

Network of Concerned Historians	NCH
<i>Annual Report 2026</i>	https://www.concernedhistorians.org

INTRODUCTION

This **thirty-second *Annual Report*** of the **Network of Concerned Historians (NCH)** documents the censorship of history, the persecution of historians, archivists, and archaeologists, and other cases on the intersection of history and human rights, drawing in particular on reports from human rights organizations and other sources. It covers mainly events of 2025 and 2026 around the world.

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								2026	2025
2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995

This year's report was compiled and edited by [Antoon De Baets](#) and [Ruben Zeeman](#).

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AFGHANISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2016, 2018, 2021–2025.

A December 2024 report by the Afghanistan Human Rights Center found that successive curriculum revisions issued by the Taliban government had amended history textbooks to no longer teach concepts such as democracy, women’s rights, and human rights. It alleged that the government had “tailored educational goals to align with its extremist and violent ideology.” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*].¹

In late August 2025, Taliban’s deputy higher education minister Ziaur Rahman Aryoubi sent a 50-page list of banned books to all universities. The list was compiled by a panel of “religious scholars and experts” and ruled that all books written by women, including historians, archaeologists and archivists, were henceforth forbidden, alongside many books by Iranian authors and those “deemed in conflict with Islamic Sharia.”²

In October 2025, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council adopted by consensus a European Union-led resolution establishing an Independent International Mechanism for Afghanistan (IIM-A). The mechanism had a mandate to investigate and collect, preserve, and analyze evidence of past and ongoing grave violations in the country, identify those responsible, and support future prosecutions. The IIM-A’s mandate was expected to include human rights violations committed during the Soviet Afghan war (1979–1989), the United States-led invasion of Afghanistan and ensuing war (2001–2021) and the Taliban crackdown on women’s rights sometimes called gender apartheid (2021–). The move came after years of campaigning by Afghan and international rights groups.³

In a letter published in the journal *Index on Censorship* on 25 June 2026, Samreen Makhfi (a pseudonym) ([2005]–) wrote about her life in Kabul, including about how she taught classes of World

¹ Isobel Yeung & Mick Krever, “[‘They Do Not Teach Us What We Need’: Inside the Expansion of Religious Schools for Girls Across Afghanistan](#),” *CNN* (4 August 2025).

² Mariamne Everett, “[Afghanistan Bans Female Authors from University Curricula](#),” *Al Jazeera* (19 September 2025).

³ Heather Barr, “[Gender Apartheid as an International Crime](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (2 September 2025); “[Afghanistan: Establishment of Accountability Mechanism a Landmark Moment in Pursuit of Justice](#),” *Amnesty International* (6 October 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 13; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 74.

History for a United States-based accredited online school to an audience of more than seventy students in Afghanistan and the wider world and about the fear of being targeted by the Taliban government.⁴

See also Australia.

ALBANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2012, 2015–2024.

On 19 May 2026, the independent fact-checking organization Faktoje was targeted by a discrediting Facebook post from historian and public commentator Olsi Jazexhi, who referred to Faktoje as a “Soros/USAID” page and suggested that it would target him by portraying him as “anti-American” and “pro-Chinese.” He had reacted to a Facebook notification about Faktoje following him on Facebook.⁵

ALGERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001–2019, 2021–2025.

On 20 August 2025, security forces arrested dozens of people, including activists and supporters of the political party Rassemblement pour la culture et la démocratie (Rally for Culture and Democracy), and prevented others from gathering at Ifri Ouzellaguen, Béjaïa Province, for the annual commemoration of the 1956 Soummam Conference – a secret gathering by leading members of the Front de libération nationale (FLN; National Liberation Front) considered a critical turning point in the War of Independence (1954–1962) against the French. Authorities had regularly prevented groups from participating in the commemoration, which was often used to voice criticism of the government, political elites, and the memory of the war [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2024–2025].⁶

⁴ Samreen, “[This Is My Life: An Afghan Woman’s Plea to Other 21 Year Olds](#),” *Index on Censorship* (25 June 2026).

⁵ “[Fact-checking Organisation Faktoje Discredited on Facebook](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (19 May 2026).

⁶ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 21; Zoheir Siouane, “[Meetings, rassemblements et recueils annoncés des partis et de la société civile 20 août: Grand pèlerinage à Ifri Ouzellaguen](#),” *Algérie360* (16 August 2018).

On 12 November 2025, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune pardoned French-Algerian novelist Boualem Sansal (1949–) [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*] and allowed him to be transferred to Germany to undergo cancer treatment.⁷

On 4 December 2025, Saad Bouakba ([1947]–), considered one of the doyens of Algerian journalism, was sentenced by the court of Bir Mourad Raïs in Algiers to a three-year suspended prison sentence, along with a fine of one million Algerian dinars (US\$ 7,500) on charges of “contempt and defamation against symbols of the National Liberation Revolution.” Bouakba had raised a historical question regarding the “treasures of the National Liberation Front,” an expression referring to the funds collected by the Front de libération nationale (FLN; National Liberation Front) to support its war effort during the struggle for the independence of Algeria (1954–1962) and the involvement of Ahmed Ben Bella (1916–2012; in office as Prime Minister in 1962–1963 and President in 1963–1965), considered an emblematic figure of that struggle. The sentence followed a complaint lodged by Ben Bella’s daughter. Abderrahim Haraoui, head of the online channel Vision TV on which Bouakba’s interview was broadcast, was given a one-year suspended prison sentence and a fine of 500,000 Algerian dinars (US\$ 3,750). The court also ordered the channel’s permanent closure and the confiscation of its broadcasting equipment.⁸

On 24 December 2025, Parliament unanimously approved a law criminalizing the French colonization of Algeria (1830–1962), a period marked by torture, enforced disappearances, massacres, economic exploitation and marginalization of the Indigenous population. It included prison sentences for those glorifying the colonization, demanded an apology and reparations from France as well as the return of national archives and information about the nuclear tests carried out by France between 1960 and 1966. The law aimed to “establish responsibility, secure recognition and an apology for crimes of colonialism as a foundation for reconciliation with history and the protection of national memory.” Previous attempts to promulgate similar laws in 2001 and 2006 failed. This time, the law was triggered by France’s recognition of Morocco’s autonomy plan for resolving the Western Sahara conflict in July 2024, while Algeria rejected the plan, supported the Sahrawi people’s right to self-determination in Western Sahara, and backed the Polisario Front. In 2018, France had acknowledged its responsibility for systematic torture during the war of independence (1954–1962).⁹

⁷ Ephrat Livni & Ségolène Le Stradic, “[Algeria Pardons Imprisoned Writer at Germany’s Request](#),” *New York Times* (12 November 2025).

⁸ “[Algeria: Freedom of Expression Is Essential to Democratic Elections](#),” *Article 19* (1 July 2026).

⁹ Tim Hume, “[Algeria Bill Seeks to Criminalise French Colonial Rule: What to Know](#),” *Al Jazeera* (21 December 2025); Veerle Schyns, “[Algerije stelt Franse kolonisatie strafbaar en gaat er alles aan doen om excuses te krijgen](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (24 December 2025).

On 1 January 2026, historian Mohammed Harbi (1933–2026) died in Paris, France. From a young age, Harbi had joined pro-independence movements in colonial Algeria, and in 1954, while studying history at the Sorbonne in Paris, he joined the French units of the Front de libération nationale (FLN; National Liberation Front). He subsequently became an adviser to FLN chief Krim Belkacem and, in 1960, FLN ambassador to Guinea. After Algerian independence in 1962, Harbi became an adviser to President Ahmed Ben Bella (1916–2012), but during this time increasingly began to criticize the official use of torture. After the June 1965 military coup, he refused to cooperate with the new regime and spent almost four years in various prisons across the country. In 1969, his prison sentence was commuted to house arrest. In 1971, he managed to escape to Tunisia with a fake Turkish passport, and in 1973 settled in France where he would spend the rest of his life. He published multiple history books, including *Aux origines du Front de libération nationale* (C. Bourgeois; 1975), *F.L.N.: Mirage et réalité* (Jeune Afrique; 1980), both of which he started writing in prison and both of which were banned in Algeria until the early 1990s. In 1991, Harbi returned to Algeria for the first time after his escape.¹⁰

On 22 April 2026, a court sentenced French-Algerian novelist and journalist Kamel Daoud (1970–) *in absentia* to three years imprisonment and gave him a fine of 5 million Algerian dinars (32,000 euros) after a privacy invasion complaint by Saâda Arbane, who claimed that Daoud had used her life story without permission for his award-winning novel *Houris* [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. As a child, Arbane had been the sole survivor of her family following a jihadist (Muslim extremist) attack in which her throat was cut. The same fate befell the fictional character in Daoud's novel. Arbane was being treated in 2015 by the woman who would later become Daoud's wife. Algeria issued two international arrest warrants against Daoud.¹¹

On 28 April 2026, six United Nations (UN) experts urged a court in Algiers to quash the trial of poet Mohamed Tadjadit (1994–), warning that the reclassified charges against him carried the death penalty. Tadjadit was a leading member of the Hirak movement – a popular movement started in February 2019 and characterized by peaceful protests for political reform – widely recognized for his poetry in Darija and his peaceful advocacy for fundamental freedoms in Algeria. He and others faced death sentences for their part in encouraging social media users to express discontent with the government through using

¹⁰ Adam Nossiter, "[Mohammed Harbi, Who Rewrote Algeria's History, Dies at 92](#)," *New York Times* (9 January 2026); Amnesty International, *Report* (London 1968–1969), 25; Amnesty International, *Report* (London 1969–1970), 28; Article 19; *Information, Freedom and Censorship: World Report 1991* (London 1991), 353; Robert Bonnaud, "Mohammed Harbi: Un historien matérialiste," *Le Quinzaine Littéraire*, 1993, no. 617, 23–24; *Index on Censorship*, 1994, nos. 4–5, 151–53, 254–55; Derek Jones, ed., *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (London and Chicago 2001), 33, 1027–28; Philip Naylor & Alf Heggoy, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria* (Metuchen 1994), 213–14; Catherine Simon, "La Mémoire meurtrie de Mohammed Harbi," *Le Monde* (11 October 2002).

¹¹ Or Goldenberg, "[Gelaauwerde schrijver Kamel Daoud door Algerijnse rechtbank bij verstek veroordeeld tot drie jaar cel](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (22 April 2026).

the #ManichRadhi (I am not satisfied) hashtag. Tadjadit's poetry contained many historical references to the struggle for independence (1954–1962) and the “black decade” marked by violence and terrorism (1990–2000).

Tadjadit had already been unfairly tried and sentenced in March 2022 to sixteen months' imprisonment, a sentence reduced on appeal prior to his release in August 2022. However, in November 2025 the court decided to retry him in the spring of 2026 on three new criminal charges, including the offense of “attacks, conspiracies and other offenses against the authority of the State and the integrity of the national territory,” thus contravening the *ne bis in idem* (double jeopardy) principle. The UN experts also expressed concern regarding the subsequent charges still hanging over him for supporting terrorism and other offenses related to the integrity and security of the State.¹²

See also France.

ANDORRA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

In [June] 2026, the progressive opposition party Concòrdia proposed amendments to the Archives and Documentary Heritage Bill. It suggested to ensure open access to all public records not subject to confidentiality clauses, rather than limiting availability to only those deemed most significant; to integrate into the Archives System all documentation produced by public and private institutions, including companies and parish archives; and to publicly disclose all procedures, deadlines, and requirements regulating access to archives.¹³

ANGOLA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2023–2024.

¹² United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL DZA 7/2025](#) (8 December 2025); [Government Response](#) (7 February 2026); United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Algeria: Trial against Hirak Poet Mohamed Tadjadit Must Be Quashed, Say UN Experts](#)” (Press release; 28 April 2026); Mohamed Tadjadit & Mark Stimpson, “[Poet Mohamed Tadjadit Has Become the Voice of Algeria's Discontented Youth](#),” *Index on Censorship* (30 April 2026); Conseil des droits de l'homme (Groupe de travail sur la détention arbitraire), [Avis no 45/2022, concernant Mohamed Tadjdid, Malik Riyahi, Soheib Debaghi, Tarek Ahmed Debaghi et Nourredine Khimoud \(Algérie\)](#) (UN Doc. A/HRC/WGAD/2022/45; 26 October 2022).

¹³ “[Concòrdia Proposes Amendments for Open Access and Digital Preservation in Archives Bill](#),” *Alto* (12 June 2026).

ANTIGUA and BARBUDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

In [July] 2025, unknown people, possibly part of an educational tour, vandalized a historic cave by carving their names and initials in the walls. Community leaders and heritage advocates expressed outrage over the defacement, with civil society organization and organizer of educational tours BarbudaGO stating that “[o]ur heritage sites are not canvases — they are sacred spaces that deserve protection.”¹⁴

See also United States.

ARGENTINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2025.

On 9 March 2024, in an open letter entitled “Milei ante la Historia Argentina” (Milei before the history of Argentina), historians Omar Acha, Marina Franco, Silvina Jensen, Federico Lorenz, Marta Philp, Andrea Belén Rodríguez, Ignacio Telesca, Javier Trímboli, Julio Vezub, and Fabio Wasserman, severely criticized President Javier Milei’s history and memory politics since he had assumed office on 10 December 2023. They argued that Milei’s politics destroyed “the pact” that was signed after the fall of the military dictatorship (1976–1983), that he drew on misleading nineteenth-century authoritarian historical analogies, grossly misinterpreted and falsified the Argentine past, and encouraged the denial of the crimes committed under the military dictatorship. The open letter was signed by 1360 historians from across the American continent.¹⁵

Throughout 2025, journalist Ceferino Reato, author of several books on recent Argentinian history, became the repeated target of a smear campaign by President Javier Milei. On 9 May 2025, Milei publicly accused him of having attempted to “extort” him in order to obtain state advertising for *Fortuna magazine*, a claim Reato rejected. Milei also portrayed him as part of an alleged media pressure scheme operating against the government.¹⁶

¹⁴ “[Vandalism at Barbuda Cave Sparks Outrage from Community Leaders](#),” *Antigua Observer* (17 July 2025).

¹⁵ “[Milei ante la Historia Argentina](#)” (open letter; 9 March 2024).

¹⁶ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 27.

On 12 February 2025, authorities reportedly canceled a concert by singer and rapper Camilo Joaquín Villarruel (artist name: Milo J), minutes before it was scheduled to take place, citing security irregularities, including deficiencies in evacuation plans and emergency exits. The free concert, which some 20,000 people were expected to attend, was to take place at the Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos (Space for the Memory and Human Rights) in Buenos Aires – formerly the Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA; Higher School of Mechanics of the Navy), one of the main clandestine detention centers during the military dictatorship (1976–1983) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2010–2011, 2013*] turned into a memorial museum. Villarruel alleged that the decision to cancel the concert was politically motivated because of its location at the memorial site. During his campaign and term in office 2023–, President Javier Milei had repeatedly negated historical evidence of the military dictatorship, including the number of people killed, and had defunded various historical organizations researching, teaching, or preserving evidence from the military dictatorship [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*].¹⁷

On 5 March 2025, and again on 27 August 2025 and 19 March 2026, several United Nations (UN) Special Procedures expressed concern about official measures that would affect the processes of truth, justice, memory, and guarantees of non-repetition, such as the planned purging and possible partial shredding of the Archivo General de la Armada (General Archive of the Navy), extensive staff and budget cuts in entities responsible for implementing transitional justice measures, and the sale of sites of memory with evidentiary value of human rights violations committed during the military dictatorship (1976–1983), obstruction of access to archives of the dictatorship, and rumors about possible pardons for military personnel convicted of international crimes. In the lead-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the 24 March 1976 coup d'état that overthrew President Isabel Perón (1931–; in office 1974–1976), five UN human rights experts added that “[a]ttempting to rewrite the past with denialist or revisionist narratives constitutes another alarming setback and a violation of human rights.”¹⁸

On 1 July 2025, Undersecretary of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture Liliana Barela dismissed Gabriel Di Meglio, historian and specialist in nineteenth-century Argentine history, as director (2020–2025) of the Museo Histórico Nacional (MHN; National Historical Museum). The Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Dr. Emilio Ravignani (named after historian Emilio Ravignani [1886–1954]) and the Asociación Argentina de Investigadores en Historia (ASAIH; Argentine Association of History

¹⁷ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 27–28.

¹⁸ United Nations Special Procedures, [Allegations Letter AL ARG 1/2025](#) (5 March 2025); [Government response 1](#) (5 May 2025); [Government response 2](#) (27 May 2025); United Nations Special Procedures, [Allegations Letter AL ARG 6/2025](#) (27 August 2025); [Government response](#) (29 October 2025); Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Argentina: Alarming Setbacks in Transitional Justice on 50th Anniversary of Coup d’État, Warn UN Experts](#)” (Press release; 19 March 2026).

Researchers), as well as several thousand historians and others, including politicians, condemned the dismissal. Barela reportedly mentioned that the order came from the Office of the President, where they were “upset” with the historian. Di Meglio had revealed to the press that the MHN was not allocated a budget except for the payment of salaries – a common strategy of the government of President Javier Milei (in office 2023–) to effectively defund historical organizations it disagreed with [See NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025*]. In addition, Di Meglio had opposed the transfer of the curved saber of General José de San Martín (1778–1850) – donated in 1896 to MHN founder and historian Adolfo Carranza – to the Regiment of Mounted Grenadiers and refused a request by Milei, who was named an “honorary grenadier” in May 2025, to use the saber in a public performance.¹⁹

On 9 July 2025, Independence Day, Camila Perochena (1987–), a historian from Rosario, media figure, and director of the master’s program in Journalism at Torcuato Di Tella University, Buenos Aires, had a public discussion on television with the director of the Casa de Tucumán, José María Posse, about the political uses that different leaders had given to Independence Day. During the discussion, she stated that President Javier Milei (in office 2023–), like his predecessors, “manipulated the past to his advantage, as when he said that we were a world power in 1910.” Following the discussion, Milei reposted a video of the discussion, and attacked and insulted Perochena on X. Perochena subsequently replied “We historians are not here to endorse the myths constructed by the messianic leaders who abound in our history.”²⁰

In December 2025, four human rights NGOs – Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, H.I.J.O.S., CELS and Memoria Abierta – presented a report, *Bajo asedio: Las políticas de memoria, verdad y justicia ante la ofensiva revisionista* (Under Siege: Politics of Memory, Truth, and Justice in the Face of the Revisionist Offensive), documenting in detail the systematic dismantling by the government of President Javier Milei (in office December 2023–) of institutions and initiatives related to the memory of the human rights violations committed under the military dictatorship (1976–1983). Alongside an analysis of this dismantling – as partly illustrated in *NCH Annual Reports 2024–2025* and the present country entry – the report criticized the official denialism, in particular the downplaying of the numbers of persons who disappeared under the dictatorship, and the official thesis of “memoria completa” (complete memory) – a phrase used by denialist groups to support the old so-called “two-demon theory,” a rhetorical device

¹⁹ Daniel Ginega, “[Indignación generalizada: enérgico repudio de historiadores, intelectuales y académicos por el despido de Gabriel Di Meglio del Museo Histórico Nacional](#),” *La Nación* (1 July 2025); Andrés Ruggeri, “[El día que Milei quiso usar la reliquia de San Martín y no lo dejaron](#),” *Página 12* (3 July 2025); Daniel Ginega, “[El Gobierno obligó a Gabriel Di Meglio a dejar la dirección del Museo Histórico Nacional](#),” *La Nación* (9 July 2025).

²⁰ “[Milei ahora atacó a una historiadora rosarina: ‘Patética, tiene el cerebro lleno de parásitos’](#),” *La Capital* (10 July 2025); “[Quién es Camila Perochena, la historiadora rosarina que fue agredida por Milei](#),” *La Capital* (10 July 2025).

that equated the violence of the Armed Forces and left-wing armed groups at the time (*See* item below).²¹

On 24 May 2026, the fiftieth anniversary of the 24 March 1976 coup marking the beginning of the military dictatorship (1976–1983), also known as the Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia (National Day of Remembrance for Truth and Justice) – the government of President Javier Milei (in office 2023–) released a 75-minute video titled “Día de la Memoria – Completa” (Day of Remembrance – Complete). The video featured two testimonies: one by a victim of the military dictatorship; and one by a victim of the left-wing guerrilla group Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (People’s Revolutionary Army). The video was widely criticized as advocating the teoría de los dos demonios (“two-demon theory”) which equalized the violence of the military dictatorship with that of guerrilla movements during the Guerra Sucia (Dirty War; 1976–1983) (*See* item above). It was the third year in succession that the Milei government marked the anniversary with a video downplaying state violence or questioning the death toll.

On the same day, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) “warn[ed] with concern that, in different contexts around the Americas, revisionist and negationist narratives ha[d] intensified that stigmatize victims or question historical truth and the systematic nature of State terrorism.” On 11 March 2026, IACHR experts had pointed to a qualitative shift in the region, noting that denialist discourses were no longer marginal but were now “led by the institutions themselves.” On 19 March, five United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteurs expressed “serious concern” over the “regressive measures in Argentina that risk undermining four decades of exemplary progress in memorialization, truth, and justice,” including “a possible pardon for military personnel convicted of international crimes,” the dismantling of “institutions for memory, the search for disappeared persons, the preservation of archives, and the promotion of human rights,” and “public denials and glorification of serious human rights violations committed during the dictatorship, stigmatizing discourse against victims and human rights organizations, and the discrediting of transitional justice policies” [*See* NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025* and item above].²²

²¹ Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, H.I.J.O.S Capital, CELS & Memoria Abierta, [Bajo asedio: Las políticas de memoria, verdad y justicia ante la ofensiva revisionista](#) (Buenos Aires: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, December 2025); Luciana Bertoia, [“Las políticas de memoria, verdad y justicia bajo asedio: ‘Hay una ofensiva revisionista,’ Página 12](#) (17 December 2025).

²² United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [“Argentina: Alarming Setbacks in Transitional Justice on 50th Anniversary of Coup d’État, Warn UN Experts”](#) (Press release; 19 March 2026); Inter-American Court of Human Rights, [“IACHR Pays Tribute to Victims of Dictatorships in the Americas](#) (Press release; 24 March 2026); Emma Bubola, [“President Milei Is Rebranding the Atrocities of Argentina’s Dictatorship,”](#) *New York Times* (24 March 2026); María Laura Chang, [“When Latin America Loses Its Memory,”](#) *Justiceinfo.net* (21 May 2026).

ARMENIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2006, 2010, 2014–2016.

On 22 April 2025, opposition lawmakers introduced a new genocide denial law proposing to redefine article 136 of the Criminal Code which outlawed “publicly denying, justifying, propagating or downplaying genocides and crimes against humanity ... with the aim of inciting hatred, discrimination, or violence against a person or group.” The new law proposed to explicitly mention denial of the 1915 Armenian genocide, rather than genocide denial in general, and to scrap the condition of provoking hatred, discrimination or violence. The law was seen as targeting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who in opposition media was portrayed as “questioning the historical and national perception of the Armenian Genocide.” Since the 8 August 2025 United States-brokered peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Pashinyan pursued a policy of normalization to improve relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. This included several public speeches in which he refrained from using the term “Armenian genocide” to speak instead of “Medz Yeghern” (Great Catastrophe). Moreover, in October 2024, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had announced that seeking international recognition of the genocide would no longer be a main foreign policy priority, instead pointing to the need for normalization and improvement of neighborly relations.²³

On 11 March 2026, Edita Gzoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) in Yerevan, handed in her resignation. Since early March, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had reportedly pressured Gzoyan to resign after her meeting on 10 February with United States (US) Vice-President J.D. Vance at the Armenian Genocide Memorial complex, in which she had spoken about the anti-Armenian violence in Nagorno-Karabakh (known by Armenians as Artsakh) since the 1980s and had handed Vance a book about the 1915 Armenian genocide and later massacres of Armenians (including the 1988 Sumgait and Kirovabad pogroms). On 12 March, Pashinyan confirmed that he had instructed Gzoyan to resign, stating that “I considered giving a book about Artsakh to Vance to be a provocative act that goes against the government’s policy.” Since the 8 August 2025 US-brokered peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Pashinyan pursued a policy of normalization to improve relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Following Gzoyan’s dismissal, Pashinyan reportedly also replaced members of the independent board of trustees with political allies and appointed a member of his staff as temporary AGMI director. Gzoyan’s dismissal sparked great national and international outrage. On 13 March, 39 historians, legal scholars, and journalists signed a petition to reinstate her. In a letter to

²³ Onnik James Krikorian, “[Political Tensions Erupt in Armenia Over Proposed Genocide Legislation](#),” *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa* (12 May 2025); Arshaluys Barseghyan, “[Pashinyan Links Armenian Genocide to ‘International Machinations’ in Commemorative Address](#),” *OC Media* (24 April 2026).

Pashinyan, the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America stressed that “[t]he erasure of historical memory ... cannot be made contingent on short-term political needs.”²⁴

See also Azerbaijan, Türkiye.

AUSTRALIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2001, 2003, 2007–2009, 2014–2016, 2018–2025.

In 2025, 39 universities adopted a definition of antisemitism based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition. In 2016, IHRA had adopted a non-binding working definition that defined antisemitism as “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews.” The definition was frequently criticized by academics and civil society groups, including one of the drafters of the definition, Kenneth Stern, for, among others, being incompatible with international standards of freedom of expression and assembly, including on university campuses, and for being weaponized by Israeli politicians and lobby groups. Among the “contemporary examples of antisemitism” the working definition listed “claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor,” “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis,” and “applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation” – examples that critics believed stifled legitimate criticism of Israel and its policies [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*, under Germany and under South Africa].²⁵

In May 2025, the government established an Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme to determine compensation for family members of victims of unlawful killings, unlawful assault, or property damage

²⁴ Arshaluys Barseghyan, “[Head of Armenian Genocide Memorial ‘Forced to Quit’ after JD Vance’s Visit](#),” *OC Media* (11 March 2026); Arshaluys Barseghyan, “[Pashinyan Confirms Firing Genocide Memorial Head for Giving Vance Book on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict](#),” *OC Media* (12 March 2026); “[Genocide Scholars Condemn Removal of AGMI Director Edita Gzoyan](#),” *Armenian Weekly* (13 March 2026); International Association of Genocide Scholars, “[IAGS Urges Armenian Government to Reinstate Dr. Edita Gzoyan as Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute](#)” (Press release; 13 March 2026); Middle East Studies Association Committee on Academic Freedom, “[Letter Regarding the Forced Resignation of AGMI Director Gzoyan](#)” (Press release; 9 April 2026).

²⁵ Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 87; Kenneth Stern, “[I Drafted the Definition of Antisemitism: Rightwing Jews Are Weaponizing It](#),” *Guardian* (13 December 2019); “[Human Rights and Other Civil Society Groups Urge United Nations to Respect Human Rights in the Fight Against Antisemitism](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (20 April 2023); Kenneth Stern, “[A Bad Deal: By Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, Universities Are Sacrificing Academic Freedom](#),” *Knight First Amendment Institute* (5 September 2025).

by Australian special forces in Afghanistan (2001–2021). On 19 August 2025, a local court determined that former Special Air Service (SAS) trooper Oliver Schulz could stand trial for the war crime charge of murder after footage aired by *ABC News* in 2020 showed him killing an Afghan civilian in 2012. Schulz was the only person criminally charged thus far stemming from investigations conducted as part of the Brereton inquiry [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*]. On 7 April 2026, the Office of the Special Investigator charged former SAS corporal Ben Roberts-Smith [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023*] with five counts of war crimes, alleging that he had “caused the death” or “aided, abetted, counseled or procured another person to intentionally cause the death” of five people from 2009 to 2012 in Uruzgan Province.²⁶

On 27 May 2025, the Western Australian government announced a reparations program for the “Stolen Generations” – Indigenous children who were forcibly removed from their families under racist policies between the 1900s and the 1970s [See NCH *Annual Reports 2003, 2009*]. In 1997, a report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (renamed in 2008 the Australian Human Rights Commission) had concluded that the aim of the policies had been to “eliminate Indigenous cultures as distinct entities” and “could properly be labelled ‘genocidal.’” Aboriginal children in Western Australia continued to be twenty times more likely to face family removal than non-Indigenous children.²⁷

On 1 July 2025, the Yoorrook Justice Commission (established in 2021 as the first formal truth-telling inquiry in Australia and led by Wergaia/Wamba Wamba elder Eleanor Bourke) handed down its final report to the Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne, making one hundred unanimous recommendations, including a redress for Aboriginal Victorians and a call to make the advisory First Peoples’ Assembly (established in 2018) permanent. In its history volume investigating past and ongoing impacts of colonization in Victoria (1800s–present), *Truth Be Told* (2025), the commission found that crimes against humanity and a genocide had been committed against Aboriginal people during the colonization of Victoria. There was reportedly disagreement between some of the five Yoorrook commissioners about certain findings in the history report. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan welcomed the release of the reports and said her government would consider the findings. Truth-telling commitments in other

²⁶ Sean Rubinsztein-Dunlop, “[Former SAS Soldier Oliver Schulz Committed to Stand Trial for War Crimes Charge of Murder](#),” *ABC News* (19 August 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 14; Laura Chung, “[Australia Charges Ex-Soldier With War Crimes in Afghanistan](#),” *New York Times* (7 April 2026).

²⁷ Annabel Hennessy, “[Western Australia Announces Reparations for the ‘Stolen Generations’](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (27 May 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 39.

Australian jurisdictions, like the Northern Territory and Queensland, had been scrapped [*See NCH Annual Reports 2022, 2025*].²⁸

See also India, Latvia, Malaysia, Nauru, United States.

AUSTRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2005–2007, 2009, 2018, 2020.

On 23 October 2025, an inquiry commission appointed by the Interior Ministry called the police operation at a protest camp at the Peršmanhof memorial on 27 July unlawful and disproportionate. The memorial, located in Bad Eisenkappel, Carinthia, was dedicated to the history and resistance of the Carinthian Slovenes against the Nazi regime (1938–1945). On 25 April 1945, an SS Battalion had killed eleven civilians at the site. The commission recommended to engage with the history of Peršmanhof in police training.²⁹

See also Montenegro, United States.

AZERBAIJAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–1998, 2008–2013, 2015–2025.

Throughout 2025, the destruction of cultural and religious heritage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh continued [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021–2022, 2024–2025*]. In a June 2024 report, the United States-based Caucasus Heritage Watch had estimated a 75% increase in destroyed heritage sites compared to the year prior. On 10 January 2025, the American Bar Association reported destruction of Armenian sites as well as cultural artefacts held by museums in the area. In December 2025, footage emerged of destruction inside the seventeenth-century Yerits Mankants Monastery, and satellite imagery revealed the destruction of the nineteenth-century Holy Savior Monastery. On 2 February 2026, vandalism of khachkars (Armenian memorial stones) at the site of the twentieth-century Surb Mariam Astvatsatsin

²⁸ [Yoorrook Commission website](#); Kate Ashton, “[Australian-First Truth-Telling Inquiry Rewrites Victorian History, Calls for Redress and Transfer of Power](#),” *ABC News* (1 July 2025); “[Yoorrook: Truth Be Told](#),” *Australian Policy Online* (1 July 2025).

²⁹ “[Peršmanhof-Einsatz für Kommission rechtswidrig](#),” *Vorarlberg Online* (23 October 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 89.

was reported. Earlier, the destruction of a twelfth-century khachkar was reported. Khachkars had been added to the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2010. Alongside the destruction of cultural heritage, the government of President Ilham Aliyev continued to promote the theory, dismissed by historians, that Armenian inscriptions on churches should be dated back to Caucasian Albania (2nd–8th centuries), thus denying the historical presence of the Armenian Church and Armenians in what is now Azerbaijan [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*, under Azerbaijan, *Annual Report 2025*, under Vatican].³⁰

On 20 May 2025, Iqbal (Iqbal) Abilov (1989–), a historian and ethnographer of ethnic minorities, especially the Talysh people (an ethnic Iranian minority in Azerbaijan), and lecturer in international relations at Belarusian State University, Minsk, Belarus, was sentenced to 18 years in prison on reportedly fabricated charges and after a flawed, closed-door trial in violation of fair trial rights [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. On 15 October 2025, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, and the UN Special Rapporteur on minority rights, Nicolas Levrat, expressed concern over Abilov’s arrest and called on the government to release him.³¹

On 23 June 2025, the Baku Grave Crimes Court sentenced Bahruz Samadov [Samedov] (1995–), a peace activist and PhD student in political science at Charles University, Prague, to fifteen years in prison on charges of high treason and “spying” for Armenian intelligence agencies in a closed-door trial. Samadov had been arrested and detained on 21 August 2024, while visiting Baku. The charges were related to Samadov’s criticism of the government of President Ilham Aliyev (in office 2003–) and his activism against the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh (1988–). Included in the verdict were Samadov’s posts on X, in which he expressed concern over the possibility of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh drawing on past Azerbaijani crimes against Armenians, including the 1918 Baku and 1920 Shusha massacres. On 15 October 2025, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, and the UN Special Rapporteur on minority rights, Nicolas Levrat, expressed concern over Samadov’s arrest and called on the government to release him. On 18 October 2025, Samadov was transferred to a new prison and held in solitary confinement. He threatened to commit suicide. Samadov previously attempted suicide twice during temporary stays in Umbaki

³⁰ “[Destruction and Disappearance of Armenian Cultural and Religious Heritage](#),” *Armenian Bar Association* (May 2025); “[Historians Call for an End to the Destruction of Armenian Monuments in Karabakh](#),” *Caucasian Knot* (15 March 2026); Amos Chapple & Mark Krutov, “[Photo Exclusive: Cathedral, Church Demolished in Nagorno-Karabakh](#),” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (27 April 2026).

³¹ Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights* (London: AI, April 2025), 87–88; Scholars at Risk, “[Release Wrongfully Imprisoned Academic Iqbal Abilov](#)” (New York: SAR, 16 May 2025); European Parliament Citizens’ Enquiries Unit (AsKEP), personal communication (18 June 2025); Amnesty International, *Academics Sentenced on Spurious Charges of Treason* (EUR 55/0295/2025; 15 September 2025); United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Azerbaijan: UN Experts Urge Release of Researchers Iqbal Abilov and Bahruz Samadov, Charged with Treason](#)” (Press release; 15 October 2025).

maximum-security prison. On 5 February 2026, he lost his appeal against a new transfer to a closed section in Umbaki prison. Samadov declared an indefinite hunger strike, which he halted after five days following permission to call his grandmother. On 21 May 2026, the Supreme Court rejected his appeal. During his testimony, Samadov dedicated his speech to the memory of three deceased activists.³²

See also Armenia.

³² [“Bahruz Samadov: ‘I Will Never Forget the Trauma of My Imprisonment, or the Way the State Treated Me like a Terrorist’,” *Abzas* \(30 June 2025\); “\[Azerbaijan: Sentencing and Arbitrary Detention of Prominent Peace Activist Bahruz Samadov\]\(#\),” *International Federation for Human Rights* \(15 July 2025\); “\[The Samadov Case\]\(#\),” *Baku Research Institute* \(22 July 2025\); United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “\[Azerbaijan: UN Experts Urge Release of Researchers Igbal Abilov and Bahruz Samadov, Charged with Treason\]\(#\)” \(Press release; 15 October 2025\); Aytan Farhadova, “\[Bahruz Samadov Threatens Suicide after Being Placed in Solitary Confinement\]\(#\),” *OC Media* \(21 October 2025\); Bahruz Samadov, “\[‘The State Plans to End My Life’ – Bahruz Samadov Calls for Solidarity in Prison Letter\]\(#\),” *OC Media* \(31 January 2026\); Aytan Farhadova, “\[Samadov Loses Appeal in Prison Determination, Starts Hunger Strike\]\(#\),” *OC Media* \(5 February 2026\); “\[Bahruz Samedov Ended His Hunger Strike in an Azerbaijani Prison\]\(#\),” *Caucasian Knot* \(11 February 2026\); Aytan Farhadova, “\[Azerbaijan’s Supreme Court Rejects Bahruz Samadov’s Appeal\]\(#\),” *OC Media* \(22 May 2026\); “\[Bahruz Samadov’s Closing Speech at Supreme Court\]\(#\),” *Free Bahruz Campaign* \(9 July 2026\).](#)

BAHAMAS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

BAHRAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2008–2012, 2015–2017, 2021–2022, 2024–2025.

In July 2025, during the religious commemoration of Ashura (a Shia day of mourning marking the death of Husayn Ibn Ali in the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE), security forces arrested and summoned sixty people, reportedly using “unjustified violence” [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*]. During the 2026 Ashura season (the month of Muharram, beginning on 16 June, and culminating around 25 June), the Interior Ministry increasingly criminalized Shia religious rituals by restricting religious gatherings in ma’atams and husseiniyas (community centers), processions, and sermons; banning preachers and eulogists from participating in the season’s events; removing Ashura symbols (black banners, flags, signs); and summoning, detaining, arresting, and using force against citizens who protested against the measures. The authorities also warned against discussing topics that they considered to be a “politicization of Ashura.” The escalation reflected a growing effort to subject religious rituals to security oversight, undermine the independence of Shia religious institutions, and deprive citizens of their right to practice freedom of religion.³³

BANGLADESH

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2019, 2021–2025.

On 17 September 2024, after the uprising against Sheikh Hasina’s government (in office 2009–2024), police in Dhaka arrested journalist, author, and filmmaker Shahriar Kabir (1950–), president of the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (Forum for Secular Bangladesh & Trial of War Criminals of 1971), a civil society movement established in 1992 and demanding accountability for war crimes committed by the Pakistan Army and its collaborators during the 1971 war when Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan. Kabir was charged with murder and crimes against humanity in fourteen

³³ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 49; Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), “[Ashura Season Marked by Escalating Violations, Restrictions on Freedom of Religion and Assembly](#),” *Ifex* (23 June 2026).

cases, including cases dating from the July–August 2024 protests, before the International Crimes Tribunal – a tribunal initially created to try 1971 perpetrators. The charges were widely criticized for being politically motivated. Kabir had previously been imprisoned in 2001–2002, during the coalition government (2001–2006) of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami.

On 25–29 August 2025, the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention said that Kabir’s detention was arbitrary and that he was denied a fair trial, a view reiterated on 14 April 2026 by five UN Special Rapporteurs. The working group suggested that his arrest was connected to his political and secular opinions and his views against religious extremism, while the rapporteurs criticized the prosecutors for not having provided any evidence yet and for rejecting bail on humanitarian grounds. Kabir used a wheelchair, had reportedly suffered several heart attacks, and was denied proper medical care. On 12 March 2026, several international human rights organizations and many human rights activists, academics, and journalists signed a letter to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman (in office February 2026–) expressing concern over the detention and health of Kabir and urging him to offer humanitarian bail. Kabir had authored dozens of books, including on the history of the 1971 war of independence.³⁴

In 2025, the interim government of Muhammad Yunus (in office August 2024–February 2026) moved to prosecute the most serious crimes allegedly committed during the Awami League’s rule (1996–2001, 2009–2024) before the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), a domestic court previously used to prosecute crimes under international law committed during the 1971 war of independence. On 17 November 2025, the ICT sentenced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (in office 2009–2024) and former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal (in office 2015–2024) to death following trials *in absentia* for crimes against humanity. In response, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights called the verdict an “important moment for victims” but expressed regret over the “imposition of the death penalty, which we oppose in all circumstances.” In the week before the verdict, Hasina’s lawyers had raised fair trial and due process concerns and claimed to have “repeatedly challenged” the interim government to bring its charges to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

The interim government also established a commission to investigate allegations of enforced disappearance and extra-judicial killings committed under the Awami League, which had received over

³⁴ “[Shahriar Kabir Arrested in Dhaka](#),” *Dhaka Tribune* (17 September 2024); “[Professor Shahriar Kabir Suffers Second Heart Attack in Custody; Family Alleges Negligence](#),” *Dhaka Tribune* (3 April 2025); United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, *Opinions Adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at Its 103rd Session* (A/HRC/WGAD/2025/40; 21 October 2025); “[Statement Calling for the Immediate Release of Human Rights Defender Shahriar Kabir from Detention in Bangladesh](#),” *Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security* (5 January 2026); “[To Bangladesh Prime Minister Concerning Shahriar Kabir](#),” *Genocide Watch* (13 March 2026); Zyma Islam, “[Journalists Held Without Trial for Up to 620 Days](#),” *Daily Star* (3 May 2026); “[Shahriar Kabir](#),” *Wikipedia* (last updated 3 May 2026).

1,850 complaints by August 2025, and banned the League under the Anti-Terrorism Act [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. The commissioners declared that they had collected significant evidence, but security force officers had destroyed evidence, limited their cooperation, and were resisting efforts to hold alleged perpetrators accountable [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. In October 2025, authorities filed charges against 28 people for alleged involvement in enforced disappearances. On the night of 22 to 23 June 2026, dozens of Awami League activists were arrested while marking the League's 77th anniversary [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].³⁵

On 28 August 2025, journalist Monjurul Alam Panna, specialized in issues related to the history of the 1971 independence from Pakistan, moderated a roundtable discussion titled "Our Great Liberation War and the Constitution of Bangladesh," organized by Mancha 71, a platform dedicated to commemorating independence, in Dhaka. A group of men calling themselves "July fighters" (invoking the 2024 uprising that had toppled the regime of Sheikh Hasina) stormed the venue and threatened those present, including Panna and elderly independence fighters. When police arrived, they arrested Panna with fourteen other participants, ostensibly for their protection. On 29 August 2025, Panna was charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act with damaging property with the intent to create public fear and thereby endangering public security. Following a court hearing, Panna was transferred to prison. On 12 November 2025, he was released after being granted bail by the High Court. The criminal proceedings against him were ongoing.³⁶

In February–March 2026, a coordinated digital campaign by Facebook pages with the names "Network 71," "Mahir Chowdhury," and "Nadim Chowdhury" targeted self-organized community archivists. These included the July Revolutionary Alliance and The Red July, who uploaded audiovisual material related to the 24 July 2024 Student-People's Mass Uprising, including records of human rights violations, for public-interest purposes on their Facebook pages, which had hundreds of thousands of followers. The campaign against the community archivists used multiple fake email identities and copyright claims and led to the removal of content and the suspension of pages by Facebook owner Meta without adequate verification or due process. Repeated protests to Meta by the affected community archivists were largely ineffective. A substantial portion of the archivists' content was reportedly intended or already used as evidentiary material in proceedings at the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) addressing mass violence linked to the uprising. Both archivists' groups also reported a

³⁵ "[Bangladesh Bans Activities of Awami League, the Party of Ousted PM Hasina](#)," *Al Jazeera* (11 May 2025); Arunoday Mukharji, Mir Sabbir, Anbarasan Ethirajan & Ewan Somerville, "[Bangladesh's Ousted Leader Sheikh Hasina Sentenced to Death](#)," *BBC News* (17 November 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 52–53; Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 95; "[Activists of Awami League Held During Anniversary Marches](#)," *The Hindu* (24 June 2026), 14.

³⁶ United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter AL BGD 1/2026](#) (14 April 2026).

pattern of harassment and threats from cyber groups aligned with political figures, including former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, connected to the trials at the ICT. In several cases, groups identifying themselves as “Crack Platoon, Bangladesh Cyber Force,” “Dark Cyber Gang,” and “Qawmi Cyber Expert Team” publicly stated that they used copyright reporting tools to remove pages and accounts, and shared evidence of these actions online.³⁷

BARBADOS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2024–2025.

In April 2026, a report by the United States-based Public Interest Experts estimated that between the British institution of chattel slavery in 1636 and its official abolishment in 1834, Barbados’s population of African descent lost 25 million years of life and suffered damage up to \$ 2 trillion. On 18 June, Prime Minister Mia Mottley announced a new manifesto outlining the “moral, ethical and legal case” for reparations caused by enslavement at the High-Level Next Steps Conference on Reparatory Justice in Ghana (*See item below, under United Nations*).³⁸

BELARUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2000, 2005–2007, 2009–2011, 2014–2025.

A December 2024 report on academic freedom in Belarus emphasized that protests against President Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s landslide August 2020 re-election, which the opposition and many governments had denounced as fraudulent [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021–2025*], and against Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, had led the government to step up ideological indoctrination at all levels of education, including by promoting the official historical narrative of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2023–2024*]. The report recalled that in January 2022, Lukashenka had announced the Year of Historical Memory and established the Republican Council on Historical Policy, tasked with developing a unified policy on historical memory and the interpretation of history to be taught in Belarus [*See NCH Annual Report 2022*]; that on 5

³⁷ Shoeb A, “[Meta Removes Bangladeshi Community Archivists’ Pages through False Copyright Claims](#),” *Global Voices* (6 May 2026).

³⁸ Paul Lashmar & Natricia Duncan, “[UK Stole 25m Years of Life and Labor Through Slavery in Barbados, Says Report](#),” *Guardian* (30 April 2026); “[Barbados Prime Minister Announces Manifesto for Slavery Reparations](#),” *Guardian* (18 June 2026).

January 2022, the Law on the Genocide of the Belarusian People was adopted, which criminalized any alternative interpretation of the history of World War II [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*]; and that a new Constitutional amendment of February 2022 included a State duty to ensure the preservation of historical truth. These legal reforms allowed the government to persecute independent publishing houses and ban publications about certain historical events, symbols, and figures by adding them to the list of extremist materials administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. In 2024, more than fifty books were added to the list, including a collection of historical documents from the State archives, a historical monograph based on a dissertation officially defended in Belarus in 2006, and publications specializing in Belarusian history, such as the journals *ARCHE Pachatak* and *Nasha historyia* [*Nasha historyja*; Our History] [See NCH *Annual Reports 2007, 2010*]. They were removed from sale and libraries.³⁹

On 10 September 2025, journalist, historian and cultural activist Larysa Shchyrakova ([1973]–) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2024*], who was serving a 3.5 years’ prison sentence since August 2023 for discrediting Belarus and promoting extremist activities, was asked to write a pardon request. The next morning, masked KGB (security service) officers transported her to the Lithuanian border without explanation.⁴⁰

On 15 September 2025, the Prosecutor General labeled the European Humanities University (EHU) as an “extremist organization,” submitting a petition to the Supreme Court to formally ban its activities and symbols within Belarus. He accused EHU of deliberately working to destabilize Belarus by promoting “alternative” interpretations of historical events, democratic values, and Western political transformation. Founded in Minsk in 1992, EHU had been established to promote liberal education in the humanities and social sciences. In 2004, the Belarusian Ministry of Education revoked EHU’s license, characterizing it as too “pro-Western.” EHU relocated to Lithuania in 2005 as a “university-in-exile.”⁴¹

On 13 December 2025, Ales Bialiatski (Aleś Bialiacki) (1962–), a human rights activist, scholar of the history of Belarusian literature, and winner of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize alongside Memorial and the Ukrainian Center for Civil Liberties, was released after two years of his ten-year prison sentence and

³⁹ Julia Mirau, ed., [Academic Freedom in Belarus: State Repression and its Consequences at Home and Abroad](#) (Berlin: Science at Risk Monitoring Report, December 2024), 19–21, 28.

⁴⁰ Larysa Shchyrakova, [“Stripped of Her Home: The Belarusian Political Prisoner Pardoned by Lukashenka,”](#) *Index on Censorship* (29 April 2026).

⁴¹ Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Project, [“European Humanities University”](#) (15 September 2025); [Scholars at Risk’s Submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Belarus](#) (February 2026), 5.

forced into exile [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*] after negotiations between President Aliaksandr Lukashenka and the United States government over the lifting of economic sanctions.⁴²

See also Azerbaijan, Russia, Serbia.

BELGIUM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2008, 2010–2012, 2021–2025.

In February 2026, the Africa Museum in Tervuren, Flemish Brabant, refused to hand over geological archive material on Belgian mining companies that ceased operations in Congo in the late 1960s to American mining company Kobold Metals that wanted to use the data to map valuable raw materials. “We want to carry out the digitization ourselves, in a scientific manner, and not leave it to a private company,” museum director Bart Ouvry declared. The administration of American President Donald Trump reportedly increased pressure through diplomatic channels. Belgian foreign minister Maxime Prévot supported the museum.⁴³

On 17 March 2026, a Brussels court ordered retired diplomat Étienne Davignon to stand trial on war crimes charges over the killing of the first Congolese Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961), and his associates Joseph Okito (1910–1961) and Maurice Mpolo (1928–1961). Prosecutors alleged that Davignon was the last surviving member of a group of Belgian officials responsible for Lumumba’s kidnapping and murder after the September 1960 military coup [See NCH *Annual Reports 2000, 2002, 2014, and 2020*, under Belgium, and NCH *Annual Report 2025*, under Congo (Democratic Republic)]. The court order marked fifteen years since Lumumba’s children had filed a criminal complaint.⁴⁴

BELIZE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014, 2025.

⁴² PEN International, *Writers under Siege: Defying Silence* (London: PEN International, 2026), 75–76.

⁴³ Colin Clapson, “[Africa Museum Refuses to Release Congo Geological Archive to US Mining Company. Despite Pressure from President Trump](#),” *VRT News* (12 February 2026).

⁴⁴ Lynsey Chutel, “[Retired Belgian Diplomat, 93, Faces Trial over 1961 Killing of Congolese Leader](#),” *New York Times* (18 March 2026); Matthew Mpoke Bigg, “[‘Africa Will Write Its Own History’: Who Was Patrice Lumumba?](#)” *New York Times* (19 March 2026).

BENIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2023.

On 13 May 2025, the Finnish government returned a Katakélé (three-legged royal stool), stolen by colonial French forces in 1892 from the then Kingdom of Dahomey (1600–1904) and later sent to Finland in a museum exchange. The Katakélé was the 27th repatriated cultural artefact since 2021. However, the opening of the museum in Abomey where the artefacts were supposed to be conserved and exhibited was again delayed, this time until 2027 [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. The government had made several requests to European countries for the repatriation of other looted artefacts, including the statue of Gou stolen by the French in 1894.⁴⁵

BHUTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

BOLIVIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2023.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2025.

On 11 July 2025, at the thirtieth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide (also known as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica), victims' families and human rights groups drew attention to the more than 1,000 victims of the genocide that remained missing or unidentified, and criticized renewed efforts by senior officials in the Republika Srpska (RS) to deny the crimes and glorify individuals convicted of the genocide [See NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025*]. In May 2025, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina had sentenced Vojin Pavlovic, head of an RS-based NGO, to two-and-a-half years' imprisonment for inciting hatred by denying the genocide and

⁴⁵ Rachida Houssou, "[Benin: The Faint Breath of Restitution](#)," *Justiceinfo.net* (20 May 2025).

glorifying convicted war criminals. This was the first conviction for genocide denial since the 2021 amendment to the criminal code sanctioning war criminals' glorification and genocide denial [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. On 26 January 2026, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina convicted Miodrag Malić, an activist for the opposition Srpska demokratska stranka (Serb Democratic Party), of violating the 2021 amendment in a November 2022 rally in Banja Luka, the RS administrative center, in which he had performed a Serbian salute on stage to photographs of Colonel General Ratko Mladić (1942–) and former President of Republika Srpska Radovan Karadžić (1945–), both of whom had been found guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and were serving a life sentence.⁴⁶

See also Montenegro, Serbia.

BOTSWANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

BRAZIL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2025.

In February 2025, the Supreme Court agreed to examine whether the 1979 amnesty law applied to enforced disappearance, kidnapping, and unlawful imprisonment [See NCH *Annual Reports 2009–2010, 2013–2021*]. The law, enacted by the dictatorship (1964–1985), shielded officials responsible for grave human rights violations and had been ruled in violation of international law by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in December 2010.⁴⁷

In April 2025, Indigenous organizations, federal prosecutors, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Bernard Duhaime, called on the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to create a new National Truth Commission to investigate human rights violations against Indigenous peoples during the military

⁴⁶ Amnesty International, "[Bosnia and Herzegovina: 30th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre 'A Painful Reminder from History'](#)" (Press release; 10 July 2025); Marija Tausan, "[Bosnia Convicts Serb of Glorifying Mladic, Karadzic at Rally](#)," *Balkan Insight* (26 January 2026); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 104.

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 70–71.

dictatorship (1964–1985). The call followed the April 2024 apology by law professor Eneá de Stutz e Almeida, President of the Comissão de Anistia (Amnesty Commission), on behalf of the State for crimes committed against Indigenous people during the dictatorship and “over the last 524 years because of the non-Indigenous invasion of this land” [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].⁴⁸

In August 2025, the Associação Nacional de História (ANPUH; National Historical Association) publicly denounced what it called an authoritarian attack on history education by the São Paulo State government. It condemned pressure on teachers, attempts to shorten history curricula, and the increasing presence of civic-military schools, among others. It further denounced attacks by right-wing extremist groups on history courses at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP; University of São Paulo) and the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp; State University of Campinas) and the dissemination of historical misinformation by the media company Brasil Paralelo since 2019. On 20 August 2025, a public hearing was held at the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo in defense of history teaching and academic freedom.

In June and August 2021, Brasil Paralelo had sent letters to several historians and history students with requests to add a reply to their publications with the alleged purpose of rewriting its history of close relations with the Jair Bolsonaro government (2019–2023):

- In early June [2021], academic publisher Rosenéia Hauer, director of Texto e Contexto in Ponta Grossa, Paraná, was requested to add annexes to the open-access e-book *Nova direita, bolsonarismo e fascismo: reflexões sobre o Brasil contemporâneo* (2020; “The New Right, Bolsonaroism and Fascism: Reflections on Contemporary Brazil”), edited by historians Mayara Balestro dos Santos and João Elter Borges Miranda. The publisher complied.
- On or around 16 August 2021, Carlos Zacarias Figueiró de Sena Júnior, history professor at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA; Federal University of Bahia), was given seven days to publish a retraction to his 11 July Facebook post criticizing Brasil Paralelo as “a channel that produce[d] revisionist/negationist history content” following the nomination of one of its videos by the Secretaria Estadual de Educação da Bahia (State Department of Education of Bahia). Zacarias refused and instead published the eleven-page notification and three-page sample retraction online. On 23 August, the Bahia Section of the ANPUH denounced the intervention.
- Other notified authors included Eduardo Pereira, an UFBA master’s history student; Flávio Henrique Calheiros Casimiro, a history professor at the Federal Institute of Southern Minas Gerais; Karine Rodrigues Firmino, a master’s student in political science with a history background at the

⁴⁸ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Brazil Must Fully Address Violations of the Dictatorship to Guarantee Human Rights and Democracy](#)” (Press release; 7 April 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 70–71.

Federal University of São Carlos; and Mayara Balestro, at the time a master's history student at the State University of Western Paraná.⁴⁹

In August 2025, Marxist historian and influencer Jones Manoel, former candidate for governor of Pernambuco with the PCB (Brazilian Communist Party) had his Instagram and Facebook accounts removed without comment or possibility of appeal. The move was reportedly part of a pattern of Meta banning Brazilian left-wing influencers. Jones had one million followers on Instagram.⁵⁰

On 29 August 2025, a labor court found that German company Volkswagen (VW) had subjected hundreds of workers on its cattle ranch to degrading work conditions, forced them into debt bondage and held them under armed surveillance during the 1970s and 1980s, and ordered it to pay 165 million reais (\$ 30.44 million) in damages and issue a formal apology. VW claimed that it had complied with labor laws and would appeal the verdict.⁵¹

On 22 December 2025, several United Nations mechanisms expressed concern over the alleged lack of implementation of the Minas Gerais State Law No. 13.448 which created the Minas Gerais Human Rights Memorial at the site of the Departamento de Ordem Política e Social (DOPS; Department of Political and Social Order), the secret police between 1924 and 1983, in Belo Horizonte, and the alleged attempts by the State of Minas Gerais to suppress and censor activities by civil society organizations at the Memorial site aimed at preservation and promoting human rights, education, and historical memory.⁵²

BRUNEI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

⁴⁹ “[O passado sob ataque: defender o ensino de história é defender a democracia](#),” *Folha de São Paulo* (11 August 2025); Juliana Sayuri, “[Justiça paralela: Brasil Paralelo lança ofensiva judicial para calar críticos e reescrever a própria história](#)” (9 December 2021); “Direito de resposta: Empresa de comunicação “Brasil Paralelo,” in Mayara Aparecida Machado Balestro dos Santos & João Elter Borges Miranda, eds., [Nova direita, bolsonarismo e fascismo: reflexões sobre o Brasil contemporâneo](#)” (Ponta Grossa: Texto e Contexto, 2020), 463–472; Diretoria da ANPUH, Seção Bahia, [Press release](#) (Ilhéus, 23 August 2021); ANPUH, “[O comércio da mentira e os ataques à história profissional](#)” (Press release; 23 August 2021).

⁵⁰ Gabriel Gomes, “[Meta derruba contas do Instagram e Facebook de Jones Manoel, que vê motivação política](#),” *ICL Notícias* (7 August 2025); Nina Auras, “[Meta Bans Brazilian Left-Wing Influencers](#),” *Index on Censorship* (12 December 2025).

⁵¹ “[Volkswagen’s Brazil Unit Ordered to Pay \\$ 30 Million for Decades-Old ‘Slave Labor’ Case](#),” *Reuters* (29 August 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 70–71.

⁵² United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter AL BRA 7/2025](#) (22 December 2025); [Response by the Brazilian Government](#) (13 February 2026).

BULGARIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015–2017, 2019–2020, 2022, 2024–2025.

On 11 March 2026, the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in a case initiated in 2017 that Bulgaria had violated the right to freedom of association of the non-profit ethnic-Macedonian Human Rights Protection Committee “Tolerance” (HRPCT), founded in 2013 by seven ethnic Macedonians, including historian Stojko Ivanov Stojkov (1974–), co-president of UMO Ilinden–PIRIN, a political party declared unconstitutional in 2000 and dissolved [See NCH *Annual Reports 1996, 2002, 2006*]. The committee held that the denial of registration of HRPCT, both in the first instance and on appeal, was the result of a policy denying recognition of Macedonian ethnic identity, lacked valid legal justification, and was unnecessary and disproportionate.⁵³

See also France.

BURKINA FASO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2004, 2005, 2013, 2015–2018, 2021–2023.

See Niger.

BURUNDI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2001–2003, 2005–2015, 2017–2021, 2024–2025.

In early February 2025, Noé Clément Ninziza, the vice chair of the Commission Vérité et Réconciliation (CVR; Truth and Reconciliation Commission) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*], and Aloys Batungwanayo, CVR communications commissioner, went into exile, reportedly after having been forced to resign by the speaker of the National Assembly. Public statements by leading political figures

⁵³ United Nations Human Rights Committee, [Stojko Ivanov Stojkov versus Bulgaria \(Communication No. 3717/2020\)](#) (11 March 2026); United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [“Bulgaria Violated Freedom of Association by Denying Registration of an Ethnic Macedonian Rights Organization, UN Committee Finds”](#) (Press release; 10 April 2026).

reportedly stigmatized one of the commissioners by associating him with treason without evidence or charges brought against him. On 13 February, the assembly elected two new members. Ninziza and Batungwanayo had been the subject of criticism by CVR's chair Pierre Claver Ndayicariye, who had himself been criticized for allegedly showing a Hutu bias. The CVR's work had so far focused primarily on the 1972 Ikiza ("Catastrophe") or Ubwicanyi ("Killings") – a series of mass killings, often characterized as a genocide, by the Tutsi-dominated armed forces primarily against the Hutu population, leading to the deaths of between 100,000 and 300,000 people – despite its mandate to investigate crimes in the far larger period between 1885 and 2008 [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*]. On 12 August 2025, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, wrote to the UN Human Rights Council that "the climate of fear created, including the prospect of judicial reprisals against commissioners who express[ed] disagreement with the official line, directly hinder[ed] the aims of establishing the truth and collecting credible testimony."

On 25 November 2025, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raised concerns about possible political interference in the Commission nationale indépendante des droits de l'homme (CNIDH; National Independent Human Rights Commission), whose former president was forced into exile in January 2025 after a report that documented human rights violations.⁵⁴

See also Niger.

⁵⁴ Jean Ntumwa, "[Burundi: Mysterious Disappearance of Two Commissioners of the CVR – Forced Resignation or Set-Up?](#)" *SOS Medias Burundi* (26 February 2025); United Nations Human Rights Council, "[Situation of Human Rights in Burundi: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaetan Zongo](#)" (UN Doc A/HRC/60/60; 12 August 2025), paragraphs 28–33; "[Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Commend Burundi on Efforts to Combat Discrimination, Raise Questions on Ethnic Quotas and the Treatment of Congolese Refugees](#)," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (25 November 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 82.

CABO VERDE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

In a 31 October 2025 interview, Sandra Inês Cruz, a journalist and author of *Tarrafal, 1975, o Campo do Silêncio* (2025; Tarrafal, 1975, the Camp of Silence) – about the Tarrafal concentration camp in which between 1936 and the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974, Portuguese colonial forces imprisoned, tortured, and killed political prisoners – criticized the 25 April annual commemoration at Tarrafal for not including victims who were incarcerated between 25 April 1974 and Cabo Verde’s independence from Portugal on 5 July 1975. Cruz claimed that the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC; African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) imprisoned up to 58 people in Tarrafal, including some who disagreed with a unification of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde after independence.⁵⁵

CAMBODIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2018, 2020–2023, 2025.

Throughout 2025, many of the families who had faced forced eviction and resettlement from their houses at the Angkor temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site, despite the government’s decision to temporarily halt evictions in 2023 after global outrage from civil society organizations, faced debt and lacked access to adequate housing or any form of relief or remedy [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2009, 2011–2012, 2025].⁵⁶

On 25 January 2025, the government of Prime Minister Hun Manet proposed a draft law introducing up to five years’ imprisonment for denial of atrocities, including genocide, committed by the Khmer Rouge between 1975–1979. In March, the law was accepted by Parliament. It replaced a 2013 genocide denial law that carried a two-year prison sentence. Critics feared that the law could be used to further stifle dissent and legitimate historical debate, and signaled an attempt by former Prime Minister Hun Sen (in office 1985–2023; father of Hun Manet) – who had himself initially been a commander for the

⁵⁵ “[Livro conta a história dos presos no Tarrafal após o 25 de Abril](#),” *Observador* (25 August 2025); Manuel Brito-Semedo, “[Tarrafal, o Silêncio que Faltava Contar](#),” *Expresso das Ilhas* (31 August 2025).

⁵⁶ Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 47–48, 118, 119.

Khmer Rouge and later joined the Vietnamese assault defeating the Khmer Rouge – to protect a specific historical interpretation.⁵⁷

See also Thailand, Uzbekistan.

CAMEROON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2012–2014, 2016, 2020–2021, 2023, 2025.

CANADA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000, 2002–2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2009, 2012–2025.

On 14 August 2025, the Toronto International Film Festival reversed its decision to cancel the screening of “The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue,” a documentary by Canadian filmmaker Barry Avrich about former Israeli Major General Noam Tibon’s rescue of his family during the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack on Kibbutz Nahal Oz in Israel. The festival organizers had initially canceled the screening for not having the proper “clearance to use archival footage” – referring to footage of atrocities committed and livestreamed by Hamas fighters – a claim the film’s producers rejected as “absurd, horrific, [and] disconnected.”⁵⁸

In the lead-up to 30 September 2025, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, some political figures, including Dallas Brodie, former Conservative Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, and Maxime Bernier, leader of the People’s Party of Canada, issued online posts and statements downplaying or denying the history of residential schools [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2021–2022, 2024–2025]. The Assembly of First Nations called the statements “possible hate speech.” A parliamentary bill to criminalize residential school denialism, introduced in September 2024, had not been voted upon due to the elections in the spring of 2025. Between 1857 and 1996, 150,000 Indigenous

⁵⁷ “[Cambodia to Punish Khmer Rouge Genocide Denial with Jail under Draft Law](#),” *Guardian* (25 January 2025); “[Cambodia Genocide Denial Law Open to Abuse, Say Critics](#),” *France24* (15 April 2025).

⁵⁸ Vjosa Isai, “[In Reversal, Toronto Film Festival Will Screen Documentary About Oct. 7 Attack](#),” *New York Times* (14 August 2025).

children had been forced to attend church-run, government-funded schools, established with the goal to erase Indigenous cultures. An estimated 6,000 children died while attending the schools.⁵⁹

On 5 March 2026, a petition with over 11,000 signatures called on Parliament to save the records on abuse in residential schools (a network of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples) at risk of destruction. Files related to compensation under the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, where almost 40,000 survivors testified in confidential settings about the abuses they suffered while at school and provided some documentation of the harms, would be destroyed on 19 September 2027. In 2017, the Supreme Court had ruled that IAP files had to be destroyed because survivors were promised confidentiality throughout the process [See *NCH Annual Reports 2012–2014, 2016, 2019, 2021–2022, 2025*].⁶⁰

See also China, India, Israel.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2009, 2011–2012, 2014–2025.

On 27 June 2025, authorities arrested seven people, including three organizers from the Groupe de travail de la société civile (Civil Society Working Group), at a vigil commemorating the explosion at Barthélémy Boganda High School in Bangui on 25 June, which reportedly killed 29 students and injured at least 250 others. The organizers sought to honor the victims, call for safer schools, and demand an investigation. Authorities had banned the vigil citing a 2022 ban on protests in public spaces. All were subsequently released, with some alleging that they had been beaten. After their release, the internal security minister posted on Facebook that the organizers would continue to “be subject to close police surveillance.”⁶¹

On 24 July 2025, after a trial lasting more than ten years, the International Criminal Court sentenced former Anti-Balaka leaders Alfred Yékatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona to fifteen and twelve years’

⁵⁹ Alessia Passafiume, “[Indigenous Peoples Grapple with Claims Downplaying the History of Residential Schools](#),” *CTV News* (4 October 2025).

⁶⁰ Samantha Schwientek, “[Petition Calls on Parliament to Save Files on Residential School Abuse Before They’re Destroyed](#),” *CBC News* (5 March 2026).

⁶¹ “[Central African Republic: Activists Arrested at Memorial Event](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (4 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 96–97.

imprisonment, respectively, for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2013 and 2014 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2019–2021*].⁶²

CHAD

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2015–2016, 2024–2025.

On 6 March 2026, in answering questions from the United Nations Human Rights Committee, a Chadian delegation reported that a trust fund had been created which would be transferred as compensation to victims of the regime of President Hissène Habré (1982–1990) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2000–2013, 2015–2018, 2023–2025*]. Some 10,082 victims were eligible for redress. Sites for building a monument for the victims had been identified, and it would be erected in a neighborhood where many victims were buried. The question whether the former headquarters of the Direction de la documentation et de la sécurité (DDS; Directorate of Documentation and Security; Habré’s political police) had been converted into a museum, was not answered.⁶³

CHILE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2025.

On 8 August 2025, three United Nations Special Procedures expressed their concern to the Chilean and German governments over allegations related to the latter’s steps to address the legacy of gross human rights violations committed at the Sociedad Benefactora y Educacional Dignidad (Colonia Dignidad) – a sectarian agricultural community established by German emigrant preacher and child sex abuser Paul Schäfer in 1961 which became a site of torture, murder and child sexual abuse, including in collaboration with the military regime of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990) [See NCH *Annual Report 2015*]. Among other things, the Special Rapporteurs expressed concern to the German government over “the apparent insufficiency of measures to ensure the criminal investigation, prosecution and – where pertinent – sanction of the alleged perpetrators and accomplices of the gross human rights violations and other crimes committed at Colonia Dignidad, as well as the apparent insufficient judicial

⁶² Janet Anderson, “[ICC: A Throwback Judgment](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (28 July 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 35, 125.

⁶³ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Experts of the Human Rights Committee Welcome Efforts by Chad to Combat Trafficking, Raise Issues Concerning the Decree to Examine Reinstating the Death Penalty and Compensation for Victims of the Hissène Habré Regime](#)” (Press release; 6 March 2026).

cooperation and implementation of the judgements handed down by the Chilean courts against the perpetrators of such crimes residing in Germany,” and the inclusion of victims and human rights organizations in the work of the Chilean-German Joint Commission to Address the Historical Memory of Colonia Dignidad and the Integration of Victims.

On [8] April 2026, newly elected President José Antonio Kast reversed the decision by his predecessor Gabriel Boric (in office 2022–2026) to expropriate part of the Colonia Dignidad territory for excavation and to create a memorial for the victims, citing budgetary reasons. Kast, whose brother Miguel was an economic adviser to the Pinochet regime and whose father had risen to lieutenant in the Wehrmacht (German army), had in the past expressed support for Pinochet’s regime.⁶⁴

CHINA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2025.

Previous *Annual Report* entries on Hong Kong, *See* Hong Kong: 1996.

In November 2023, law professor at Yale University Taisu Zhang revealed via social media that the Qing History Project of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) had been suspended, despite the investment of nearly 2 billion renminbi (US\$ 280 million) over two decades, reportedly because it “failed to honor the perspective of the people” and was “overly influenced by the New Qing History” and failed to align with the required political perspective. The project, a government-sponsored attempt to formally write a comprehensive and authoritative history of the Qing (or Manchus) (1644–1912), had been led since its beginning in 2002 by Dai Yi (1926–2024), an expert in Qing history at Renmin University and the CASS. The “New Qing History” argued that the Qing empire was multi-ethnic rather than sinicized.⁶⁵

In May 2025, a grand jury in the United States indicted two people on charges of conspiracy, stalking, and smuggling in relation to the years-long harassment of Chinese dissident artist Hui Bo, who lived in the United States. Hui became famous with his twin statues depicting President Xi Jinping (in office 2013–) and his wife Peng Liyuan, respectively kneeling clothed and bare-chested, suggesting a

⁶⁴ UN Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter AL DEU 3/2025](#) and [Allegations Letter AL CHL 4/2025](#) (8 August 2025); [Response 1 Chilean Government](#) (8 October 2025); [Response German Government](#) (17 October 2025); [Response 2 Chilean Government](#) (20 November 2025); John Bartlett, “Chile’s Far-Right Government Rips Up Plan for Memorial at Pinochet Torture Site,” *Guardian* (8 April 2026); María Laura Chang, “When Latin America Loses Its Memory,” *Justiceinfo.net* (21 May 2026); John Bartlett, “José Antonio Kast, the Pinochet Fan about to Swerve Chile to the Far Right,” *Guardian* (11 March 2026).

⁶⁵ Sun Peidong, “What Will Newly Increased Party Control Mean for China’s Universities?,” *ChinaFile* (5 February 2024).

historical analogy with twelfth-century grand chancellor Qin Hui (1091–1155) who was responsible for the wrongful execution of General and national hero Yue Fei (1103–1142) and whose statue stood outside the general’s tomb in Hangzhou, China. Hui faced harassment, including a tracking device placed in his car and slashed tires. His parents, who lived in China, had also been arrested for questioning. Human rights organizations indicated that Hui’s harassment fitted an increasing trend in the transnational harassment of dissidents by the Chinese Communist Party.

In another example, Chen Weiming, a dissident sculptor who led the Liberty Sculpture Park in Yermo, California, which included various works that memorialized the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, had faced repeated harassment since 2022, including surveillance and threats. In March 2022, federal prosecutors had announced charges against three people over their involvement in the case.⁶⁶

On 12 June 2025, the multinational tech conglomerate Tencent filed a takedown complaint against GreatFire, a website monitoring online censorship in China (also known as the Great Firewall), assisting Chinese web users in circumventing this censorship, and archiving previously censored websites and posts [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. On 28 November 2025, Vultr, the site’s cloud hosting provider, issued GreatFire with a formal thirty-day notification of termination of services. Meanwhile, GreatFire moved FreeWeChat, a platform that archived censored, deleted, or blocked posts on the widely used Chinese app WeChat (owned by Tencent), to a second hosting provider.⁶⁷

On 29 August 2025, days before the State-organized military ceremonies in Beijing marking the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II (1939–1945), activist Qi Hong projected large slogans on a building in Chongqing calling on the Chinese people to “rise up against fascism” and “take back your rights.” After setting up the projector in a hotel room, Qi left for the United Kingdom with his family from which he operated the projector. Videos of the projections and the police entering the hotel room were widely shared on social media, with one video generating 18 million views in four days. Police subsequently arrested one of Qi’s brothers and a friend, and interrogated his mother.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Mark Walker & Alicia Chen, “[“Orwellian Climate of Fear’: How China Cracks Down on Critics in the U.S.”](#), *New York Times* (21 December 2025).

⁶⁷ “[Tencent Attempts to Silence FreeWeChat in Trademark Smokescreen Attack](#),” *GreatFire* (10 July 2025); Khunsha Dar, “[China: Tech Conglomerate Tencent Reportedly Requests Removal of Anti-censorship Archive FreeWeChat](#),” *Business & Human Rights Resource Centre* (17 July 2025); Mackenzie Argent, “[Censorship of an Archive: Chinese Tech Corporation Seeks Closure of Crucial Social Media Archive](#),” *Index on Censorship* (Press release; 18 July 2025); Mark Stimpson, “[China Media Giant Tencent Gags Anti-censorship Website FreeWeChat](#),” *Index on Censorship* (8 December 2025).

⁶⁸ Li Yuan, “[A Hidden Camera Protest Turned the Tables on China’s Surveillance State](#),” *New York Times* (2 September 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 103.

On 30 March 2026, the trial against artist Gao Zhen ([1957]–) began behind closed doors. Gao had been arrested in August 2024 on charges of “slandering heroes and martyrs” including for a series of satirical sculptures, made around 2009 and intended to “reassess Mao’s Cultural Revolution” (1966–1976) [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. On 15 April 2026, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights office called for Gao’s immediate release, saying his case “raise[d] concerns with regard to retroactive application of criminal law and use of criminal sanctions to punish artistic expression, undermining the principle of legality.” Repeated applications for Gao’s medical bail were denied.⁶⁹

On 25–27 May 2026, dissident Dong Guangping ([1957]–) escaped over the Yellow Sea to South Korea and later rejoined his family in Toronto, Canada. A police officer-turned-human rights activist, Dong had been in prison several times for his activism. In 1999, he had been dismissed from the police for signing a petition to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. In 2001, he was imprisoned for three years for “inciting subversion of state power.” He was imprisoned again in 2014 for participating in another Tiananmen Square commemoration event. He had fled China previously – in 2015, 2019, and 2022 – but was sent back each time.⁷⁰

In the night from 30 to 31 May 2026, the June Fourth Memorial Museum in Los Angeles, United States, was broken into and vandalized.⁷¹

On 2 June 2026, the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau reportedly barred the Tiananmen Mothers – mothers of students and others killed during the 4 June 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre – from traveling to Wan’an Cemetery to mourn their children or hold their customary commemorative activities on the massacre’s anniversary. The group said it was the first time that authorities had barred them from visiting the graves and denying them their right to commemorate.⁷²

Hong Kong

On 22 January 2026, the trials of the former chairs of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China – Lee Cheuk-yan [*See NCH Annual Reports 2020–2022, 2025*], Chow

⁶⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[China: Cases of Artist Gao Zhen and Lawyer Yu Wensheng](#)” (Press release; 15 April 2026); Gavin Butler, “[Art on Trial: A Sculptor’s Arrest Highlights New Extremes for Censorship in China](#),” *BBC News* (20 April 2026).

⁷⁰ Phoebe Kong, “[‘I Must Get Out into the Free World’, Dissident Who Fled China on Boat Tells BBC](#),” *BBC News* (15 July 2026).

⁷¹ Jemimah Steinfeld, “[The Tiananmen Square Massacre Must Not Be Forgotten](#),” *Index on Censorship* (5 June 2026).

⁷² Amnesty International, “[China: ‘Heartless’ Ban on Tiananmen Mothers Visiting Cemetery Signals Escalating Repression](#)” (Press release; 3 June 2026); Jemimah Steinfeld, “[The Tiananmen Square Massacre Must Not Be Forgotten](#),” *Index on Censorship* (5 June 2026).

Hang-tung [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2025*], and Albert Ho Chun-Yan [See NCH *Annual Report 2022, 2025*] – finally began, after having been repeatedly postponed [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. They had already been in pre-trial detention for four years and faced life imprisonment on subversion charges, related to their organizing vigils commemorating the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. The alliance’s work had been banned in 2020 as part of a wider crackdown on freedom in Hong Kong [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020–2025*].⁷³

Tibet

On 2 June 2025, the International Campaign for Tibet called on the UNESCO World Heritage Site Committee to designate the 17th-century Potala Palace, the seventh-century Jokhang Temple, and the 18th-century Norbulingka area, the largest man-made garden of Tibet (known together as the “historic ensemble of the Potala Palace”), as a World Heritage Site in Danger. The call followed a years-long process of “sinicization” of the palace complex, exemplified by the construction of two Chinese-style pavilions built directly in front of the Jokhang Temple, officially to protect three stone columns from weather impact.

The changes at the palace complex also drew increased attention to General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Xi Jinping’s decades-long policy of financial and diplomatic investment in UNESCO, especially after United States (US) President Donald Trump had, again, withdrawn the US from the agency. The *New York Times* reported that under Xi’s reign, China had effectively lobbied UNESCO to be granted the largest number of intangible cultural heritage and the second largest of tangible cultural heritage designations. The latter included several sites in oppressed regions like Tibet, Mongolia, and Xinjiang.⁷⁴

Xinjiang

Among the historians and related professionals imprisoned since the 2014 government campaign of massive arbitrary arrests, imprisonment in “re-education camps,” and human rights violations some have called a genocide targeting the Uyghur population, were [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022, 2024* for similar lists]:

⁷³ [Index on Censorship](#), 2026 no. 1, 8.

⁷⁴ [“ICT Urges UNESCO to Designate Potala Palace Ensemble as “World Heritage in Danger” Amid Cultural Heritage Violations in Tibet,” International Campaign for Tibet \(2 June 2025\); World Heritage Watch, *World Heritage Watch Report 2025* \(Berlin: WHW, 2025\), 67–71; Aurelien Breeden, “U.S. Says It Will Withdraw from U.N. Cultural Organization, Again,” *New York Times* \(22 July 2025\); Mara Hvistendahl, “China Flexes Muscles at U.N. Cultural Agency, Just as Trump Walks Away,” *New York Times* \(23 July 2025\).](#)

- In 2024, Yaxia'er Xiaohelaiti ([1998]–), an Uyghur songwriter performing under the name Uigga, was sentenced to three years in prison after being convicted of “promoting extremism” and “possessing extremist materials.” The charges reportedly stemmed from his artistic work in the Uyghur language and from owning books regarded as central to the community’s cultural history. Prosecutors alleged that his lyrics undermined the State, while civil society actors maintained that his music simply gave voice to his cultural roots.⁷⁵

On 3 September 2025, five United Nations mechanisms expressed concern about the enforced disappearance of Uyghur ethnographer Rahile Dawut in 2017 [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2019, 2021–2022, 2024].⁷⁶

See also Japan, United Kingdom, United States.

COLOMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2004, 2006–2025.

On 16 and 18 September 2025, the Justicia Especial para la Paz (JEP; Special Jurisdiction for Peace) – a transitional justice tribunal established by the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to prosecute the worst abuses of the internal armed conflict (1964–2016) [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2016–2020, 2025] – issued its first two rulings, sentencing a total of 19 people to *sanciones propias* (restorative sanctions [See NCH *Annual Report* 2025]) ranging from five to eight years for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed between 1993 and 2012. The rulings were hailed as historic.⁷⁷

COMOROS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

⁷⁵ “[UN Experts Urge China to End Repression of Uyghur and Cultural Expression of Minorities](#)” (Press release; 1 October 2025).

⁷⁶ United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegation Letter CHN 18/2025](#) (3 September 2025).

⁷⁷ Juri Berger, “[First Ruling by Colombia Special Tribunal Is ‘Crucial Milestone’ Says UN Human Rights Chief](#),” *Jurist News* (18 September 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 139.

CONGO (Democratic Republic)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2000, 2003–2025.

On 27 June 2025, a United States (US)-brokered peace deal with Rwanda took effect. The deal, ending a violent insurgency by the Rwandan-backed March 23 (M23) militia, failed to demand accountability for human rights violations committed by M23 in North Kivu since 2022 (for which the International Criminal Court had started an investigation on 14 October 2024). It was criticized for excluding Congolese civil society organizations and victim groups, facilitating US access to Congolese minerals, and shielding international corporations, including mining companies, from prosecution for their alleged involvement in human rights violations since the First Congo War (1996–1997) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021, 2023–2024*].⁷⁸

See also Belgium.

CONGO (Republic)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004–2006, 2008, 2010–2012, 2019.

COOK ISLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

COSTA RICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

⁷⁸ Maria Elena Vignoli, “[International Criminal Court Takes Important Step in DR Congo](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (16 October 2024); Ian Wafula, “[The Evidence That Shows Rwanda Is Backing Rebels in DR Congo](#),” *BBC News* (29 January 2025); Jessica Donati & Sonia Rolley, “[Exclusive: USAID Cancelled Rape Survivor Kits for Congo as Conflict Erupted](#),” *Reuters* (1 July 2025); Evelyn Namakula Mayanja, “[Rwanda-DRC: Peace without Justice](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (31 July 2025).

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

See Ivory Coast.

CROATIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2001, 2003–2013, 2015–2025.

On 12 September 2025, in response to frequent public display of the World War II-era Fascist Ustaše symbols [*See NCH Annual Report 2017*], the center-left opposition party Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske (SDP; Social Democratic Party) proposed to amend the Misdemeanor and Criminal Codes to ban both “the glorification of Ustaše, Chetnik [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*, under *Serbia*] and other regimes and their symbols” and “denying and glorifying crimes committed after the Second World War.” The proposal included two exceptions: for insignia commemorating veterans, including on tombstones; and for flags used during the war of independence (1991–1995).⁷⁹

See also Montenegro, Serbia.

CUBA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2002, 2006, 2010–2012, 2015–2016, 2018, 2021–2025.

For years, all the books of Carlos Eire ([1950–]), T. L. Riggs Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University, have been banned. He was also proclaimed an “enemy of the state,” unable to return to Cuba. A child of exiles who fled from Cuba in 1962 and a specialist in the history of late medieval and early modern Europe, the history of popular piety, the history of the supernatural, and the history of death, he was the author of *War Against the Idols* (1986); *A Very Brief History of Eternity* (2010); *They Flew: A History of the Impossible* (2023), among other books. He ventured into the twentieth century and the Cuban Revolution in two memoirs, *Waiting for Snow in Havana* (2003) and *Learning*

⁷⁹ Vuk Tesija, “[Croatia Opposition Proposes Fascist Salute Ban, With Controversial Loopholes](#),” *Balkan Insight* (12 September 2025).

to Die in Miami (2010), in which he had criticized the regime of President Fidel Castro (1926–2016; in office 1959–2008) [*See NCH Annual Report 2016*].⁸⁰

On several occasions in 2024, art historian and activist Yamilka Lafita was threatened. In March and September, she received anonymous threats accusing her of conspiring against the regime. In December, a State Security agent threatened her with the prospect of sexual and physical assault in prison after she refused to accept a document she believed to be an official summons. Lafita had participated in the 27N movement launched in November 2020 to protest restrictions on artists, many of whom were subsequently arrested.⁸¹

In June 2024, Alina Bárbara López Hernández, a historian and writer, and Jenny Victoria Pantoja Torres, a historian and anthropologist at the Miguel Enríquez Faculty of the University of Medical Sciences in Havana specialized in Afro-Cuban religious practices, were arrested for trying to attend a monthly peaceful protest against government censorship [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. In May 2025, the Matanzas Prosecutor's Office sent their case for trial on charges of contempt, disobedience, and assaulting a police officer, but no trial had taken place as of January 2026. Both also continued to face judicial harassment throughout 2025.

López Hernández's harassment reportedly included repeated house surveillance, temporary interruptions of internet and mobile services, and pressure on her daughter. On 18 December 2025, she was again detained for several hours while trying to attend a protest. Her daughter, who came out to protest her arrest, was also detained (*See also item below*).

Pantoja Torres was detained on 18 January 2025, preventing her from carrying out her monthly peaceful protest. On 18 February, she was summoned for questioning at a police station in Havana and subsequently detained, reportedly on charges of not paying a 2023 fine. She was released several hours later. On 17 July, she had reportedly been excluded from an academic event for political reasons and prevented from presenting her work in person. On 18 November, her home was reportedly placed under police surveillance in order to prevent her from carrying out her monthly protest. On 18 December, she was again detained in Havana while attempting to participate in a peaceful demonstration and reportedly held for several hours.⁸²

On 20 May (Independence Day) and 5 August (anniversary of the 1994 Maleconazo mass protests against economic conditions after the fall of the Soviet Union) 2025, journalist and author Camila

⁸⁰ “[Carlos Eire](#)” (biographical notice [2024]); Carlos Eire, *They Flew: A History of the Impossible* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2023), x, 388–389; Guus Valk, “Waarom is Obama toch zo lief voor Castro?” (Interview with Carlos Eire), *NRC Handelsblad* (21 March 2016), 14–15.

⁸¹ Freemuse, [The State of Artistic Freedom 2025](#) (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2025), 30.

⁸² PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 37.

Acosta Rodríguez was surveilled and prevented from leaving her house by uniformed and plain clothes officials.⁸³

In November 2025, Afro-Cuban historian and activist Alexander Hall Lujardo [*See NCH Annual Reports 2024–2025*] made public that a travel ban, in place since 2023, had prevented him from leaving the country to begin postgraduate studies in Ecuador, despite having obtained a scholarship. He said that State Security officials had made the lifting of the restriction conditional on his carrying out actions he considered coercive or humiliating, including making a public self-incriminating statement and surrendering money and electronic devices, which he described as a form of political pressure.⁸⁴

On 6 May 2026, Ada Ferrer (1962–), a history professor at Princeton University, author of the critical *Cuba: An American History*, and political activist, wrote an open letter to President Miguel Díaz-Canel (in office 2018–), in which she, among others, criticized “the surveillance and harassment to which you subject people like Alina López Hernández.” López Hernández, a historian and writer (*See item above*), had been repeatedly detained and banned from attending a monthly silent vigil at Liberty Park, Matanzas, where she would often carry a blank sign to symbolize the absence of basic freedoms [*See NCH Annual Reports 2024–2025*]. Ferrer had gone into exile with her parents in 1963.⁸⁵

On 18 July 2026, artist and anti-government activist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, co-founder of the Museum of Dissidence, a website listing all those who stood up against the government during Cuba’s history (Hatuey, José Martí, Fidel Castro, Oswaldo Payá, etc.), went into exile in the United States after his five-year prison sentence on charges of “public disorder,” including “defiling” the Cuban flag, expired [*See NCH Annual Report 2018*].⁸⁶

See also Mexico.

CYPRUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2005, 2008–2011, 2013, 2015–2018, 2021–2022, 2024–2025.

⁸³ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 34.

⁸⁴ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 38.

⁸⁵ Ada Ferrer, “[My Father Wrote Letters to the Cuban Government – Here Is Mine](#),” *New York Times* (6 May 2026).

⁸⁶ David C. Adams, “[Prominent Cuban Artist Will Go Into Exile After 5-Year Prison Term](#),” *New York Times* (17 July 2026); Ryan McChrystal, “[Museum of Dissidence: We Must Sacrifice Ourselves If We Want to Achieve Freedom in Cuba](#),” *Index on Censorship* (11 January 2019).

CZECH REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–1998, 2000, 2010, 2013–2025.

See Azerbaijan, Slovakia.

DENMARK

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2006–2007, 2013, 2016–2020, 2022–2025.

On 9 September 2025, a committee of researchers, including historians, from the University of Greenland and the National Institute of Public Health at the University of Southern Denmark – set up by the Danish and Greenlandic governments in 2022 to investigate a Danish government birth control campaign to reduce the birthrate of Greenlanders after the incorporation of Greenland into Denmark in 1953 [See NCH *Annual Report* 2023] – published its final report. Based on personal testimonies, medical records and historical documents, it concluded that as part of an official government campaign Danish doctors had put intrauterine devices (IUDs) into Greenlandic girls as young as twelve without their consent or knowledge, had refused medical care to victims, and had given injections that victims claimed left them infertile for life. The report found that most instances happened between 1966–1974, but Greenlandic officials claimed that the practice continued even after Greenland’s semi-autonomous government took control of the island’s health care system in the early 1990s. The report suggested that many of the practices violated Danish law and international human rights standards, but that a final judgment should be established in court. On 4 March 2024, a group of 143 women had sued the State for having been fitted with an IUD without their consent or knowledge [See NCH *Annual Report* 2024].

On 27 August 2025, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had issued a joint apology with Premier Jens-Frederik Nielsen of Greenland for the government campaign. This followed an earlier apology in the spring of 2022, when Frederiksen had apologized for the removal of 22 Greenlandic children from their parents as part of the so-called “Experiment” – a failed attempt to educate a new Greenlandic elite by removing the children from their parents and bringing them to Denmark to learn Danish and understand Danish culture [See NCH *Annual Report* 2022]. Civil society organizations welcomed the apology but called on the government to issue reparations.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Jeffrey Gettleman & Maya Tekeli, “[Denmark Apologizes After Birth Control Scandal in Greenland](#),” *New York Times* (27 August 2025); Maya Tekeli & Jeffrey Gettleman, “[Denmark Forced Contraception on Greenlandic Girls, a Scathing Report Confirms](#),” *New York Times* (9 September 2025); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 59, 154.

DJIBOUTI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008.

On 15 October 2025, President Ismail Omar Guelleh inaugurated the First African Forum of Official Journals, highlighting the vital role of preserving Africa’s institutional memory through documentary heritage preservation, transparency, and digital governance for future generations. The event, which coincided with an exhibition about Djibouti’s history, opened at the Library and National Archives in Balbala.⁸⁸

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2023.

⁸⁸ Asha Elmi, “[Djibouti President Urges Preservation of African Heritage](#),” *Dawan Africa* (16 October 2025).

ECUADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2007, 2009–2021, 2025.

See Cuba, Mexico.

EGYPT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2001, 2003, 2006–2007, 2010–2025.

On 6 October 2025, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) elected former tourism and antiquities minister Khaled El-Enany as its new director-general. A group of heritage specialists and historians had sent a letter to UNESCO trying to prevent El-Enany's election, accusing him of failing to shield sensitive heritage sites in Old Cairo and the Sinai Peninsula, overseeing the systematic destruction of historic sites, cemeteries, and tombs, especially Islamic ones, and describing his record during his tenure (2016–2022) as “hostile to heritage.” In particular, the letter accused El-Enany of approving decisions that violated Egypt's antiquities law, including removing historic sites from the national heritage register; condemned his policy of relocating ancient obelisks and statues from their original settings for “cosmetic and political purposes”; claimed that restoration work at Luxor and Karnak temples used cement materials in violation of international standards, defacing the ancient facades; cited reports of weddings and dance events held inside pharaonic temples and ancient monasteries; and argued that such practices breached both national law and international conventions.⁸⁹

See also Palestine, Sudan.

EL SALVADOR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2023.

On 14 January 2025, seven United Nations human rights experts called on the government of President Nayib Bukele (in office 2019–) to improve its transitional justice policies, including by strengthening

⁸⁹ John Irish, “[UN Cultural Agency Selects Egypt's El-Enany As New Chief](#),” *Reuters* (6 October 2025); “[Why Some Egyptians Opposed Their Own Candidate's UNESCO Win](#),” *Al-Estiklal* ([15] October 2025).

the search for disappeared people, increasing access to military archives, and enhancing mechanisms for reparations. The experts further noted that nine years after the 2016 Supreme Court judgment that had declared the 1993 Amnesty Law unconstitutional [*See NCH Annual Reports 2008–2019*], proposals for a new transitional justice framework remained pending. They also noticed that most of the recommendations from the 2020 report by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition had not been implemented. During the Civil War (1979–1992) an estimated 75,000 people had been tortured, extrajudicially executed, or forcibly disappeared.⁹⁰

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2019.

On 2 July 2025, the Consejo de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas (CICTE; Scientific and Technological Research Council) set up a new committee for the repatriation and restitution of stolen cultural artefacts during the Portuguese (1472–1778) and Spanish (1778–1968) colonization. It further strengthened collaboration with the University of Barcelona to study artefacts held at Catalan public museums and promote their return.⁹¹

ERITREA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008, 2016, 2018, 2024–2025.

ESTONIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2010, 2015, 2017, 2023.

See Latvia.

⁹⁰ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[El Salvador: Experts Call for Implementation of Transitional Justice Agenda Related to Armed Conflict](#)” (Press release; 14 January 2025).

⁹¹ Bélgica Nvó Acaba, “[Guinea Ecuatorial podría recuperar sus objetos culturales expoliados durante el período colonial](#),” *AhoraEG* (4 July 2025).

ESWATINI

Previous *Annual Report* entries under Swaziland: 2011, 2013, 2016–2018; under Eswatini: 2023–2025.

ETHIOPIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2011, 2015–2025.

FIJI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006, 2010.

FINLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012, 2017, 2020, 2022, 2024–2025.

On 4 December 2025, the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission presented its 700-page final report. Among its recommendations were curriculum reforms to increase education about Sámi culture and livelihoods, and the establishment of a State Secretariat for Sámi affairs. Following the report, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo announced a State apology for Sámi assimilation policies that had been adopted by the State and church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the forced assimilation of Sámi children in boarding schools, where they were forbidden to speak the Sámi language and forced to integrate into the majority culture. The Sámi were also subjected to religious conversion, removed from their land, and stripped of their culture [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2017, 2020, 2022, 2024].⁹²

See also Benin.

FRANCE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1999, 2001–2009, 2011–2014, 2016–2018, 2020–2025.

In early March 2025, two members of the Comité de Vigilance face aux usages publics de l’histoire (CVUH, established in 2005; Committee of Vigilance on the Public Use of History) – CVUH president and professor emeritus of modern history at Lumière Lyon 2 University, Natacha Coquery, and CVUH member and professor emeritus of contemporary history and gender history at Paris-VIII-Saint-Denis University, Michèle Riot-Sarcey – were summoned to appear before the Bobigny Criminal Court on charges of defamation and complicity in defamation by Jean-Marc Berlière, emeritus professor at the University of Bourgogne and expert in police history, and René Fiévet, two of the three authors of *Histoire d’une falsification: Vichy et la Shoah dans l’Histoire officielle et le discours commémoratif*

⁹² Otso Kortegankas, “[Finland’s Promise to the Sámi](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (5 January 2026).

(History of a Falsification: Vichy and the Shoah in Official History and Commemorative Speech) (Paris: L'Artilleur, 2023). In a November 2024 article on the CVUH website, Riot-Sarcey had expressed her admiration for a twenty-page review by Laurent Joly in the *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (2023), that questioned the veracity of allegations made in the book, especially the allegation that during World War II the Vichy regime had saved French Jews from deportation to Nazi Germany by handing over foreign Jews – a view also defended by far-right politician Éric Zemmour in 2021 [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*]. In her article, Riot-Sarcey had written, among other things, that “[f]rom the perspective of these revisionist historians, the other is the enemy, particularly the Jew, who is by definition a foreigner according to the viewpoint of the true falsifiers,” which two of the book authors found defamatory. On 16 October 2025, the judge dismissed the case on technicalities.⁹³

In July 2025, four residents of Toul filed a petition to remove the town's statue of Marcel Bigeard (1916–2010), a general who served in World War II (1939–1945), the First Indochina War (1946–1954), and the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), and later worked as deputy defense minister during Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's presidency (1974–1981). In the 2000s, Bigeard had faced several accusations of having overseen and practiced torture on Algerian prisoners during the independence war. He denied the accusations but opined that torture had been a “necessary evil.” The statue had been the target of monthly protests, attracting between forty and two hundred people. A petition to keep the statue, which had been installed in October 2024 with approval of the city council, was signed 11,500 times.⁹⁴

On 31 October 2025, the Paris Criminal Court sentenced four Bulgarians to between two and four years in prison for desecrating the Mur des Justes (Wall of the Righteous), a Holocaust memorial, with red handprints on 14 May 2024. The judgment said that foreign interference aimed to “stir up public opinion, exploit existing divisions and further fragment French society” was “undisputable.” The case was one of nine suspected acts of Russian interference [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*].⁹⁵

⁹³ Michèle Riot-Sarcey, “[A propos du livre Histoire d'une falsification](#),” Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire (12 November 2024 – 12 March 2025); “[Procès Berlière Fiévet 2024](#),” Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire ([March] 2025); “[Compte rendu de l'Assemblée générale du CVUH – 14 juin 2025](#),” Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire (22 July 2025); Comité de soutien 2025, “[Soutien au Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire \(CVUH\) et aux deux collègues abusivement mises en cause](#),” Comité de vigilance face aux usages publics de l'histoire (petition; no date [2025]); Diego Chauvet, “[Historiennes poursuivies par des révisionnistes de Vichy: Le tribunal annule la procédure](#),” *L'Humanité* (16 October 2025); Gilles Heuré, “[Vichy et les Juifs français: Deux historiennes dans le viseur d'auteurs révisionnistes](#),” *Télérama* (16 October 2025).

⁹⁴ Ségolène Le Stradic, “[Statue of French General Accused of Torture Divides His Hometown](#),” *New York Times* (6 August 2025).

⁹⁵ “[French Court Jails Four Bulgarians for Defacing Paris Holocaust Memorial](#),” *Le Monde* (31 October 2025).

On 4 November 2025, the trial against eight former executives of cement manufacturer Lafarge began at the Paris Criminal Court. Lafarge was accused of “financing terrorist enterprises” and “failure to comply with international financial sanctions” for allegedly paying € 5 million to several armed groups – including Da’esh (also known as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) and Jabhat Al-Nusra – in Syria between 2013 and 2014 through its Syrian subsidiary. In a separate investigation, Lafarge was also charged with “complicity in crimes against humanity” committed during the Syrian civil war (2011–2024). In 2022, Lafarge had already admitted to financing terrorist organizations as part of a plea bargain signed in the United States, which included a \$ 778 million fine.

On 13 April 2026, the court sentenced Lafarge to a fine of €1.125 million (the maximum amount under French law), as well as a fine of € 4.57 million for non-compliance with international financial sanctions. Several executives, including former CEO Bruno Lafont and former deputy chief operating officer Christian Hérault, were sentenced to prison ranging from three to six years and forced to pay fines up to € 225,000. The verdict marked the first time a company was found guilty as a legal entity of financing terrorism.⁹⁶

On 9 November 2025, the Collège de France, a research institute founded in 1530, canceled the conference “Palestine and Europe: The Weight of the Past and Contemporary Dynamics,” scheduled for 13–14 November 2025 and jointly organized by the Collège’s chair of History of the Contemporary Arab World, historian Henry Laurens, and the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. The conference was subsequently held at the Arab Center without incidents. The cancellation followed a critical article in *Le Point* and pressure from Higher Education Minister Philippe Baptiste and others. In a case before the administrative court in Paris, lawyer Raphaël Kempf argued that political pressure, not genuine security risk, drove the Collège’s decision. The rapporteur-general called the cancellation “disproportionate,” favoring security measures over outright cancellation. On 15 July 2026, the court ruled against the Collège de France, annulling the cancellation decision and ordering it to pay € 4,000 to the plaintiffs.⁹⁷

On 19 November 2025, the Paris prosecutor’s office cybercrime division announced that it had expanded an investigation into Elon Musk’s platform X, started in July, to include “Holocaust-denying comments” generated by its Large Language Model (LLM) chatbot Grok. On 17 November 2025, Grok

⁹⁶ Chloé Dubois, “[Lafarge Faces Justice for Financing Terrorism](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (3 November 2025); Sharon Weill, “[Lafarge Trial: A Step Beyond Nuremberg?](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (10 April 2026); Chloé Dubois, “[Tough Verdict against Cement Group Lafarge](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (14 April 2026).

⁹⁷ Tribunal Administratif de Paris, M.H. and others: [Order of 25 November 2025](#); Mahmoud Al-Hajj, “[French Court: Collège de France Decision to Cancel Palestine Conference ‘Disproportionate’](#),” *The New Arab* (3 July 2026).

had posted in French that the gas chambers in Nazi death camps were designed for “disinfection” against typhus rather than for mass executions.⁹⁸

On 4 May 2026, historian Gilles Manceron criticized the closure of colonial archives pertaining to Algeria and stated that the Ministry of Armed Forces (previously the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Defense) should review the limited access to its archives. His call followed a similar one by historian Christophe Lafaye, a researcher in the French Defense Historical Service and at the Institute for Strategic Research of the Military School, in an article titled “The Return of Forbidden Archives ... Defense Secrecy and Military Archives” [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. Manceron cited as one example the case of Commander Romain Choron, a history professor at the École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr (Special Military School of Saint-Cyr), who obtained a doctorate in 2023 on the topic of the independence war in Algeria (1954–1962) and consequently was prosecuted on charges of “disclosing national defense secrets” as well as denied promotion. Manceron argued that Choron’s case was meant to serve as deterrence. More broadly, Manceron said that the archives of the Ministry of War, the Council of State, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Paris Police Prefecture remained in the possession of these institutions and not of the National Archives.⁹⁹

See also Algeria, Benin, Georgia, Haiti, India, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Syria, Thailand, Togo, United States.

⁹⁸ [“French Authorities Charge X over Holocaust-Denial Comments by AI Chatbot Grok,”](#) *Le Monde* (19 November 2025).

⁹⁹ Mohamed Meslem, [“French Historian Criticizes the Programmed Closure of Colonial Archives Pertaining to Algeria,”](#) *Echorouk Online* (4 May 2026).

GABON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016, 2018.

On 20 May 2025, upon visiting the Direction générale des archives nationales (National Archives) in Libreville, Geoffroy Fouboula Libeka Makosso, Vice-President of the Assemblée nationale de la Transition (the post-2023 coup legislative assembly), described its state as a “catastrophe.” Makosso noted poorly maintained buildings, including leaking roofs with rainwater seeping onto documents, and staff suffering from respiratory and skin illnesses caused by humidity and lack of ventilation. A bill to cover the annual rent for two new archive buildings had been stalled for several months.¹⁰⁰

GAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2016–2018, 2021–2025.

GEORGIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2003, 2010–2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2024–2025.

In April 2025, pro-government media targeted the French Embassy’s 2025 grant award to the Soviet Past Research Laboratory (SovLab), a civil society organization studying and teaching the history of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (1921–1991), for a project creating tourist routes in Gori and Kutaisi that would highlight pre-1921 democratic movements and resistance to Soviet rule. The government of Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze (in office 2024–) made it increasingly difficult for civil society organizations to receive grants. On 1 April 2025, parliament passed the Foreign Agents Registration Act, requiring individuals and organizations to register as “foreign agents” if they received foreign funding or operated under vaguely defined “foreign influence.” On 15 April, the government established the State Grant Management Agency tasked with distributing grants under government oversight. And on 16 April, Parliament passed an amendment on the Law of Grants forcing foreign donors to obtain government approval before awarding grants to local organizations.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Darelle Mamba, “[Gabon : Les Archives nationales, un patrimoine en péril](#),” *Gabon Clic* (22 May 2025).

¹⁰¹ “[Georgia: Drop Repressive ‘Foreign Agents’ Bill](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (26 March 2025); “[GD Government Creates State Grant Agency Amid Controversial Legal Changes](#),” *Civil Georgia* (23 April 2025).

GERMANY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997–2000, 2003, 2006–2013, 2015–2017, 2019–2025.

In September 2024, the Bahnhof Langendreer arts center in Bochum canceled “Guernica Gaza,” an exhibition by Palestinian artist Mohammed Al-Hawajri. The series, which combined 19th- and 20th-century paintings with images from the 2008–2009 Gaza War, was canceled amid political accusations that it equated Israeli military actions with historical atrocities.¹⁰²

On 1 April 2025, the German-Israeli Omri Boehm, a philosophy professor at the New School for Social Research in New York, United States, winner of the 2024 Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding, and the grandson of a Holocaust survivor, was disinvited as a speaker at the central commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora concentration camps near Weimar on 6 April after pressure from the Israeli embassy in Berlin who accused him of trivializing the Holocaust. It suggested that “[I]nviting Boehm to speak at a Holocaust commemoration, [was] like inviting Bashar al-Assad to give a lecture on human rights.” Boehm was a vocal critic of the Israeli government, the genocide in Gaza, and attempts to turn Israel into a Jewish ethnostate. His speech was postponed to a later date and published by *Haaretz* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.¹⁰³

Starting in December 2025, Christina Brüning ([1980–]), a professor of history education at the University of Marburg, received death threats, including through graffiti within university buildings calling to kill her, and had her seminars disrupted. Brüning and dean of the Humanities Faculty, historian Eckart Conze, identified the threats and disruptions as coming primarily from far-right groups. After Brüning and the university filed criminal complaints, the state security division responsible for politically motivated crimes became involved, but the perpetrators and their motives remained unknown, and the investigation was closed without result. Some protective measures were put in place. For years, Brüning had felt that pressure and intimidation directed at her and her work had been

¹⁰² Freemuse, [The State of Artistic Freedom 2025](#) (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2025), 55.

¹⁰³ Jens-Christian Wagner, “[Statement: On the Postponement of Omri Boehm’s Speech on the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camps](#)” (Press release Buchenwald Memorial, 1 April 2025); Nette Nöstlinger, “[Dispute with Israeli Government Overshadows Buchenwald Camp Liberation Anniversary](#),” *Politico* (4 April 2025); PEN Berlin, “[Omri Boehm’s Speech at the Buchenwald Memorial: Disinvitation Strikes Again](#)” (Press release, 5 April 2025); Michael Rotberg, “[Universal Values](#),” *London Review of Books* (10 April 2025).

intensifying – stemming from what she described as aggressively disruptive behavior by some of her students who were trainee teachers.¹⁰⁴

In early December 2025, historian and reporter of ARD broadcaster Sophie von der Tann (1991–) fell victim to a smear campaign while reporting about Israel’s policies in Gaza and the West Bank. Israel’s reserve army spokesman called her “the face of new German hatred of Jews and Israel” at a journalism award ceremony. Israel’s ambassador to Germany, Ron Prosor, accused her of “distorting and relativizing history.” For example, her statement that the 7 October 2023 massacre by Hamas had a prehistory was interpreted by Israeli critics as an attempt to downplay the crime.¹⁰⁵

On 14 February 2026, journalist and academic Michael Krell and several photojournalists were obstructed and, in some cases, injured by police while reporting on the events surrounding the far-right commemoration of the 1945 bombing of Dresden, Saxony. On 13–15 February 1945, Dresden was almost completely destroyed by Allied bombings at the end of World War II. Far-right extremist and Neo-Nazi-groups instrumentalized the occasion to hold “commemoration events” in Dresden that furthered denialist narratives of Nazi-crimes and promoted historical revisionism. On 15 February 2025, the eightieth anniversary of the bombing, at least one journalist had been attacked and threatened by the right-wing extremist organizer of the “commemoration.”¹⁰⁶

See also Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, India, Israel, Libya, Montenegro, Namibia, Nauru, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Samoa, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine.

GHANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2004–2008, 2017, 2019, 2022.

See Barbados, United Nations.

¹⁰⁴ Jan-Christoph Scholz, Anna Spieß & Rebekka Dieckmann, “[Hessen Professorin berichtet über Morddrohungen an Uni: ‘Marburg ist für mich zum Angstort geworden’](#),” *Tagesschau* (11 June 2026).

¹⁰⁵ Noura Maan, “[Nahost-Korrespondentin Sophie von der Tann, preisgekrönt und attackiert](#),” *Der Standard* (5 December 2025); Civil Liberties Union for Europe, [Media Freedom Report](#) (April 2026), 50–51.

¹⁰⁶ “[Journalist Reporting on Far-Right Demonstration Suffers Split Lip from Police](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (14 February 2026); “[Police Obstructs Journalist in the Context of Reporting on Far-Right Demonstration](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (14 February 2026); “[Police Attacked Pixel Roulette Journalist with Baton During Protest Reporting](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (14 February 2026); “[Police Push Freelance Photojournalist Observing Police Action against Fellow Reporter](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (14 February 2026).

GREECE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2004–2011, 2013–2019, 2022–2025.

On 6 December 2025, the 17th anniversary of the killing of 15-year old student Alexis Grigoropoulos ([1992/3]–2008) by a police officer, a commemoration in Exarcheia, Athens, was violently dispersed by police forces, including by using stun grenades known to cause deafness and burn injuries.¹⁰⁷

See also Türkiye.

GRENADA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2022.

GUATEMALA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2023, 2025.

On 16 February 2026, several United Nations Special Mechanisms expressed concern about allegations that at least eighty Indigenous children had been subjected to illegal intercountry adoptions after being institutionalized at the “Hogar Temporal Elisa Martínez” (Temporary Home Elisa Martínez) following their capture and enforced disappearance between 1968 and 1996. They called for an effective investigation into the matter.¹⁰⁸

On 8 July 2026, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances urged Guatemala to open its archives and military installations to search for persons who disappeared both during and after the civil war (1960–1996), stressing that access to military, police, and intelligence files, including the files of the National Civil Police and the National Registry of Reparations, was essential for compiling the still lacking consolidated victim records and locating the disappeared, while welcoming the launch of the Mechanism for the Humanitarian Search for Disappeared Persons and the

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International, [Protests Are Not Battlefields: Patterns of Unlawful Use of Force by Police and Impunity in Greece](#) (London: AI, 2026), 34; Eleni Stamatoukou, “Greek Police’s ‘Unlawful Force and Impunity’ Criticised in Amnesty Report,” [Balkan Insight](#) (4 June 2026).

¹⁰⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[UN Experts Alarmed by Reports of Historic Illegal Adoptions and Alleged Role of Senior Official in Guatemala](#)” (Press release; 16 February 2026).

Plan for Reparation and Dignification of Victims of the Internal Armed Conflict 2026–2036 as first steps.¹⁰⁹

GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2009–2025.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2012, 2015.

See Cabo Verde.

GUYANA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2022, 2025.

In April 2026, various journalists, historians, and other academics expressed concern over land clearing and excavation activities around Fort Zeelandia – a brick fortress on Fort Island in the Essequibo River, which had been built by enslaved labor under the auspices of the Dutch colonial regime in the mid-18th century. The site had been declared a national monument in 1999, but critics noted that its structure had endured decades of neglect, erosion, flooding, and looting, and observed severe damage from recent bulldozing.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Guatemala: UN Experts Call for Opening of Military Archives and Facilities in the Search for Missing Persons](#)” (Press release; 8 July 2026).

¹¹⁰ “[Citizens Call on Govt. to Preserve Historical Sites](#),” *Kaieteur News* (26 April 2026).

HAITI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2000–2003, 2006, 2008–2009, 2013–2023, 2025.

Seventeen April 2025 marked the 200th anniversary of the “independence debt.” On 17 April 1825, France imposed this debt of 150 million francs on Haiti (sixteen times the size of its economy at the time) under threat of a military invasion as a condition to recognize Haiti’s 1804 independence – which made Haiti the first independent “Black Republic” and the first country to abolish slavery in the world – and to pay compensation for the loss of colonial profits from enslaved labor. It was called a “double debt” because it included the original sum and high-interest loans required for payments lasting until 1947. In April 2025, French President Emmanuel Macron had announced the creation of a Franco-Haitian joint commission tasked with examining the “shared past” and making “recommendations to both governments so that lessons can be learned” [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. Although a positive step, the declaration failed to put affected communities at the center of this process or to recognize France’s duty under international human rights law to provide reparations and address the legacies of colonialism and slavery in Haiti. Following calls for such reparations, the National Assembly adopted a resolution in June aimed at the recognition, reimbursement, and reparation by France of Haiti’s debt.¹¹¹

HONDURAS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998, 2001–2002, 2009–2015, 2022–2023.

See Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

¹¹¹ “[France Urged to Repay Billions of Dollars to Haiti for Independence ‘Ransom’](#),” *Guardian* (18 April 2024); Amnesty International, “[Haiti: Activists and Organizations from Haiti and Its Diaspora Urge France to Address Its Colonial Past in Haiti on the Bicentenary of the ‘Independence Debt’](#)” (AMR 36/9258/2025; Press release; 16 April 2025); “[Macron Announces Creation of Joint Commission to Examine Haiti’s Independence Debt to France](#),” *Le Monde* (17 April 2025); Natricia Duncan, “[Macron Announces Joint Commission with Haiti amid Calls for Reparations](#),” *Guardian* (17 April 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 21, 174, 190.

HUNGARY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1997, 2004, 2007–2025.

On 22 April 2026, Bálint Ruff, the nominee for (and later) deputy prime minister for the newly elected government of Péter Magyar, called the establishment of a framework for historians to study the archives of the Communist era (1949–1989) secret police his “number one task.” Unlike other post-Communist countries in East Central Europe, Hungary had never officially revealed the names of Communist-era secret police collaborators.¹¹²

See also Syria, Ukraine.

¹¹² “[Hungary’s Next Government Vows to Open Communist-Era Secret Police Archives](#),” *US News* (22 April 2026).

ICELAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

INDIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1997, 2000–2025.

Throughout 2025, the erasure of digital news archives intensified, especially targeting articles about government surveillance, hate crimes, and alleged human rights abuses. In India-administered Kashmir, some newspaper archives from before 2019 – when the government revoked Jammu and Kashmir’s special status under article 370 of the Indian Constitution – were entirely erased. The erasure was in part government-ordered, in part preemptively executed by media companies, and partly requested by journalists themselves out of fear for persecution.¹¹³

On 21 March 2025, a final-year master student at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University (AUD), New Delhi, was suspended for six months for allegedly criticizing a speech delivered by AUD Vice Chancellor Anu Singh Lathar on 26 January, Republic Day (named after the day the Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950). Lathar had said in her speech that the Ram Janmabhoomi movement (a campaign by Hindu organizations to build a temple dedicated to Lord Ram in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, on the site of the Babri Masjid mosque which was destroyed by Hindu nationalists in 1992 [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2002–2004, 2010–2011, 2015, 2017, 2020–2022]) was 525 years old and not a new issue. Lathar had also applauded the State for the establishment of the Ram temple and called for Bhimrao R. Ambedkar – who chaired the committee that drafted the 1950 Constitution, served as minister of law and justice in Jawaharlal Nehru’s first government (1947–1951), and was among the foremost anti-caste activists – to be a national figure, in line with attempts by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to “saffronize” Ambedkar’s critiques of Hindutva. In an order by the Proctorial Board on 21 March 2025, AUD cited “indiscipline” and use of “derogative and disrespectful language against the Head of the Institution” in the student’s email.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Hanan Zaffar, “[News in India Is Being Erased from the Internet](#),” *Index on Censorship* (23 July 2025).

¹¹⁴ “[Ambedkar University Suspends Student Over ‘Criticism’ of V-C’s Republic Day Speech: Report](#),” *The Wire* (24 March 2025); Sophiya Mathew, “[Delhi: Ambedkar University Suspends Student for ‘Criticising’ V-C’s Speech](#),” *Indian Express* (24 March 2025); “[A Decade After JNU Sedition Case, Silenced Dissent Is the Norm on Indian Campuses](#),” *The Wire* (21 February 2026).

In April 2025, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) delayed the release of Ananth Mahadevan's Bollywood film *Phule*, about the life of anti-caste and women's rights activists Jyotirao Phule (1827–1890) and Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), after pressure from Brahmin groups in Maharashtra, and requested significant alterations. Jyotirao Phule had been the founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj reformist movement advocating for the right to education of Dalit communities and challenged caste discrimination. CBFC's decision was criticized as an attempt to “sanitize” history and censor historical experiences of marginalized communities.¹¹⁵

In [July] 2025, the National Council for Education and Research Training (NCERT) released new textbooks. The seventh-grade social science textbooks for the 2025–2026 school year omitted references to Raziyat al-Din bint al-Sultan, more commonly known as Razia Sultan ([1205]–1240), a female sultan ruling Delhi in 1236–1240, and Mughal Empress Nur Jehan (1577–1645), the last wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1569–1627). This fitted a larger trend, initiated in 2017, of excising positive (Muslim) examples and contributions from the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526–1857) from textbooks entirely [See NCH *Annual Reports 2020, 2022–2023*]. The new Class 8 textbook removed references to the Sultan of the Kingdom of Mysore, Haidar Ali (1720–1782), his son and successor Tipu Sultan (1751–1799), and the four Anglo-Mysore wars (1767–1769, 1780–1784, 1790–1792, 1798–1799). It also claimed that *jiziya*, a tax paid by the non-Muslim population, was created as an incentive for conversion, without providing evidence. The Class 12 history textbook, furthermore, presented the contested theory that “Aryans” were native to India, rather than migrants, without providing evidence.¹¹⁶

In August 2025, Bharatiya Janata Party politicians and former royal family members in Rajasthan sent a complaint to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) over a Class 8 social studies textbook showing a 1759 Maratha Empire (1674–1818) map, claiming that its borders extended beyond the empire's historical territorial reach. The NCERT complied and deleted the map from its textbooks in Hindi and Urdu (but maintained it in an English online version). The NCERT decision was criticized by Maharashtra opposition politicians as “an attempt to erase Maratha's glorious

¹¹⁵ Maroosha Muzaffar, “[Bollywood Film about Anti-Caste Icons Delayed after Protests from Brahmins](#),” *The Independent* (11 April 2025).

¹¹⁶ Nilosree Biswas, “[Powerful Indian Women Cancelled in the Classroom](#),” *Index on Censorship*, 54 no. 4 (December 2025), 24–25; Ruchika Sharma, “[A Dark Chapter in the History of NCERT](#),” *National Herald* (3 August 2025); “[Removing Mughals from Textbooks Is Nonsense: Historian Romila Thapar](#),” *Business Standard* (25 January 2026); Pragya Singh, “[Breaking up History is ‘Absurd’, Says Romila Thapar at Kerala Lit Fest 2026](#),” *The Wire* (26 January 2026); Romila Thapar, *The Past As Present: Forging Contemporary Identities through History* (Aleph Book Company, 2014), especially Sections III and IV.

history.” On 5 May 2026, descendants of prominent Maratha royal families and some Maharashtra citizens initiated a public interest litigation (PIL) at the Bombay High Court against the removal.¹¹⁷

On 5 August 2025, the Home Ministry in Jammu and Kashmir ordered the confiscation of 25 books, alleging without evidence that they promoted “a false narrative and secessionism” in the disputed territory. The books ranged from historical narratives of the region to documentation of state violence and human rights atrocities committed in Kashmir, and included:

- *Azadi*, a book by writer Arundhati Roy with essays on the thousands allegedly killed and disappeared in Kashmir by Indian forces in recent decades;
- *Independent Kashmir*, by Australian political scientist Christopher Snedden, exploring the Kashmiri fight for independence since the 1990s;
- *Colonizing Kashmir: State-Building Under Indian Occupation*, by Hafsa Kanjwal, associate professor of South Asian history in the department of history at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, United States;
- *The Kashmir Dispute, 1947–2012*, by the late constitutional expert A.G. Noorani;
- *Kashmir & the Future of South Asia*, edited by historians Sugata Bose & Ayesha Jalal;
- *Human Rights Violation in Kashmir* and *Law & Conflict Resolution in Kashmir*, both by Piotr Balcerowicz, professor of Indian philosophy, religions and history at Warsaw University, Poland, and Agnieszka Kuszewska, associate professor at the Institute of the Middle and Far East, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland;
- *Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora*, by Essar Batool and others, reinvestigating a 1991 mass rape case;
- *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, by Victoria Schofield, a British author, biographer and historian;
- *Tarikh-i-Siyasat Kashmir* (History and Politics of Kashmir), by Afaq Aziz.

The order accused the works of glorifying terrorists, distorting history, and promoting violence, and claimed that they had “contributed to the radicalization of youth in Jammu and Kashmir.” Following the order, police forces raided bookshops and roadside book vendors across several districts of Kashmir to confiscate the banned books. Student groups that held seminars or events on Kashmir’s political

¹¹⁷ Abhijeet Patil, “[Maha Politicians Outraged after Maratha Empire Map Goes Missing from Hindi, Urdu Version of NCERT Std VIII Social Science Textbook](#),” *Times of India* (26 March 2026); “Petition Seeks Restoration of Maratha Empire Map,” *The Hindu* (7 May 2026), 2.

history were accused of “sedition” and some were banned completely. Critics condemned the order as censorship, a criminalization of memory, and an erosion of the historical record (*See item below*).¹¹⁸

On 14 August 2025, the National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) released two new modules for middle and secondary level school children titled *Partition Horrors Remembrance Day* – after the annual commemoration of the 1947–1948 Partition of British India into India and Pakistan on 14 August, established by President Narendra Modi in 2021 [*See NCH Annual Report 2022*]. Critique on the first module, for classes VI to VIII, focused especially on the class VIII textbook on early modern history, which limited references to the Rajput dynasties, Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) and Mughal Empire (1526–1857) [*See NCH Annual Report 2023*], while extensively discussing the Maratha Empire (1674–1818), including by using territorial maps criticized as false (*See item above*). Historians observed that the passages on the Partition in the second module ignored “at least four decades of research on Partition,” used “partial citation of sources” and tried “to malign the [Indian National] Congress and suggest that the Muslims who remained in India [we]re an illegitimate population.” The module held the Indian National Congress (led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, among others, in the 1930s and 1940s) as responsible as the Muslim League for the Partition.

On [27] August 2025, the Indian History Congress (IHC) criticized the new modules, stating that their conclusion distorted the actual events of India’s freedom struggle and corrupted young minds by feeding them a polarizing history full of “falsehoods” designed with a “clear communal intent.” It pointed out that the British had carried out a sustained divisive colonial policy since at least 1857 which the “communal forces” (the predecessors of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party) had supported during the freedom struggle. The IHC statement also accused the government of Islamophobia in the modules.¹¹⁹

On 17 September 2025, former Chief Minister of Rajasthan for the Indian National Congress party Ashok Gehlot (in office 1998–2003, 2008–2013, 2018–2023) criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)–government in Rajasthan for removing a chapter on Jyotirao Phule (1827–1890) from the

¹¹⁸ “[25 Books on Kashmir Banned for ‘Glorifying Terrorism and Inciting Violence against Indian State,’](#)” *Groundxero* (6 August 2025); Hannah Ellis-Petersen, “[Arundhati Roy Works Among Dozens of Books Banned in Indian-Administered Kashmir,](#)” *Guardian* (7 August 2025); “[Police Raid Kashmir Bookshops After India Bans Titles for ‘Secessionism,’](#)” *Al Jazeera* (7 August 2025); Syed Firdaus Ashraf, “[The 25 Books Banned In Kashmir,](#)” *Rediff* (8 August 2025); Showkat Nanda & Pranav Baskar, “[Book Blacklist in Kashmir Aims to Muzzle Criticism of India,](#)” *New York Times* (10 August 2025); Muhammad Batish, “[Silencing Kashmir: India’s Ban on Critical Scholarship,](#)” *Kashmir Media Service* (10 August 2025); International Federation for Human Rights, “[India: Kashmir Book Ban Violates Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom](#)” (Statement; 21 August 2025); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 196.

¹¹⁹ “[‘Clear Communal Intent’: Indian History Congress on NCERT’s New Partition Module,](#)” *The Wire* (27 August 2025); Adityakrishna Deora, “[Rise of Hindutva Through NCERT’s Class 8 History Textbook Revisions,](#)” *The Wire* (3 September 2025); Avantika Mehta, “[A Class of Controversies: How NCERT’s Revised History Curriculum Politicises Education,](#)” *Outlook India* (5 September 2025).

political science syllabus at Rajasthan University (RU). Phule was an anti-caste activist and founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj reformist movement advocating for the right to education of Dalit communities. In January 2026, Gehlot again criticized RU for dissolving the B.R. Ambedkar Chair – named after Bhimrao R. Ambedkar who chaired the committee that drafted the 1949 Constitution, served as minister of law and justice in Jawaharlal Nehru’s first government (1947–1951), and was among the foremost anti-caste activists.¹²⁰

On 30 September 2025, Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood announced the introduction of the “Rashtraneeti” curriculum in Delhi government schools Classes 1–12. The curriculum would include chapters on the history and philosophy of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindutva organization intimately linked to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, and historical figures like V.D. (Veer) Savarkar (1883–1966), Hindutva’s founder, and Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945), an anticolonial nationalist who collaborated with Nazi Germany. New textbooks for the curriculum were prepared for publication in November 2025. The Congress-backed National Students’ Union of India criticized the curriculum for aiming to “distort history, hide anti-national activities, and fill children’s minds with hate.”¹²¹

On 15 October 2025, Vipin Vijayan, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sanskrit at the University of Kerala in the capital Trivandrum, had his thesis defense interrupted by the department’s dean, C.N. Vijayakumari, who allegedly made anti-caste remarks. Vipin (whose dissertation studied the life of Chattampi Swamikal [1853–1924], a social reformer and Hindu sage who played an important role in the 19th-century Kerala Reformation movement) belonged to the Pulaya Scheduled Caste community, one of the most marginalized Dalit communities in India. Vijayakumari, a Brahmin and member of the university senate for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, insisted that the defense be rescheduled because Vipin allegedly did not answer certain questions and did not answer in Sanskrit (official university policy allowed defenders to answer in Sanskrit, Malayalam, or English). The allegations were denied by Vipin’s committee members, both of whom signed his Ph.D. thesis. Afterward, Vijayakumari refused to sign the thesis, allegedly telling Vipin: “Why do you need a doctorate to add to your name? You have a Pulaya surname, that is enough.” (Scheduled Caste communities held certain government protections and benefited from affirmative action under the Constitution to overcome effects of systematic discrimination). On 5 and 7 November, Vipin filed a complaint with the police and

¹²⁰ “[BJP Govt Asks Varsities to Plan Activities around Phule’s Life, Critics Say Move Is for Political Gains](#),” *The Wire* (28 September 2025); Geetha Sunil Pillai, “[Former CM Ashok Gehlot, LoP Jolly Slams Rajasthan University’s ‘Dalit-Hostile’ Neglect: Ambedkar Chair Scrapped in Secrecy, Phule Removed from Syllabus!](#),” *The Mooknayak* (4 January 2026).

¹²¹ “[Delhi Govt Schools to Introduce ‘Rashtraneeti’ Curriculum Where Students Will Learn about RSS and India’s Freedom Fighters](#),” *Times of India* (1 October 2025); “[NSUI Slams Delhi Government’s New RSS Curriculum, Calls It Misleading for Students](#),” *India Today* (2 October 2025).

university, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission respectively, alleging caste discrimination and abuse. The complaint stipulated that Vijayakumari's anti-caste abuse had begun in 2015, when Vipin was a master's student. On 20 November, Kerala University withheld approval of Vipin's Ph.D. and ordered a review of Vijayakumari's findings. On 8 December, Vijayakumari was awarded bail awaiting trial.¹²²

On 21 October 2025, Francesca Orsini, an emeritus professor of Hindi at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, and author of *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (2002) and *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India* (2009), was denied entry in India even though she had a valid visa, and deported to London. No reason was given, but an anonymous official reportedly claimed that she was blacklisted for doing research on a tourist visa in the past.¹²³

On 2 November 2025, writer and investigative journalist Rana Ayyub received various phone calls, messages, voice notes, and video calls from an unknown Canadian phone number, which included death threats and information about her and her father's home addresses. The messages demanded Ayyub to publish an article on the 41st anniversary of the 31 October 1984 assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1917–1984; in office 1966–1977, 1980–1984) glorifying the Sikh bodyguards who killed her. The threats came after Ayyub had shared an Instagram post saying that the 1984 Sikh massacre, in which around 3,000 Sikhs were killed following Gandhi's assassination, and the ensuing lack of accountability had sparked an increase in communal tensions and violence. Ayyub had previously been subjected to coordinated online abuse, doxing, and rape and death threats linked to her reporting on sectarian violence and human rights violations. She is the author of, among others, *Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a Cover Up*, about the 2002 Gujarat riots [See NCH Annual Reports 2017, 2023].¹²⁴

On 26 November 2025, also known as Constitution Day, members of the Aam Admi Party staged a demonstration against the renaming of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Specialized Excellence in East Delhi to Chief Minister School for Rising India (CM Shri). Protesters alleged that the decision by the

¹²² [“KU Sanskrit HoD Booked under SC/ST Act for Alleged Casteist Remarks against Research Scholar,”](#) *The Hindu* (9 November 2025); Haritha Manav, [““Why Do You Need a Doctorate?”: Dalit PhD Scholar Recounts Abuse from Kerala Uni Dean of Faculty,”](#) *The News Minute* (15 November 2025); [“64 PhD Degrees Approved: Vipin Vijayan's Withheld,”](#) *Times of India* (20 November 2025); Sangeetha Prathap, [“Kerala SC/ST Court Grants Bail to Kerala University Dean Accused of Caste-Based Abuse During PhD Defence Session,”](#) *24Law* (9 December 2025).

¹²³ [“Globally Renowned Scholar of Hindi Deported from Delhi Airport Despite Valid Visa,”](#) *The Wire* (21 October 2025).

¹²⁴ Vinaya Deshpande Pandit, “No FIR Was Registered Despite Filing Complaint on Death Threat, Rana Ayyub,” *The Hindu* (9 May 2025), 3; PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 60.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Delhi government fitted a broader pattern of removing references to Ambedkar (1891–1956). Bhimrao R. Ambedkar chaired the committee that drafted the 1950 Constitution, served as minister of law and justice in Jawaharlal Nehru’s first government (1947–1951), and was among the foremost anti-caste activists (*See* item above). He was a complex figure for the BJP, whose attitude oscillated between rejecting his criticism of Hindutva and attempting to “saffronize” him.¹²⁵

On 6 January 2026, the Supreme Court asked the Haryana government to grant a “one-time magnanimity” and drop criminal charges against historian Ali Khan Mahmudabad (1982–), an associate professor and head of the Political Science Department at Ashoka University [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].¹²⁶

On [19 January] 2026, the case against nine students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) began at the Mumbai civil and sessions court. The students had been fined by TISS for participating in a commemoration, on 12 October 2025, of the first anniversary of the death of literature scholar and human rights activist G. N. Saibaba (1967–2024). Saibaba had been sentenced to life imprisonment in 2017 for alleged Maoist links. He was twice acquitted (in 2022 and 2024) by the Bombay High Court and released in March 2024. On 12 October 2024, he died of post-operative complications allegedly related to his prolonged imprisonment and inadequate medical care.¹²⁷

On 29 January 2026, Sarover Zaidi, associate professor at the School of Art & Architecture at O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana, was suspended for one semester after a complaint by a student’s father alleged that she had made “politically derogatory, inflammatory and deeply disturbing” remarks during a “Politics of Representation” course on 7 November 2025. The university’s decision followed an investigation by the Haryana Human Rights Commission which began hearings on the same day. The complaint alleged that Zaidi, in a discussion on political advertising and propaganda, had compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party with Adolf Hitler and the Nazi political party, and included audio recordings made during the course. Zaidi responded that “whatever is contained in the recordings was not intentional and part of a larger discourse that the audio file did not fully capture.” On 14 November 2025, the student’s father had filed another complaint

¹²⁵ Geetha Sunil Pillai, “[AAP Stages Fierce Protest Against BJP-Led Delhi Government’s Renaming of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Specialised Excellence to ‘CM Shri’](#),” *The Mooknayak* (27 November 2025); Anand Teltumbde, “[Saffronising Ambedkar: Why the Sangh Portrays Ambedkar as Anti-Communist and Anti-Muslim](#),” *The Caravan* (16 June 2018).

¹²⁶ “[SC Grants Haryana Six Weeks to Consider Dropping Case against Ashoka Professor](#),” *The Telegraph* (7 January 2026).

¹²⁷ “[‘Your Careers Are Ruined’: Judge Tells TISS Students Booked for Attending G N Saibaba’s Death Anniversary Event](#),” *New Indian Express* (21 January 2026).

against Zaidi and her colleague Ekta Chauhan, an associate professor at the same department who held a bachelor's degree in history and a Ph.D. in world heritage studies, alleging that they had taught that "Hindus vandalized the Babri Masjid" – the 16th-century Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya destroyed by Hindu nationalists on 6 December 1992 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2002–2004, 2006–2007, 2010–2011, 2015, 2017, 2020–2021*, and item above].¹²⁸

In late January 2026, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi set up a committee to investigate "serious concerns" about the "choice of speakers and content" at the "Critical Philosophy of Caste and Race" conference held in New Delhi between 16–18 January. The conference, which featured lectures on Dalit identity, caste-race theory and history writing, drew social media criticism, including that comparisons of race- and caste-based discrimination were defaming India and showed anti-Hindu bias. A talk by Aarushi Punia was criticized for comparing the position of Dalits in India to Palestinians in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory. Many, including the organizers and participants, criticized the committee's establishment.¹²⁹

On 12 February 2026, a speech by historian Irfan Habib at Delhi University's Arts Faculty was disrupted when unidentified individuals threw a bucket of water at him during the People's Literature Festival, organized by the far-left All India Students' Association (AISA) on campus. The disruption occurred during a session titled "Caste in Indian Society and Universities," where Habib spoke about the "distortion of history" and "the deliberate attempt by the BJP RSS to rewrite history." AISA alleged that members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), were responsible for the act. Habib resumed and completed his speech within a few minutes [See NCH *Annual Reports 2000, 2016, 2025*].¹³⁰

On 23 February 2026, in a move variously described as "a decolonization attempt" and "an attack on anglicized elites," the bust of British architect Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), who designed large parts of central New Delhi, was removed from the Rashtrapati Bhavan (the presidential palace). It was replaced by a bust of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1878–1972; popularly known as Rajaji), a freedom fighter, first and last Indian Governor-General of independent India (1948–1950), and political rival of

¹²⁸ Bhartesh Singh Thakur, "[Haryana Prof Suspended for Hitler-PM Remark](#)," *The Tribune* (27 February 2026).

¹²⁹ Nootan Sharma, "[Why Discussing Caste Is a Crime? Faculty, Scholars Shocked by IIT-Delhi Probe on Conference](#)," *The Print* (27 January 2026); Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta, "[How to Silence Scholarship and Subject a Conference on Caste to a Probe: The IIT Delhi Model](#)," *The Wire* (31 January 2026).

¹³⁰ Saher Hiba Khan, "[Attack On Historian S. Irfan Habib Highlights Growing Intolerance On Campuses](#)," *Outlook* (14 February 2026).

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Former Central Bureau of Investigation director Mannem Nageswara Rao described the move as “petty vandalism of history.”¹³¹

On 24 February 2026, around twenty members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), vandalized Azim Premji University’s (APU) Sarjapur Road campus, Bengaluru, Karnataka, claiming that an event organized by the far-left Spark APU Reading Circle to discuss the alleged mass rape of Kashmiri women in Kunan Poshpora village in Kashmir by Indian armed forces on 23 February 1991 amounted to anti-national and Kashmir-separatist conduct. The APU administration nominally condemned the actions of both sides, but the APU registrar filed a First Information Report (FIR; police complaint) against the Spark Reading Circle – accusing it of organizing a discussion without the administration’s permission and instigating trouble at APU. The FIR invoked Section 299 (“deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or beliefs”) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS; Indian criminal code since 2024). APU’s disproportionate attempt to punish the students rather than the ABVP was condemned by many. The police detained 18 people in connection with the incident. The day of the alleged 1991 rapes was marked as Kashmiri Women’s Resistance Day. Although the Indian army had denied the incident, the Supreme Court had ordered a reinvestigation after a petition had been filed in 2013.¹³²

On 25 February 2026, the Supreme Court banned the Class 8 social-science textbook *Exploring Society: India and Beyond* of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), ordered the removal of all copies from the market and blacklisted three experts involved in drafting a chapter entitled “The Role of Judiciary in our Society.” Although its director Dinesh Prasad Saklani first defended the book, NCERT later apologized and withdrew the book. The chapter’s lead author was French-born Indian historian Michel Danino (1956–); he was assisted by educator Suparna Diwakar and legal researcher Alok Prasanna Kumar. The Supreme Court move was viewed as judicial overreach by many, especially because the chapter had cited case pendency figures and corruption perception indices coming from the National Judicial Data Grid, a portal built and maintained by the Supreme Court’s e-Committee.

An autodidact with no formal advanced degrees in history or archaeology, Danino had lectured widely on ancient Indian history, culture, and knowledge systems at institutions across India. Since

¹³¹ Vikas Pathak, “[Why Lutyens’ Bust Has Been Replaced with Rajaji’s: Decolonisation and Its Layered Political Messaging](#),” *Indian Express* (23 February 2026); “[Great-Grandson of Edwin Lutyens Criticises Removal of His Bust from Rashtrapati Bhavan](#),” *Economic Times* (25 February 2026).

¹³² “[After ABVP Vandalism, Azim Premji University Says Protesters ‘Misinformed’, Files Complaint Against Students](#),” *The Wire* (25 February 2026); M. B. Girish, “[Several ABVP Activists Booked for Disturbance at Azim Premji University](#),” *Deccan Chronicle* (25 February 2026); Anisha Reddy, “[ABVP Vandalises Campus and Azim Premji University Files FIR against Its Own Students](#),” *South First* (3 March 2026).

2011, he had served as a visiting professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, where he played a key role in establishing the Archaeological Sciences Center and coordinating courses on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). He was also a member of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), contributing to research on ancient India. In recent years, he had served as the chairperson of NCERT's social science curriculum committee, incorporating elements of Indian heritage in it. In 1996, Danino had published *The Invasion that Never Was*, a controversial and much criticized book arguing against the Indo-Aryan migration theory and asserting that Aryans were indigenous to India (*See* item above). In his NCERT role, Danino had reportedly overseen controversial textbook changes described as ideologically driven, such as portraying the Maratha Empire positively while depicting the Mughal Empire negatively.¹³³

On 7 March 2026, the Women's Studies Centre at Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University, Mumbai, Maharashtra, canceled the Neera Desai memorial lecture scheduled to be delivered by feminist historian Uma Chakravarti one day after it was announced, citing "technical reasons." Reports suggested that soon after the poster of the event was released on social media, Chakravarti, who specialized in histories of gender, caste, and class, was criticized as the inventor of the term "Brahminical patriarchy." Following the cancelation, the Maharashtra feminist collective Maharashtra Stree Mukti Parishad and the civil society platform Mumbai 4 Peace organized an alternative program where Chakravarti could give her lecture.¹³⁴

On 9 March 2026, police dispersed Sikh and left-wing students protesting against a seminar organized at Panjab University, Chandigarh (Punjab and Haryana), on "Sikh History, Guru Tegh Bahadur [1621–1675], and the Panj Pyare," with speakers from the Hindu-nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Nearly forty students were reportedly rounded up, detained, kept in preventive custody, and released after the program concluded.¹³⁵

On 22 March 2026, the University of Jammu, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, removed topics related to Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), leader of the All-India Muslim League (1913–1947) and first

¹³³ National Council of Educational Research and Training, [Public Apology](#) (Press release; 10 March 2026); Raju Das, "[Debunked Aryan Invasion Theory, Identified Vedic Saraswati River](#)," *Opindia* (11 March 2026); Sandeep Balakrishna, "[The Case of Michel Danino: Examining Judicial Overreach](#)," *Dharma Dispatch* (14 March 2026); Rahul Verma, "[Two Sentences and a 'Conspiracy'](#)," *The Wire* (19 March 2026).

¹³⁴ Pallavi Smart, "[SNDT Cancels Neera Desai Memorial Lecture by Uma Chakravarti, Sparks Concern in Academic Circles](#)," *Indian Express* (7 March 2026); Niraj Pandit, "[SNDT's Cancelled Lecture to Be Held at Dadar's Shivaji Mandir](#)," *Hindustan Times* (12 March 2026); Aakriti Handa, "[Why Indian Universities Are Witnessing a 'Bloody Spring': The Criminalisation of Student Protests](#)," *The Quint* (18 March 2026).

¹³⁵ Aakriti Handa, "[Why Indian Universities Are Witnessing a 'Bloody Spring': The Criminalisation of Student Protests](#)," *The Quint* (18 March 2026).

Governor-General of Pakistan (1947–1948), Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), a philosopher and educator advocating the two-nations theory (the pre-independence theory that the Muslims of British India needed a homeland separate from Indian Hindus), and Mohammad Iqbal (1877–1938), an Islamic philosopher and Urdu poet, from the syllabus of its political science master's course on modern Indian political thought. The decision followed protests by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the Hindutva paramilitary organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.¹³⁶

On [17] April 2026, the Rajasthan School Education Department ordered the removal of four history textbooks – Rajasthan's Freedom Movement and Tradition of Valor (Class 9), History and Culture of Rajasthan (Class 10), Golden India After Independence, Part 1 (Class 11), and Golden India After Independence, Part 2 (Class 12) – from the syllabus. The books had been introduced as supplemental materials alongside the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) curriculum by then Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot (Congress Party), who argued that Rajasthan history was insufficiently covered by NCERT materials. Bharatiya Janata Party Minister of Education in Rajasthan Madan Dilawar had criticized the books for focusing too strongly on the Gandhi and Nehru families.¹³⁷

On 15 May 2026, the Madhya Pradesh High Court granted Hindus the right to worship at the Bhojsala temple complex in Dhar. In its ruling, the court rejected a 2003 order of the Archaeology Survey of India that had allowed Muslim communities to offer Friday prayers at the Kamal Maula Mosque, arguing instead that the complex was the site of a temple of the goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati) and calling on the government to pressure the United Kingdom to return a Saraswati idol taken by the British in the 1886. The court also rejected the validity of an August 1935 Ailaan (official proclamation) by the then princely State of Dhar, which had declared the site a mosque.¹³⁸

On 29 May 2026, Justice Sachin Datta of the Delhi High Court issued a 144-page judgment saying the “right to be forgotten” followed from the Constitutional right to privacy under Article 21 and enabled individuals to seek removal of personal information from publicly accessible digital sources when it no longer served a legitimate public purpose. The court also laid down a framework governing the de-indexing of judicial records from search engines and legal database platforms, and the masking of personal identifiers from publicly accessible court records. The petitioners who brought the case had

¹³⁶ [“Jammu University Panel Suggests Dropping Jinnah from Course Amid Row,”](#) *New Delhi Television Ltd.* (23 March 2026).

¹³⁷ Rajesh Asnani, [“Rajasthan Drops Class 9–12 Supplementary History Books after Minister's Objections over Mughal Content,”](#) *New India Express* (17 April 2026); Suparna Roy, [“Rajasthan Education Minister Madan Dilawar Justifies Removal of 4 History Books to Address Historical Distortion,”](#) *Times of India* (18 April 2026).

¹³⁸ Mehul Malpani, “Disputed Bhojshala Complex a Temple, Says M.P. High Court,” *The Hindu* (16 May 2026), 5.

argued that the continued availability and name-based searchability of judicial records bearing their names in the digital public domain caused “disproportionate and continuing harm to their reputations, dignity, and life prospects.”¹³⁹

In June 2026, a newly released National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) arts education textbook for grade nine had an image of the bronze nude sculpture known as the Dancing Girl – dating back to 2600 BCE and found in Mohenjo-daro, the center of the Indus Valley civilization (3300–1300 BCE) – covered with dark shading, hiding its anatomical features. After a backlash from historians and educators, the original image was restored in the digital version of the book and the NCERT promised it would also do so in new print editions.¹⁴⁰

On 7 July 2026, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha ordered a comprehensive and periodic screening of books entering educational institutions across the Union Territory, directing the removal of books deemed “anti-national” or separatist, with institutions certifying compliance. This followed the suspension of officials and blacklisting of authors over two books dealing with Kashmir’s history, identity, and political evolution that allegedly glorified separatism: *Personalities and Legends of J&K*, by Hilal Ahmad and Santosh Meena (Jammu, Oberoi Book Service), and *Great Personalities of Jammu and Kashmir*, by Sushant Giri (Delhi, Anurag Prakashan) [See also item above]. Srinagar Member of Parliament Syed Agha Ruhullah Mehdi and author Rao Farman Ali criticized the move, warning it erased Kashmir’s historical and collective memory, reduced students to “recipients of propaganda,” and substituted security concerns for academic judgment.¹⁴¹

See Israel, United Kingdom.

INDONESIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2001–2002, 2004–2013, 2015–2019, 2021–2025.

On 19 June 2024, a screening of the documentary film *Eksil* had to be canceled because the film theater management demanded that the organizer obtain a “crowd permit” (required for events in public spaces

¹³⁹ “Delhi HC Recognises ‘Right to Be Forgotten,’ Lays Down Rules for Deindexing Judicial Records,” *The Hindu* (2 June 2026).

¹⁴⁰ Cherylann Mollan, “[‘Dancing Girl’s’ Bare Torso Restored in Indian Textbook after Backlash](#),” *BBC News* (16 June 2026).

¹⁴¹ Junaid Dar, “[As L-G Asks for Greater Scrutiny of J&K Books, Questions on Academic Freedom, Erasure of History](#),” *The Wire* (9 July 2026).

that might attract more than 200 people). However, there was no regulation that required such a permit for a screening in a privately-owned film theater. *Eksil* documented the lives of Indonesian students who were exiled and unable to return to their homes for decades after the 1965–1966 mass killings of alleged communists and communist sympathizers.¹⁴²

On 28 October 2025, Culture Minister and historian Fadli Zon defended the Out of Nusantara theory at the Continental Inter-Congress Asia of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences at the Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, Central Java, in front of delegations from forty countries and repeated it after inaugurating a Buddhist temple in the region. The theory held that the first human beings did not live in Africa, as the Out of Africa theory stated, but in Nusantara (the Indonesian term for Maritime Southeast Asia), thus positioning Indonesia as the world's oldest civilization. He explained that sixty percent of the world's *Homo erectus* fossils were found in Indonesia, including Java Man found by Dutch paleontologist Eugène Dubois (1858–1940) in Trinil in 1889–1893. In this connection, he emphasized the repatriation from the Netherlands in September 2025 of the Dubois Collection containing 40,000 fossils as a restoration of Indonesia's scientific sovereignty. Zon also linked his theory to the narrative cave art found in South Sulawesi and dated in July 2024 to an age of 51,200 years. Leading archaeologists, including Harry Truman Simanjuntak and Daud Aris Tanudirjo, criticized Zon's theory for its lack of evidence: the human fossils found in Africa were far older than those found in Indonesia and there was no causal connection between the *Homo erectus* fossils and the paintings made by *Homo sapiens*. Originally, Truman was a member of the Indonesian History Rewriting Team preparing an official ten-volume history of Indonesia [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*] and the intended author of its first volume, but he had left the team in January 2025 citing political pressure for nationalistic reasons.¹⁴³

On 10 November 2025, also known as National Heroes Day, the administration of President Prabowo Subianto (in office 2024–) declared ten people “national heroes,” including former President – and Prabowo's former father-in-law – Suharto (1921–2008; in power between 1967–1998). In 1965, General Suharto helped organize an anti-Communist clampdown that killed an estimated 500,000 people. During his military reign, another 100,000 people were estimated to have endured human rights violations. He was never held accountable for his crimes. Previous attempts to nominate Suharto had been blocked due to a 1998 People's Consultative Assembly (PCA) decree, issued shortly after his fall, which named him as a figure to be investigated for corruption, marking him unfit for the national hero's

¹⁴² Freemuse, [The State of Artistic Freedom 2025](#) (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2025), 70.

¹⁴³ “Minister of Culture Fadli Zon Reveals Great Ideas ‘Out of the Archipelago’ Challenges Human Origin Theory,” *Voi* (28 October 2025); “Explainer: Tracing Fadli Zon's ‘Out of Nusantara’ Ancient Humans Claim,” *Jakarta Post* (19 November 2025); Saskia Konniger, “De Indonesische regering probeert de rol van het land in de wereldgeschiedenis op te poetsen,” *NRC Handelsblad* (11 December 2025).

criteria of exemplary behavior and no criminal conduct. In 2024, before Prabowo's election, the PCA had removed Suharto's name from the decree.

In the lead-up to the decision, hundreds of activists, supported by historians and public figures, had signed a letter calling on Prabowo not to give Suharto the national hero title and denouncing the administration's efforts as an attempt to whitewash the history of the Suharto era [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. Prabowo also faced accusations of involvement in human rights violations while he was a commander of the Kopassus special forces during Suharto's rule. He had been discharged from the military for his alleged involvement in the 1998 kidnapping and torture of 22 pro-democracy activists, thirteen of whom were still missing [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*].¹⁴⁴

See also Japan.

IRAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2025.

On 5 March 2025, authorities flogged singer Mehdi Yarrahi 74 times as part of an agreement to end a criminal case against him. On 16 September 2023, marking the first anniversary of the killing of law student Mahsa Amini (1999–2023) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*], Yarrahi had released a protest song titled “Your Headscarf” for which he served one year in prison (later converted to electronic ankle monitoring). The flogging sentence was a condition for Yarrahi to retrieve the 15 billion toman (around US\$ 25,000) bail (paid by a third party).¹⁴⁵

On 18 August 2025, satellite imagery obtained by *BBC Persian* showed that around 3,400 square meters of the Behesht Zahra Cemetery – a cemetery where many victims of political persecution during the 1980s, including the so-called “1988 prison massacres,” were buried – had been leveled, and another 2,200 square meters were to become a parking lot. The government actions were condemned by the Center for Human Rights in Iran, calling it “a grotesque crime and a blatant attempt to erase evidence

¹⁴⁴ Yericia Lai & Adi Marsiela, “[Opposition Grows over National Hero Title for Soeharto](#),” *Jakarta Post* (3 November 2025); Ade Rosman, “[Eks Jaksa Agung hingga Romo Magnis Surati Prabowo, Tolak Gelar Pahlawan Soeharto](#),” *Katadata* (4 November 2025); Cabinet Secretariat for the Republic of Indonesia, “[President Prabowo Confers National Hero Title to Ten National Figures](#)” (Press release; 10 November 2025); Radhiyya Indra, “[Soeharto Named National Hero](#),” *Jakarta Post* (10 November 2025); Andreas Harsono, “[Indonesia's President Declares Late Dictator Soeharto a 'National Hero'](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (10 November 2025); “[Indonesia Discusses Massacres that Killed 500,000](#),” *BBC News* (18 April 2016).

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Wintour, “[Iranian Singer Mehdi Yarrahi Given 74 Lashes over Protest Song](#),” *Guardian* (5 March 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 232.

of its crimes against humanity” and calling on the international community to denounce the actions and call on the government to “cease persecuting families seeking information, the right to mourn, or justice for state crimes.” No perpetrators had been brought to justice for the killings [See NCH *Annual Reports 2008–2009, 2017, 2021–2023*].¹⁴⁶

In November 2025, security forces arrested Milan Khajeh'i ([1994/5]–), a history student at Zahedan University, Zahedan, for unknown reasons and brought her to an undisclosed location. Khajeh'i had previously been sentenced to one year in prison by the Zahedan Revolutionary Court for distributing anti-government leaflets, writing slogans at the university, and running a Telegram channel. Her sentence had been reduced to five months on appeal.¹⁴⁷

On 12 December 2025, writer, journalist, human rights defender, and 2023 Nobel Peace laureate Narges Mohammadi was assaulted and detained in Mashhad while attending a memorial service for human rights lawyer Khosrow Alikordi (1979–2025), who had been found dead under suspicious circumstances on 6 December. She was reportedly hospitalized twice between 12 and 14 December, due to injuries sustained from plain-clothed agents who hit her with batons on the head and neck and threatened to kill her. On 8 February 2026, an Iranian court in Mashhad sentenced her to seven years and six months in prison and to two years of internal exile in South Khorasan for “gathering and collusion” (related to the memorial service) and “propaganda activities” (likely related to an Instagram message she published alongside various Iranian intellectuals calling the January 2026 violent crackdown on anti-government mass protests, in which as many as 20,000 people may have been killed, a crime against humanity). She went on hunger strike to protest the sentence. Mohammadi suffered from severe health conditions, including a neurological disorder that could result in seizures, temporary partial paralysis, and pulmonary embolism. Repeated reports from her lawyers and family members indicated that she was in a critical condition, was denied essential medication and health care, and had suffered from a heart attack. On 1 May 2026, her family expressed concern for her life.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Shehab Mirzai, “تخریب قطعه ۴۱ بهشت زهرا؛ «مبارزه با حافظه جمعی» و «تحریف تاریخ»,” *BBC Persian* (23 August 2025); “Iran’s Destruction of Graves from 1980s State Massacres Must Be Condemned,” *Center for Human Rights in Iran* (26 August 2025); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 207.

¹⁴⁷ “Iranian Authorities Arrest Suspended University Student,” *Iranwire* (20 November 2025).

¹⁴⁸ “Activists in Iran Say Khamenei Responsible for ‘Crime against Humanity’,” *Iran International* (28 January 2026); PEN International, *Writers under Siege: Defying Silence* (London: PEN International, 2026), 105–106; David Gritten, “Iran Nobel Laureate Suffered Suspected Heart Attack in Prison, Family Says,” *BBC News* (2 April 2026); Ghoncheh Habibi-azad & Henri Astier, “Concern for Jailed Iranian Nobel Laureate as Brother Fears She Is Dying,” *BBC News* (3 May 2026).

On 8 January 2026, as part of a violent crackdown on mass anti-government protests in which as many as 20,000 people may have been killed, government forces shot Hamidreza Vatanjou ([2004/5]–2026), a history student at Farhangian University, Isfahan.¹⁴⁹

On 17 February 2026, people around Iran used *chehelom* – a primarily Shia tradition of commemoration ceremonies to mark the fortieth day of a mourning period, in this case for those killed during the government crackdown on mass protests on 8 and 9 January 2026 in which as many as 20,000 people may have been killed – to stage new anti-government protests. At a cemetery in Abdanan, crowds of mourners were reportedly fired on by a security official; the cemetery in Arak was completely closed; security forces were deployed at Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery in Tehran; and in Sanandaj and Qaem Shahr military vehicles and motorcycle police were patrolling the streets to prevent gatherings. Some relatives of people killed during the crackdown reported being surveilled by police, sometimes in plainclothes. Protests also took place at universities across the country despite harassment from pro-government forces and the Basij (a paramilitary volunteer militia used for internal security). On the other hand, state-organized ceremonies were broadcast on television and attended by senior government and military officials, where people were led by organizers to chant “death to America.” In the past, periods of mourning played a crucial role during the downfall of the regime of the Shah in 1978–1979 and after the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*].¹⁵⁰

During the war that broke out between Iran and Israel and the United States (28 February 2026–), Israeli and American airstrikes damaged or destroyed multiple cultural heritage sites:

- On 2 March 2026, the Golestan Palace, built during the Safavid period (1501–1736) and expanded during the Qajar dynasty (1789–1925) when it became the royal residence, was damaged by shock waves from nearby blasts. The damage to the palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, included the shattered hall of mirrors.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ “[Iran: Growing Evidence of Countrywide Massacres](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (16 January 2026); “[University Students Killed in Iran Protests Rises to 25 after Nine More Deaths Confirmed](#),” *HENGAW Organization for Human Rights* (23 January 2026); “[What Happened at the Protests in Iran?](#),” *Amnesty International* (26 January 2026).

¹⁵⁰ Erika Solomon, Leily Nikounazar, and Sanjana Varghese, “[Iranians Mourn Slain Protesters With ‘Revolutionary Rage’](#),” *New York Times* (17 February 2026); Irith Fuks, Georgia Oost & Natalia Toret, “[Iraniërs markeren veertigste dag na bloedige protesten met gespannen herdenkingen](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (17 February 2026); Jake Horton, Ghoncheh Habibiazadand & Sarah Jalali, “[Iran Security Official Appears to Fire on Crowd at Cemetery](#),” *BBC News* (18 February 2026); Maryam Dehkordi, “[Iran’s Universities Reopen to Protest as Students Demand Justice for the Killed](#),” *Iran Wire* (23 February 2026).

¹⁵¹ Farnaz Fassihi, “[Strikes on Iran Damage Cultural Heritage Sites, Infuriating Iranians](#),” *New York Times* (11 March 2026); Julian Borger & Deepa Parent, “[Dismay as Ancient Heritage Sites across Iran Damaged in US-Israel Bombing](#),” *Guardian* (12 March 2026); “[Golestan Palace](#),” *UNESCO World Heritage Center* ([no date]).

- [Between 2 and 4] March 2026, airstrikes damaged the 19th-century Salar Saeed mansion, housing the Sanandaj Archaeological Museum, and the Asef Vaziri mansion in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province.¹⁵²
- On 4 March 2026, the United States (US) Committee of the Blue Shield, a non-governmental organization campaigning to uphold the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols, called on all sites to protect cultural heritage. It expressed special disturbance over comments from US Secretary of War (formerly Secretary of Defense) Pete Hegseth, who stated on 2 March that the US “regardless of what so-called international institutions say, is unleashing the most lethal and precise air power campaign in history ... No stupid rules of engagement.”¹⁵³
- On 8 March 2026, an airstrike severely damaged the Shapur Khast Castle (also known as Falak ol-Aflak, or “Sky of the Skies”) in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province. The castle structure was built during the Sasanian Empire (224–651), used as a prison during the Pahlavi era (1925–1979), and it had subsequently been turned into a museum. [Around the same time], airstrikes damaged the caves and rock shelter formation known as the Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site with evidence of human occupation dating back to the Middle (300,000–50,000 BCE) to Upper Paleolithic era (50,000–10,000 BCE).¹⁵⁴
- On 9 March 2026, Israeli military strikes on Isfahan damaged the Chehel Sotoun Palace and Garden, and the Ali Qapu Palace, both commissioned by the Safavid Shah Abbas I (also known as “The Great”; 1571–1629), the Masjid-e-Jāmeḥ Isfahān (also known as the Friday Mosque), structures of which dated back to the eighth century, and the Naqshe Jahan Square, construction of which began in 1598.¹⁵⁵
- On 15 March 2026, a statement by the cultural heritage ministry claimed that 56 cultural heritage sites had been damaged or destroyed since 28 February, including museums, historic government buildings, traditional bazaars, and mosques.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Julian Borger & Deepa Parent, “[Dismay as Ancient Heritage Sites across Iran Damaged in US-Israel Bombing](#),” *Guardian* (12 March 2026).

¹⁵³ US Committee of the Blue Shields, “[USCBS Releases Statement on the Iran Conflict and Cultural Heritage](#)” (Press release; 4 March 2026).

¹⁵⁴ Farnaz Fassihi, “[Strikes on Iran Damage Cultural Heritage Sites, Infuriating Iranians](#),” *New York Times* (11 March 2026); Julian Borger & Deepa Parent, “[Dismay as Ancient Heritage Sites across Iran Damaged in US-Israel Bombing](#),” *Guardian* (12 March 2026); “[Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley](#),” *UNESCO World Heritage Center* ([no date]).

¹⁵⁵ Farnaz Fassihi, “[Strikes on Iran Damage Cultural Heritage Sites, Infuriating Iranians](#),” *New York Times* (11 March 2026); Julian Borger & Deepa Parent, “[Dismay as Ancient Heritage Sites across Iran Damaged in US-Israel Bombing](#),” *Guardian* (12 March 2026).

¹⁵⁶ “[Iran Says over 50 Cultural Sites Damaged in U.S. and Israeli Strikes](#),” *Africa News* (16 March 2026).

- On [25] March 2026, the Sa'dabad palace complex in Shemiran, near Tehran, which had been used as a summer residence by members of the Qajar (1789–1925) and Pahlavi (1925–1979) dynasties and was turned into a museum after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, was severely damaged.¹⁵⁷

See also Afghanistan, Azerbaijan.

IRAQ

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2025.

On 31 January 2020, a group of armed men from Firkat Al-Mawt (“Death Squad”) kidnapped publisher and writer Mazen Latif, the owner of the Mesopotamia publishing house, which frequently published works by national and international historians on cultural heritage, including most recently the cultural magazine *Nahariya*. He remained missing as of March 2026.¹⁵⁸

On 16 January 2025, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ al-Sudani oversaw the handover of archival documents on crimes of the Baathist era (1968–2003) to the London-based Iraqi Center for Documenting Extremist Crimes, affiliated with the al-Abbas Holy Shrine located in Karbala.¹⁵⁹

See also France, Kuwait.

IRELAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2013, 2015–2016, 2021, 2023, 2025.

On 20 June 2025, the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued its concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ireland. Its experts expressed “deep concern” over the lack of recognition for women and children who resided or were confined in State-funded institutions operated until the late 1990s by religious orders, including the “mother and baby homes” for unmarried women to give birth, “Magdalene laundries” where women

¹⁵⁷ Danielle Pinedo & Toef Jaeger, “[‘Als cultureel erfgoed met opzet wordt verwoest, kun je spreken van een oorlogsmisdaad’](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (27 March 2026).

¹⁵⁸ “[Sixth Periodic Report on Violations during Popular Demonstrations](#),” *Gulf Center for Human Rights* (3 July 2020); “[Mazen Latif](#),” *PEN International* ([no date]).

¹⁵⁹ “[Sudani Oversees Handover of Baath Crime Archives in London](#),” *Rudaw* (17 January 2025).

and girls were forced to live and work, and institutional homes for children [See NCH *Annual Reports 2013, 2015–2016, 2023, 2025*]. The committee experts further called on the government to remove outstanding arbitrary barriers to redress for survivors.¹⁶⁰

On 27 November 2025, historian Kerby Miller turned down an honorary doctorate conferred by the University of Galway because its ongoing research program Asterisk involved the Technion Institute of Technology in Haifa, which developed defense and security technology. Miller was due to be recognized for his donation in 2021 of emigrant letters, sent from around the world, over more than 300 years, kickstarting the so-called Imirce digital archive. Several others similarly refused the honor.¹⁶¹

See also United Kingdom.

ISRAEL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000–2003, 2008–2014, 2016–2025.

On 22 January 2025, several United Nations (UN) Special Procedures expressed concern over allegations of recent human rights violations related to Israel's invasion of Lebanon, causing civilian casualties and massive destruction of civilian objects, including cultural heritage sites and places of religious worship, and triggering mass forced displacement. The concern followed the 3 January 2025 allegations letter on cultural heritage destruction in Palestine [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].¹⁶²

Between late April and 8 August 2025, and increasingly between 8 August and 13 December 2025, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly bulldozed part of the Gaza war cemetery in al-Tuffah, destroying graves of dozens of soldiers killed in World War I (1914–1918) and World War Two (1939–1945), and part of the Indian United Nations (UN) memorial and the cemetery for Canadian UN peacekeepers.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, "[Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Praise Ireland for Increasing Women's Representation in Decision-Making, Raise Issues Concerning Historic Rights Violations and Sexual Violence](#)" (meeting summary; 20 June 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 212.

¹⁶¹ Pat McGrath, "[Third Person Turns Down Doctorate from University of Galway over Links to Israel](#)," *RTE* (26 November 2025).

¹⁶² United Nations Special Procedures, [Allegations Letter AL ISR 1/2025](#) (22 January 2025).

¹⁶³ Seham Tantes, Julian Borger & Ben Doherty, "[Revealed: Israel Bulldozed Part of Gaza War Cemetery Containing Allied Graves](#)," *Guardian* (4 February 2026).

On 23 September 2025, six United Nations (UN) Special Mechanisms criticized the Prohibition of Denial of Massacre Incidents of 7 October 2023 (Shemini Atzeret Massacre) Law, criminalizing the public denial, minimization, or celebration of the Hamas-led attacks and enacted on 21 January 2025, observing that it risked suppressing legitimate discourse, deterring engagement with sensitive historical and political issues, and impermissibly restricting freedom of expression by policing a singular State-approved interpretation of the historical truth and punishing dissenting viewpoints. They also stated that the attacks on 7 and 8 October 2023 occurred in recent history, the precise details of which were still the subject of an ongoing debate among the Israeli and Palestinian populations, historians, experts, and the international community; and that there had not yet been a thorough independent investigation by Israel itself.¹⁶⁴

In November 2025, news broke that possibly since the 1960s, Harvard University, Cambridge, Ma., United States, housed a secret facility dedicated to preserving everything published in Israel as part of an effort to safeguard the country's cultural and scientific output in case the State ceased to exist. The archive contained roughly one million archival items and tens of thousands of volumes and works across disciplines representing Israeli culture, all cataloged and stored in large underground halls. The project was led by Jewish scholar Charles Berlin, but criticized, among others by Moshe Mosk, National Archivist from 1984–2008, because of the project's premise that Israel might not survive.¹⁶⁵

According to a 6 November 2025 report in *The Palestinian Chronicle*, Israel targeted platforms and online archives to erase the evidence of Israel's genocide in Gaza (2023–), using paid and instructed propagandists to reshape the historical record. Among the censored platforms were critics of the Israeli government, such as the Palestinian human rights groups Al-Haq, the Al-Mezan Center, and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.¹⁶⁶

On 6 March 2026, nine United Nations Special Mechanisms warned against “the irreversible ‘de-Palestinization’ of Jerusalem” and expressed concern that “[u]nder the cover of an existential war against the Palestinians, Israel [was] accelerating measures that alter[ed] Jerusalem's demographic composition, religious character and legal status, destroying the remnants of the pluralistic fabric that Jerusalem ha[d] represented for centuries, for Muslims, Christians and Jews.” One of several aspects they mentioned were the sweeping restrictions on Palestinian access to holy sites. 73,871 settler incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound were reported in 2025 alone. Christian communities

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Special Procedures, [Allegations Letter OL ISR 20/2025](#) (23 September 2025).

¹⁶⁵ Zein Khalil & Mohammad Sio, “[Secret Harvard Archive Preserves Israeli Publications ‘in Case Israel Ceases to Exist’](#),” *Anadolu Agency* (15 November 2025).

¹⁶⁶ Robert Inlakesh, “[Censorship Crusade: Israel Targets Platforms and Online Archives to ‘Rewrite Gaza’](#),” *Palestinian Chronicle* (6 November 2025).

had faced assaults and restrictions, particularly during religious observances. The UN Mechanisms said that “[w]hat [was] unfolding mirrors colonial enterprises of past centuries, carried out in real time.”¹⁶⁷

On 11 May 2026, the Knesset (parliament) adopted the Law for the Prosecution of the October 7 Massacre, establishing a special military tribunal to prosecute people accused of participation in the 7 October 2023 massacre and its aftermath, in which Hamas forces killed an estimated 1,200 people and kidnapped an estimated 240 people. The tribunal, whose proceedings would be livestreamed, was criticized for allowing death penalties on a majority vote, disabling means of effective defense violating the right to a fair trial, and excluding defendants, some of whom had already been held in pre-trial detention for almost three years and had reportedly been tortured, from trial proceedings. Israeli lawyer Smadar Ben-Natan described the tribunal as “show trials that will last a decade” and an attempt to create a spectacle akin to the 1961 trial of Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann.¹⁶⁸

See also Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Iran, Ireland, Netherlands, Palestine, Serbia, United Kingdom, United States.

ITALY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016–2019, 2021–2022, 2024–2025.

On 19 January 2025, the authorities arrested Osama Elmasry Njeem (Najim), a general and former chief of Libya’s judicial police sought by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, including torturing someone to death at Mitiga prison. Two days later, he was released and flown on a government aircraft to the Libyan capital Tripoli. The release prompted outrage within Italy, where Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (in office 2022–) and three cabinet members were shortly under investigation on suspicion of aiding and abetting a criminal and embezzlement of public funds over the use of the air force jet. On 17 October 2025, ICC judges found that the Meloni government had failed to comply with its obligations under the 2002 Rome Statute. On 5 November 2025, the Libyan General Prosecutor announced Njeem’s arrest.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[UN Experts Warn against the Irreversible ‘De-Palestinisation’ of Jerusalem](#)” (Press release; 6 March 2026).

¹⁶⁸ Peter Beaumont, “[Israeli MPs Back Special Tribunal with Death Penalty Powers for Alleged 7 October Attackers](#),” *Guardian* (12 May 2026); Smadar Ben-Natan, “[Israel’s Military Court for October 7: Abdicating Truth and Justice](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (23 June 2026).

¹⁶⁹ Angela Giuffrida, “[Giorgia Meloni Says She Is under Investigation for Repatriation of Libyan Warlord](#),” *Guardian* (28 January 2026); Angela Giuffrida, “[Libyan General Accused of Crimes against Humanity](#)”

On 16 April 2026, the Court of First Instance in Rome acquitted anti-mafia writer Roberto Saviano (1979–) of criminal defamation in the trial initiated by Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the right-wing Lega political party, Matteo Salvini (1973–) on 1 February 2023. Saviano had been charged with defamation under Article 595 of the Italian Penal Code for some statements published in a widely shared video on social media in June 2018, a few days after the Lega-M5S government took office, in which he had accused Salvini, then Interior Minister, of ignoring the mafia stranglehold on Italy's south and stirring up resentment against immigrants. He called him “Il Ministro della Mala Vita” (minister of the underworld), a phrase borrowed from anti-Fascist historian Gaetano Salvemini (1873–1957), who used it in 1910 as the title of a book against the then Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti (1842–1928), accusing him of winning elections with the support of criminals. In 2023, Saviano had lost a defamation trial, against Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (1977–).¹⁷⁰

See also Malaysia, United States.

IVORY COAST (Côte d'Ivoire)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2004, 2006–2021, 2025.

[Arrested in Tripoli](#),” *Guardian* (5 November 2025); Pranav Baskar & Elisabetta Povoledo, “[Libya Detains Prison Director Wanted for Crimes Against Humanity](#),” *New York Times* (5 November 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 282.

¹⁷⁰ PEN International, “[Criminal Defamation Charges against Writer Roberto Saviano Must Be Dropped: Statement](#)” (31 January 2023); PEN International, “[Roberto Saviano](#)” (21 March 2025); PEN International, “[Italy: Writer and Journalist Roberto Saviano Facing Prison for Defamation](#)” (4 April 2025); “[‘Shame on You’: Saviano against Salvini in the Courtroom at the Libel Trial](#),” *Il Sole 24 Ore* (25 June 2025); Media Freedom Rapid Response, “[Italy: Landmark Ruling in Roberto Saviano’s case](#),” *Article 19* (21 April 2026).

JAMAICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018, 2025.

See United States.

JAPAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2025.

On 17 January 2025, the government enacted a law offering compensation to victims of sterilization under a 1948 eugenics law, which had caused at least 16,500 people to be forcibly sterilized, with another 8,500 likely having consented under great pressure. The compensation law followed a July 2024 Supreme Court order [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. By late November 2025, only 1,560 claims had been approved, with victims struggling to gather evidence, such as old medical records. Victims' groups highlighted that some people were unaware that surgery had been performed on them.¹⁷¹

On 15 August 2025, marking the eightieth anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, agriculture minister Shinjiro Koizumi visited the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo – a memorial for 2.5 million victims of war, including since 1978 fourteen convicted war criminals, which was considered a glorification of the militaristic and colonial past [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2024*].¹⁷²

On 6 March 2026, eight United Nations Mechanisms expressed concern at the continued lack of justice for survivors of the so-called “comfort women” system – the system in which an estimated 200,000 women and girls were forced into prostitution by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War (1931–1945) [See NCH *Annual Reports 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005–2006, 2009–2011, 2013, 2017–2018, 2025* under Japan, NCH *Annual Report 2016–2018, 2020–2021, 2024* under South Korea, NCH *Annual Report 2023* under Philippines, and NCH *Annual Report 2021*, under United States]. They said that previous efforts to address the issue, such as the 2015 bilateral agreement between Japan and South Korea, failed to deliver survivor-centered justice and that States from which victims and survivors originated (South Korea, China, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Netherlands, and the Philippines) bore obligations to facilitate their access to justice and redress. The Mechanisms added that “[s]overeign immunity should not serve as grounds to waive accountability for war crimes and crimes against

¹⁷¹ Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 221.

¹⁷² [“Japan Minister Visits Controversial Shrine to Mark World War II Anniversary,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (15 August 2025).

humanity” and that “[t]he denial of atrocities by high-level officials and the harassment of victims, survivor-led organizations, academics, and journalists, seriously undermine[d] efforts toward accountability and redress.”¹⁷³

JORDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2004, 2015, 2018, 2022–2023.

In late 2024, authorities began a second campaign of forced resettlement of the Bedul community from the area around the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Petra. The community, whose knowledge of Petra and Wadi Rum was part of UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, was denied access to water and housing and faced detention. Authorities claimed that the evictions were aimed at protecting the site, an important tourist attraction and source of government revenue, but they were criticized for violating the economic, social, and cultural rights of the community. An earlier government campaign of forced relocations took place in 1985.¹⁷⁴

See also Palestine.

¹⁷³ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Justice, Truth and Reparations Long Overdue for Survivors of So-Called ‘Comfort Women’ System: UN Experts](#)” (Press release; 6 March 2026).

¹⁷⁴ “[Jordan: Petra’s Bedul Bedouin Community Displaced](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (21 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 259; “[Cultural Space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum](#),” UNESCO ([no date]).

KAZAKHSTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2001, 2007, 2012, 2022, 2024–2025.

On 12 November 2025, the Lower House of Parliament approved a draft law on archival regulations and restrictions on the dissemination of illegal content. A section of the bill included measures intended to protect children from materials deemed harmful to their health and development, prohibiting the public or online distribution of information that contained “propaganda of pedophilia and/or nontraditional sexual orientation.” Several international human rights organizations condemned the section, saying that it violated Kazakhstan’s international commitments and noting that it was unrelated to the law’s primary focus on archival matters and added only after the bill’s first reading. The bill had to go to the Senate for another reading.¹⁷⁵

KENYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2018, 2020–2025.

On 7 July 2025, the thirty-fifth anniversary of Saba Saba day (“seven seven” in Kiswahili, referencing the seventh day of the seventh month) commemorating the national protests that began in 1990 and led to the reestablishment of multi-party democracy a year later, security forces killed at least 31 people, with another two disappeared, 107 wounded, and 532 arrested. They came amid more than a year of mostly youth-led protests that have swept across Kenya since June 2024.¹⁷⁶

In August 2025, the National Environmental Tribunal revoked the license of Super Cement, an Abu Dhabi-based cement production firm, to extract limestone on Chasimba, citing the historical and cultural value of the land’s ancestral prayer caves. The decision followed six years of protest by scientists, environmentalists, and members of the Chonyi community, for whom the caves hold spiritual significance and contain the remains of ancestors.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Daniil Devyatkin, “[Human Rights Groups Slam Kazakhstan’s ‘Russia-Style’ LGBT Propaganda Law](#),” *Kursiv* (12 November 2025).

¹⁷⁶ “[At Least 31 Dead, 532 Arrested in Kenya’s Antigovernment Protests](#),” *Al Jazeera* (9 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 268.

¹⁷⁷ Sarah Hurtes & Mohamed Ahmed, “[How Kenyan Villagers Saved Their Sacred Caves From a Mining Company](#),” *New York Times* (19 September 2025).

On 4 December 2025, the Kerugoya High Court ruled that an 18-member Panel of Experts – appointed in August by President William Ruto (in office 2022–) “to design and establish an operational framework to verify, categorize, and compensate eligible victims” of police violence during anti-government demonstrations since 2017 – was “constitutionally invalid” and violated executive authority over oversight and redress mechanisms for human rights violations that fell under the authority of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Ruto subsequently converted the panel into a government advisory body.¹⁷⁸

KIRIBATI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

KOSOVO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2025.

For entries before 2021: *See* Serbia.

In February 2025, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in The Hague upheld the fifteen-year prison sentence of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commander Salih Mustafa [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021, 2023, 2025*].¹⁷⁹

On 23 January 2026, Prime Minister Albin Kurti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić agreed to form a Joint Commission on Missing Persons – part of the 2023 Declaration of Missing Persons following a European Union-led dialogue process began in 2013 – to cooperate and share information about the fate of people whose remains were still missing after the Kosovo War (1998–1999) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021, 2023*].¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ James Murimi, “[Ruto Suffers Setback As Court Nullifies His Panel on Protest Victims](#),” *Dawan Africa* (4 December 2025); Joseph Wangui, “[Ruto Converts Victims Compensation Panel into Advisory Body](#),” *Daily Nation* (10 January 2026); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 267.

¹⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 392.

¹⁸⁰ Xhorxhina Bami & Milica Stojanovic, “[Kosovo and Serbia Kick Off Joint Commission on Missing Persons](#),” *Balkan Insight* (23 January 2026).

KUWAIT

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2018, 2021, 2024–2025.

On 17 September 2025, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted a resolution on the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait regarding the return of Kuwaiti property, including the National Archives, and the search for and repatriation or return of all missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing Gulf War (1990–1991). It requested the appointment of a UN Senior Representative to that end [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2003–2005, 2017–2018, 2021].¹⁸¹

KYRGYZSTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010–2013, 2016–2017, 2021–2022, 2025.

On 7 June 2025, authorities in Osh dismantled a 23-meter statue of Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), originally installed in 1975, and relocated it to a city park. Officials said that they intended to improve the city's architectural landscape, not to “politicize” the issue, but many saw it as signifying a broader trend of de-Sovietization. In 2022, after six years of renovation, the National Historical Museum of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek had reopened, with many of the Soviet-era displays, including sections on the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and statues of Lenin and Karl Marx (1818–1883), replaced by pre-Soviet history.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ United Nations Security Council, [S/RES/2792\(2025\)](#) (17 September 2025); “[Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2792 \(2025\), Security Council Requests Appointment of Senior Official to Address Fate of Missing Persons in Gulf War](#)” (17 September 2025).

¹⁸² Aliya Haidar & Anton Chipegin, “[Lenin Falls in Osh: Central Asia Redefines Its Soviet Legacy](#),” *Times of Central Asia* (10 June 2025).

LAOS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2023.

LATVIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2006, 2008, 2015–2016, 2019, 2022–2023.

On 24 February 2026, the Russian-Australian historian Andrei Lankov ([1963/64]–), a lecturer at Kookmin University, Seoul, South Korea, was detained just before a public lecture on North Korean elites in Riga and expelled from Latvia to Estonia after having been declared *persona non grata* on 20 February. Lankov believed that he was deported for his “excessively objective views” on North Korea. A native of Soviet Leningrad, now Saint Petersburg, Lankov studied in Pyongyang, North Korea, as an exchange student in 1984–1985. He was the director at NK News and its parent company Korea Risk Group. He was previously fined in Russia over his “activities” in an “undesirable organization,” probably related to his work with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a United States–based think tank.¹⁸³

LEBANON

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2003, 2006–2025.

On 10 March 2025, Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation Jamal Al-Hajjar annulled the January 2023 ruling by his predecessor Ghassan Oueidat that had barred cooperation with the lead investigator of the domestic inquiry into the 2020 Beirut explosion, Tarek Bitar [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2021, 2023–2025]. The case was one of 43 lawsuits filed against Bitar in an attempt to suspend his investigation, including another one by Oueidat – who was among eight people being charged by Bitar in January 2023 [See NCH *Annual Report* 2025]. After Al-Hajjar’s ruling, several people appeared for questioning for the first time in years, including former Prime Minister Hassan Diab (in office January 2020–August 2020), Major General Abbas Ibrahim, and Major General Tony Saliba. Others, including Oueidat and members of parliament Ali Hassan Khalil and Ghazi Zaiter, refused to appear. On [11]

¹⁸³ Anton Sokolin, “[North Korea Scholar Andrei Lankov Detained in Latvia Before Lecture](#),” *NK News* (25 February 2026); “[Russian Scholar of North Korea Says He Was Detained and Expelled From Latvia](#),” *Moscow Times* (25 February 2026).

February 2026, the Beirut Indictment Chamber confirmed an earlier ruling rejecting attempts to prosecute Bitar.¹⁸⁴

See also Israel, Syria.

LESOTHO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

LIBERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2001, 2004–2015, 2018, 2021, 2024–2025.

LIBYA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2005–2021, 2023–2025.

On 12 May 2025, the Government of National Unity led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah (in office 2021–) declared its acceptance of the International Criminal Court (ICC)’s jurisdiction “with respect to alleged crimes in its territory from 2011 (the beginning of the protests against longtime dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi [1942–2011; in office 1979–2011]) to the end of 2027.” ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan subsequently confirmed that his office would complete active investigations in Libya by the first quarter of 2026.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Youssef Diab, “[Judicial Development Reopens Probe into Beirut Port Explosion](#),” *Asharq al-Awsat* (11 March 2025); “[Joint Letter: Protect Beirut Blast Investigation from Interference and Obstruction](#),” *Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy* (27 March 2025); “[Lebanon: Five Years Without Justice for Port Explosion Victims](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (4 August 2025); “[Blast Investigator Tarek Bitar to Interrogate Rhosus Ship Owner](#),” *This Is Beirut* (11 December 2025); Caolán Magee, “[Bulgarian Court Rejects Lebanon’s Extradition Request over Beirut Blast](#),” *Al Jazeera* (11 December 2025); “[Court Confirms Decision to Block Prosecution of Tarek Bitar](#),” *LBC International* (11 February 2026); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 276.

¹⁸⁵ “[Libya’s Acceptance of the International Criminal Court’s Jurisdiction: Stakes and Implications](#),” *International Commission of Jurists* (2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 282.

On 16 June 2025, German authorities arrested Khaled Mohamed Ali El Hishri, known as “Al-Buti,” at Berlin Brandenburg Airport. On 1 December, they surrendered him to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity while working at Mitiga prison. El Hishri’s trial was the first under the ICC’s ongoing investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Libya since 2011 (*See* item above). The ICC had issued eight other warrants, including for Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi (1972–2026), the son of former dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi (1942–2011; in office 1979–2011), who was killed at his home on 3 February 2026.¹⁸⁶

On 30 August 2025, the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expressed “alarm at the pervasive and systematic practice of enforced disappearances across the country” and called for a “coordinated national effort to clarify the fate of all missing persons” to ensure victims’ and relatives’ right to truth. In an August 2024 report, UNSMIL and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights documented widespread and systematic human rights violations and abuses by al-Kaniyat military forces (2013–2020) and numerous human rights violations and abuses by armed forces aligned to the Government of National Unity (2020–2022) around Tarhuna. As of August 2025, 67 people in the Tarhuna area remained missing.¹⁸⁷

On 3 February 2026, an e-archiving project was launched in the presence of Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Imran Al-Qayeb. With the support of the University of Tripoli, it aimed to preserve more than 30 million historical documents at the Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies and to digitize documents that formed the national memory across various historical periods (including colonial-era records and records of indigenous, oral, and post-independence intellectual history) and highlighted Libyan-centric perspectives.¹⁸⁸

See also Italy.

¹⁸⁶ William Christon & Oliver Holmes, “[Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Son of Ex-Libyan Leader, Killed, Say Officials](#),” *Guardian* (4 February 2026); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 282.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Tarhuna - Mass Graves and Related Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Libya](#) (August 2024); United Nations Support Mission in Libya, “[Statement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya on the Occasion of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances](#)” (Press release; 30 August 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 282.

¹⁸⁸ Wagdy Sawahel, “[E-history Archive Launched as Decolonization of Knowledge](#),” *University World News* (13 February 2026).

LIECHTENSTEIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

LITHUANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005, 2009, 2015, 2018, 2021–2022.

See Belarus.

LUXEMBOURG

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

See Ukraine.

MADAGASCAR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018, 2025.

On 26 August 2025, the French government returned four skulls taken after the 1897 Ambiky massacre and previously held at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. It was presumed that one of the skulls belonged to Menabe King Toera (died 1897).¹⁸⁹

MALAWI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2012, 2019, 2021, 2024.

MALAYSIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2002, 2007–2008, 2010–2011, 2016–2017, 2019–2024.

On 29 September 2025, Murray Hunter, an Australian journalist, academic, and author of several books on Malaysian history, economy, and politics, was detained by Thai police forces at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok while preparing to board a flight. He was released on bail the next day, but had his passport confiscated preventing him from leaving Thailand. On 17 November 2025, a Thai court indicted him on four counts of criminal defamation under Section 328 of the Thai Criminal Code, each carrying a potential sentence of up to two years' imprisonment and a fine. The arrest and court case followed a civil defamation case, filed by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in April 2024, after Murray had criticized the MCMC for reportedly blocking websites considered critical of the government. On 17 January 2026, Hunter and the MCMC reached a settlement, and charges against him were dropped. The actions of the MCMC were criticized by PEN International as transnational legal harassment and a case of SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit against Political participation).¹⁹⁰

On 31 October 2025, controversy erupted over the claim by Solehah Yaacob, an Arabic linguistics lecturer and historical linguist at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), that the ancient Romans learned shipbuilding from the Malays. She made the claim first during a public lecture at a

¹⁸⁹ “[France Returns Three Colonial-Era Skulls to Madagascar](#),” *Africa News* (27 August 2025).

¹⁹⁰ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 61–62.

mosque in Selangor on 31 December 2022, but it came under public spotlight after a video of the lecture was posted on YouTube channel Nota Kuliah on 31 October 2025. In response to the uproar, IIUM on 6 November expressed regret over the claims and in mid-November announced an internal inquiry panel – including historian Zaid Ahmad and dean of IIUM’s International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization Hazizan Noon – to examine the claim, pending disciplinary proceedings.

The claim was widely dismissed as pseudohistory. On 6 November, Wan Ramli Wan Daud, an emeritus historian of Malay technology at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, said that there was no archaeological evidence or historical record to back it. In a 15-page paper, Azizi Othman, a doctor of Business Administration from Asia e University, refuted the claim arguing that the Romans were already building advanced warships hundreds of years before they had any significant contact with Southeast Asia. The time gap of several centuries “fundamentally undermines claims of knowledge transfer from Malays to Romans.” The paper warned against “presentist revisionism,” arguing that pseudohistorical claims undermined legitimate historical scholarship.

On 10 November, the issue reached Parliament, where at least two government lawmakers pressed the National Unity Ministry to address the controversy. Democratic Action Party Member of Parliament Syerleena Abdul Rashid said that many historians had debunked the claim as “baseless manipulation of history.” Yaacob had a history of making controversial claims.¹⁹¹

In January 2026, when launching the National Education Blueprint (RPN) 2026–2035, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that compulsory subjects covering the Federal Constitution and Malaysian History, to be taught in Malay, would be included in the curriculum of all Malaysian students in higher education institutions, public as well as private, starting in 2026. He emphasized that mastering the subject was essential for safeguarding the nation and part of broader efforts to strengthen national identity and civic awareness among the youth.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ “[No Evidence Romans Learnt Shipbuilding from Malay Sailors, Says Historian, amid Academic’s Claims](#),” *Straits Times* (6 November 2025); Zaf Seraj, “[Ramasamy: IIUM’s Response to Critics of Professor’s Roman Shipbuilding Claims ‘Weak’](#),” *New Straits Times* (8 November 2026); “[IIUM Lecturer Defends Claim Romans Learned Shipbuilding from Malays](#),” *Free Malaysia Today* (9 November 2025); Azizi Othman, “[A Mediterranean Meltdown: Evaluating IIUM’s Associate Professor Dr Solehah Yaacob’s Claim That Romans Learned Shipbuilding from Malays](#),” *ResearchGate* (November 2025); Fernando Fong, “[How To Sink a Theory: Inside the Academic Takedown of Malaysia’s Roman Shipbuilding Claim](#),” *The Rakyat Post* (11 November 2025); Hazlin Hassan, “[Romans Learnt Shipbuilding from Malays? Malaysian Academia’s Integrity in Question after Claim](#),” *Straits Times* (11 November 2025).

¹⁹² Bernama, “[Malaysian Universities to Make Constitution and History Compulsory Subjects](#),” *The Sun* (20 January 2026).

MALDIVES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2013, 2020–2021, 2024.

MALI

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011, 2013–2021, 2023–2025.

On 11 August 2025, the military government started returning historic manuscripts from the capital Bamako to community elders in Timbuktu. The manuscripts had been secretly removed from Timbuktu after its occupation by al-Qaida-linked militants in 2012. The militants had destroyed more than 4,000 manuscripts (some dating back to the thirteenth century), nine mausoleums, and a mosque's door. Most of the documents (more than 27,000) had been saved by librarians, who carried them out of Timbuktu in rice sacks, on donkey carts, by motorcycle, by boat, and four-wheel drive vehicles [*See NCH Annual Reports 2013, 2016–2018, 2021, 2024*].¹⁹³

See also Niger.

MALTA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012, 2021, 2024.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015, 2025.

¹⁹³ Baba Ahmed, "[Saved from Militants, Timbuktu's Famed Manuscripts Return Home after 13 Years in Mali's Capital](#)," *City News* (11 August 2025).

MAURITANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2009, 2011, 2017, 2019–2020, 2024.

Throughout 2025, Saif al-Islam ([1947/8]–), librarian and custodian of Al Ahmed Mahmoud Library Foundation, continued the maintenance and protection of manuscripts in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Chinguetti against encroaching desertification and violence spilling over from the armed conflict in neighboring Mali (2012–). Between the eighth and seventeenth centuries, Chinguetti served as an important caravan stop in the trans-Saharan trades and as a gathering place for hujjaj (pilgrims) on their way to Mecca and a center for scholarship, earning it the nickname “city of libraries.” The remaining libraries in Chinguetti were estimated to hold more than 2,000 volumes, including Quranic manuscripts and books on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, poetry, and legal jurisprudence dating as far back as the eleventh century.¹⁹⁴

MAURITIUS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2012, 2025.

On 8 December 2025, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed “deep concern” over the May 2025 agreement between the United Kingdom (UK) and Mauritius to transfer the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Islands from the former to the latter [See NCH *Annual Report* 2025]. The CERD expressed concern over a provision in the agreement that would lease the island of Diego Garcia, which hosted a joint UK-United States military base, to the UK for 99 years, with the possibility of a forty-year extension. It noted that the provision “explicitly prevent[ed] the return of the Chagossian people to their ancestral lands in Diego Garcia Island” and prevented them “from exercising their cultural rights and preserving their cultural heritage.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Eromo Egbejule & Ely Cheikh Mohamed Vadel, “[The Man on a Mission to Save Mauritania’s ‘City of Libraries’ from Encroaching Desert Sands](#),” *Guardian* (12 November 2025); Jordi Busqué, “[Mauritania: A Rare Glimpse at One of the World’s Least-Visited Nations](#),” *BBC News* (12 July 2026); Olga Khrustaleva, “[Chinguetti: Mauritania’s Ancient Saharan City](#),” *BBC News* (10 July 2020).

¹⁹⁵ Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, “[UK and Mauritius’ Chagos Agreement Raises Concerns over Chagossian People’s Rights, UN Committee Warns](#)” (Press release; 8 December 2025).

MEXICO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2001–2025.

In early May 2025, Tania Contreras López filed a defamation lawsuit and a gender-based violence lawsuit against journalist and historian Héctor de Mauleón. The lawsuits followed a 1 May article by de Mauleón, in which he reported on alleged corruption and family links between public officials and Contreras López, who was running to become magistrate. Contreras López’s complaint was initially dismissed, but an appeals court ordered a special sanctioning procedure against de Mauleón and the newspaper *El Universal*, in which he published the article. On 15 May, the Instituto Electoral de Tamaulipas (Electoral Institute of Tamaulipas; IETAM) ordered de Mauleón to refrain from further publications, and *El Universal* to remove the article. *El Universal* refused.¹⁹⁶

On 10 July 2025, in its tenth periodic report on Mexico, the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) called on the government to formally recognize “mujeres buscadoras” (women, often mothers, who searched for disappeared people) as a special category of human rights defenders, monitor the specific violence they experience, provide comprehensive reparation for the damage they suffered, and include them in truth-seeking and memorialization processes. Already in February 2024, human rights organizations had reported that sixteen members of “search collectives” – groups, often set up by victim’s families, that investigated disappearances in the absence of effective government action – had been killed during the administration of former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (in office 2018–2024) [See NCH *Annual Report 2025* and item below].¹⁹⁷

In late July 2025, Alessandra Rojo de la Vega, mayor of the borough of Cuauhtémoc in Mexico City, ordered the removal of statues of former Cuban leaders Fidel Castro (1926–2016) and Che Guevara (1928–1967), calling them “murderers” who should not be commemorated. The order drew widespread criticism, including from President Claudia Sheinbaum who called the order “illegal” and said that it showed “total intolerance.” Rojo de la Vega responded to Sheinbaum’s criticism by pointing to the latter’s decisions to remove a commemoration plaque for former President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1911–

¹⁹⁶ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 41.

¹⁹⁷ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, “[Concluding Observations on the Tenth Periodic Report of Mexico](#)” (10 July 2025), 18–19; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 253–254.

1979; in office 1964–1970) and a statue of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) in 2020 (*See* item below).¹⁹⁸

In September 2025, the Senate appointed thirteen members, including relatives of the disappeared, experts, and members of civil society organizations, to the Sistema Nacional de Búsqueda's (National Search System) Citizen Council [*See* NCH *Annual Reports 2019–2020*]. The Council had been inactive for sixteen months (*See* item above).¹⁹⁹

On 5 September 2025, workers of the Mexico City government began removing the fences surrounding the Glorieta de las Mujeres que Luchan (Women Who Fight Roundabout), but after pressure from various activists and civil society organizations returned them. The roundabout featured a wooden statue titled Antimonumenta Vivas Nos Queremos (Anti-monument “We Want Them to Be Alive”), also known as Justicia, featuring a girl holding up one arm in a sign of protest. The statue had been installed by an anonymous feminist group after municipal authorities had removed a previous statue of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) on 10 October 2020 [*See* NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2022* and item above]. In June 2023, authorities had placed fences at the roundabout to remove the wooden statue and replace it with a replica of *La joven de Amajac* (the young woman of Amajac), a sculpture from the Huastec civilization (tenth century BCE–1520s) [*See* NCH *Annual Reports 2022, 2024*]. However, after protests the wooden statue was kept, and the fences had since then become part of the roundabout site, featuring the names of hundreds of women who were killed in femicides.²⁰⁰

On 2 April 2026, the United Nations (UN) Committee on Enforced Disappearances (UNCED) activated an article 34 procedure concluding that “the information it has received appears to contain well-founded indications that enforced disappearances in Mexico have been and continue to be committed as crimes against humanity.” The decision to activate article 34 of the International Convention against Enforced Disappearance – which allowed the UNCED to bring a matter to the attention of the UN General Assembly if it received well-founded information that enforced disappearance was practiced on a widespread or systematic basis in a States Party – was hailed by international human rights organizations as a historic first. President Claudia Sheinbaum denied the existence of enforced disappearances, and the Senate called for UNCED chair, Ecuadorian law professor Juan Pablo Albán

¹⁹⁸ James Wagner, “[Removal of Castro and Guevara Statues Ignites Outcry in Mexico](#),” *New York Times* (26 July 2025).

¹⁹⁹ Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 253–254.

²⁰⁰ Ximena Arochi, “[Trabajadores de la CDMX retiran tapiales de la Glorieta de las Mujeres que Luchan](#),” *Proceso* (5 September 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 252–253; “[Glorieta de las mujeres que luchan](#),” *Wikipedia* (last edited 28 March 2026).

Alencastro, to be sanctioned for “speculating.” The Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos (National Human Rights Commission) also denied a crisis of enforced disappearances and questioned UNCED’s decision.²⁰¹

See also United States.

MICRONESIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

MOLDOVA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1999, 2003, 2010, 2022–2024.

MONGOLIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007, 2013.

MONTENEGRO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2008–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017, 2021–2025.

On 20 April 2026, president of the Montenegrin parliament and leader of the Nova srpska demokratija (NOVA; New Serb Democracy) party, Andrija Mandić, announced that parliament would mark 21 April as a day of remembrance for victims of genocide in the World War II concentration camps at Jasenovac (Croatia), Mauthausen (Austria), and Dachau (Germany). The decision to commemorate the victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp – in which between August 1941 and April 1945 the Croatian fascist Ustaše organization killed at least 85,000 predominantly ethnic Serbs, Romani, and

²⁰¹ United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances, “[Mexico: UN Committee Requests General Assembly Consideration of Enforced Disappearance Situation](#)” (Press release; 2 April 2026); “[Historic Decision: The Committee on Enforced Disappearances Takes Enforced Disappearances in Mexico to the United Nations General Assembly](#),” *International Federation for Human Rights* (2 April 2026); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 253–254.

Jewish people, with the final number estimated to be much higher [See NCH *Annual Reports 1996, 2017, 2020, 2024* under Croatia, and *Annual Report 2023* under Serbia] – was condemned by Croatian politicians as politically motivated and divisive. Croatian minister of foreign affairs Gordan Grlić-Radman recognized the commemoration of victims of the Ustaše regime as “necessary and morally binding,” but accused the NOVA members of parliament of “not acting sincerely” and having “the least right to speak about Jasenovac,” alleging that they identified with the wartime Četnik movement [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021, 2025* under Serbia] and denied the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. In May 2024, Mandić had announced that representatives of the Serbian people in Montenegro would propose a resolution in parliament about the Jasenovac concentration camp in Croatia along the lines of the then pending (and later adopted) United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Srebrenica [See NCH *Annual Report 2024* under Bosnia and Herzegovina, and *Annual Reports 2024–2025* under Croatia].²⁰²

MOROCCO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2013, 2015–2018, 2020–2025.

Throughout 2025, historian and human rights activist Maâti Monjib (1962–) remained unable to leave the country because of the travel ban imposed on him in 2020 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2016, 2020–2025*].²⁰³

See also Algeria, Spain.

MOZAMBIQUE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018, 2020, 2023–2024.

²⁰² Predrag Milic, “[Montenegro’s Jasenovac Commemoration Move Sparks Tensions with Croatia](#),” *Balkan Insight* (20 April 2026).

²⁰³ PEN International, [Writers under Siege: Defying Silence](#) (London: PEN International, 2026), 107.

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997–2001, 2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2025.

On 24 July 2025, the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace & Human Rights (ARSPHR) announced the launch of the Rohingya Atrocities Archive, a digital repository about the persecution of Rohingyas, including during the military operations in 2016–2017. ARSPHR was founded by Rohingya community leader Mohib Ullah (1971–2021) in 2017 to provide Rohingya refugees with a platform to document their stories and advocate for their rights. He was assassinated in 2021 [*See NCH Annual Reports 2018–2021, 2025*].²⁰⁴

On 29 September 2025, the United Nations (UN) Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) – set up in 2018 by the UN Human Rights Council to collect and preserve evidence of mass human rights violations, including allegations of crimes against humanity and genocide of Rohingya people since 2017 [*See NCH Annual Reports 2018–2021, 2025*] – published a new report, documenting the seizure and destruction of Rohingya land, property, and heritage since 2017. It found that “[b]y paving over sacred and communal spaces, the authorities obliterated material proof of Rohingya history, making future claims of belonging or return more difficult” and “[b]y destroying cultural and religious property, Myanmar security forces and Rakhine State authorities physically displaced Rohingya communities and disrupted their cultural continuity.”²⁰⁵

On 27 April 2026, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas Andrews, issued his final report detailing how since the 1948 independence from the United Kingdom, “the military ha[d] systematically targeted civilian populations in its counter-insurgency campaigns,” using “violence and mass imprisonment ... to crush society-wide pro-democracy uprisings,” and persecuting, attacking, and killing the Rohingya population, in what the UN and various international human rights organizations characterized as genocide. Among his recommendations were that “the international community should support the institutions and leaders in Myanmar that are building the foundation for future justice and accountability” and provide funding to support “emerging governance institutions for human rights documentation, the development of historical archives, memorialization initiatives and consultations on the development of truth mechanisms and processes.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ “[Hūmānus and ARSPHR Launch Groundbreaking Rohingya Atrocities Archive, Continuing Mohibullah’s Sacrificial Fight for Truth and Justice](#),” *PR Newswire* (24 July 2025).

²⁰⁵ Janet Anderson, “[Myanmar: Making Sure There Is No Return](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (29 September 2025).

²⁰⁶ United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, [From Impunity to Justice: Accountability for Grave Human Rights Violations in Myanmar](#) (UN Doc. A/HRC/61/CRP.9; 27 April 2026), 4–5, 49.

See also United Kingdom.

NAMIBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2006–2009, 2011, 2016–2018, 2023, 2025.

On 28 May 2025, Namibia held its first Genocide Remembrance Day, marking the massacre of the Ovaherero and Nama Peoples by German colonial forces between 1904–1908 – in which more than 75,000 Ovaherero and Nama people, and thousands of other Indigenous Peoples, including among the San and the Damara, were killed in what historians recognized as the first genocide of the twentieth century. Despite a 2021 joint declaration and ongoing negotiations between the Namibian and German governments resulting in an important development aid agreement, Germany continued to deny its legal duty to provide reparations to descendants [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2017, 2024, under Germany, and NCH *Annual Reports* 2023, 2025, under Namibia]. Descendant communities continued to face a lack of political representation, leaving them unable to effectively participate in negotiations over reparations and the repatriation of ancestral remains and cultural artefacts. At the time, the skulls of prisoners who had died in prison camps were shipped to German universities and museums for racist research.²⁰⁷

NAURU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

On 12 May 2026, Parliament unanimously adopted a proposal to hold a referendum to change the island's name from Nauru to Naoero. President David Adeang (in office 2023–) explained the name change as an attempt to “more faithfully honor our nation's heritage, language and identity.” The name Nauru stemmed from the 1888 German annexation of the island and had been maintained by the Australian government during the Mandate period (1919–1968), and after independence.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Amnesty International, “[Namibia: Germany Must Deliver Reparatory Justice for Its Brutal Colonial Past](#)” (Press release; 2 October 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 181, 268.

²⁰⁸ Prianka Srinivasan, “[No More Nauru: Island Hopes Name-Change Can Reclaim Pre-Colonial Past](#),” *Guardian* (12 June 2026), 31.

NEPAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2021, 2024–2025.

On 14 May 2025, the government of then Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli (in office 2024–2025) appointed new commissioners to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) after their operations had been stalled since 2022. The appointments followed the August 2024 Disappeared Persons’ Inquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amendment Act (also known as the transitional justice law) [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. However, victims’ groups voiced strong objections to the appointments, denouncing the process as opaque, arbitrary, and politically motivated [See NCH *Annual Report 2021*], and calling on their representatives not to engage with the TRC and CIEDP’s recent call for submissions.²⁰⁹

NETHERLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 2004–2005, 2007–2025.

On 6 October 2025, Selma Leydesdorff (1949–2025), emerita professor of oral history and culture at the University of Amsterdam, died. In the years between 2002 and 2008, the project leading to her book *De leegte achter ons laten: Een geschiedenis van de vrouwen van Srebrenica* (March 2008; Leaving the void behind us: a history of the women of Srebrenica) was refused a grant after the personal intervention of two government ministers [See NCH *Annual Report 2009*].²¹⁰

In early November 2025 it became public that during the summer of 2025, two plaques commemorating African American soldiers fighting against Nazi Germany in Europe during World War II (1939–1945) had been removed from a permanent exhibition in the visitors’ center of the United States (US) military cemetery of Margraten, Limburg province. The removals reportedly took place after the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing American think tank, had accused the American Battle Monuments

²⁰⁹ “[Government Revives Mishra-Led Committee to Recommend Officials for Two TJ Commissions](#),” *Kathmandu Post* (25 March 2025); Binod Ghimire, “[Government Appoints Office Bearers in Two Transitional Commissions](#),” *Kathmandu Post* (14 May 2025); Meena Bhatta, “[Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Nepal](#),” *London School of Economics Blog* (9 June 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 322–323; Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 51, 269.

²¹⁰ Bas Blokker, “[Selma Leydesdorff, oprichter van de Dolle Mina’s, keek verder dan de vrouwenstrijd](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (10 October 2025).

Commission (ABMC), responsible for the site, of defying President Donald Trump's crackdown on diversity programs. The ABMC had not informed the provincial authorities of the removal but on [19] November 2025 it declared that attention to the struggle for equal rights waged by African American soldiers no longer fitted the "commemorative mission" of the United States, with the American ambassador in the Netherlands saying that "The signs at Margraten are not intended to promote an agenda that criticizes America." More than 8,200 Americans were buried at the cemetery, including 172 African American soldiers. African American soldiers typically held labor or supporting jobs in the military, as part of segregationist policies, and helped build the Margraten site from late 1944. On 21 November 2025, 34 Members of Congress expressed their concern about the removals to the ABMC and asked to put the panels back on display.²¹¹

On 4 May 2026, National Remembrance Day, an unknown individual defaced the National Monument on Dam Square with red paint. The word "genocide" was still legible by 8 am. In August 2025, a 24-year-old man participating in a pro-Palestinian demonstration had been arrested for spraying the words "never again is now" on the monument.²¹²

On 13 May 2026, a district court rejected the request of Edwin de Roy van Zuydewijn to gain pre-release access to the script of the 6-part television series *Mabel & Margarita: Oranjebitter* for reputational damage control, arguing that it unduly restricted freedom of expression. The series traced the tense relations between Princess Margarita and the Dutch royal house in 1999–2003, before and during her marriage with De Roy van Zuydewijn. The latter would appeal the decision. The series was scheduled for late 2026.²¹³

See also Guyana, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, Syria, United States.

²¹¹ Ellie Cook, "[Memorial to Black US Soldiers Who Died in WW2 Quietly Removed](#)," *Newsweek* (10 November 2025); "[Calls for Permanent Memorial in Limburg to Black US Liberators](#)," *Dutch News* (10 November 2025); Jonathan Darman, "[Thanks, U.S.A.](#)," *New York Times* (11 November 2025); Senay Boztas, "[A Dutch War Cemetery Added Displays Showing Black US Soldiers: Then They Were Quietly Removed](#)," *Guardian* (11 November 2025); [Letter by 34 Members of Congress to Robert Dalessandro, Acting Secretary American Battle Monuments Commission](#) (21 November 2025).

²¹² Lize Geurts & Luuk van der Sterren, "[Nationaal Monument op de Dam beklad met rode verf, het woord 'genocide' is nog leesbaar](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (4 May 2026).

²¹³ Rinske Koelewijn, "[Edwin de Roy van Zuydewijn spant zaak aan over tv-serie](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (31 March 2026); Rinske Koelewijn, "[Edwin de Roy van Zuydewijn naar de rechter om Videoland-serie over hem – Hoeveel vrijheid hebben makers van historische fictie?](#)" *NRC Handelsblad* (5 April 2026); Iris Verhuldonk, "[Rechtbank: Edwin de Roy van Zuydewijn mag script van Videoland-serie niet inzien](#)," *NRC Handelsblad* (13 May 2026).

NEW ZEALAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2017, 2019–2021, 2024–2025.

In November 2025, Education minister Erica Stanford rejected claims that Māori history was being sidelined in a rewrite of the compulsory 2023 history curriculum which omitted some Māori words and references to the country’s foundational document, the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). With some applauding the change, many were critical. “We were finally breaking the cycle of historical amnesia about our country’s past,” historian Vincent O’Malley said, “And now we’re putting it all at risk.”²¹⁴

See also Samoa.

NICARAGUA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2020–2025.

NIGER

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2013, 2021, 2025.

In September 2025, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso – all former French colonies and under military rule – issued a joint statement saying they would not recognize the authority of the International Criminal Court (ICC), calling it an “instrument of neo-colonialist repression.” Instead, they wanted to set up “indigenous mechanisms for the consolidation of peace and justice.” On 18 June 2026, Niger submitted its instrument of withdrawal. Niger was the third country to leave the ICC after the Philippines and Burundi.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Michelle Duff, “[‘Reframes History’: Fears Māori Knowledge Diluted in Plan to Revise New Zealand Curriculum](#),” *Guardian* (14 November 2025); Eva Corlett, “[Why Is the New Zealand Government Cutting Māori Words from Some School Books?](#),” *Guardian* (20 August 2025).

²¹⁵ Hafsa Khalil, “[Niger Pulls Out of International Criminal Court after Calling It Neo-colonialist](#),” *BBC News* (23 June 2026).

NIGERIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2006, 2008, 2010–2013, 2016–2025.

In July 2025, Ayodele Aduwo, an undergraduate student in history, and Olamide Gbadegesin, a master's student in African Studies, both at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, were suspended for four semesters and barred from any union activity. On 13 May 2024, Aduwo and Gbadegesin had been dragged from a student-union inauguration and handed over to authorities by university security officers after they had held a placard with the message “FeesMustFall” in a peaceful protest against tuition hikes. They had reportedly been beaten during the arrest.²¹⁶

On 8 August 2025, Lagos State District Coroner, Temitope Oladele, who was investigating the death of journalist and history student Pelumi Onifade (2000–2020) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2022–2025*], ordered the medical director of Ikorodu General Hospital in Lagos to release the hospital records relating to the deposit, release, or current status of Onifade's remains within seven days of receipt of the order, after the latter had previously refused to hand them over for confidentiality reasons.²¹⁷

On 10 November 2025, protesters inflicted minor damage to the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in Benin City. The museum, co-funded by the French and German governments and private donors, was supposed to exhibit several of the 150 Benin Bronzes that had been looted during European colonialism and restituted by European museums and private collections since 2020. However, in March 2023 the federal government ruled that MOWAA did not have authority to exhibit the Bronzes, which should instead be housed in the palace of the Oba of Benin, Ewuare II, also located in Benin City, from which they had been looted at the time. The protesters therefore asserted that MOWAA violated cultural heritage which fell under Ewuare II's authority. Minister of Culture Hannatu Musawa warned that “the reported disruption at MOWAA not only endanger[ed] a treasured cultural asset but also threaten[ed] the peaceful environment necessary for cultural exchange and the preservation of our artistic patrimony.”²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Hussain Wahab, “[Placards and Punishment: How Nigeria's Universities Are Policing Dissent](#),” *International Policy Digest* (22 August 2025).

²¹⁷ Media Rights Agenda, “[Coroner Orders Release of Records of Journalist Pelumi Onifade's Death](#),” *Ifex* (18 August 2025).

²¹⁸ Eromo Egbejule, “[Protesters Target Major New Nigerian Museum Embroiled in Looted Artefacts Row](#),” *Guardian* (10 November 2025).

NORTH KOREA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2006–2007, 2009–2011, 2013–2015, 2017, 2019, 2024–2025.

See Latvia, Zimbabwe.

NORTH MACEDONIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2025.

For previous *Annual Report* entries under Macedonia: 1999, 2006–2008, 2010–2015, 2017–2018.

See Bulgaria.

NORWAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2012, 2016–2017, 2022–2023.

OMAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2024–2025.

PAKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2009–2012, 2014, 2016, 2018–2019, 2021, 2023–2025.

On 16 October 2024, eight Baloch students were forcibly disappeared by police forces in plain clothes from the Gulshan-e-Iqbal [or Gulistan-i-Jauhar] area in Karachi. Among them were Shoaib Ali and Beebgar Amir [Ameer], both history students at Karachi University. On the same day, Muhammad Javed, a final-year history student at Karachi University, also forcibly disappeared from his hometown, Winder. On 17 October 2024, the police reportedly refused to lodge a FIR (first information report) about the eight disappeared by their families. On 22 October 2024, students at Karachi University organized a rally on campus in protest over the disappearances. On 23 October 2024, the Sindh High Court directed a senior police officer to “produce” the missing in court by 4 November. On 25 October 2024, six of the students were reportedly released, probably including Shoaib Ali and Beebgar Amir.²¹⁹

On 4 February 2025, two unidentified gunmen on motorcycles shot Allah Dad Wahid Baloch ([1996]–2025) multiple times in what appeared to be a targeted killing in Turbat Bazaar, Balochistan, possibly as part of a state-backed campaign of extrajudicial killings of Baloch intellectuals. Allah Dad, a graduate of Karachi University who studied for a research master’s degree at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, wrote and translated works about Baloch history, culture, and national identity. He had repeatedly been summoned and harassed, allegedly by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI), while pursuing his education, after which he returned to Turbat. His body was later handed over to his family.²²⁰

In August 2025, the BBC discovered that an international network of spammers was posting AI-generated fake images of Holocaust victims on Facebook, owned by the company Meta. Organizations

²¹⁹ “[Karachi: Eight Baloch Students ‘Forcibly Disappeared’, BYC Claims Retaliation for Security Failures](#),” *Balochistan Post* (16 October 2024); Mahrang Baloch, [Message on X](#) (17 October 2024); Waqas Ali, “[Eight Baloch Students Go ‘Missing’ from Shared Residence in Karachi](#),” *Dawn* (22 October 2024); Ishaq Tanoli, “[SHC Issued Notices on Plea for Recovery of Eight ‘Missing’ Baloch Students](#),” (23 October 2024); Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2025: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2025).

²²⁰ Ali Jan Mangi & Behram Baloch, “[Political Activist Shot Dead in Turbat](#),” *Dawn* (6 February 2025); “[Pakistan: Human Rights Body Condemns Killing of Baloch Scholar](#),” *The Tribune* (6 February 2025); “[Baloch Scholar Killed after Returning from Punjab, Family Blames Pakistan Military](#),” *The Tribune* (9 February 2025); Dilshad Baluch, “[Allah Dad Baloch’s Assassination Is Being Seen as a Targeted Attack on Intellectuals](#),” *Friday Times* (12 February 2025); PAANK [Human rights department of Baloch National Movement (BNM)], [Investigative Report on the Targeted Killings & Attacks on Baloch Educators & Intellectuals](#) (18 February 2025); Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, [Allah Dad Baloch](#) (February 2025); Scholars at Risk, [Free to Think 2025: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) (New York: SAR, 2025).

dedicated to preserving the memory of the Holocaust, including the Auschwitz Museum (also known as Auschwitz Memorial) in Poland and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, said that the images were leaving survivors and families distressed. The BBC tracked many of these images to the accounts of a network of Pakistan-based content creators who collaborated closely on how to make money on Facebook. In June 2025, the Auschwitz Museum had warned that accounts like these were stealing its posts, processing them through AI models and often warping historical details or fabricating narratives and victims entirely. Meta removed several of the profiles and groups, including ones originally flagged by the Auschwitz Museum, for violating its policies on spam and inauthentic behavior.²²¹

See also Bangladesh, India.

PALAU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

PALESTINE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2002, 2008–2010, 2013–2015, 2018, 2021–2025.

After the Israel-Gaza war started on 7 October 2023, Palestinian staff working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA; 1949–) managed to evacuate the UNRWA archives from Gaza City to Rafah and then, before Rafah’s invasion in May 2024, to Egypt via a pedestrian crossing. The archives were collated in Sinai and airlifted to Jordan. They contained the original registration records for approximately 200,000 Palestinians who were made refugees during the 1948 war (known to Palestinians as the Nakba or “catastrophe”) as well as for hundreds of thousands of others who were born into exile in Gaza in the post-1948 decades [*See NCH Annual Reports 2024–2025*].²²²

²²¹ Kristina Völk & Kevin Nguyen, “[BBC Reveals Web of Spammers Profiting from AI Holocaust Images](#),” *BBC News* (29 August 2025).

²²² Jo Kelcey & Anne Irfan, “[Rescuing the UNRWA Archive: Saving Palestinian History Amidst the Gaza Genocide](#),” *History Workshop Journal* (29 September 2025), 1–14; Jason Burke, “[The Secret Mission to Rescue the UN’s Vital Palestinian Refugee Archive](#),” *Guardian* (14 May 2026); “[UNRWA Secretly Rescued Nakba Archive from Gaza amid Israeli Bombardment, Transferred It to Jordan](#),” *New Arab* (16 May 2026).

On 7 October 2023, during the attack on Israel by the Hamas al-Qassam Brigades, American-born Liat Beinín Atzili ([1974]–), a history teacher and Holocaust educator at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem’s Holocaust Museum, was abducted by Hamas terrorists from Kibbutz Nir Oz to Gaza. She was released on 29 November 2023 as part of a temporary ceasefire deal brokered by Qatar and the United States between Hamas and Israel. A day later, she learned that her husband, Aviv Atzili, was killed on 7 October. In the prize-winning 2025 documentary *Holding Liat*, director Brandon Kramer followed Beinín’s parents and her uncle, Joel Beinín, the D. J. McLachlan Professor of History and Professor of Middle East history at Stanford University, as they fought for the release of their daughter. Another abductee from Nir Oz, Holocaust historian Alex Danzig (1948–2024), did not survive Hamas captivity [See NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025*].²²³

Among those killed during the genocide in Gaza (2023–) were the following [See NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025* for related lists]:

- On 19 October 2023, Islam Suleiman Haboush ([1983/4]–2023), professor of modern history at the Islamic University of Gaza was killed by an Israeli airstrike together with most of her family. Haboush was the author of “Popular Resistance: During the First Intifada in the Gaza Strip” and a lecturer on the history of Jerusalem.²²⁴
- On 30 October 2023, writer, English teacher, and oral historian Khalil Abu Yahya [Yahia] ([1994/5]–2023) was killed in an Israeli airstrike, along with his wife, two daughters, mother, and two brothers.²²⁵
- On 5 January 2024, Nasser Ismail Al-Yafawi ([1969/1970]–2024), a lecturer in oral history at the Islamic University of Gaza, was killed by the Israeli army together with his son. He held degrees in history from Birzeit University (bachelor’s), Al-Aqsa University, Gaza (master’s) and a PhD from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He was a prolific author of articles on Palestinian history,

²²³ “[Released: Dual US Citizen Liat Beinín Atzili; Husband Aviv Murdered on Oct. 7 Kibbutz Nir Oz Resident Atzili Is a Guide at Yad Vashem](#),” *Times of Israel* (21 October 2023; updated 29 November 2023); Ori Nir, “[The Israeli Hostages Who Forged Connections With Their Captors](#),” *Moment* (18 March 2025); Sarah Wildman, “[A Former Israeli Hostage: ‘It’s Not Our Job to Take Revenge on Our Enemies’](#),” *New York Times* (10 June 2025); Addie Morfoot, “[Israeli Hostage Survivor and Subject of Doc ‘Holding Liat’ on Recent Hostage Release: ‘After a War of This Scale We Can’t Have Things Go Back to What They Were’](#),” *Variety* (17 October 2025).

²²⁴ “[Letter Condemning the Devastating Military Campaign in Gaza](#),” *Middle East Studies Association* (25 January 2024); Liesl Gerntholtz, *All That Is Lost: The Cultural Destruction of Gaza* (PEN America, 18 September 2025); “[Fact Sheet: Scholars Killed](#),” *Georgetown Faculty & Staff for Justice in Palestine* ([no date]).

²²⁵ “[Letter Condemning the Devastating Military Campaign in Gaza](#),” *Middle East Studies Association* (25 January 2024); Liesl Gerntholtz, *All That Is Lost: The Cultural Destruction of Gaza* (PEN America, 18 September 2025); “[Fact Sheet: Scholars Killed](#),” *Georgetown Faculty & Staff for Justice in Palestine* ([no date]).

particularly popular history and the heritage of Gaza, and a member of the National Association of Palestinian Popular Heritage.²²⁶

In June 2026, the report *Scholasticide in Gaza*, authored by a coalition of academics from Palestine, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States, mapped the systematic destruction of higher education and cultural infrastructure since the start of the war with Israel in October 2023. It placed the destruction in a larger historical context, arguing that scholasticide was an integral dimension of the genocide committed against the Palestinian people [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*, under *Israel*], and labeling the destruction of past-related heritage such as archives, libraries, museums, monuments, cultural centers, and archaeological sites as “memoricide” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025*]. The report defined memoricide as “the deliberate erasure of the records, repositories and practices through which a people remembers itself across generations” and added that while “[s]cholasticide target[ed] the institutional infrastructure of intellectual life; memoricide target[ed] the cultural infrastructure of collective memory.” In Gaza more than 1,372 university students and more than 246 academics and university staff had been killed since October 2023, including at least eight historians and related professionals [See item above and NCH *Annual Reports 2024–2025*]. The report highlighted the case of killed archivist Marwan Tarazi [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*].²²⁷

See also Canada, France, Germany, India, Israel, Netherlands, Serbia, United Kingdom, United States.

PANAMA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003, 2008, 2013, 2015–2017.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014, 2023.

²²⁶ “[Letter Condemning the Devastating Military Campaign in Gaza](#),” *Middle East Studies Association* (25 January 2024); Liesl Gerntholtz, [All That Is Lost: The Cultural Destruction of Gaza](#) (PEN America, 18 September 2025); “[Fact Sheet: Scholars Killed](#),” *Georgetown Faculty & Staff for Justice in Palestine* ([no date]).

²²⁷ Chandni Desai, Omar Shweiki, Abdel Razzaq Takriti & Leon Tikly, eds., [Scholasticide in Gaza: The Systematic Destruction of Palestinian Higher Education and the Continuation of Collective Resilience](#) (London: Friends of Palestinian Universities, June 2026, 148 pages); Brendan O’Malley, “[‘Scholasticide Is Evidence of Genocidal Acts’ – Gaza Report](#),” *University World News* (17 June 2026); Jean-Pierre Filiu, [Un Historien à Gaza](#) (Paris: Les Arènes, 2025).

PARAGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2005, 2007, 2009–2010, 2012, 2015, 2020, 2022.

PERU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2025.

On 8 November 2024, the cultural association Brisas del Titicaca denounced the censorship of the paintings *Puno sí es el Perú* (Puno really is Peru) and *Mi Puno en el bicentenario* (My Puno in the bicentennial), created by artists Ruth Ingaluque and Juan Carlos Condori. The paintings were part of an exhibition organized by the association and exhibited at the National Library of Peru, Lima. In a letter sent to the association, the National Library organizers informed that these artworks could not be exhibited, warning that if they were not removed, the exhibition would be canceled. The censored pieces portrayed the struggle of the people of Puno and their demand for justice since the protests of January 2023, in which 66 people died.²²⁸

On 9 July 2025, Congress passed a bill granting amnesty to members of the army, police, and government-supported *Comités de Autodefensa* (self-defense committees) accused of crimes committed during the civil war (1980–2000). On 24 July, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) ordered then President Dina Boluarte (in office 2022–2025) to suspend implementation of the bill pending an analysis of its compatibility with the Court's prior rulings on amnesty laws [*See NCH Annual Reports 2002–2021, 2024*]. Boluarte nevertheless signed the bill into law on 13 August. The law was rejected by national and international human rights organizations. In October 2025, the IACtHR ruled that the amnesty law constituted a failure by the State to comply with previous judgments issued by the Court and urged the authorities and the judiciary to refrain from applying it. However, the Constitutional Court ruled in December that claims of the law's unconstitutionality were unfounded. It stated that the non-applicability of the statute of limitations applied only to events occurring after 10 November 2001 (Peru's date of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court). A coalition of national human rights organizations estimated that the law could revoke 156 convictions and end 600 ongoing investigations. A year prior, in August 2024, a statute of limitations law that had

²²⁸ Claudia Rebaza & Jack Guy, “[‘They Say We’re Not Peruvian’: Protester Deaths Highlight Peru’s Deep Historical Divisions](#),” *CNN* (10 March 2023); Freemuse, [The State of Artistic Freedom 2025](#) (Copenhagen: Freemuse, 2025), 8, 33.

taken effect had been criticized by United Nations Special Rapporteurs as “in patent contradiction with the rule of law” and “encourag[ing] impunity” [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].²²⁹

On 19 December 2025, several United Nations (UN) Mechanisms expressed concern over a Constitutional Court ruling upholding so-called “impunity” law 32107, which allowed statutes of limitations for crimes against humanity committed prior to Peru’s ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 2001 and the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in 2003 [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. The Court had also argued that treaty obligations were not self-executing due to legality and non-retroactivity principles and ordered the annulment of judicial decisions that disregarded the constitutionality of the “impunity law.” The UN Mechanisms said that crimes against humanity were imprescriptible under international law, which was a peremptory norm binding on all States regardless of treaty ratification.²³⁰

PHILIPPINES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2011–2015, 2019–2025.

Since January 2025, relatives of victims killed during the Calabarzon Raids (also known as “Bloody Sunday”) – in which on 7 March 2021 police and armed forces killed nine environmentalists, labor leaders, and Indigenous rights activists in a series of raids – were reportedly harassed and offered money to drop legal cases. The killings had been in part the result of a practice known as “red tagging,” in which political activists were accused of being combatants or supporters of a Communist insurgency. In June 2025, in her report to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Irene Khan, called on the government to abolish the National Task Force on Ending the Local Armed Conflict, an agency under the president’s office and supervised by the National Security Council that was often responsible for red tagging. The government of President Bongbong Marcos (in office 2022–) rejected Khan’s recommendation.²³¹

²²⁹ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, [Caso Barrios Altos y Caso La Cantuta Vs. Perú: Adopción de medidas urgentes](#) (24 July 2025); “[New Amnesty Law for Human Rights Abuses in Peru Prompts Fury, Action](#),” *Al Jazeera* (11 July 2025); “[Peru: Amnesty Bill Signed into Law](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (13 August 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 349; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 291, 292.

²³⁰ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Peru: UN Experts Concerned about Constitutional Court Ruling on ‘Impunity Law’](#)” (Press release; 19 December 2025).

²³¹ Sarthak Gupta, “[Red-Tagging in the Philippines: The Modern McCarthyism Threatening Freedom of Expression](#),” *Global Freedom of Expression* (22 August 2024); “[Philippines: Dangerous ‘Red Tagging’ of](#)

On [21] November 2025, over one hundred organizations and individuals issued a statement opposing the impending burial of Juan Ponce Enrile (1924–2025) at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB; Cemetery of Heroes) scheduled for 22 November, calling it a form of historical distortion. Ponce Enrile had been defense minister and chief architect of the martial law era (1972–1986) during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. (1965–1986), and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel during the presidency of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. (2022–2025). The collective statement, initiated by Project Gunita, an academic research organization dedicated to archiving historical materials and resisting the distortion of the Marcos dictatorship, provided a list of massacres and corruption scandals in which Ponce Enrile had been involved as a mastermind between 1971 and 1986. He reportedly also played a role in launching seven to nine coup attempts to destabilize the government of President Corazon Aquino (1986–1992). The National Union of Peoples’ Lawyers issued a similar statement of protest.²³²

On 5 May 2026, the Commission on Higher Education (Ched) held a public hearing on the Proposed Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for the Reframed General Education Curriculum, proposing to reduce the existing 36 GE units (units of General Education courses) to 18 to address the demands of the job market. The reform would particularly affect courses in the humanities, social science, and ethics and many of those present feared that it would deteriorate the quality of higher education, affect academic freedom, and jeopardize the jobs of thousands of teachers. The faculty of the history department of the University of the Philippines in Quezon City condemned the proposal, saying that the plan to merge the history course and the Rizal course (the latter being an examination of Philippine society, culture, history, and national identity from the views of national hero José Rizal [1861–1896]) was an attempt to remove the study of history from higher education, leaving only the course *Pag-aaral ng Kasaysayan at Lipunang Pilipino* (PKLP; Study of Philippine history and society) in Senior High School (SHS).²³³

See also Japan, Niger.

[Labor Leaders](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (25 September 2025); United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Visit to the Philippines - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression](#) (A/HRC/59/50/Add.1; 4 June 2025); “[Philippines: Activists Face Red-Tagging, Arbitrary Arrests and Financing Terrorism Charges around Mid-Term Elections](#),” *Civics Monitor* (24 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 355–356.

²³² Dominic Gutoman, “[‘Enrile’s Burial in Hero’s Cemetery Is Historical Distortion’ – Groups](#),” *Bulatlat* (21 November 2025).

²³³ Anne Marxze Umil, “[Teachers Reject Ched’s Plan to Reduce General Education Units](#),” *Bulatlat* (7 May 2026).

POLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2001, 2004–2005, 2007–2011, 2014–2025.

In mid-July 2025, the exhibition “Our Boys – Residents of Gdańsk-Pomerania in the Army of the Third Reich” opened at the Museum of Gdańsk. The exhibition, about the estimated 400,000–450,000 Polish soldiers who fought for the Nazi German Wehrmacht, drew fierce criticism and protests, especially from politicians of the populist-conservative Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS; Law and Justice Party) and affiliated organizations. Former President Andrzej Duda described it as a “moral provocation,” and PiS founder Jarosław Kaczyński as “an attack on the Polish *raison d’état* and a questioning of obvious historical facts.” Under PiS Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki (in office 2017–2021) a “memory law” had been passed making “whoever publicly and contrary to the facts attributes to the Polish Nation or to the Polish State responsibility or co-responsibility for the Nazi crimes committed by the German Third Reich ... liable to a fine” [See NCH *Annual Report 2018*]. The exhibition’s curator Andrzej Hoja, a historian at the Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin, received threats and insults.²³⁴

In October 2025, far-right activist Tomasz Sommer filed a defamation lawsuit with the District Court in Warsaw against Rafał Pankowski, a professor of sociology and political science at Civitas University, Warsaw, and co-founder of the anti-racist Nigdy Więcej (Never Again) association, because he had criticized Sommer’s 2023 68-minute documentary “Jedwabne: Historia prawdziwa” (Jedwabne: The True Story), about a pogrom in which at least 340 Jews were killed in Jedwabne on 10 July 1941, and in which Sommer had denied the responsibility of the Polish perpetrators for the massacre. In a comment to the liberal Israeli daily *Haaretz* in August 2023, Pankowski had said that the documentary, partially funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, distorted history and that it “allege[d] that accusations against Poles for the pogrom of Jedwabne were invented by a Jewish-led conspiracy,” referring to historian Jan Tomasz Gross and Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich in particular. Pankowski argued that his comments were justified criticism. Sommer demanded the publication of an apology on *Haaretz*’s website and damages [See NCH *Annual Report 2000*]. The Jedwabne pogrom had been a divisive and polarizing issue since the 2000 publication of Gross’s *Neighbors* [See NCH *Annual Reports 2001, 2014*].

²³⁴ Jakub Knera, “‘Our Boys Were Forced Into the Enemy Army to Save Loved Ones’: The Second World War Exhibition Dividing Poland,” *Guardian* (20 August 2025); Raphael Minder, “The Secret History of Poland’s Wehrmacht Conscripts,” *Financial Times* (27 September 2025); Mark Middel, “Polen zien zichzelf als slachtoffer van de oorlog,” *NRC Handelsblad* (28 May 2026).

In the run-up to 85th anniversary of the pogrom on 10 July 2026, extreme-right protesters placed antisemitic “memorial stones” in Jedwabne and on the day itself organized several counter-commemorations there, during which the responsibility of Polish perpetrators for the massacre was again denied.²³⁵

On 28 November 2025, the Warsaw District Court granted interim legal protection to TVP journalist Dorota Wysocka-Schnepf by prohibiting media figures Krzysztof Stanowski, Robert Mazurek, and YouTube channel *Kanał Zero* from publishing content linking her or her family (especially her late father-in-law) to Communist-era crimes, including references to the Augustów Roundup (a military operation by Soviet troops and Polish communists against an estimated two thousand anti-Communist partisans and sympathizers in Augustów, northeast Poland, in July 1945), and from calling her “the high priestess of propaganda.” The ruling also ordered warning notices to be added to several existing videos and issued financial penalties for further violations. Wysocka-Schnepf was often criticized by populist-conservative figures for what they perceived as her liberal-progressive bias.²³⁶

In December 2025, the Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu (Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation) of the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN; Institute of National Remembrance), the YouTube channel *Kanał Zero* and the Kulski Foundation launched a campaign against Polish-German historian Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (1979–) for his book *Polnische Bürgermeister und der Holocaust: Besatzung, Verwaltung und Kollaboration* (De Gruyter, 2024; Polish Mayors and the Holocaust: Occupation, Administration and Collaboration), which examined the role of Polish mayors during the Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete (1939–1945; General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Region). In an open letter, the Kulski Foundation expressed “strong opposition” to Rossoliński-Liebe’s book and alleged it “damaged” “good Polish-German relations,” because the book cover included a photograph of Warsaw’s wartime mayor, Julian Kulski. At the same time, former Polish Prime Minister for the nationalist-conservative Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS; Law and Justice) party (and historian) Mateusz Morawiecki (in office 2017–2023) and others claimed that the book sought to “blame the Poles for the Holocaust,” a narrative amplifying a 47-page November 2025 IPN book review and later reiterated by Karol Nawrocki, IPN director (2021–2025) and Polish President (2025–), in a post on X. As a result of the campaign, Rossoliński-Liebe faced harassment (including a hostile video by *Kanał Zero*, hate messages, and

²³⁵ Sam Sokol, “[Funded by the Polish Government, This Film Downplays Poland’s Role in the Holocaust](#),” *Haaretz* (14 August 2023); “[Free Speech at Stake in Polish Legal Battle over 1941 Pogrom Truth](#),” *Never Again Association* (25 February 2026); Arnout Le Clercq, “[Waarom de herdenking van de massamoord in Jedwabne het middelpunt is van een bittere strijd in Polen](#),” *Volkskrant* (18 July 2026); Rafał Pankowski, “Met Any Jews Lately?” *Index on Censorship*, 2000, no. 2, 143–148.

²³⁶ “[Journalist Dorota Wysocka-Schnepf and Her Family Targeted with Harassment Campaign](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (7 September 2025).

personal threats on social media). His lecture at the Topographie des Terrors (Topography of Terror) in Berlin was reportedly indefinitely postponed after an intervention by the Polish ambassador to Germany.

It was not the first time that Rossoliński-Liebe faced pressure. In February 2012, as a doctoral student at the University of Hamburg, he had written a biography of ultra-nationalist leader Stepan Bandera (1909–1959), the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army). He had been scheduled to give six lectures in Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kyiv on Bandera, the OUN, and the UPA upon invitation of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Embassy, and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. During a first lecture at the embassy under heavy police protection, the radical-right nationalist party Svoboda organized a demonstration of about one hundred protesters in front of the building, with banners calling Rossoliński-Liebe a “liberal fascist,” an “advocate of the Nazis,” a “provocateur,” a “mendacious grandson of Goebbels,” and a “Ukrainophobe.” The other planned lectures were canceled. Rossoliński-Liebe was threatened and had to hide in an anonymous apartment under the protection of the embassy. Some people, including students, received threats for supporting him. Bandera appeared in some nationalist discourses as a “national hero” (he was named so by former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and was celebrated as such in Western Ukraine), and the OUN and UPA as “liberation movements” [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*, under *Ukraine*].²³⁷

On 4 December 2025, the Internal Security Agency (ABW) detained Russian archaeologist Alexander Butyagin (1971–), head of the Northern Black Sea Region’s Classical Archaeology Sector of the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on a Ukrainian warrant. Since 1999, he had overseen research into the site of Myrmekion (an ancient Greek colony founded by the Ionians in the sixth century BCE), near Kerch in Crimea, which Russia had illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Claiming sovereignty over Crimea, Ukraine saw any archaeological work there since 2014 as illegal and considered any antiquities taken from the site to be stolen – in line with the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict under which Russia’s excavations in Crimea were illegal. In November 2024, Ukraine’s Office of the

²³⁷ Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, personal communication (10 December 2025); Network of Concerned Historians, [Campaign for Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe](#) (14 January 2026); Fundacja Kulskich, [“Over 150 Public Figures Appeal for Historical Truth”](#) (open letter; 8 December 2025); Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, [Polnische Bürgermeister und der Holocaust: Besatzung, Verwaltung und Kollaboration](#) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024); [“An Open Letter in Defense of Academic Freedom and the Historian Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe”](#) (no date [January 2026]); Scholars Concerned with Academic Freedom and Democracy in Ukraine, [“For Freedom of Speech and Expression in Ukraine”](#) (petition; no date, [March] 2012); Per Anders Rudling & Jared McBride, [“Ukrainian Academic Freedom and Democracy Under Siege,”](#) *The Algemeiner* (1 March 2012); Jemimah Steinfeld, “No Unflattering Portraits of the Past, Please,” *Index on Censorship*, 2026 no. 1, 82–83.

Prosecutor General had charged Butyagin *in absentia* with illegally excavating and partially looting and destroying Myrmekion since February 2014.

On 18 March 2026, Judge Dariusz Łubowski of the Warsaw district court ruled that Butyagin could be extradited to Ukraine. Butyagin intended to appeal the ruling. A motion to release him on bail was turned down. In Ukraine, he could face a prison term of up to five years if found guilty of plundering artefacts. Meanwhile, Russia's foreign ministry threatened Poland over the arrest, warning that the act would "not go unpunished." In demanding Butyagin's release, the United States-based Committee of Concerned Scientists said that "science must transcend national borders. Injecting territorial disputes into the work of a scientist is highly controversial. The state of war between Russia and Ukraine leaves little chance of a fair trial for Butyagin if he were extradited to Ukraine." On 28 April 2026, Butyagin was released as part of a prisoner swap between Poland and Belarus.²³⁸

On 15 June 2026, Russian artist Robert Kuzovkov, also known as Semyon Skrepetsky, was shot dead in the eastern town of Biała Podlaska. He was known as a staunch critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. Three days prior, on 12 June (also known as Russia Day, marking the establishment of the Russian Federation in 1990), Kuzovkov had traveled to Berlin to stage a protest showing a caricature of Putin sitting on the lap of Joseph Stalin (1878–1953). Polish police treated the shooting as a political murder.²³⁹

On 19 June 2026, President and historian Karol Nawrocki [See NCH *Annual Report 2020, 2022*, and items above] stripped Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest state order bestowed on him in 2023, after Zelensky had decided in May to name a military unit after the Ukrainianska Povstanska Armiia (UPA; Ukrainian Insurgent Army) – a military organization which collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II and participated in the massacres of Jews, Poles, and Hungarians, including massacres between 1943–1945 in Volhynia (Wołyn, Volyn) and Eastern Galicia, in which up to 100,000 predominantly Polish people were killed (See item below, under Ukraine). In Ukraine, however, UPA soldiers were seen by some as national heroes. Russian President Vladimir Putin had justified the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February

²³⁸ Valerie Hopkins, "[Russia Warns Poland over Arrest of a Researcher Wanted by Ukraine](#)," *New York Times* (11 December 2025); Adam Easton, "[Poland Arrests Russian Archaeologist Wanted in Ukraine](#)," *BBC News* (11 December 2025); Committee of Concerned Scientists, "[Appeal for the Release of Russian Archaeologist Aleksandr Butyagin Detained in Poland](#)" (15 December 2025); "[Moscow Demands Poland Release Russian Archaeologist Wanted by Ukraine](#)," *Notes from Poland* (13 January 2026); Nataliya Vasilyeva, "[Despite Moscow's Threats, Poland Rules to Extradite Archaeologist to Ukraine](#)," *New York Times* (18 March 2026); Grigor Atanesian & Adam Easton, "[Russian Archaeologist Can Be Sent to Ukraine for Trial, Polish Judge Rules](#)," *BBC News* (19 March 2026); Andrew Higgins, Nataliya Vasilyeva & Tomas Dapkus, "[Prisoner Swap in Eastern Europe Frees 10, Including Accused Spies](#)," *New York Times* (28 April 2026).

²³⁹ Piotr Sauer, "[Russian Artist and Critic of Putin and Chechen Leader Shot Dead in Poland](#)," *Guardian* (16 June 2025); Mark Hallam, "[Poland: Arrest after Russian Artist and Putin Critic Killed](#)," *Der Welt* (18 June 2026).

2022 as a fight against “neo-Nazis [and] Banderites,” further complicating the memory of the UPA [*See NCH Annual Report 2022*].²⁴⁰

See also India, Pakistan, Ukraine.

PORTUGAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017, 2021, 2025.

See Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea.

²⁴⁰ Henry Moore, “[Zelensky Stripped of Highest Polish Honour over WW2 Name of Army Unit](#),” *BBC News* (19 June 2026); Mark Middel, “[Historische gevoeligheid zet de relatie van Oekraïne met grote bondgenoot Polen onder druk](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (22 June 2026).

QATAR

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010.

See Palestine.

ROMANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007–2008, 2010, 2019, 2021–2025.

On 14 July 2025, President Nicusor Dan defended his decision to challenge at the Constitutional Court a bill criminalizing activities or organizations considered Legionary – referring to the fascist and antisemitic Legion of the Archangel Michael movement (1927–1941). Dan criticized the bill for lacking “clear legal definitions, particularly regarding what constituted a ‘fascist’ or ‘Legionary’ movement.” The decision was criticized by legal experts, historians, and members of the Jewish community. If approved, the bill would complement already existing legislation making public denial, justification, or minimization of the Holocaust punishable by 6 to 36 months in prison.²⁴¹

RUSSIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–1998, 2001, 2004–2006, 2008–2025.

Among the historians who went into exile after the 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2025* for related lists] was the following:

- On 10 October 2022, Alexander Evgenyevich Saifullin ([1991/2]–), a high school history teacher at Moscow College of the Service Sector no.10, went into exile first in Türkiye and then in Germany. Before the invasion, Saifullin had received complaints from parents for “politicizing reality” in the ways he spoke about President Vladimir Putin and opposition politician Alexei Navalny (1976–2024). After the invasion, Saifullin and his colleagues were forced to teach indoctrinating lessons called “Conversations about important things” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2023, 2025*] and to provide lecture recordings to the school’s director, officially to monitor student cheating. Instead, Saifullin would regularly turn off the recording to talk about crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the March 2022 Bucha massacre, and LGBTQ+–rights. Between 1 and 9 October 2022, Saifullin was confronted with anonymous threats, including death threats, secret recordings of his class, and references to his secret relationship with a man. After he fled to Istanbul, unknown men came to his house to search it. In February 2023,

²⁴¹ Marian Chiriac, “[Romanian President Criticised for Querying Law Targeting Far-Right Racists](#),” *Balkan Insight* (14 July 2025).

after Saifullin gave an interview from Germany to *Novaya Gazeta*, police officers went to interrogate his mother in Ulan-Ude, Buryatia.²⁴²

During the night of 10–11 March 2024, Daniil Golikov and Andrei Kozlovsky reportedly damaged an informal “Z-memorial” for Russian forces killed after the 2022 invasion in Ukraine. On 14 March, they were sentenced to fifteen days’ imprisonment on charges of “failure to comply with the lawful order of a police officer.” However, the ruling sparked outrage from pro-war activists who filed multiple criminal complaints against them. On 29 March, both men were placed under house arrest pending further investigation. During their trial, expert witnesses brought by the prosecution, including art historians and psychologists, concluded that the Z-memorial had “enormous socio-cultural and patriotic value” and “historical significance” and was “linked to heroic events.” On 18 November, they were sentenced to two-and-a-half and three years’ imprisonment in a low-security penal colony. On 8 July 2025, an appeal court reduced both sentences to two years.²⁴³

On 5 December 2024, authorities arrested and searched the house of Fazyl Abdullovich Valiakhmetov (1955–), a local historian, journalist, veteran of the Tatar national movement and director of the library and museum for Hadi Atlasi (1876–1938) – a historian, Turkologist, and Tatar public figure who was shot and killed by the NKVD (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) on 15 February 1938 for leading a “counterrevolutionary insurgency.” Valiakhmetov was charged with “discrediting” the Russian armed forces (Article 280.3 of the Russian Criminal Code) for social media posts on *Vkontakte*, and “justifying terrorism” (Article 205.2) for reposting an appeal by the Free Russia Legion, a Ukraine-based paramilitary group of Russian citizens opposing President Vladimir Putin’s government. His trial remained ongoing as of January 2026.²⁴⁴

Throughout 2025, authorities continued to prosecute people for commemorating opposition leader Alexei Navalny (1976–2024) – killed by government forces with a neurotoxin according to a February 2026 report by five European countries – and for sharing information about him, using his name, or displaying his portrait [*See NCH Annual Report 2024*].²⁴⁵

²⁴² Mikhail Bushuev, “[“Ты слишком много пи...шь”: История учителя, бежавшего из РФ](#),” *Deutsche Welle* (9 August 2023).

²⁴³ “[Andrei Kozlovsky and Daniil Golikov Are Political Prisoners](#),” *Memorial* (7 May 2025; updated [8 July 2025]).

²⁴⁴ “[Fazyl Valiakhmetov Is a Political Prisoner](#),” *Memorial* (9 June 2025); “[Valiakhmetov Fazyl Abdullovich](#),” *Memorial* ([no date]).

²⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 373; Anton Troianovski, Nataliya Vasilyeva & Lynsey Chutel, “[Navalny Was Poisoned with Frog Toxin, European Governments Say](#),” *New York Times* (14 February 2026).

In January 2025, authorities added the political prisoners project of Memorial, a leading human rights organization, to the “foreign agents” register. Over the next few months, they designated as “foreign agents” dozens of current and former Memorial leaders and members [*See also item below*].²⁴⁶

On 20 March 2025, Order No. 38 of Rosarkhiv (Russian federal archives) established a list of documents reclassified as “official information for limited distribution,” including materials whose dissemination “may pose a potential threat to the interests of the Russian Federation.” As a result, historians were barred from working with files of those repressed during the purges of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (in office 1924–1953), access to which became limited to relatives of the repressed, provided the latter could prove their family ties. The order contradicted the archival law, according to which any interested person could access a repressed individual’s file 75 years after its closure. The President’s Office said that Rosarkhiv’s decision was “dictated primarily by the need to protect Russian interests” in the face of “unfriendly actions against the country” and the need to “protect information” in the archives “from the distortion of historical facts and events, their false interpretation, or use in the interests of unfriendly states and territories,” probably alluding to the use made of the files by Russian historians in exile. The archives of the former secret service NKVD and KGB, managed by the Federal Security Service, already allowed access to case files of Stalinist victims to relatives only.²⁴⁷

On 24 April 2025, the Duma (Parliament) adopted federal law “On Perpetuating the Memory of the Victims of the Genocide of the Soviet People during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.” The law stated that “the actions of the Nazis and their accomplices during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 aimed at the total or partial destruction of national, ethnic, and racial groups living on the territory of the USSR, through killing members of those groups, inflicting severe bodily harm, forcibly preventing childbirth, transferring children, forcibly relocating populations, or otherwise deliberately creating living conditions calculated to bring about their physical destruction.” The definition of Nazi crimes against Soviet people – estimated at killing at least 26.6 million people – as a genocide, although contested by historians, had been promoted politically since at least 2019. The law went into force on 1 January 2026.

On [26] February 2026, the Duma approved upon first reading a bill making amendments to Article 243.4 (“criminal liability for the desecration of military burial sites, as well as monuments, stelae, obelisks, and other memorial structures or objects commemorating those who perished in defense of the Fatherland or its interests, or dedicated to the days of Russia’s military glory”) and Article 354.1

²⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 372.

²⁴⁷ “[Foreign Intelligence Service: The Kremlin Is Rehabilitating Stalin-Era Repressions](#),” *Odessa Journal* (6 October 2025); Alexander Leonidovich, “[In the Dark: Access to Key Russian Archives Is Being Restricted as the State Seeks to Tighten Its Control of Historical Memory](#),” *Novaya Gazeta Europe* (8 October 2025).

(“rehabilitation of Nazism”) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2009–2010, 2014, 2017, 2022–2023, 2025*] of the Criminal Code to include denial of the “genocide of the Soviet people.” The amendments would establish criminal liability for 1) “destroying, damaging, or desecrating burial sites of victims of the ‘genocide of the Soviet people,’ or memorials dedicated to them”; 2) “publicly denying the fact of the ‘genocide of the Soviet people’”; and 3) “publicly insulting the memory of the victims of the ‘genocide of the Soviet people,’” and making violation punishable for up to five years in prison.²⁴⁸

A 30 July 2025 report by Human Rights Watch found that online censorship and surveillance had increased since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. It showed how foreign websites were becoming increasingly inaccessible without a Virtual Private Network (VPN), while VPN providers were increasingly targeted. It concluded that government policies “forced a growing number of users to switch to Russian browsers and social media platforms on which users are offered government-promoted content and interpretations of current and historic events.”²⁴⁹

In September 2025, independent historian Jamie Bryson described how since 2014 and especially after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, bans and visa restrictions had affected Western historians wanting to access Russian archives (in his case, for research into the tsarist secret police Okhrana during World War I), and how they had been forced to give up field work and adopt remote or indirect research methods due to formal and informal access barriers, personal risks, and political opposition to the invasion of Ukraine.²⁵⁰

On 1 September 2025, a new law banned people designated as “foreign agents” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2013, 2016–2017, 2021–2024*] from participating in educational or political activities. Among its effects was that many bookstores and libraries removed books by “foreign agents” from their shelves. Already in 2024, the Russian Book Union had set up an “expert panel” featuring representatives from, among others, the Orthodox Church and the ultranationalist Russian Community to flag books deemed

²⁴⁸ Russian Federation, [Об увековечении памяти жертв геноцида советского народа в период Великой Отечественной войны 1941 - 1945 годов](#) (Федеральный закон по.74-ФЗ; 21 April 2025); “[Russia Coined the Term ‘Genocide of the Soviet People’: Now It Wants to Jail Deniers — A Move Unprecedented Even in the USSR](#),” *Meduza* (27 February 2026); Noah Krasman, “The Paradox of Genocide in Modern Russia: Evolving Narratives of the Siege of Leningrad During the ‘Great Patriotic Operation,’” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 25 no. 3–4 (2023), 403–417; Andrii Nekoliak, “Weaponizing Russia’s Memory Law: On Russia’s Mnemonic Dissidents,” *Verfassungsblog* (11 July 2023); Anton Weiss-Wendt, “‘Genocide of the Soviet People’: Putin’s Russia Waging Warfare by Means of History, 2018–2023,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 17 no. 2 (2024), 1–29; Konstantin Pakhaliuk, “Official Memory Politics, the ‘Genocide of the Soviet People,’ and the Distortion of the Holocaust in Modern Russia,” *Holocaust Study*, 31 no. 4 (2025), 636–659.

²⁴⁹ “[Disrupted, Throttled, and Blocked: State Censorship, Control, and Increasing Isolation of Internet Users in Russia](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (30 July 2025).

²⁵⁰ Jamie Bryson, “Russian History without Russia: Archive Encounters in an Era of Restricted Access,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (2025), 1–12; Emily Dixon, “[Locked Out of Archives, Scholars Forced to Study Russia from Afar](#),” *Times Higher Education* (6 November 2025).

“immoral” or “unpatriotic.” Among the books targeted by the September law were the works of Boris Akunin (pseudonym of Grigory Chhartsishvili [Grigori Tsjchartsjvili]) (1956–), author of historical novels and historical works, who lived in exile in Western Europe [*See NCH Annual Report 2024*].²⁵¹

On 15 September 2025, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova, submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council, in which she devoted attention to the topic of “State ideology and distortion of ‘historical truth’.” She argued that since the February 2022 of Ukraine, Russia had promoted a consolidated ideology centered on “traditional” values and external threats in order to justify aggression abroad and repression at home. State funding was used to promote support for the war on Ukraine and emphasize patriotism. Education was weaponized for ideological indoctrination, with mandatory patriotic and pro-war content in schools and universities [*See NCH Annual Reports 2022–2025*]. Russian textbooks mandatory in grades 10 and 11 omitted historical facts about Soviet-era crimes, the Stalinist purges, and the August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [*See NCH Annual Reports 2009–2010, 2016–2017*]. In April 2025, Russia had introduced a broadly framed definition of genocide committed by the Nazis and their collaborators, further instrumentalizing historical memory to justify its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, backed by statements such as the claim by President Vladimir Putin that Russia was fighting Nazism in Ukraine. Article 354.1 of the Criminal Code, on the “Rehabilitation of Nazism,” had been used to target dissent, with at least 52 persons convicted in 2024 [*See NCH Annual Reports 2009–2010, 2014, 2017, 2021–2025, and item above*].²⁵²

On 8 October 2025, authorities arrested food historian Pavel Syutkin (1965–) for spreading “false information” about the Russian military on his Telegram channel “Russian Cuisine: A History.” The charges were likely related to posts about the Russian massacre in Bucha, Ukraine, in March 2022. Syutkin could face up to ten years in prison if convicted.²⁵³

On 29 December 2025, President Vladimir Putin signed the federal law “On Amendments to Article 11 of the Federal Law on Days of Military Glory and Commemorative Dates of Russia” establishing April 19 as the “Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Genocide of the Soviet People perpetrated by the Nazis and their accomplices during World War II.” It was designed to commemorate the “feat of

²⁵¹ Niko Vorobyov, “[Russia’s Law against Books by ‘Foreign Agents’ Signals Tightening Grip](#),” *Al Jazeera* (26 September 2025); Niko Vorobyov, “[Folk Music and Raids: How Ultranationalists Target Migrants in Russia](#),” *Al Jazeera* (26 July 2025).

²⁵² United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova, [Situation of Human Rights in the Russian Federation](#) (UN Doc. A/HRC/60/59; 15 September 2025), paragraphs 64–68.

²⁵³ “[Prominent Russian Culinary Historian Hit with Criminal Charges for ‘Army Fakes’](#),” *Moscow Times* (8 October 2025).

our grandfathers and great-grandfathers who saved the whole world from the Nazis” and to not “let others forget the truth about the atrocities of the Nazis and the heroism of the Soviet people.” The law did not mention the six million Jewish victims of the Shoah. Russia’s history politics regarding World War II (known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War) and Nazism had increasingly become complicated and central during Putin’s reign, including and especially after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, backed by statements that Russia was fighting Nazism in Ukraine [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2025*]. The law also showed similarities with the 2022 law “On the Genocide of the Belarusian People” signed by President Aliaksandr Lukashenko [See NCH *Annual Report 2022–2024*, under *Belarus*].²⁵⁴

On or around 4 February 2026, historian Mikhail Suprun, a lecturer at the Northern (Arctic) Federal University in Arkhangelsk (SAFU), was dismissed. The day before, a post on a webpage close to the security forces had accused him of “anti-Russian activities” and published a document stating that in 2022 Suprun had worked at the Free University of Berlin and allegedly received a scholarship of € 1,125 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2010–2013, 2024*]. Earlier, historian Alexei Feldt had also been dismissed from SAFU, causing widespread protests. Some of the students who had spoken out in Feldt’s support had reportedly been intimidated by the SAFU administration.²⁵⁵

On 13 February 2026, philosopher and historian Roy Medvedev (1925–2026), died. Medvedev’s father, a Marxist philosopher, had perished in a labor camp in 1941 and Medvedev himself had been in charge of the history textbooks department of the Publishing House of Pedagogical Literature (1957–1961). Between October 1964 and March 1971, he edited and published eighty monthly issues of the *samizdat* (underground) journal *Politicheskii dnevnik* (Political Diary). In 1969, he published a three-volume *samizdat* study *Before the Court of History* which exposed Stalin (1878–1953) and Stalinism from a Marxist-Leninist point of view. The fruit of six years’ research (1962–1968), it was the first comprehensive work on Stalinism and its crimes written by a Soviet author. A request for official publication had been rejected in 1968 after two hundred people had read and commented on the manuscript. In 1969 it was sent on microfilm to David Joravsky, head of the history department at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, United States. Around the same time, Medvedev protested against the attempts of the official journal of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) *Kommunist* to rehabilitate Stalin. In October 1969, after the Committee for State Security KGB got hold of one of the twenty *samizdat* copies of *Before the Court of History*, he was expelled from the CPSU

²⁵⁴ Executive Office of the President of Russia, “[A New Commemorative Date Established: April 19 – Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Genocide of the Soviet People](#)” (29 December 2025); Mathilda Heller, “[Putin Establishes Soviet Genocide Memorial Day, Erasing Jewish Victims of Nazis](#),” *Jerusalem Post* (6 January 2026).

²⁵⁵ Георгий Чентемиров, “[Историка Михаила Супруна уволили из САФУ](#),” *Barents Observer* (4 February 2026).

and later dismissed from his position as department head at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences Institute of Vocational Education, Moscow (1961–1971). He became a freelance writer and was frequently harassed. When information emerged about foreign publishers' interest in his book, the KGB searched his house and manuscripts, and his archives on Stalin were raided and confiscated. Threatened with interrogation and arrest, he went into hiding for several months in the Black Sea area in 1971–1972. In 1972 the study was published in New York as *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (Russian and English, 1972). One thousand Russian-language copies were printed and many of them smuggled into the Soviet Union (USSR). Medvedev was sometimes called a leader of the Leninist opposition in the USSR. In 1975 he and his brother Zhores published their study *N. S. Khrushchev: Ten Years in Power* in samizdat and abroad. In March 1975, Medvedev began publishing the samizdat journal *Dvadtsati vek* (Twentieth Century) as the successor of *Politicheskii dnevnik*. The Procuracy (the prosecuting authority) stopped its publication after ten issues. In 1979 Medvedev's *On Stalin and Stalinism*, a sequel of *Let History Judge*, was published in Oxford. Several other books of his were published abroad. From 1983 to mid-1985 he was kept under house arrest and close surveillance. In June 1988, he made his first official appearance in decades at a conference on Stalinist terror. In April 1989, he was rehabilitated as a CPSU member and in 1990 he became a member of the CPSU Central Committee. In March [1991], he was elected to the Presidium of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, which attempted to hold a sixth extraordinary session. In 2002, *Let History Judge* was published legally in Russia for the first time.²⁵⁶

On 20 February 2026, the city government of Moscow announced that the Gulag History Museum, founded in 2001, would be replaced by a Museum of Memory focused on the “genocide of the Soviet people” (See item above) and to “instill in the modern generation a strong rejection of Nazism in all its manifestations.” The Gulag History Museum was the last remaining museum dealing with the Soviet

²⁵⁶ L. Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious and Human Rights* (originally Russian 1984; Middletown 1987), 14–15, 416–420; P. Boris, *Die sich lossagten: Stichworte zu Leben und Werk von 461 Exkommunisten und Dissidenten* (Cologne 1983), 185–186; K. Boyd, ed., *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (London/Chicago 1999), 794–795; S.F. Cohen, ed., *An End to Silence: Uncensored Opinion in the Soviet Union; From Roy Medvedev's Underground Magazine Political Diary* (New York/London 1982), 137; S.P. de Boer, E.J. Driessen, & H.L. Verhaar eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Dissidents in the Soviet Union 1956–1975* (The Hague 1982), 292–93; *Index on Censorship*, 1975 no. 2: 94; 1975 no. 3: 88; 1978 no. 1: 77; 1979 no. 2: 25–31; 1979 no. 3: 3–11, 33–37; 1979 no. 5: 76–78; 1979 no. 6: 78–79; 1983 no. 3: 2, 48; 1984 no. 3: 49; 1988 no. 7: 39–40; D. Jones, ed., *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (London/Chicago 2001), 1567–1569, 2873; R. D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956–1974* (Houndmills 2001), 298; R. M. Slusser, “History and the Democratic Opposition,” in R. L. Tökés, ed., *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People* (Baltimore/London 1975), 332–334, 346–351; T. Sherlock, “Politics and History Under Gorbachev,” *Problems of Communism* (May–August 1988), 40; J. Vronskaya & V. Chuguev, *The Biographical Dictionary of the Former Soviet Union* (London 1992), 330; Antoon De Baets, “[Open Letters in Closed Societies: The Values of Historians under Attack](#),” *History and Theory*, 63 no. 4 (December 2024), 160, 166, 174; Robert McFadden, “[Roy Medvedev, Soviet Era Historian and Dissident, Is Dead at 100](#),” *New York Times* (14 February 2026).

Gulag system. It had already been closed since November 2024 for unspecified “fire safety violations” [See NCH *Annual Reports 2018, 2025*].²⁵⁷

On 24 February 2026, it was reported that Konstantin Malofeev, an ultranationalist and sanctioned media owner and oligarch known for his extremist historical views, longtime ally of President Vladimir Putin, and financier of the war in Ukraine (2014–), was set to teach a history course, “The History of Empire,” at Moscow State University (MSU). In 2024, Malofeev had married Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova, who, along with Putin, had been issued an International Criminal Court arrest warrant for the war crime of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children to Russia. Malofeev’s ideas reportedly began appearing in official ideological discourse in 2025. His concept of Russia as a “particular, integrative type of empire” became part of the Foundations of Russian Statehood curriculum, mandatory for first-year students since 2023.²⁵⁸

On 1 March 2026, a special council at the Ministry of Culture was scheduled to begin screening films for elements that “discredit traditional values.” The council followed a November 2022 list of “traditional spiritual and moral values,” approved by President Vladimir Putin, including patriotism, service to the Fatherland, and historical memory. On 11 November 2025, various ministries had presented the “Standard of Advertising with Traditional Value Content,” which instructed companies to reflect “traditional Russian spiritual and moral values” in their advertising.²⁵⁹

On 9 April 2026, the Supreme Court designated the history and human rights NGO Memorial [See NCH *Annual Reports 2001, 2005–2006, 2009–2023*, and item above] an “extremist organization.” The ruling followed a 9 February 2026 designation of Zukunft Memorial and the International Memorial Association as “undesirable” by the Prosecutor General’s Office, banning them in Russia and threatening to prosecute anyone who engaged in their activities in Russia or overseas.

On 27 March 2026, the Justice Ministry had filed a lawsuit seeking to designate Memorial “extremist,” claiming that it had “disregarded” court rulings by recognizing some individuals convicted of participation in terrorist organizations as political prisoners. The case had culminated in a closed-door hearing, in which Memorial’s attorneys were not allowed to participate. The case file was classified “top secret.” In a news release, the Supreme Court called Memorial’s activities “vocally anti-Russian,

²⁵⁷ Neil MacFarquhar, “[Russia Takes the Gulag Out of the Gulag History Museum in Moscow](#),” *New York Times* (20 February 2026).

²⁵⁸ Jess Daly, “[Ultranationalist Ideologues Now Teach History in Russia’s Universities](#),” *United24* (24 February 2026).

²⁵⁹ “[В России запретят фильмы, дискредитирующие «традиционные ценности»](#),” *Moscow Times* (28 November 2025); “[Власти начнут искать «дискредитацию традиционных ценностей» в фильмах по доносам](#),” *Moscow Times* (10 February 2026); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 370.

aimed at destroying the foundations of Russian statehood, undermining territorial integrity, and eroding historical, cultural, spiritual, and moral values.” The ruling allowed authorities to include individuals suspected of involvement with Memorial in the nationwide “list of extremists,” to imprison them (up to twelve years), and to freeze their bank accounts. In its lawsuit, the ministry had identified 196 “active participants” in the movement. In 2025, the Justice Ministry had already designated dozens of Memorial’s members “foreign agents” in their personal capacity, which entailed onerous and burdensome labeling and reporting requirements and prosecution for supposed violations.²⁶⁰

On 7 May 2026, authorities in Yekaterinburg arrested historian Oleg Novoselov on charges of “inciting or recruiting to assist terrorist activity.” No further information was provided. Novoselov studied political repression in the Urals during the Great Terror (1936–1938) and frequently published documents from the Sverdlovsk public archives on his Telegram channel. In the past, he had volunteered for the history and human rights NGO Memorial, which the Supreme Court had designated an “extremist organization” one month before Novoselov’s arrest (*See* item above). He faced fifteen years in prison.²⁶¹

See also Belarus, France, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine.

RWANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2000–2017, 2019–2025.

On 30 September 2025, the Nyanza High Court Chamber of International and Cross-Border Crimes sentenced Aimable Karasira (1977–2026), an online commentator, singer, and former professor of information communication technology at the University of Rwanda [*See* NCH *Annual Report* 2022], to five years in prison for inciting “divisionism.” The prosecution had sought thirty years on charges of inciting public disorder and denying and justifying the 1994 genocide in critical videos on YouTube where he spoke about his family’s history, the genocide (in which his Tutsi parents were killed), and killings by Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers in its aftermath. The government of President, and former RPF commander, Paul Kagame (in office 2000–) was known for using vaguely defined laws on

²⁶⁰ Valerie Hopkins, “[A Newspaper Is Raided and a Rights Group Outlawed Amid Kremlin Crackdown](#),” *New York Times* (9 April 2026); Human Rights Watch, “[Russia: Memorial Rights Group Declared ‘Extremist’](#)” (Press release; 10 April 2026); United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Comment by UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk on Russian Designation of Memorial as ‘Extremist’](#)” (Press release; 10 April 2026).

²⁶¹ “[Yekaterinburg Police Arrest Soviet Repression Researcher on ‘Terrorism’ Charges](#),” *Moscow Times* (7 May 2026).

“genocide ideology” and “genocide denial” to silence dissent. On 6 May 2026, Karasira was released from prison but died the same day in a hospital in Kigali after he had allegedly overdosed on his prescription medication. His death was called suspicious by some and compared to the death of singer Kizito Mihigo (1981–2020) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021, 2024*].²⁶²

See also Congo (Democratic Republic), Uganda.

²⁶² Nicole Kamanzi Muteteri, “[Aimable Karasira Sentenced to Five Years in Prison](#),” *Igihe* (30 September 2025); Clémentine de Montjoye, “[Jailed Critic in Rwanda Faces 30-Year Sentence](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (25 February 2026); Didier Bikorimana, BBC Great Lakes Service & Hafsa Khalil, “[Rwandan Singer Dies as He Was Being Released from Prison](#),” *BBC News* (7 May 2026).

SAINT KITTS and NEVIS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

SAINT LUCIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

On 29 July 2025, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional the colonial-era “buggery and gross indecency” law, which had criminalized consensual gay sex with up to ten years in prison. While the government had not been enforcing the law, the ruling was hailed as an important step toward gender equality. The decision followed similar rulings in 2022 (in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis) and 2024 (in Dominica).²⁶³

SAINT VINCENT and THE GRENADINES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2014.

On 6 March 2025, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves announced the purchase of the privately owned and uninhabited island of Baliceaux. The announcement was hailed as “a historic and long-awaited victory” by members of the Garifuna community – descendants of enslaved Africans and Indigenous Kalinago and Arawak people. In 1796, British colonial forces had deported around 5,000 Garifuna people to the island of Baliceaux in an attempt to quell anticolonial resistance. When the British returned to deport them again, this time to Roatán island off the coast of Honduras, half of them had died from starvation and disease.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Natricia Duncan, “[Caribbean LGBTQ+ Activists Celebrate as Court Strikes Down Colonial-Era Laws](#),” *Guardian* (1 August 2025).

²⁶⁴ Natricia Duncan & Demion McTair, “[St Vincent and the Grenadines Buys Island Central to Garifuna Culture](#),” *Guardian* (6 March 2025).

SAMOA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

On 2 June 2026, the government of Prime Minister Laaulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Schmidt (in office 2025–) and relatives of the leader of the anticolonial Mau movement, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III (1901–1929), jointly opened the restored headquarters of the Mau Independence Movement in Vaimoso. Founded in 1908, the Mau movement challenged German (1900–1914) and New Zealand (1914–1962) colonialism, including from its headquarters in Vaimoso. In March 2021, the Samoa Tofia, an NGO advocating for the protection and restoration of Samoan cultural heritage, had called on the government of then Prime Minister Afioga Fiamē Naomi Mata‘afa (in office 2021–2025) to resolve the lack of recognition for the Mau movement by creating a public holiday and a monument commemorating its killed members.²⁶⁵

SÃO TOMÉ and PRÍNCIPE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

SAUDI ARABIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2001, 2006, 2010–2011, 2013, 2017–2021, 2024–2025.

See Mauritania.

SENEGAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2004, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017–2018, 2020, 2023, 2025.

On 16 October 2025, the Committee for the commemoration of the 1944 Thiaroye massacre, led by historian Mamadou Diouf, published a 301-page report about the massacre, in which French forces killed French West African veterans from the 1940 Battle of France [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2017,

²⁶⁵ Lagi Keresoma, “[Lest We Forget – The Mau Movement History Restored](#),” *Talamua* (2 June 2026); Marc Membrere, “[Recognize Mau Movement: Samoa Tofia](#),” *Samoa Observer* (15 March 2021).

2025]. It found that the massacre had been premeditated, that its death toll had been vastly underestimated – French colonial authorities had stated that 35 people were killed whereas the report mentioned a tally of 300 to 400 – and that evidence had subsequently been concealed. It also concluded that “some administrative and military archives [we]re inaccessible or inconsistent, while others ha[d] disappeared or been falsified.”

On 14 December 2025, French ambassador in Senegal Christine Fages explained in a radio broadcast that all records related to the massacre had been declassified, except two – and that this was not intentional. The first was a record of the ship that brought the riflemen back to Dakar, a document that France did not have, as the ship was British; the second was an individual file, which she did not wish to name, partly covered by a 1947 amnesty from the Council of State, which placed legal constraints on its disclosure.

On 27 March 2026, the Paris administrative court ruled that the State had failed to effectively investigate the circumstances in which at least one rifleman died, in a case brought by the latter’s son who was awarded 10,000 euros. The court explained that it could not condemn France for the death itself, as the statute of limitations had expired.²⁶⁶

SERBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2021–2025.

Previous *Annual Report* entries under Serbia / Kosovo: 2008–2020; under Serbia / Montenegro: 1999, 2001–2007.

On 15 March 2025, between 275,000 and 300,000 people participated in an anti-government protest and silent vigil for the fifteen persons killed in the Novi Sad railway station collapse on 1 November 2024 [See NCH *Annual Report* 2025]. The vigil was interrupted by an unusual and disturbing noise heard by protesters, causing a minor stampede. Government critics claimed that some kind of sonic weapon was used; the authorities denied this.²⁶⁷

In April 2025, the board of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) decided that its 31st Annual Meeting, scheduled for Belgrade in September 2025, would take place online. It further decided

²⁶⁶ [“French Massacre of WWII African Riflemen ‘Premeditated’, Covered Up: Report,”](#) *Al Jazeera* (17 October 2025); [“Déclassification des archives Thiaroye 4: Christine Fages assure que la France n’a ‘rien à cacher’ et explique l’absence de deux documents clés,”](#) *RTS* (14 December 2025); [“Massacre de Thiaroye: L’État français condamné pour avoir dissimulé les circonstances du décès d’un tirailleur africain,”](#) *RFI* (27 March 2026).

²⁶⁷ Katarina Baletic, [“Mass Rallies, Marches and Roadblocks Dominate Serbia’s Streets in 2025,”](#) *Balkan Insight* (22 December 2025).

that archaeologists affiliated with Israeli institutions would only be allowed to speak in a personal capacity because of the ongoing genocide in Gaza – in line with an earlier decision for Russian and Belarusian archaeologists after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. However, after external pressure the EAA Board decided at the last minute to reverse the second decision, leading to subsequent calls to boycott the meeting. As a result, the organizers of session 20, titled “Material Traces of Totalitarian and Dictatorial Regimes in the Twentieth-Century Hidden Past” and scheduled for 5 September, canceled their session.²⁶⁸

In May 2025, it became known that the American company Affinity Global was granted a 99-year lease on the landmark and memorial site called the Generalštab complex in Belgrade despite its protected status under Serbia’s cultural heritage laws. On 15 December, however, the developer withdrew from the project, acknowledging that “meaningful projects should unite rather than divide.” This coincided with the indictment of the Minister of Culture, Nikola Selaković, and three other officials by the Public Prosecutor for Organized Crime on allegations of abuse of office [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. On 19 December 2025, United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Alexandra Xanthaki welcomed the withdrawal and called on the government to reinstate the protected status of the Generalštab complex.²⁶⁹

On 4 November 2025, a European Commission report on the European Union’s enlargement policy found that the draft amendments to the Law on Textbooks, one of four framework education laws to which amendments had been approved by the government in March 2025, would give exclusive rights to one publisher for producing textbooks for a range of subjects, including history, that risked affecting the quality of textbooks and politicizing the curriculum.²⁷⁰

On 6 November 2025, the government of President Aleksandar Vučić (in office 2017–) removed the departments of History, Serbian Language and Literature, and Russian Language and Literature from the University of Niš, and replaced them with the “Faculty of Serbian Studies.” On 26 January 2026, three United Nations Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about the decision, taken without the

²⁶⁸ Theo Toebosch, “[Archeologen leggen de sporen bloot die dictatoriale regimes in Europa hebben achtergelaten](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (9 October 2025); European Association of Archaeologists, [31st EAA Annual Meeting 2–6 September 2025, Belgrade Virtual: Programme Book](#) (EAA, 2025); Elisabeth Bumiller, “[Israeli Academics Find Themselves Isolated Despite Gaza Cease-Fire](#),” *New York Times* (9 November 2025); Association of Archaeologists, [Last-Minute Cancellations](#) (Excel sheet).

²⁶⁹ Guy Delauney, “[A Belgrade Landmark Bombed by NATO Could Get Trump Makeover](#),” *BBC News* (12 June 2025); Otilie Mitchell, “[Serbia Clears the Way for Controversial Trump-Linked Property Plan](#),” *BBC News* (8 November 2025); UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[UN Expert Welcomes Halt to Divisive Belgrade Project, Urges Serbia to Protect Generalštab Complex](#)” (Press release; 19 December 2025).

²⁷⁰ European Commission, [Commission Staff Working Document – Serbia 2025 Report](#) (SWD(2025) 755; Brussels: European Commission, 4 November 2025), 87–88.

involvement or consent of the competent university bodies, noting that this action appeared part of a broader pattern of measures affecting academic freedom and the independence of academic institutions under Vučić's tenure.²⁷¹

On 22 June 2026, a report by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Serbia said that routine denial of war crimes and glorification of convicted war criminals formed part of a deliberate strategy to foment hatred, sow division, and undermine democratic values. It found at least 110 instances of war crimes denial and sixty cases of glorification of war criminals related to the Yugoslav Wars of Independence (1991–1995), and thirty instances of denial of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide throughout 2025. It also found an increase in references to Croatians and Serbian Croats as Ustaše, referring to the World War II fascist organization.²⁷²

See also Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro.

SEYCHELLES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2019, 2022.

SIERRA LEONE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2000–2012, 2016, 2021, 2024–2025.

SINGAPORE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2009–2011, 2015–2016, 2018–2022, 2024–2025.

On 3 February 2025, human rights defender Jolovan Wham was charged under the Public Order Act for allegedly attending five candlelight vigils for death row prisoners without a permit between March

²⁷¹ United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL SRB 1/2026](#) (26 January 2026).

²⁷² Ivana Jeremic, "[Serbian Officials Using War-Crimes Denial 'To Foment Hatred,' Report Asserts](#)," *Balkan Insight* (22 June 2026); Massimo Moratti, "[30 Years After: Serbia in Denial about Genocide](#)," *Justiceinfo.net* (10 July 2025).

2022 and April 2023. Wham had long faced judicial harassment for his activism, with charges dating back to 2017 [See NCH *Annual Reports 2018–2020*].²⁷³

SLOVAKIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013–2015, 2017, 2022–2023, 2025.

The campaign of dismissals by Minister of Culture Martina Šimkovičová to promote “Slovak culture” continued [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]:

- On 30 September 2024, historian Branislav Panis, an expert in numismatics, was dismissed as director of the Slovak National Museum. Panis had spent more than twenty-five years at the museum, including as its director since 2016. No official reason for the dismissal was given.
- On 10 December 2024, director of the Pamiatkový úrad Slovenskej republiky (Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic) Pavel Ižvolt was dismissed and replaced with archaeologist Mario Comisso. In personally selecting Comisso, Šimkovičová reportedly violated the legal procedure to ask an opinion from the Monuments Board members.²⁷⁴

On 29 August 2025, marking the annual commemoration of the 1944 Slovak National Uprising against Nazi Germany and the collaborationist regime of President Jozef Gašpar Tiso (1887–1947; in office 1939–1945), Prime Minister Robert Fico invoked the “denial of the results of World War II” – a theme of Russian propaganda suggesting that insufficient attention was paid to the Soviet Red Army’s role in the defeat of Nazi Germany, but that was itself criticized for ignoring the German-Soviet cooperation between 1939–1941 (especially the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop pact [See NCH *Annual Reports 2009–2011, 2016–2017*, under Russia]) and the subsequent occupation by the Soviet Union of parts of East Central and Southeastern Europe. Fico’s statement was denounced as part of a broader trend of pro-Russian historical revisionism. On the same day, Fico’s ally in the European parliament, Ľuboš Blaha, portrayed former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Gustáv Husák (in office

²⁷³ Nadine Chua, “[Activist Jolovan Wham Faces 5 Charges over Taking Part in Illegal Vigils for Death Row Inmates](#),” *Straits Times* (3 February 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 396; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 321.

²⁷⁴ “[Culture Minister Appoints Archaeologist with Dubious Reputation as Monuments Office Head](#),” *Slovak Spectator* (11 December 2024); Artistic Freedom Initiative, [Early Warning: The Politicization of Slovak Arts and Culture](#) (9 April 2025), 37–45; “[Fired in Bathrobe: Slovak Cultural Heads Recall Their Dismissals](#),” *France24* (4 July 2025); Diana Lodderhose, “[Far-Right Purges On Culture Sectors In Slovakia & Hungary Spark Concern Among CEE Delegates In Karlovy Vary: ‘This Is Not Just A Local Fire’](#),” *Deadline* (8 July 2025).

1969–1987) as a realist who “saved Czechoslovakia from bloodshed after 1968” – Husák was responsible for a repressive policy of “normalization” following the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of the country that crushed the Prague Spring. Already on the anniversary of the 21 August 1968 invasion, Blaha had posted that rather than the Russian Federation, Ukraine was to be held responsible for that invasion – claiming that then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian-born Leonid Brezhnev (in office 1964–1982), was “shaped by the Ukrainian environment” – and called on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to apologize for the 1968 invasion. In June 2025, the government had canceled the annual 17 November public holiday (also known as the Day of the Struggle for Freedom and Democracy) commemorating the beginning of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, citing fiscal pressure.²⁷⁵

SLOVENIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2007–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2018, 2021, 2023, 2025.

At the end of 2025, more than 25,000 citizens of former Yugoslavia remained excluded from the official registry of permanent residents after being unconstitutionally removed in 1992 following independence [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2007–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2018, 2023]. There remained no pathway to permanent residency, resulting in ongoing violations of their right to nationality and denial of access to political participation and essential services. Despite court rulings in favor of the so-called “Erased,” no effective remedies had been provided.²⁷⁶

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

²⁷⁵ “[Slovakia Ends November 17 Public Holiday amid Fiscal Pressures](#),” *Slovak Spectator* (3 June 2025); Peter Dubóczy & Michaela Dubóczy, “[Nazism from the West and Freedom from the East: History Is Being Distorted in Slovakia](#),” *Friedrich Naumann Foundation* (4 September 2025); Emma de Ruiter, “[Thousands in Slovakia and Czech Republic Rally against Leaders on Velvet Revolution Anniversary](#),” *Euronews* (18 November 2025).

²⁷⁶ Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 323.

SOMALIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2003, 2006, 2012–2014, 2019, 2022, 2025.

SOUTH AFRICA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2004, 2006–2010, 2012–2021, 2023, 2025.

On [14] September 2025, Zulu King Misuzulu kaZwelithini attacked Musa Xulu ([1961–]), ethnomusicologist and director of a cultural heritage tourism company, in front of thousands of people who had gathered at the newly built royal palace for the traditional annual Reed Dance. Challenging him to a stick fight, the king said that Xulu had insulted him and the entire Zulu nation but did not specify why. Xulu believed the reason lay in an interview in which he had criticized the move to a new palace after millions had been invested in the restoration of the old one. Xulu reportedly received death threats and lodged a formal complaint with the police.²⁷⁷

On [18] March 2026, the grave of anti-apartheid activist and founding member of the Pan-Africanist Congress, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe (1924–1978), was vandalized. The vandalism occurred amid heightened tension over the renaming of the town of Graaff-Reinet – named after Cornelis Jacob van de Graaff, the Dutch governor of the Cape Colony when the town was founded in 1786, and his wife Hester Cornelia Reynet – after Sobukwe. On 6 February 2026, minister of sports, arts and culture, Gayton McKenzie, had approved the name change, alongside twenty others, “to redress, correct and transform the geographical naming system in order to advance restorative justice, including addressing the colonial and apartheid-era naming legacy.” The decision was followed by petitions, a letter of complaint, and marches by supporters and opponents of the change.²⁷⁸

See also Australia, Palestine.

²⁷⁷ Joseph Winter, “[Zulu King Challenges Professor to Stick Fight](#),” *BBC News* (14 September 2025).

²⁷⁸ Rachel Savage, “[Goodbye Graaff-Reinet: South African Town’s Name Change Stirs Racial Tensions](#),” *Guardian* (29 March 2026).

SOUTH KOREA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1998–2001, 2003, 2006, 2008–2010, 2012–2013, 2016–2025.

On 26 March 2026, President Lee Jae-myung met with bereaved families of the Jeju April 3 Incident and pledged to restore the honor of its victims and abolish statutes of limitations for state violence crimes. The Jeju Uprising of 3 April 1948 (often dubbed “Jeju 4·3 Incident”) had resulted in a military crackdown and in the deaths of 30,000 to 60,000 people [See *NCH Annual Report 2012*]. Lee added that “[t]he Jeju 4·3 is a history that must never be forgotten” and expressed his determination to counter its distortion and denigration and construct an archive center for Jeju 4·3 records.²⁷⁹

See also China, Japan, Latvia.

SOUTH SUDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2015–2021, 2024–2025.

On [22] May 2025, authorities appointed a nine-member selection panel for the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing [See *NCH Annual Report 2025*] which began the process of selecting its commissioners. Civil society expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and public participation in the process. The procedure to establish the African Union-backed Hybrid Court for South Sudan remained stalled [See *NCH Annual Reports 2016–2021, 2024–2025*].²⁸⁰

SPAIN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999, 2002–2025.

In late July 2025, the government approved the draft Law on Classified Information, which would declassify documents over 45 years old and replace the Franco-era Law of Official Secrets (1968, amended 1978) [See *NCH Annual Reports 2008–2009, 2016, 2019, 2023*]. Declassified archives would

²⁷⁹ Song Jong-ho, “[President Lee Pledges Extended Victim Registration, Archive Center for Jeju 4·3](#),” *Seoul Economic Daily* (29 March 2026).

²⁸⁰ United Nations Human Rights Committee, “[Concluding Observations on the Seventh Periodic Report of Spain](#) (26 August 2025), 3; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 332, 335.

include those dating from the Civil War (1936–1939), the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), and files on the Green March – a mass demonstration on 6 November 1975, coordinated by the Moroccan government, to force Spain to hand over the disputed Spanish Sahara to Morocco, and which resulted in Spain’s sudden withdrawal from the territory. Spain had publicly denied Moroccan sovereignty over its Saharan territories until March 2022. Implementation of the law, if passed by parliament, was expected from late 2026.²⁸¹

On 26 October 2025, in its concluding observations on the seventh periodic report on Spain, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) welcomed the adoption of the 2022 Democratic Memory Act which aimed to recognize victims of crimes under international law from the civil war (1936–1939) and Franco military dictatorship (1939–1975) [*See NCH Annual Reports 2023–2025*] but expressed concern that the 1977 Amnesty Law remained in place. Following the Constitutional Court’s dismissal of several appeals challenging the refusal of domestic courts to investigate complaints of torture during the Franco era, one appeal remained pending before the European Court of Human Rights as of March 2026.²⁸²

In early April 2026, the official Consejo de Memoria Democrática (Democratic Memory Council) established a Comisión sobre las Violaciones de Derechos Humanos durante la Guerra y la Dictadura (Commission on Human Rights Violations during the War and the Dictatorship), a truth commission to investigate the human rights violations committed during the Civil War (1936–1939) and the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975). It would include a sub-commission to investigate violations committed against thousands of women confined in centers of the Patronato de Protección a la Mujer (Women’s Protection Board) from 1941 to 1985. The government officially recognized and extended apologies to victims of the Patronato, which would be declared a Democratic Memory Site.²⁸³

See also Equatorial Guinea, United States.

²⁸¹ Adil Faouzi, “[Spain to Declassify Secret Archives: Morocco Awaits Revelations on Western Sahara](#),” *Morocco World News* (2 August 2025).

²⁸² Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 326.

²⁸³ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Spain: UN Experts Welcome Truth Commission on Violations Committed during Civil War and Franco Dictatorship](#)” (Press release; 10 April 2026).

SRI LANKA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2004, 2008–2025.

In May 2025, excavations of a mass grave began in Jaffna, Northern Province. During the Civil War (1983–2009) between the national army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 predominantly Tamil people forcibly disappeared. During previous exhumations, the State was criticized for lack of expertise, insufficient funding, and cover-ups of mass graves. A 2024 report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had expressed concern “that there [we]re insufficient financial, human and technical resources to conduct exhumations in line with international standards and [that it] encourage[d] the Government to seek international support in this regard.” On 17 August 2025, the Counter-terrorism Investigation Department summoned photojournalist, human rights activist, and president of the Mullaitivu Press Club, Kanapathipillai Kumanan, for an inquiry over his social media posts, including many documenting the excavations in Jaffna. Kumanan and his family had previously received threats.²⁸⁴

On 2 June 2026, police forces arrested rapper Sangeethsan Ganeskumar (also known as Hiphop Sangee) on charges of supporting or glorifying the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – the Tamil separatist group that fought the national army during the Civil War (1983–2009) and was dissolved after defeat – in his music and on social media. He faced prosecution under the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act.²⁸⁵

See also Palestine.

SUDAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002–2003, 2006–2025.

An August 2025 report by the London-based Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC) Network found that various “amputated historical memories” circulated during the civil war (2023–) between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and various other

²⁸⁴ Jeevan Ravindran, “[New Sri Lanka Mass Grave Discovery Reopens Old Wounds for Tamils](#),” *Al Jazeera* (16 June 2025); “[Sri Lanka: ICJ Urges International Oversight and Victim-Centred Investigation into Chemmani Mass Grave in Compliance with International Law and Standards](#),” *International Commission of Jurists* (27 July 2025); “[Sri Lanka: Groups Demand Counter-terror Police Cease Harassment of Tamil Photojournalist Kanapathipillai Kumanan](#),” *Ifex* (18 August 2025); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2026: Events of 2025* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 420–421.

²⁸⁵ Elaine Pearson, “[Sri Lanka Detains Rapper Over Video](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (14 June 2026).

military groups. Among them were selective references to Abdullah al-Taashi (1846–1899) – who proclaimed himself a Mahdi (Guided One; a messianic figure in Islamic eschatology), defeated the rule of the Khedivate of Egypt over Sudan (1821–1881) and established the Al-Dawla al-Mahdiyyah (Madhist State; 1881–1899) – aimed at delegitimizing anti-SAF and anti-RSF advocates for justice for historically marginalized groups, including the Ḥarakat al-‘Adl wal-musāwāh (Justice and Equality Movement) and the Ḥarakat Taḥrīr as-Sūdān (Sudan Liberation Movement) [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].²⁸⁶

On 6 October 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) convicted Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, also known as “Ali Kushayb,” a principal leader of the paramilitary Janjaweed (precursor of the Rapid Support Forces), of 27 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur between August 2003 and March 2004. On 9 December, he was sentenced to twenty years’ imprisonment. The ruling was hailed as a landmark being the first to hold a leader accountable for crimes committed during the War in Darfur (2003–2020) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2008–2012, 2021–2022*].²⁸⁷

On 21 November 2025, Blue Shield – an international organization set up in 1996 to protect cultural heritage – expressed “serious concern” over the destruction of cultural heritage during the Civil War (2023–), including “risks to museums, archives, sacred spaces, and archaeological sites,” and called on all parties to abide by their responsibilities under the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999. The statement followed reports in January 2025 of the partial destruction of the Sultan Ali Dinar Palace (built in 1912) in El Fasher, Darfur, by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – part of a widespread and years-long campaign of cultural heritage destruction by the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces [See NCH *Annual Reports 2023–2025*]. On 25 November, the International Council of Archives reiterated Blue Shield’s call.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC Network), [Sudan’s Information War: How Weaponised Online Narratives Shape the Humanitarian Crisis and Response](#) (no place; August 2025), 18.

²⁸⁷ Margherita Capacci, “[Ali Kushayb, the Convicted Symbol of Crimes in Darfur](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (10 October 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 427; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 33–34, 342–343.

²⁸⁸ “[The Destruction of Sultan Ali Dinar Palace: An Assault on Sudan’s Cultural Heritage](#),” *Darfur Network for Human Rights* (17 January 2025); Peter Stone, “[Blue Shield Statement on Sudan](#),” *Blue Shield* (21 November 2025); “[ICA Statement on the Blue Shield Appeal for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Sudan](#),” *International Council on Archives* (25 November 2025).

SURINAME

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009–2010, 2012–2013, 2015–2016, 2018, 2024–2025.

SWEDEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2017–2018, 2020, 2022, 2024.

On 25 February 2025, two United Nations Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about the pending by-election of three members of the Truth Commission for the Sámi people. A June 2022 agreement between the Sámi Parliament and the national government had established that it should consist of a chairperson and twelve members, and that their competences should include Sámi culture and language (two members); human rights (three members); international expertise (one member); history (four members); ethnology (one member); and archaeology (one member). Although the twelve members were appointed immediately, three commission members, including the chair (two human rights experts and one historian), resigned in [October] 2024. It was the second time that the commission's chair resigned, after Kerstin Calissendorff had requested her resignation in 2023. The latest resignations followed an editorial opinion in the conservative daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, titled “Stop the falsification of Sweden's history,” in which the daily's deputy head Peter Wennblatt criticized the commission for having been “hijacked by activists” and being “anything but scientific.” Despite the fact that on 2 December 2024, the Sámi Parliament's Steering Group for the Truth Commission selected three new candidates, including one historian, the vacancies were not filled. The government stated that no further appointments had been made because the nine-member composition was deemed adequate enough. On 1 April 2025, human rights lawyer Lena Nyberg was appointed as new chair.²⁸⁹

On [2] April 2026, the Stockholm District Court was asked to sentence former chief executive of Lundin Oil company Ian Lundin and former vice-president Alexandre Schneiter to respectively ten and six years' imprisonment for complicity in war crimes committed between 1999 and 2003 in the context of the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A) [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*]. In his closing arguments, chief prosecutor Henrik Attorps traced the history of the question of corporate responsibility back to the

²⁸⁹ “[Chairman of the Truth Commission Resigns – Again](#),” *Sweden Herald* (31 October 2024); “[Lena Nyberg Takes Helm of Sami Truth Commission](#),” *Sweden Herald* (1 April 2025); United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter AL SWE 3/2025](#) (17 December 2025); [Response by Sweden](#) (11 February 2026); also [Allegations Letter AL SWE 1/2025](#) (25 February 2025); [Response by Sweden](#) (16 April 2025); “[About the Commission](#),” *Sanningskommissionen för det samiska folket* ([no date]).

Nuremberg trials (1945–1946) and the Nuremberg Military Tribunals (1946–1949) in which several industrial leaders were convicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, and criminal conspiracy while collaborating with Nazi Germany.²⁹⁰

See also Sudan.

SWITZERLAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1997, 1999–2000, 2004, 2007–2009, 2014, 2016–2018, 2022, 2024–2025.

SYRIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2002, 2004–2025.

On 26 March 2025, four United Nations Special Mechanisms expressed their concern to the government over allegations related to the efforts so far undertaken to develop and implement a transitional justice roadmap that would seek to ensure truth, justice, reparation, memorialization, and guarantees of non-recurrence in Syria [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].²⁹¹

On 17 May 2025, transitional President Ahmad al-Sharaa issued Decree No. 19 establishing the National Commission for the Missing to investigate missing and forcibly disappeared people and establish a national database. The commission was welcomed by international human rights organizations. As with the simultaneously established National Commission for Transitional Justice [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*], there were concerns about the involvement of victims' organizations. Throughout 2025, families of the disappeared organized demonstrations, including sit-ins at “truth tents” across Syrian towns and cities, calling for action to uncover the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones, expressing their frustration that the search for the disappeared had not yet begun in earnest. More than 100,000 people were estimated to have gone missing as part of the civil war (2011–2024).²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Martin Schibbye, “[Prison Sentence Sought for the Two Lundin Executives](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (2 April 2026); Clémentine Méténier, “[In Nuremberg, ‘We Started to Judge Company Executives and Managers’](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (12 September 2022).

²⁹¹ United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter AL SYR 1/2025](#) (26 March 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 428.

²⁹² United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Türk Says Syria Commissions Are Integral Steps for Better Future](#)” (Press release; 19 May 2025); “[ICTJ Welcomes Establishment of Syria’s](#)

On 25 July 2025, the Cour de Cassation in Paris, France, ruled that the arrest warrants against President Bashar al-Assad (in office 2000–2024), his brother Maher al-Assad, and two senior military officials for their alleged complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity in connection with the use of banned chemical weapons against civilians in Ghouta and Douma in August 2013 [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*] were invalid, arguing against an exception to presidential immunity in cases of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. It left open the possibility for a new warrant since Bashar al-Assad no longer enjoyed presidential immunity after his fall in December 2024. In January, August, and October 2025, French judges issued new arrest warrants against Al-Assad and accomplices for complicity in war crimes in the 2017 bombing of Deraa; for complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 2012 bombardment of a press center in Homs; and for chemical weapons attacks in Eastern Ghouta in 2013.²⁹³

On 10 November 2025, six Roman-era marble statues and other artefacts were stolen from the National Museum in Damascus. Housing the most important archaeological collection in Syria, the museum was established in 1919, forced to close in 2012, one year after the outbreak of the Revolution (with most of the collection evacuated and kept at secret locations to protect it), partially reopened in 2018, and fully accessible since January 2025, a month after rebel forces overthrew President Bashar al-Assad.²⁹⁴

Among the Syrian archaeologists living in exile in 2026 were Zeinab Ballouk ([1994]–), Nour Shoukhar ([1989]–), and Karam Abboud ([1995]–). Ballouk and Shoukhar went to Budapest, Hungary, and Abboud to Beirut, Lebanon, before arriving at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Dutch National Museum of Antiquities) in Leiden, the Netherlands, where they cataloged Mesopotamian artifacts.²⁹⁵

On 18 January 2026, residents of Tabqa, northern Syria, destroyed the statue of a female Kurdish fighter after the Syrian Arab Army had captured the city a day earlier in an offensive launched against Kurdish-

[New National Commissions for Transitional Justice and the Missing](#),” *International Center for Transitional Justice* (22 May 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 428; Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 347.

²⁹³ “[France’s Top Court Annuls Arrest Warrant against Syria’s al-Assad](#),” *Al Jazeera* (25 July 2025); Kim Willsher, “[France’s Top Court Annuls Arrest Warrant for Bashar al-Assad](#),” *Guardian* (25 July 2025); “[Assad Targeted by New French Arrest Warrant](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (23 October 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 173; Dan Plesch & Steve Kostas, “[The Lost Archive: France’s Highest Court Should Follow WWII-Era Rejection of Head of State Immunity](#),” *Just Security* (9 July 2025).

²⁹⁴ David Gritten, “[Ancient Statues Stolen from Syria’s National Museum](#),” *BBC News* (12 November 2025).

²⁹⁵ Theo Toeboosch, “[‘Met mijn uiterlijk en omdat ik uit het Midden-Oosten kom word ik in eerste instantie als archeoloog niet serieus genomen’](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (interview; 1 July 2026).

led forces in the area. Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ), part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), had been instrumental in defeating Islamic State (Daesh) in the Raqqa Governorate in 2017.²⁹⁶

See also France, Germany, United States.

²⁹⁶ Eyad Kourdi & Tim Lister, "[Syria's Military Has Seized Swaths of Kurdish-Held Territory](#)," *CNN* (19 January 2026).

TAIWAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998, 2001, 2008–2010, 2012, 2016–2020, 2022, 2024.

On 17 November 2025, the National Archives were newly launched, with President Lai Ching-te in an official address declaring that they would offer the public a deeper, unifying understanding of the endeavors of Taiwan’s democracy pioneers since its transition from authoritarian rule in 1987.²⁹⁷

TAJIKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2017–2018, 2020, 2023–2025.

See Uzbekistan.

TANZANIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2010, 2016–2017, 2024.

On 7 September 2025, police arrested members and supporters of the opposition party Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema; Party for Democracy and Progress) at a gathering in Mwanza, Serengeti, commemorating people who died in the struggle for independence (1954–1961). The event marked a counter-commemoration to the official annual Mashujaa Day (Heroes’ Day) celebration on 25 July.²⁹⁸

In April 2026, United States (US)-based technology company Meta acknowledged that it had followed government directives blocking the social media account of activist Maria Sarungi-Tsehai and, citing “recidivism policy” violations, deleting the accounts of US-based government critic Mange Kimambi. The directives followed a violent crackdown on protests after the 29 October 2025 re-election (with 98% of votes) of President Samia Suluhu Hassan (in office 2021–), widely decried as fraudulent, in which at least 518 people were killed. On 3 December 2025, Hassan had canceled the annual

²⁹⁷ Sean Lin, “[President Lai Hails National Archives as Unifying Force for Taiwan](#),” *Focus Taiwan* (17 November 2025).

²⁹⁸ Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 354.

Independence celebration on 9 December, citing fears of a coup, and the directives were seen as a test case for increased digital censorship in the lead-up to the 2026 celebration.²⁹⁹

THAILAND

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995, 1999, 2001–2002, 2005, 2007–2022, 2024–2025.

In 2025, the Paetongtarn (2024–2025) and Anutin (2025–) governments failed to investigate the more than 2,800 killings that accompanied then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s “war on drugs” in 2003.³⁰⁰

During border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia from 24–28 July and 8–27 December 2025, Human Rights Watch reported that airstrikes and artillery fire had damaged the eleventh-century Prasat Ta Krabey, a temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, and the eleventh-century UNESCO World Heritage site Preah Vihear/Phra Viharn temple. The latter was also one of the causes of the conflict, as it and the eleventh-century temple complex Prasat Ta Moan Thom/Prasat Ta Muen Thom were contested between both countries. A 1962 verdict by the International Court of Justice had ruled that, following a French colonial-era map, the Preah Vihear/Phra Viharn temple lay within Cambodia [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2009, 2011–2012, 2014]. However, the Thai government contested the verdict and preferred to follow a bilateral 2000 memorandum of understanding under which both sides agreed to jointly survey and demarcate the areas. The temple complexes played an important role in both countries’ nationalist imagination, either to claim descent from the Khmer Empire (802–1431) which built the temples, or as “lost territories” ceded by Siam [Thailand’s name until 1935] to French Indochina (1887–1954).³⁰¹

See also Malaysia.

²⁹⁹ “[Tanzania Vote Violated Democratic Values, AU Observers Say](#),” *Reuters* (5 November 2025); “[Tanzania Blocks Independence Day Protests, Calls Them a ‘Coup’](#),” *Africa News* (9 December 2026); “[Tanzania Blocks Activists Online As Independence Day Protests Loom](#),” *Africa News* (2 April 2026); Basillioh Rukanga & Alfred Lasteck, “[More Than 500 People Killed in Tanzania Election Violence, Inquiry Finds](#),” *BBC News* (23 April 2026).

³⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 444–445.

³⁰¹ Ashley Kirk, Lucy Swan, Oliver Holmes & Antonio Voce, “[A Visual Guide to the Historical Maps and Temples at the Heart of the Thailand–Cambodia Conflict](#),” *Guardian* (16 December 2025); Sui-Lee Wee, “[Thailand and Cambodia Stepped Back From War, but Their Temple Fight Remains](#),” *New York Times* (30 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 445.

TIMOR-LESTE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2003–2013, 2015–2018, 2023.

See Japan.

TOGO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2002, 2008–2013, 2017–2018, 2021.

On 13 January 2026, the 63rd anniversary of the death of first President of independent Togo, Sylvanus Olympio (1902–1963; president 1961–1963), Jean-Pierre Fabre, the leader of the opposition Alliance Nationale pour le Changement party (ANC; National Alliance for Change), officially requested the release of secret diplomatic and intelligence files held in France on Olympio’s murder and the ensuing coup d’état in order to identify those responsible domestically and internationally. At the time, Olympio had been attacked by a group of former French army soldiers who were demobilized after Togo’s independence in 1960. He was shot near the United States embassy in the capital Lomé. Educated as an economist, Olympio had been determined to abandon the CFA franc and give Togo a sovereign currency.³⁰²

TONGA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

TRINIDAD and TOBAGO

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2018.

On 25 March 2025, the court of appeal overturned a 2018 high court ruling that struck down the colonial-era “buggery” law, which had criminalized consensual gay sex. The decision was appealed,

³⁰² Charly Hessoun, “[Togo: L’ANC exige la déclassification des archives françaises sur l’assassinat de Sylvanus Olympio](#),” *La Nouvelle Tribune* (14 January 2026); Adama Aly Pal, “[Au Togo, les dossiers de la terreur au service de la réconciliation](#),” *Libération* (24 March 2015).

and the case was moved to the privy council in London, United Kingdom (UK), the final court of appeal for some Commonwealth countries. The ruling partly revolved around a 1962 “savings clause,” agreed upon during the transition to independence in 1962, which protected colonial-era laws against being overturned.³⁰³

TUNISIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2011–2025.

On 16 June 2026, journalist, human rights defender, and former president (2014–2018) of the Instance Vérité et Dignité (Truth and Dignity Commission), Sihem Bensedrine ([1950]–), was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison on charges of “fraud and forgery” and “abuse of official capacity” for allegedly falsifying a report denouncing corruption in the banking sector. She had been provisionally released in January 2025 after five months’ arbitrary detention and placed under a travel ban [*See NCH Annual Reports 2015, 2023–2025*].³⁰⁴

See also Algeria.

TÜRKİYE (TURKEY)

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–1998, 2000–2025.

On 7 August 2025, an Istanbul court ordered video-sharing platform YouTube to block the channel of journalist and political commentator Fatih Altaylı to “protect national security and public order” and “prevent crimes” in connection with the historical parallels he drew between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ottoman sultans [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. Altaylı had reportedly been the most-watched journalist on YouTube in July, drawing a total of 28 million views. On 26 November 2025, the Istanbul 26th High Criminal Court sentenced Altaylı to four years and two months in prison. The court rejected his request for release. On 29 December 2025, however, the Istanbul Regional Court of Appeals ordered Altaylı’s release pending appeal, citing the nature of the alleged offense, the fact that

³⁰³ Joshua Surtees, “[Activist Takes Case over Trinidad’s Homophobic Laws to UK’s Privy Council](#),” *Guardian* (4 April 2025); Natricia Duncan, “[Caribbean LGBTQ+ Activists Celebrate as Court Strikes Down Colonial-Era Laws](#),” *Guardian* (1 August 2025).

³⁰⁴ Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 361; “[Bensedrine Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison](#),” *Justiceinfo.net* (26 June 2026).

evidence had already been collected, the absence of flight risk, the sentence imposed at trial, and the length of time he had spent in detention.³⁰⁵

On 17 October 2025, Greek journalist and documentary filmmaker Nikos Aslanidis was detained and denied entry to Türkiye by police who reportedly told him he was “particularly dangerous.” Aslanidis described the incident as an attempt to intimidate journalists and discourage them from presenting historical truths, stressing that his documentaries merely featured eyewitness accounts of the destruction of Greek communities in the northeastern Pontus region between 1914–1923 (known as the Greek Pontic genocide). After his release, he was escorted back to the border, where he was ordered to return to Thessaloniki.³⁰⁶

On 6 November 2025, the government seized independent broadcaster TELE1 and disabled access to its digital archive and YouTube channel. The operation resembled a similar one on 28 October 2015, when armored police vehicles surrounded the headquarters of İpek Media in İstanbul. Archives were deleted there as well. During a crackdown following the failed July 2016 coup, Zaman, Samanyolu, Cihan News Agency, and dozens of local outlets had met the same fate: servers were wiped, printed archives confiscated, and websites erased from the public record.³⁰⁷

On 2 December 2025, *bianet* editor Tuğçe Yılmaz was to stand trial before the Second Penal Court of First Instance in Istanbul on charges of “insulting the Turkish nation, the state of the Republic of Turkey, and its institutions and organs” under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for her report entitled “Turkish Armenian Youth Speak: A Mourning that Has Lasted 109 Years.” In a report published on 24 April 2024 (a day of commemoration for the start of the genocide in 1915), two young Armenian interviewees had spoken about their lives in Türkiye and about the meaning of the 1915 Armenian Genocide to them, as well as about the murders of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink (1954–2007) and Armenian soldier Sevag Balıkcı (1986–24 April 2011), two hate crimes related to the genocide. Yılmaz was investigated, temporarily detained on 3 June [2024], and indicted after an anonymous complaint reached the Presidential Communication Center (CİMER) saying that “the website named bianet uses

³⁰⁵ Hamdi Firat Buyuk, “[Arrest of Turkish Journalist for Online Comments Condemned as ‘Unlawful’](#),” *Balkan Insight* (23 June 2025); Hamdi Firat Buyuk, “[Turkey Blocks Jailed Journalist’s YouTube Channel on ‘National Security’ Grounds](#),” *Balkan Insight* (8 August 2025); “[Veteran Journalist Fatih Altaylı Arrested for Online Comments](#),” *Safety of Journalists Platform* (25 June 2025, updated 30 December 2025).

³⁰⁶ “[Greek Journalist Nikos Aslanidis Detained and Denied Entry by Turkish Authorities](#),” *Mapping Media Freedom* (17 October 2025).

³⁰⁷ Adem Yavuz Arslan, “[Erasing the Archives: How Authoritarian Regimes Wage War on Memory](#),” *Turkish Minute* (6 November 2025).

the term ‘genocide’ for the events of 1915 and incites public hatred and hostility, and that the same site engages in terror praise and terror propaganda.”³⁰⁸

On 14 July 2026, the Istanbul 13th Criminal Court of First Instance meted out a suspended prison sentence of five months to standup comedian Tuba Ulu due to a sexually explicit joke made during a show about Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I “the Magnificent” (1494–1566), who had married his consort Hürrem ([1502]–1558). After her detention on 9 April 2026, Ulu was at first accused of “insulting historical, national, and spiritual values,” later indicted for “inciting the public to hatred and hostility,” and eventually for “publicly degrading a segment of the public,” which referred to her portrayal of Hürrem.³⁰⁹

See also Algeria, Armenia, Russia.

TURKMENISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2004, 2009, 2011–2012, 2015–2019, 2023.

TUVALU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

³⁰⁸ HA/VK, “[bianet Editor Tuğçe Yılmaz to Appear before Court over Interview with Armenian Youths](#),” *bianet* (28 November 2025); Tuğçe Yılmaz, “[Armenian Youths Speak Up: A 109-Year-Long Mourning](#),” *bianet* (24 April 2024).

³⁰⁹ “[Comedian Tuba Ulu Sentenced over Ottoman Sultan ‘F-Buddy’ Joke](#),” *bianet* (14 July 2026); “[5 Months Prison Sentence for Comedian Tuba Ulu](#),” *Agos* (15 July 2026).

UGANDA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2009, 2011–2013, 2015–2017, 2019–2021, 2023, 2025.

In [June] 2025, UNESCO incorporated into the Memory of the World register the so-called “lost archive” of former dictator Idi Amin (in office 1971–1979) as well as other materials documenting Uganda’s history. The Idi Amin archive had been rediscovered in 2015, including by archivist Malachi Kabaale, and contained 60,640 official photographs; the other materials included thousands of films and hundreds of sound reels and vinyl records produced by Uganda’s official media units in 1947–1986. Idi Amin’s dictatorship killed up to 300,000 of its own citizens.³¹⁰

On 8 June 2025, Elson Tumwine ([2002]–), a third-year student of agriculture at Makerere University, Kampala, disappeared during his internship in Hoima district. On 13 July 2025, it emerged that he had been secretly arrested, detained, and tortured at Entebbe police station. On 30 July 2025, Tumwine appeared before the Entebbe Magistrate’s court. On 4 August 2025, he was sentenced to two months in prison on charges of hate speech and malicious information under the Computer Misuse Act for a TikTok video critical of President Yoweri Museveni (in office 1986–) and speaker of parliament Anita Among. In the video, shared in May 2025, Tumwine accused Museveni of orchestrating the July 1989 Mukura massacre in the Teso region and accused Among of selective reconciliation. He reportedly claimed that “Museveni burnt a full train of human beings in Mukura ... and that a thousand people were killed and dumped in a swamp opposite Soroti University by the Banyarwanda who came to help him” and allegedly belittled Museveni by stating that “he only apologized to the Baganda,” suggesting he overlooked other parts of Uganda where worse atrocities were committed. In support of the latter claim, he allegedly doctored a clip of Among’s response to the apology issued by Museveni to the Baganda people, Uganda’s largest ethnic group, in May. Tumwine pleaded guilty during the proceedings and asked for forgiveness, probably under pressure from security operatives.³¹¹

³¹⁰ “[Lost Archives of Idi Amin Preserved and Protected](#),” *University of Western Australia News* (14 July 2025).

³¹¹ Basillioh Rukanga, “[‘Abducted’ Ugandan Student Jailed over Anti-Museveni TikTok Video](#),” *BBC News* (5 August 2025); Muhammad Jjumba, “[Kidnapped Makerere Student Sentenced over TikTok Post Criticising Museveni, Anita](#),” *The Observer* (7 August 2025); Mackenzie Argent, “[Jailed for a TikTok: Ugandan University Student Imprisoned for Posting TikTok Critical of the President](#),” *Index on Censorship* (8 August 2025).

UKRAINE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 2009–2011, 2014–2025.

Among those killed at the frontline in the war against Russia were [See also similar lists in NCH *Annual Reports* 2023–2025]:

- Oleksiy Voytiuk [Voituk] (? – [March 2023]), archaeologist, museum curator at the Regional Museum of Local History in Rivne, and team member of the Ostvitsya Historical Reconstruction Park in Rivne, was killed near Bakhmut in [March 2023]. He had gone missing since March 2023. His body was found on 13 January 2026. Voytiuk worked as a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences at the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering in Rivne. His widow, Lidiya, was a historian.³¹²
- Volodymyr Maryshchuk (29 October 1990 – [17 November] 2024), a 2014 bachelor of history at the Faculty of Humanities of the Ukrainian Catholic University, was mobilized into the 47th Separate Mechanized Brigade “Magura” in 2023. In the fall of 2024, his unit served in the Sumy region and later in the Kursk region. He was killed at the front in November 2024 but remained missing in action until his body was identified following a prisoner exchange with Russia on [6] July 2026.³¹³
- Ihor Klymovych (13 June 1991 – 30 July 2025), historian, local historian from the Lviv region, and photographer, second lieutenant in the Third Assault Brigade of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, was killed in the Kharkiv region. He was interested in ancient and medieval history and a member of the international association of experimental archaeology EXARC. He founded the Zastava historical club and was involved in the evacuation of cultural heritage. In the brigade, he gave history lectures to other soldiers.³¹⁴
- Marina Hrytsenko (26 May 1986 – 7 August 2025), historian graduated from the Faculty of History at the Taras Shevchenko National University Chernihiv Collegium, chief curator of the Chernihiv Regional Art Museum (2009–2025), combat medic in the Third Assault Brigade (2023–2025), was killed on a mission in the Kharkiv region as a result of a Russian drone attack. After the 2022 invasion, she had lived in the museum to protect the exhibits from looters. In January 2025, she had received

³¹² Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communication (13 January 2026); Анна Коваленко, “[“Непоправна втрата для музейної спільноти”: на фронті загинув археолог і реставратор Олексій Войтук](#),” *Українська правда* (13 January 2026).

³¹³ Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communication (7 July 2026); “[Post of Український католицький університет](#),” *Facebook* (6 July 2026).

³¹⁴ Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communication (5 August 2025); Lyudmila Klishchuk, “[На Харківщині загинув офіцер Третьої штурмової, історик і краєзнавець Ігор Климович](#),” *Novy Narnia* (5 August 2025); “[На війні загинув краєзнавець та історик зі Львівщини Ігор Климович](#),” *Tvoemisto.tv* (5 August 2025).

the Order of Courage, third degree.³¹⁵

In January 2025, the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky lifted a seven-year moratorium on exhumations in Puzhnyky, allowing Polish experts to begin exhuming remains of the victims of a series of massacres between 1943–1945 in Volhynia (Wołyń, Volyn) and Eastern Galicia, in which up to 100,000 predominantly Polish people were killed by members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The government of then President Petro Poroshenko (in office 2014–2019) had halted exhumations alleging failures of the Polish government to protect graves of Ukrainians in Poland [See NCH *Annual Reports 2018–2019*].

The massacres had for decades complicated geopolitical relations between Ukraine and Poland: in 2013, the Polish Sejm (parliament) had adopted a resolution defining the killings as “an ethnic cleansing with signs of genocide” and various politicians, especially of the conservative nationalist Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS; Law and Justice), had threatened to derail Ukraine’s European Union accession talks. In 2025, the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk declared 11 July as the Volyn Massacre Day.

In Ukraine, on the other hand, politicians regularly referred to the massacre as a “tragedy,” drawing attention to the up to 10,000 Ukrainians that Polish underground forces killed in reprisal and the alleged collaboration of these underground forces with the Soviet secret service NKVD (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs). Moreover, the UPA, its umbrella organization the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), and the far-right leader of one of its factions, Stepan Bandera (1909–1959), were seen by some as nationalist heroes, despite their collaboration with Nazi Germany and participation in the massacres of Jews, Poles and Hungarians, among others. The memory of the UPA, OUN, and Bandera was further complicated after Vladimir Putin justified the 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine as a fight against “neo-Nazis [and] Banderites” [See NCH *Annual Report 2022*].³¹⁶

In June 2025, the government of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the Council of Europe (CoE) signed an agreement to establish a special tribunal to prosecute senior Russian officials for the crime of aggression. The Register of Damages for Ukraine, launched by the CoE in 2023, opened fourteen claim categories for documenting losses, injuries, and destruction caused by Russia’s war. The register served

³¹⁵ Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communication (8 August 2025); “[Була головною зберігачкою фондів Чернігівського художнього музею: На фронті загинула бойова медикinja 3 ошбр, пластунка Марина “Мері” Гриценко](#),” *Novy Narnia* (8 August 2025); “[На війні загинула пластунка Марина Гриценко, СВ](#),” *Plast Global* (8 August 2025); [Facebook page](#).

³¹⁶ Jennifer Rankin, “[Poland Hails Breakthrough with Ukraine over Second World War Volhynia Atrocity](#),” *Guardian* (16 January 2025); Mansur Mirovalev, “[Genocide or Tragedy? Ukraine, Poland at Odds over Volyn Massacre of 1943](#),” *Al Jazeera* (19 July 2025); Andrew E. Kramer & Yurii Shyvala, “[A World War II Dispute Between Ukraine and Poland Is Put to Rest](#),” *New York Times* (6 September 2025); Roman Goncharenko, “[Stepan Bandera: Hero or Nazi Collaborator?](#),” *Der Welt* (22 May 2022).

primarily as a record-keeping mechanism, while compensation mechanisms and funding sources – potentially from frozen Russian assets – remained undefined. In February 2025, Russia had designated the register an “undesirable organization,” a move that posed a significant obstacle to reparations and was likely to hinder residents of occupied areas from submitting claims and accessing future compensation.³¹⁷

On 29 September 2025, the State Archives Service of Ukraine and the Special Unit for Cultural Property of the General Staff of the Armed Forces began applying protective “Blue Shield” markings (provided for by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict) to all the buildings of the state archives in the country. A May 2024 report by the Virginia Museum of Natural History’s Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab and the Smithsonian Institution’s Cultural Rescue Initiative had identified potential damage to 143 libraries and archives between 24 February 2022 and 30 April 2024 [See NCH *Annual Report 2024*].³¹⁸

On 7 December 2025, in his address marking Ukrainian Armed Forces Day, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke about soldiers honored through murals in Ukraine, among whom were:

- In Kharkiv, a soldier known as “Vzhyk” (personal details kept secret). A student of history before the invasion and with an expertise in topography and cartography which enabled a successful evacuation under enemy fire during the battles for Soledar, he was killed while carrying out a combat mission near Kupyansk.
- In Lviv, Taras Bereziuk (1988–2022) (“Synkhivskiy,” “Kotsiuba”), a historian, educator, and ATO (Anti-Terrorist Operation) veteran, who returned to military service after the invasion, took part in the battles for Lyman, Lysychansk, and Siverskodonetsk, and was killed on Independence Day. He worked as a history and sociology teacher at one of the colleges in Lviv.³¹⁹

Russian forces continued to damage and destroy cultural heritage sites in Ukraine [See NCH *Annual Reports 2022–2025* for similar lists]:

- On 24 May 2026, the Ukrainian National Chernobyl Museum in Kyiv, dedicated to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster and its consequences, was largely destroyed by a Russian

³¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 477.

³¹⁸ “[Ukrainian Armed Forces Use Blue Shield Markings to Protect State Archives](#),” *Mezha* (16 December 2025).

³¹⁹ President of Ukraine, “[Murals in Ukraine and Around the World Honoring Ukrainian Defenders Featured in the President’s Video Address on Ukrainian Armed Forces Day](#)” (Press release; 7 December 2025); “[Березюк Тарас Зеновійович](#),” *Wikipedia* (retrieved 13 June 2026); Evgeniya Kanchura, Personal communications (12–13 June 2026).

missile.³²⁰

- On 15 June 2026, the eleventh -century Dormition Cathedral, part of the UNESCO World Heritage site Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (Kiev Monastery of the Caves), was significantly damaged in a wave of Russian strikes in what President Volodymyr Zelensky called “one of the biggest Russian crimes against Christian culture.” In January 2026, Russian attacks had already damaged the site. During World War II, the cathedral had been destroyed almost entirely.³²¹

On 24 February 2026, President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a decree imposing sanctions against individuals involved in the distortion of historical facts and the theft of cultural property. Among them were Russian historians Aleksandr Chubaryan (1931–), co-author of a school Russian history textbook that reportedly justified Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, and Alexei Miller (1959–), and Ukrainian historian Artem Lagovsky (1991–), “culture minister” of the temporarily occupied part of the Kherson region. He also imposed sanctions on fifteen Russian organizations collaborating with the administrations of Russian-occupied territories involved in “falsifying historical facts, stealing cultural property from museums and reserves of Crimea, [and] appropriating documents of the National Archive Fund of Ukraine.” Zelensky’s adviser on sanctions stated that “[w]e introduced sanctions against cultural colonization – against those who for decades distorted the history of Ukraine and imposed imperial narratives. This is ... a component of hybrid warfare aimed at undermining our identity and statehood.”³²²

On 17 May 2026, marking the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to condemn the crimes of the Soviet regime (1917–1991) and demanded that Russia open its archives and release documents related to crimes committed by the Soviet secret police agency, NKVD. It added that these crimes were never properly condemned, investigated, or punished.³²³

On 24 May 2026, Andriy Melnyk (1890–1964) was reburied with state honors in Kyiv after his remains and those of his wife had been transferred from Luxembourg, where he had died in exile. Melnyk had been an important leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) – which had collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II and participated in the massacres of Jews, Poles, and Hungarians, among others – and later led a more moderate faction after a split with Stepan Bandera

³²⁰ Freyan Bosma, “[Vernielingen aan Tsjernobyl-museum en andere culturele instellingen in Kyiv door Russische aanvallen, Moskou dreigt met nieuwe bombardementen](#),” *NRC Handelsblad* (25 May 2026).

³²¹ Joel Guintoand & Farouk Chothia, “[Russian Strikes Kill Nine and Set Historic Cathedral in Kyiv Ablaze](#),” *BBC News* (15 June 2026).

³²² President of Ukraine, “[Sanctions Against Russian Individuals and Organizations That Spread Russian Propaganda and Distort Facts: Volodymyr Zelenskyy Enacted NSDC Decision](#)” (Press release; 24 February 2026).

³²³ “[Ukraine Demands Russia Open Soviet-Era Archives on NKVD Crimes](#),” *Ukrinform* (17 May 2026).

(1909–1959) (*See* item above). At the same time, Melnyk and the OUN were seen by some as nationalist heroes for their resistance against Soviet occupation. In the burial ceremony, President Volodymyr Zelensky described Melnyk and his wife as “iconic Ukrainians of the twentieth century who are deeply respected.”³²⁴

Russian-Occupied Territories

On 16 September 2025, the Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) of Yale University, United States, published a report describing the re-education and militarization by Russia of thousands of Ukrainian children who were living in its territory or under its effective control since the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine [*See* NCH *Annual Report 2024*]. HRL defined re-education as the promotion of cultural, historical, societal, and patriotic messages or ideas that aligned with and served the interests of Russia. Among the activities children were forced to participate in were lectures on history and geopolitics, visits to museums and historical sites, singing of Russia’s national anthem, thematic programming focused on Russian patriotism, ceremonial military parades, and education in military history. In 2023 alone, at least three groups of children from Luhansk oblast were taken to Young Patriot, a health complex near Moscow owned by the Presidential Administration, where they had to follow lessons that presented a Russian State-aligned view of history.³²⁵

See also Belarus, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, United States.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2013, 2016.

See Kenya.

³²⁴ Andrew Kramer, “[In Ukraine, a Divisive 20th-Century Figure Comes Home](#),” *New York Times* (24 May 2026).

³²⁵ Yale School of Public Health Humanitarian Research Lab, [Ukraine’s Stolen Children: Inside Russia’s Network of Re-education and Militarization](#) (New Haven, CT: Yale School of Public Health, 16 September 2025), 2, 6, 10, 13; Andrew Kramer, “[Russia Indoctrinates Children From Occupied Ukraine at 210 Sites, Study Says](#),” *New York Times* (16 September 2025).

UNITED KINGDOM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998–2001, 2003–2004, 2006–2025.

In June 2025, a delegation of twenty representatives of the Naga people, an Indigenous group living predominantly in India, was allowed for the first time to view the Naga human remains at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, as part of a repatriation process begun in 2020. The museum collection housed more than 200 human remains, including a warrior's cranium and a woman's skull decorated with buffalo horn, most of which had been stolen during colonial military expeditions. According to Naga traditions, humans remains are sacred, carrying life and spirit, meaning that, according to one of the Naga elders, "they are restless, the spirits will not be in peace unless they find a resting place." Although the Naga people had not made an official request for repatriation, the plan to do so raised questions over how to attend to the remains (historically, the Naga had performed animistic burial rituals, but under the pressure of American missionaries in the nineteenth century most had been Christianized) and where to repatriate them to (after the decolonization from the United Kingdom, the Naga spread to several states of India (Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh) as well as to Myanmar.³²⁶

In [early November] 2025, the Committee for Academic Freedom, Alumni for Free Speech, and Academics for Academic Freedom sent a joint letter to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, accusing it of breaking its own and national free speech rules by hosting the annual conference for the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (Brismes) in June 2026. In the lead-up to the annual conference, Brismes had issued a mandatory policy on "territorial and land acknowledgment," requiring participants to acknowledge the "traditional owners of the land on which the institution to which they are affiliated is located, and/or, in the case of military occupation, acknowledge the status of the land under international law" and acknowledge research "conducted on land that is traditionally owned by indigenous peoples (in settler colonial contexts) or under foreign military occupation in violation of international law." As an example, the policy listed academics working at Tel Aviv University, Israel, who were to explain that their university was built on the site of the Palestinian village of Sheikh Muwannis, which had been depopulated during the Nakba ("catastrophe"; the Arabic name for the 1948 expulsion of about 750,000 Palestinians from Israel).

The joint letter criticized the mandatory policy, refusal of which would result in rejection of papers or withdrawal from the conference, as "incompatible with SOAS's statutory duty to secure freedom of speech" and in violation of the Higher Education Act 2023. It criticized Brismes for foregrounding

³²⁶ K.B. Pragati, "[A Bid to Undo a Colonial-Era Wrong Touches a People's Old Wounds](#)," *New York Times* (2 August 2025).

“only one of many competing frameworks for interpreting history” and risking “suppressing legitimate scholarly disagreement,” and concluded that “we cite this example not to align with any particular interpretation, but to emphasize that, within the wider academy, the historical record is widely recognized as far more intricate than the ideological claim that Israel was simply established by invasion and theft.”³²⁷

On 30 November 2025, UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) sent a letter to the Open University (OU) complaining about the use of the term “ancient Palestine” in a description of the Virgin Mary as a “Jewish woman in ancient Palestine,” a description of Aramaic as “a language widely spoken in ancient Palestine,” and a map labeled as showing “ancient Palestine.” It said that the term could be a violation of the Equalities Act because it could “harass” Jewish or Israeli students by creating “an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.” On 18 December 2025, the OU wrote to UKLFI that it “accept[ed] that the term [was] now problematic in a way that, perhaps, it was not when the materials were written in 2018” and that “We will not use the term ‘ancient Palestine’ in any future course materials.”

After reports in the British and Israeli press as well as backlash from over 600 academics and public figures – including Israeli historians Ilan Pappé and Avi Shlaim, and Palestinian historians Rashid Khalidi and Nur Masalha – who signed an open letter, OU publicly retracted from this position. OU Classical Studies lecturer Chella Ward said the term “ancient Palestine” was the “most accurate way to refer to this region at this time in antiquity.”³²⁸

In [December] 2025, a group of Conservative Members of Parliament and peers wrote to incoming Archbishop of Canterbury (the senior bishop of the Church of England), Dame Sarah Mullally, urging her to stop the Church of England from spending 100 million pounds over its historical links to slavery, claiming that the funds could only legally be spent on churches and the payment of clergy wages. The funds proposal had been announced in January 2023 following the publication of a report investigating the Church’s historical links to transatlantic slavery and finding that a fund established by Queen Anne in 1704 to help poor Anglican clergy (known as Queen Anne’s Bounty) was invested in African chattel enslavement.³²⁹

A 14 April 2026 investigation by *The Guardian* found that the Victoria and Albert Museum in London had made changes to its exhibition catalogs following requests from the Chinese government censorship

³²⁷ Sanchez Manning, “[University in Free Speech Row Over Demands on Israeli Academics](#),” *The Times* (4 November 2025).

³²⁸ Harriet Williamson, “[Open University U-Turns on ‘Ancient Palestine’ Ban](#),” *Novara Media* (3 March 2026).

³²⁹ Fiona Nimoni, “[New Archbishop Urged to Scrap £100m Fund over Slavery Links](#),” *BBC News* (28 December 2025).

administration GAPP (General Administration of Press and Publication). The museum, like many other British museums, worked predominantly with Chinese printing companies. The changes included the removal of a 1930 map of British trade routes with a supposedly problematic depiction of the Chinese border and a photograph of Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) as a revolutionary, in 2026 and 2021, respectively.³³⁰

On 27 May 2026, the British Museum postponed a talk titled “The Ancient History of Israel and Judah,” citing security concerns. The event, part of Jewish Culture Month, was postponed to early June to ensure “an environment that properly safeguard[ed] both the audience experience and the integrity of the program.” The decision was criticized by politicians, free speech advocates, and Jewish commentators. Members of the Jewish Artists for Palestine network had reportedly bought tickets to stage a protest at the event, reflect “different points of view,” and demand an explanation for the reported removal of references to Palestine in some of the Museum’s galleries. On [6] May, Palestinian ambassador Husam Zomlot had called on the Foreign Office to reverse the changes, which had reportedly followed requests by the UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) activist group (*See item above*).³³¹

On 22 June 2026, a 40-minute video installation, titled *Persistence*, by prize-winning artist Helen Cammock was withdrawn at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) in London after a row over the role of former Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874–1965) in the Bengal famine (1943–1944) in British India, in which an estimated three million people died. In the video, Cammock explored the seventeenth-century military campaigns by Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) in Ireland, saying he “starved people, en masse” which was “a little like” Churchill’s role in the Bengal famine. This prompted an open letter to the NPG from Lord Roberts of Belgravia, a Churchill biographer – signed by more than fifty peers including Churchill’s grandson Sir Nicholas Soames – saying this was incorrect. As a result, Cammock removed her work from display, commenting that it was art, not documentary. Churchill’s actions, or lack thereof, in the famine had long been subject to heated academic dispute.³³²

³³⁰ Matthew Weaver, “[V&A Censored Catalogues after Demands by Chinese Printer](#),” *Guardian* (14 April 2026); “[Europe: China’s Censorship of Cultural Institutions Must Be Challenged](#),” *Article 19* (21 April 2026).

³³¹ Julian Borger, “[Palestinian Ambassador Protests to Foreign Office over ‘Erasure’ by British Museum](#),” *Guardian* (6 May 2026); Nadia Khomani, “[British Museum Postpones Jewish Culture Month Lecture over Protest Fears](#),” *Guardian* (28 May 2026); Claire Moses, “[British Museum Postpones Jewish Cultural Event, Citing Threat of Disruption](#),” *New York Times* (29 May 2026).

³³² Ewan Somerville, “[National Portrait Gallery Display Withdrawn after Churchill Row](#),” *BBC News* (23 June 2026); Tom Heyden, “[The 10 Greatest Controversies of Winston Churchill’s Career](#),” *BBC News* (26 January 2015); Shashi Tharoor, “[In Winston Churchill, Hollywood Rewards a Mass Murderer](#),” *Washington Post* (10 March 2018); George Martin, “[Civilisations Presenter David Olusoga Blames Winston Churchill for War Crimes in Africa](#),” *The I Paper* (19 March 2018); Soren Geiger, “[Winston Churchill the Racist War Criminal](#),” *The Churchill Project* (16 April 2018); “[Churchill Statue ‘May Have to Be Put in Museum,’ Says Granddaughter](#),” *BBC News* (13 June 2020); Priyamvada Gopal, “[Why Can’t Britain Handle the Truth about Winston Churchill?](#)” *Guardian* (17 March 2021).

Northern Ireland

In September 2025, the governments of the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland adopted a Joint Framework to revise the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act [*See NCH Annual Reports 2021–2025*], after the Belfast High Court and Northern Ireland Court of Appeal, respectively, had found it incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and in breach of the Windsor Framework agreement between the UK and the European Union [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]. On 24 September, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk welcomed the new framework, which would abolish the conditional immunity scheme provided for under the act, lift the existing prohibitions imposed by it against all civil proceedings, and mandate a Legacy Commission to conduct investigations capable of leading to criminal prosecutions. In October, the UK government published the Northern Ireland Troubles Bill to repeal and replace the act. However, on 7 May 2026, the UK Supreme Court in *Dillon and Ors v Secretary of State for Northern Ireland* struck down the 2025 rulings by the Belfast High Court and Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. Victims reportedly intended to appeal the Supreme Court decision at the ECHR.³³³

See also Barbados, China, India, Mauritius, Myanmar, Palestine, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, United Nations, United States, Zimbabwe.

UNITED NATIONS / INTERNATIONAL

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2022–2025.

On 25 March 2026, the International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution with a *Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime against Humanity*, proposed by Ghana, with 123 votes in favor, 3 against, and 52 abstentions. The resolution emphasized “the trafficking of enslaved Africans and racialized chattel enslavement of Africans as the gravest crime against humanity by reason of the definitive break in world history, scale, duration, systemic nature, brutality and enduring consequences that continue to structure the lives of all people through racialized regimes of labor, property and capital.” Dan Negrea, the representative of the

³³³ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[UK-Ireland Joint Framework Is an Important Step towards Addressing the Human Rights Legacy of the Troubles – Türk](#)” (Press release; 24 September 2025); Amnesty International, *The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026* (London: AI, April 2026), 382; “[UK: Supreme Court Judgment a ‘Bitter Blow to Victims’](#),” *Amnesty International* (7 May 2026).

United States (US), one of the States voting against, said that the US “does not recognize a legal right to reparations for historical wrongs that were not illegal under international law at the time they occurred.” Countries like the United Kingdom had long rejected calls to pay reparations for the slave trade and slavery, saying today’s institutions could not be held responsible for past wrongs.

Between 1500 and 1800, more than twelve million people were captured in Africa and taken to the Americas where they were forced to work as slaves. It is estimated that over two million of them died on the journey. On 19 June 2026, during a follow-up conference in Ghana, African and Caribbean countries endorsed a 19-point plan, calling for a formal apology and reparations from countries that benefited from the transatlantic slave trade.³³⁴

UNITED STATES

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1995–2025.

In 2024, Indigenous groups and partners continued the fight to halt the construction of a lithium mine by Lithium Americas at Peehee Mu’huh (“Rotten Moon,” also known as Thacker Pass) in Nevada. The pass had long been a sacred site for various Indigenous groups. It was also the site where on 12 September 1865 federal soldiers in the 1st Nevada cavalry massacred members of the Numu (or Paiute) Indigenous group, killing at least fifty, including women and children. In February 2023, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and Summit Lake Paiute Tribe had issued a request to the Department of the Interior to have the site designated under the National Register of Historic Places.³³⁵

Throughout 2025 and 2026, the revision of the Smithsonian Institution, a conglomerate of 21 museums and research centers established in 1846, continued in line with the 27 March 2025 Executive Order “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History” of President Donald Trump, which, among others, described the institution as having been taken over by a “revisionist movement” that “[sought] to undermine the remarkable achievements of the United States by casting its founding principles and historical milestones in a negative light” [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*]:

³³⁴ United Nations General Assembly, [Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime against Humanity](#) (Resolution A/RES/80/250; draft: 17 March 2026); United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [“UN Resolution Urges Reparations for Slavery’s ‘Historical Wrongs’”](#) (Press release; 25 March 2026); Wedaeli Chibelushian & Thomas Naadi, [“UN Votes to Recognise Enslavement of Africans as ‘Gravest Crime against Humanity’”](#), *BBC News* (25 March 2026); Yvette Tan, [“African and Caribbean Nations Call for Formal Apology for Transatlantic Slavery”](#), *BBC News* (20 June 2026).

³³⁵ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2025: Events of 2024](#) (Washington: HRW, 2025), 511; Michael Sainato, [“‘We Were Not Consulted’: Native Americans Fight Lithium Mine on Site of 1865 Massacre”](#), *Guardian* (13 October 2023).

- In [late] July 2025, the Institution's National Museum of American History, Washington D.C., removed explicit reference to President Trump's two impeachments from an exhibit on the American presidency as part of a review of the institution's content for bias. Trump was acquitted from both impeachments (in 2019 and 2021) after facing trials in the Senate. On 2 August 2025, the Smithsonian said that the exhibit would be "updated in the coming weeks to reflect all impeachment proceedings in our nation's history." On [8] August, the original text was restored, with the addition of the word "alleged" in the placard's description of the actions that led to Trump's first impeachment. On [10] January 2026, the National Portrait Gallery replaced a portrait of Trump and took down a wall text of his first term (2017–2021), including information on his two impeachments and the 6 January 2021 attack on the Capitol.³³⁶
- On 12 August 2025, the Trump administration sent a letter to the Smithsonian Institution announcing a wide-ranging review of current and planned exhibitions at its 21 museums, scouring wall text, websites, and social media "to assess tone, historical framing and alignment with American ideals." Museums would be required to adjust any content that the administration found problematic within 120 days, "replacing divisive or ideologically driven language with unifying, historically accurate and constructive descriptions." White House senior associate Lindsey Halligan later stressed the need for Smithsonian exhibitions to be "accurate, patriotic, and enlightening – ensuring they remain places of learning, wonder, and national pride for generations to come." Annette Gordon-Reed, a professor at Harvard University and president of the Organization of American Historians, and several other historians, criticized the move.

On 21 August 2025, the White House published an unsigned list of exhibits, programming, and artwork it considered objectionable. The list argued that the National Museum of American History promoted homosexuality by hanging a pride flag; overemphasized the relationship of Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), one of the Founding Fathers, to slavery, and supported open borders by depicting migrants watching fireworks through an opening in the United States (US)–Mexico border wall. The list also criticized a series at the African American museum that "featured content from hardcore woke activist Ibram X. Kendi," a professor of history at Howard University specialized in race and racism in US history. On 18 December, the Trump administration sent another letter to the Smithsonian, criticizing it for not turning over records on current and planned exhibitions and

³³⁶ Graham Bowley, "[Smithsonian Removes Reference to Trump's Impeachments, but Says It Will Return](#)," *New York Times* (31 July 2025); Kanishka Singh, "[American History Museum Removes Trump's Name from Impeachment Exhibit](#)," *Reuters* (1 August 2025); Peter Baker, "[Trump's Efforts to Control Information Echo an Authoritarian Playbook](#)," *New York Times* (3 August 2025); Jason Lalljee, "[Smithsonian Restores Trump to Impeachment Display in Museum with Revisions](#)," *Axios* (8 August 2025); Graham Bowley, Robin Pogrebin & Derrick Bryson Taylor, "[Smithsonian Removes Label Noting Trump Impeachments](#)," *New York Times* (10 January 2026); Doug Mills & Larry Buchanan, "[All the President's Portraits](#)," *New York Times* (2 March 2026); Eric Berger, "[Smithsonian Swaps Trump Portrait and Removes Mention of Impeachments](#)," *Guardian* (11 January 2026).

demanding full disclosure by 13 January.³³⁷

On 27 January 2025, amid a flurry of Executive Orders (EOs) [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*], President Donald Trump issued EO “Restoring America’s Fighting Force,” which prohibited “the Department of Defense and the Armed Forces, including any educational institution operated or controlled thereby” from “promoting, advancing, or otherwise inculcating ... un-American, divisive, discriminatory, radical, extremist, and irrational theories” and to “carefully review the leadership, curriculum, and instructors of the United States Service Academies and other defense academic institutions” to ensure that they “teach that America and its founding documents remain the most powerful force for good in human history.” Following the EO, the Military Academy at West Point scrapped two history courses (Topics in Gender History and Race, Ethnicity, Nation) and disbanded a Black history project at the history department.³³⁸

On 11 April 2025, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, terminated its cooperation with Choices Program, a high school history program used by more than one million students and covering more than forty units, ranging from the American Revolution (1765–1783) to the Syrian Civil War (2011–2024). The university administration explained its decision as “exclusively financial,” but faculty at the history department – where the Choices Program had been officially housed since 2018 – challenged that explanation, referring to the program as historically self-sustaining. The unit on Israel/Palestine had drawn frequent criticism, including a March 2025 report by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) alleging “foreign influence” promoting “anti-Israel bias” in the curriculum materials. The university’s decision came amid negotiations between Brown and the Trump administration over allegations of antisemitism, which culminated in a July 2025 settlement to restore federal funding.³³⁹

On 30 April 2025, the White House dismissed all members – historians James Goldgeier (professor of international relations at American University, Washington DC, and committee chair), Kristin Hoganson, Sharon Leon, Nancy McGovern, Timothy Naftali, Deborah Pearlstein, Elizabeth Saunders, Kori Schake, and Sarah Snyder – of the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation of the State Department (established 1991; usually called the State Department Historical Advisory Committee

³³⁷ Graham Bowley, Jennifer Schuessler & Robin Pogrebin, “[White House Announces Comprehensive Review of Smithsonian Exhibitions](#),” *New York Times* (12 August 2025); Edward Helmore, “[Trump Administration to Review 19 Smithsonian Museums to Ensure Exhibits Are ‘Patriotic’](#),” *Guardian* (12 August 2025); Zolan Kanno-Youngs, “[Trump Says Smithsonian Focuses Too Much on ‘How Bad Slavery Was’](#),” *New York Times* (19 August 2025); Kanishka Singh, “[Trump Targets the Smithsonian Again, Says It Focuses Too Much on How Bad Slavery Was](#),” *Reuters* (20 August 2025); Zachary Small, “[White House Lists Smithsonian Exhibits It Finds Objectionable](#),” *New York Times* (21 August 2025); Graham Bowley, “[White House Chides Smithsonian for Delayed Turnover of Programming Records](#),” *New York Times* (19 December 2025).

³³⁸ Graham Parsons, “[West Point Is Supposed to Educate, Not Indoctrinate](#),” *New York Times* (8 May 2025).

³³⁹ Ethan Schenker, “[Staff Shocked, Disappointed after Brown Cuts Ties with Choices Program after 35 Years](#),” *Brown Daily Herald* (16 April 2025); Dana Goldstein, “[How Politics Is Changing the Way History Is Taught](#),” *New York Times* (27 October 2025).

[HAC] [See NCH *Annual Reports 2014, 2019*]]. Since its inception, the HAC has been responsible for reviewing classified materials related to United States foreign policy, advising on their access, and selecting documents to be published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) documentary series [See NCH *Annual Reports 2014, 2017, 2023*]. The White House did not give a reason for the dismissal and left the seats vacant.³⁴⁰

In May 2025, the Florida state board of education threatened the Hillsborough County school district with legal action if it did not remove “pornographic” titles – a designation mostly used for books on race and LGBTQ+ themes, according to PEN America – from their library. In response, the district removed six hundred titles, including *The Diary of Anne Frank* describing the period in hiding of a Dutch-Jewish girl before she was arrested and killed in a concentration camp during World War II (1939–1945). Fearing similar retribution, eight surrounding school districts subsequently removed books as well, in what PEN America described as “state-driven censorship.”³⁴¹

On 7 May 2025, federal judge at the District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina (N.C.) James Dever declared admissible a complaint by the Concerned Citizens of Tyrrell County, a group of mostly older Black residents, that a 123-year old monument of a Confederate soldier in Columbia, N.C., violated their right to equal protection under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. In May 2024, the group had filed the complaint over the monument’s inscription, which included the phrase “in appreciation of our faithful slaves.” In October 2024, however, the defendants had filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that they were bound by a 2015 North Carolina monument protection law that limited the possibility of moving or altering an “object of remembrance” on public property. The motion was rejected.³⁴²

On 17 May 2025, PEN America criticized Florida’s new social studies standard on “The History of Communism” for grades 6–12. Beginning from Fall 2026, all middle and high school students in Florida would be required to follow an annual social studies class on the history of communism. PEN America Florida Director William Johnson criticized the standard, which praised Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee – responsible for mass civil rights abuses, including imprisonment and job loss in the 1950s – as “champions of anti-communism,” for its “recasting of McCarthyism as

³⁴⁰ Steve Inskeep, “[Trump Fires Historians Who Put Together Unbiased Accounts of U.S. Foreign Policy](#),” *NPR* (3 June 2025); “[Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation](#)” (official website).

³⁴¹ PEN America, “[Fearing Legal Action by the State, School Districts in Nine Florida Counties Remove Hundreds of Books from Libraries Ahead of the New School Year](#)” (Press release; 7 August 2025); Olivia Empson, “[‘State-Driven Censorship’: New Wave of Book Bans Hits Florida School Districts](#),” *Guardian* (16 August 2025).

³⁴² “[Judge Allows Tyrrell Confederate Monument Lawsuit to Move Forward](#),” *Carolina Journal* (8 May 2025); Audra D. S. Burch, “[North Carolina Confederate Monument Goes Too Far, Lawsuit Says](#),” *New York Times* (17 August 2025).

patriotism and dissent as ‘un-American’.”³⁴³

On 28 May 2025, PEN America published a “banned words list,” compiled from a wide variety of sources and containing words that the federal government allegedly scrutinized in order to remove unwelcome references from official publications, websites, school curricula, and government-sponsored research proposals. Among the more than 350 words were “cultural heritage” and “historically.” In February 2025, the White House had said that it did not create a banned words list but instead left it to federal agencies to interpret how to comply with executive orders.³⁴⁴

On 9 June 2025, the Harvard Education Publishing Group canceled the publication of a special issue of the *Harvard Educational Review* on “education and Palestine” which had been scheduled to be published in July. The issue, on which the editors had begun working in March 2024, aimed to contextualize “what has[d] been happening in Gaza with histories and continuing impacts of occupation, genocide, and political contestations,” and would include contributions on the genealogy of “scholasticide” [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*, under Palestine and United States, and item above under Palestine] and the effects of limitations on the freedom of teaching about Palestine in the United States. As an official reason, the publishing group cited the need for “considerable copy editing” and an “inadequate review process” – referring to the publisher’s demand that articles would be submitted to a legal review, to which the authors had objected as a “dangerous form of institutional censorship.”

The decision came amid a crackdown on what the government claimed was widespread antisemitism on college campuses, but which many organizations decried as severe violations of academic freedom. It also coincided with an ongoing legal feud between the government and Harvard University over a more than \$ 2 billion funding freeze. As a result, Harvard had already dismissed the director and associate director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*], and as part of a January 2025 settlement with Jewish students who had accused Harvard of tolerating and promoting antisemitism on campuses, Harvard had adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of antisemitism – a definition many scholars, including one of the definition’s drafters, considered liable to stifle legitimate criticism of Zionism and the State of Israel.³⁴⁵

On 1 August 2025, historian and Edward Said professor emeritus of modern Arab studies at Columbia University, Rashid Khalidi, wrote an open letter to Claire Shipmen, Acting President of Columbia

³⁴³ “[New Florida Curriculum on Communism Is a “Dangerous Recasting” of McCarthyism](#),” *PEN America* (17 November 2025).

³⁴⁴ A. J. Connelly, “[Federal Government’s Growing Banned Words List Is Chilling Act of Censorship](#),” *PEN America* (28 May 2025).

³⁴⁵ Alice Speri, “[Revealed: Harvard Publisher Cancels Entire Journal Issue on Palestine Shortly before Publication](#),” *Guardian* (22 July 2025).

University, announcing the withdrawal of his fall course on modern Middle East history due to the university's June 2025 deal with the Trump administration. He argued that the university's compliance with governmental demands, including the installment of an allegedly independent monitor and the adoption of the definition of antisemitism drafted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Association, violated academic freedom and freedom of expression and made much teaching about the Middle East impossible. He further argued that the alleged use of informers violated the rights, and risked the safety, of students and teaching assistants. Khalidi planned to offer a public lecture series in New York focused on parts of his course.³⁴⁶

On 10 August 2025, it was reported that Florida International University professor Terrence Peterson, who was authoring a book on the seventy-year history of the Rivesaltes internment camp (1938–2007) in southern France, had his US\$ 60,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded in early 2025, canceled. Peterson wanted to examine how “internment camps became and remain[ed] a central tool for states to manage human movement.”³⁴⁷

On 17 August 2025, Oklahoma Superintendent (chief executive of education) Ryan Walters, a Republican, announced the “America First”-certification, a fifty-question certification exam, including on United States history, for aspiring public education teachers coming from New York and California [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].³⁴⁸

On 20 August 2025, a memorial for victims of the 2016 Pulse gay nightclub shooting, in which 49 people were killed, in Orlando, Florida, was painted over. A crosswalk painted in the colors of the rainbow flag, it was likely erased by the State Department of Transportation after the Trump administration had sent a letter to all states to make streets and pavements “free from distractions.” The letter was widely seen as a call to erase commemorations and information plaques not in alignment with government policies [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. The next day, protesters repainted the rainbow flag.³⁴⁹

On 21 August 2025, the White House deemed objectionable a long list of exhibitions and work on display at the National Museum of American History (NMAH) (See item above). Among them was a cartoon drawn in 1999 by American cartoonist Feggo (Felipe Galindo), “4th of July from the South Border.” The

³⁴⁶ Rashid Khalidi, “[I Spent Decades at Columbia – I’m Withdrawing My Fall Course Due to Its Deal with Trump](#),” *Guardian* (1 August 2025).

³⁴⁷ Andrew Atterbury, “[Florida’s Universities Face Research Overhaul Courtesy of Trump and DeSantis](#),” *Politico* (10 August 2025).

³⁴⁸ Anna Betts, “[Oklahoma to Reportedly Vet Prospective Teachers with ‘America First’ Test](#),” *Guardian* (18 August 2025).

³⁴⁹ Aishvarya Kavi, “[Florida Paints Over Rainbow Memorial for Victims of Pulse Nightclub Shooting](#),” *New York Times* (23 August 2025).

cartoon showed a Mexican boy watching 4th of July fireworks through a wall on the United States (US)–Mexican border. Feggo’s work was displayed as part of the exhibition “Presente! A Latino History of the United States” at the NMAH, which housed the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Latino project. The White House also denounced the entire museum project and what it called an “anti-American exhibition” that “define[d] Latino history as centuries of victimization and exploitation” and characterized US history as rooted in “colonization.” The exhibition, scheduled to run until November 2025, closed its doors in the subsequent months.³⁵⁰

In late August 2025, it was announced that the Pentagon (Defense Ministry) would restore a portrait of General Robert E. Lee (1807–1870), which had been taken down after a 2020 law stripping military bases from references to the breakaway republic Confederate States of America (1861–1865) and a 2022 commission ordering to remove displays that “commemorate[d] or memorialize[d] the Confederacy,” to the West Point library.³⁵¹

On 1 September 2025, three United Nations Special Mechanisms expressed their concern to the government over allegations concerning various executive orders, memorandums, and policies on ending Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs and race-centered ideology in historical exhibits and memorials.³⁵²

On 10 September 2025, Texas State University (TSU) terminated the contract of tenured associate professor of history Thomas Alter for comments made during a speech at the Revolutionary Socialism Conference the previous week, after an edited clip of his talk, made by a YouTuber who infiltrated and recorded the conference, circulated on social media. In his speech on Zoom, Alter had discussed the ideology of so-called insurrectionary anarchists, saying that “[a]s anarchists, these insurrectionists explicitly reject[ed] the formation of a revolutionary party capable of leading the working class to power. Without organization, how can anyone expect to overthrow the most bloodthirsty, profit-driven mad organization in the history of the world—that of the U.S. government?” TSU president Kelly Damphousse said that after a university review, they had concluded that Alter’s statements “amounted to serious professional and personal misconduct,” accusing him of inciting violence. After a judge had ordered TSU to reinstate Alter and give him due process over the allegations, TSU once again dismissed Alter on 22 September 2025 after “a thorough review of Dr. Alter’s conduct and the information provided during his

³⁵⁰ Cartooning for Peace, [Under Pressure: Report on the Situation of Threatened Cartoonists around the World, 2023–2025](#) (March 2026), 29, 41.

³⁵¹ Aishvarya Kavi, [“Florida Paints over Rainbow Memorial for Victims of Pulse Nightclub Shooting,”](#) *New York Times* (23 August 2025).

³⁵² United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegations Letter OL USA 26/2025](#) (1 September 2025).

due process hearing.” Alter pursued legal action against TSU.³⁵³

On 11 or 12 September 2025, the Department of Justice removed a report about historic trends in domestic terrorism by the National Institute of Justice. The report had found that since 1990 “militant, nationalistic, white supremacist violent extremism ha[d] increased in the United States,” continuing “to outpace all other types of terrorism and domestic violent extremism.” The findings contradicted the practice by the Trump government after the assassination on 10 September 2025 of author and political activist Charlie Kirk (1993–2025), founder of the conservative non-profit Turning Point USA [*See NCH Annual Report 2017*], to present political violence as a “problem of the Left.”³⁵⁴

On 13 September 2025 – after the assassination of Charlie Kirk (*See item above*) – the University of South Dakota (USD) dismissed tenured professor of art history Michael Hook in response to a social media post that he made about Kirk. The post triggered public pressure on USD, with South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden and South Dakota Speaker of the House Jon Hansen commenting publicly in support of Hook’s dismissal. Hook removed the post and apologized but sued USD for engaging in unconstitutional retaliation against political speech. On 23 September 2025, the United States District Court for South Dakota ruled that Hook spoke on a matter of public concern as a citizen and ordered USD to suspend the dismissal. On 3 October 2025, USD dropped its attempt to dismiss Hook, stating to him that it had “taken into consideration your remorse for the post, your past record of service, and the university’s interest in efficient operations.” On 8 October 2025, Hook asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit against USD.³⁵⁵

The same day, Florida Atlantic University placed professor of art history Karen Leader on leave for “repeated comments on social media ... regarding the assassination of Charlie Kirk.” Leader denied making comments about the assassination and claimed that she had only reposted critical commentary of Kirk’s politics. Both university’s decisions were part of a broad, government-supported backlash against free speech after Kirk’s death that drew widespread criticism from politicians and civil society organizations from across the political spectrum.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Emma Whitford, “[Texas State Fires Professor Accused of Inciting Violence](#),” *Inside HigherEd* (12 September 2025); Ayden Runnels & Lindsey Byman, “[Texas State University Professor Fired Again after Court Revoked Initial Firing over ‘Inciting Violence’](#),” *Texas Tribune* (26 September 2025); Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, [Casesheet](#) (September 2025); Laura Spitalniak, “[Gov. Abbott: Texas Is Targeting Professors over ‘Leftist Ideologies’](#),” *Higher Ed Dive* (21 October 2025).

³⁵⁴ Joseph Gedeon, “[US Justice Department Removes Study Finding Far-Right Extremists Commit ‘Far More’ Violence](#),” *Guardian* (17 September 2025).

³⁵⁵ Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Project, [Case Sheet](#) (dated 13 September 2025).

³⁵⁶ Richard Luscombe, “[‘Inappropriate’ Comments about Charlie Kirk Shooting Lead to University Firings](#),” *Guardian* (15 September 2025); Joseph Gedeon, “[US Justice Department Removes Study Finding Far-Right Extremists Commit ‘Far More’ Violence](#),” *Guardian* (17 September 2025); Jeremy W. Peters “[With Calls for Retribution over Kirk, Some See Rise of a ‘Woke Right’](#),” *New York Times* (19 September 2025); Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Project, [Case Sheet](#) (dated 13 September 2025).

On 30 September 2025, the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, New York, lodged a petition to a Court of Appeals asking to instruct the District Court for the Southern District of Florida to release the second volume of the report by Special Counsel Jack Smith on President Donald Trump's retention of classified documents when he was out of office. Judge Aileen Cannon had imposed an injunction on distribution of the report [*See NCH Annual Report 2021–2025*].³⁵⁷

On 1 October 2025, the White House dismissed without reason possibly as many as 22 of the 26 members of the National Council on the Humanities, an outside advisory group to the National Endowment for the Humanities, including Deborah Coen, a historian of science at Yale University appointed in 2022.³⁵⁸

On 9 October 2025, Mark Bray, a historian of Modern Spain and the World at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, focusing on politics, human rights, and transnational history, left the United States to relocate with his family in Spain after he had been blocked from boarding a flight one day earlier. With his expertise in antifascism, including in his national best-seller *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (Melville House 2017), he was called a “domestic terrorist professor” on X, became a target of repeated death threats and the subject of a petition for his dismissal after the Professor Watchlist of Turning Point USA doxed him and claimed that he was a “financier” for the antifa movement (a left-wing anti-fascist, anti-racist political movement that opposed far-right ideologies), which Bray denied. Bray's wife, Yesenia Barragan, an associate professor in Rutgers University History Department, also received threats related to his work. The blockade on 8 October coincided with a White House event where President Donald Trump promised “very threatening” steps against antifa activists. On 22 September 2025, Trump had signed an Executive Order designating antifa a domestic terrorist organization. Bray continued to instruct his students remotely.³⁵⁹

On [28] October 2025, the National Park Service reinstalled a restored statue of Confederate General Albert Pike (1809–1891) that was torn down and set on fire during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in Washington DC. The reinstalment was part of a broader campaign of the second Donald Trump administration to restore Confederate symbols, including monuments (*See* item above). Democratic Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton called the restoration “offensive to members of the military who serve

³⁵⁷ Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, “[Petition for a Writ of Mandamus to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida](#)” (30 September 2025); Charlie Savage, “[Fight Over Hidden Report on Trump Documents Case Goes to Appeals Court](#),” *New York Times* (30 September 2025).

³⁵⁸ Jennifer Schuessler, “[Trump Fires Members of Humanities Council](#),” *New York Times* (1 October 2025); Janay Kingsberry, Kelsey Ables, & Travis Andrews, “[White House Fires Much of the National Council on the Humanities](#),” *Washington Post* (1 October 2025).

³⁵⁹ Edward Helmore, “[US Anti-fascism Expert Leaves Country Day after Being Blocked from Flying to Spain](#),” *Guardian* (10 October 2025); “[Remove Antifa Financier & Professor, Mark Bray from Rutgers University](#)” (petition; no date [6 October 2025]); Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, [Case Sheet](#) (8 October 2025).

honorably.”³⁶⁰

In November 2025, it became known that the State Department removed without explanation fifteen pages of previously declassified and published archival records from one of its *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) volumes, first published in February 2021 and detailing how a 1983 NATO war simulation, known as Able Archer 83, could have led to a catastrophic nuclear exchange. The removal came after the United States Court of Appeals in 2024 upheld a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) decision to deny a 2021 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the National Security Archive. The FOIA sought the declassification of an important 1989 retrospective analysis of Able Archer 83 written by Air Force Lieutenant General Leonard Perroots [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].³⁶¹

On 2 November 2025, Andrea Prichett, a middle school United States history teacher in Berkeley, CA, and others sued Governor Gavin Newsom for signing a bill into law in October that established an antisemitism prevention coordinator with the aim of giving officials the power to investigate charges of antisemitism and order corrective action, like the banning of materials found to be antisemitic. The lawsuit called the law an infringement on free speech. In 2023, Prichett had been the subject of a school district investigation after a lesson about the colonization of North America in which she discussed examples of present-day colonialism, including Puerto Rico, Russia in Ukraine, and Israeli settlements (the latter an example offered by students). Parents complained that she taught “a one-sided narrative on Israel and Palestine that [wa]s biased against Israel.” The investigation also found that she had a “Free Palestine” poster in class, but ultimately cleared her of the discrimination charge.³⁶²

A 17 November 2025 investigation by *The Guardian* found that the online encyclopedia *Grokopedia*, set up by entrepreneur Elon Musk and generated by his Large Language Model Grok [See also above, under *France*], included praise of antisemitism, White Supremacism, scientific racism, and Holocaust denial. Among other things, its page on David Irving, a convicted Holocaust denier in multiple countries [See NCH *Annual Report 1996* under United States; NCH *Annual Report 1997* under Australia; NCH *Annual Reports 2000, 2003, 2008, 2021* under United Kingdom; and NCH *Annual Reports 2006–2007* under *Austria*], described him as a symbol of “resistance to institutional suppression of unorthodox historical

³⁶⁰ Ana Faguy, “[Confederate Statue Torn Down During Anti-racism Protests Reinstalled in Washington](#),” *BBC News* (28 October 2025); Chris Cameron, “[Trump Administration Reinstalls Confederate Statue in Washington](#),” *New York Times* (28 October 2025).

³⁶¹ Nate Jones, “[The Censored History of Able Archer 83](#),” *National Security Archive* (14 November 2025).

³⁶² District Court for Northern District of California San José Division, Andrea Prichett and others versus Gavin Newsom and others, [Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief](#) (2 November 2025); Leighton Woodhouse, “[Teachers Became Activists, and Censorship Followed](#),” *New York Times* (13 December 2025).

inquiry” in the face of “coordinated efforts to silence dissent rather than scholarly refutation.”³⁶³

In late 2025, Vincent Brown, professor of American history and African and African American Studies at Harvard University, resigned from the Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, after a research team led by Richard Cellini [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*] was unexpectedly dismissed. Since the establishment of the Initiative, part of a set of recommendations from the 2022 report *Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery* [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*], ten researchers who had been working on the project had been dismissed and three professors, including Brown, had resigned. Critics alleged that Harvard had tried to “delay and dilute” efforts to connect with descendant communities, stymied investigations into the number of people who had been enslaved by Harvard alumni, and withheld information in their public reports. Others, including Antigua and Barbuda’s ambassador to the United States, criticized Harvard for stalling recommended projects of cooperation with, and reparations to, enslaved communities on Antigua. Proposed initiatives included organizing scholarship programs for students at the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica; providing funds to upkeep National Archives; and supporting requests for genealogical research.³⁶⁴

In December 2025, the National Security Archive (NSA) celebrated its fortieth anniversary. Since 1985, it had used the 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to obtain the declassification of tens of thousands of secret government documents on United States foreign policy, in order to increase transparency in governance, advance the public’s “right to know” both at home and abroad, and “help the public see the unredacted truth about our history.” NSA also filed over 75 FOIA lawsuits to ensure the timely release of important historical records, delivered documents and expert testimony in human rights trials around the world, provided expertise and documentation to assist post-conflict truth commissions, and published over seventy books based on declassified sources as well as over 900 electronic briefing books.³⁶⁵

In December 2025, the United States National Park Service removed MLK Jr Day (named after Black leader Martin Luther King Jr, 1929–1964) and Juneteenth (19 June, a federal holiday commemorating the 1865 emancipation of enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, marking the formal end of slavery in the United States) from its list of fee-free entrance days, and added the birthday of President Donald Trump. On 20 January 2025, his first day in office, Trump had issued an executive order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs from federal agencies, which had led many agencies to bar celebrations of holidays seen as DEI-related, including MLK Jr Day and Juneteenth. However, the two dates remained

³⁶³ Jason Wilson, “[White Nationalist Talking Points and Racial Pseudoscience: Welcome to Elon Musk’s Grokipedia](#),” *Guardian* (17 November 2025).

³⁶⁴ Michela Moscufo, “[Why Are Harvard’s Slavery Researchers Quitting or Being Fired?](#),” *Guardian* (18 April 2026).

³⁶⁵ “[Heroic Excavators of Government Secrets](#),” *National Security Archive* (10 December 2025).

national holidays.³⁶⁶

In December 2025, Free Press published a report about President Donald Trump's "War on Free Speech," including his rewriting of history. It highlighted the deletion of government websites and the disappearance of official data in violation of open-records law, threatening the official record and the public's ability to access such information. It recalled how the Institute of Museum and Library Services was dismantled, how official website data and government-research archives were scrubbed from public-facing websites; and how agencies stopped following open-records guidelines governing data retention. It also recalled the dismissal of National Archivist Colleen Shogan, the distorting influence of the Executive Order "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," and the removal of signs about Indigenous history by the National Park Service [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].³⁶⁷

In December 2025, it was reported that possibly hundreds of citizen archivists from queer archivist groups like Invisible Histories and the Queer Zine Archive Project were pre-emptively preserving queer history and making it accessible in the face of likely massive attempts by the federal government at erasing it [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].³⁶⁸

On 12 December 2025, the non-profit National Trust for Historic Preservation (established in 1949) filed a federal lawsuit to block President Donald Trump's construction of a large new ballroom on White House grounds, arguing that he violated the law in bypassing any review process and illegally demolished the historic White House East Wing in October 2025.³⁶⁹

On 17 December 2025, the White House unveiled a series of plaques to accompany the portraits of United States Presidents on exhibit at the so-called "Presidential Walk of Fame" near the Oval Office. The plaques were criticized for giving an inaccurate version of history that aligned with President Donald Trump's worldview. They included frequent criticism of past Democratic Presidents and praise of past policies in line with Trump's (including tariff policies). Some also included petty insults (including references to "Sleepy Joe Biden," whose portrait was absent and replaced with an autopen) and false statements (including that the 2020 election, in which Trump lost to Biden, had been rigged). The plaques' content

³⁶⁶ Grace Eliza Goodwin, "[US National Park Service Removes Free Entry on MLK Day and Juneteenth](#)," *BBC News* (6 December 2025).

³⁶⁷ Nora Benavidez, "[Chokehold: Donald Trump's War on Free Speech & the Need for Systemic Resistance](#)" (Florence, MA: Free Press, December 2025), 20–21, 34, 41.

³⁶⁸ Lindsay Eanet, "[Fighting Anti-Queer Backlash with Citizen Archivists](#)," *In These Times* (15 December 2025).

³⁶⁹ District Court for District of Columbia, *National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States versus National Park Service, Interior Department, President Donald Trump, and others*, [Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief](#) (12 December 2025); Luke Broadwater, "[National Trust Sues to Block Trump's White House Ballroom Construction](#)," *New York Times* (12 December 2025).

mirrored an official government educational webpage about the history of the White House.³⁷⁰

On or around 19 December 2025, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) removed the announcement of two lectures in the “Evenings with History” lecture series, planned in 2026, from the UALR website due to concerns about potential backlash from Republican politicians and funding cuts under the 2025 Arkansas ACCESS Act. The lectures were “Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and the Death Penalty in Arkansas and the United States,” by John Kirk and a conversation between historians David Roediger and Guy Lancaster about Roediger’s memoir, “An Ordinary White: My Antiracist Education.” The organizer of the series, UALR historian Barclay Key, and the University History Institute (an organization separate from UALR) had refused to change the lecture titles and descriptions, arguing that the lectures were legal. In a reaction to the removal, they canceled the lectures themselves in protest of what they perceived as censorship and an assault on academic freedom.³⁷¹

In January 2026, the United Kingdom-based newspaper *The Guardian* limited access to its online published articles for the Internet Archive (IA), the largest digital library in the world, and its Wayback Machine, citing concerns that the archive was used by tech companies to scrape data to train its Large Language Models (LLM) and possibly violating intellectual property rights. Several copyright specialists, however, held that training alone was insufficient to give rise to copyright infringement claims and that making material searchable was not a copyright infringement but a well-established fair use for researchers or artists, with courts acknowledging the impossibility to build searchable indexes without making copies of the underlying material. *The Guardian*’s change of policy followed previous similar decisions by the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Financial Times* and *Le Monde*, and 18 other news outlets. Advocacy groups stressed the importance of IA’s efforts in the absence of systematic archiving efforts by newspapers themselves or national laws regulating digital archiving, and expressed concern that the policy changes could undermine its efforts to maintain its digital archive.³⁷²

In early January 2026, United States-based domain registrar and web hosting company Namecheap reportedly revoked the domain of a digital memorial honoring over 300 journalists killed in Gaza,

³⁷⁰ Chris Cameron, “[Presidential History, According to Trump](#),” *New York Times* (17 December 2025); Tom Edgington, Jake Horton & Lucy Gilder, “[Fact-Checking White House Plaques Targeting Former US Presidents](#),” *BBC News* (18 December 2025).

³⁷¹ Austin Gelder, “[Lectures on Race and History Canceled in Latest Assault on Academic Freedom in Arkansas](#),” *Arkansas Times* (24 January 2026).

³⁷² Tori Noble, “[Copyright and AI: the Cases and the Consequences](#),” *Electronic Frontier Foundation* (19 February 2025); Andrew Deck & Hanaa’ Tameez, “[News Publishers Limit Internet Archive Access Due to AI Scraping Concerns](#),” *Nieman Lab* (28 January 2026); Joe Mullin, “[Blocking the Internet Archive Won’t Stop AI, But It Will Erase the Web’s Historical Record](#),” *Electronic Frontier Foundation* (16 March 2026); AI Landes, “[23 Major News Sites Have Blocked the Wayback Machine – Digital History In Danger](#),” *Gadget Review* (13 April 2026).

including an archive of over 16,000 videos, most of which documented Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Namecheap claimed that the content, maintained by Zionism Observer, “promote[d], encourage[d], or depict[ed] cruelty toward humans or animals.”³⁷³

On 6 January 2026, Martin Peterson, a philosophy professor at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, was instructed to delete passages from Plato’s *Phaedo* (written in the early fourth century BCE) from his syllabus, because they violated the university’s December 2025 guidelines on teaching race and gender. The guidelines further established a “24/7 reporting mechanism” allowing students to report “inaccurate or misleading course content” and announced an Artificial Intelligence-driven review of course syllabi each semester.³⁷⁴

On 9 January 2026, the American Historical Association organized a panel on “Historians Under Fire” during its Annual Meeting in Chicago. Organized and chaired by Beth English (History, Archives, and Records Preservation Project of the Organization of American Historians), the panel featured Thomas Alter II (Texas State Employees Union and American Association of University Professors), Eileen Boris (University of California, Santa Barbara), Deirdre Cooper Owens (University of Connecticut), Gail Dubrow (University of Minnesota), Karen Leader (Florida Atlantic University), and Erik Wallenberg (Miami Center for Racial Justice), all targets of harassment in the past years themselves. The session examined the growing wave of harassment and intimidation targeting historians and public history professionals. Alter discussed his dismissal from Texas State University (*See* item above); Leader the coordinated effort to threaten her (*See* item above); Wallenberg the hostile takeover at New College of Florida orchestrated by Governor Ron DeSantis in spring 2023 [*See* NCH *Annual Report 2024*]; Cooper Owens the efforts to undercut reproductive justice and race/gender equality; and Dubrow the impact of federal policies on efforts to preserve and interpret significant places in LGBTQ+ and Disability histories. Boris spoke on behalf of invited scholars who could not attend in person, highlighting the pressures that made it difficult for them to speak out. The present situation was dubbed the “new McCarthyism” or “new Red/Lavender Scare.”³⁷⁵

On 22 January 2026, the National Park Service (NPS) took down the exhibition “Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation” at the Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, which

³⁷³ Skwawkbox, “[Web Hosting Company Deletes Archive of 300+ Murdered Gaza Journalists’ Work](#),” *Canary* (3 January 2026).

³⁷⁴ Alan Blinder, “[Texas A&M Tightens Rules on Talking About Race and Gender in Classes](#),” *New York Times* (13 November 2025); Alan Blinder, “[Texas A&M, Under New Curriculum Limits, Warns Professor Not to Teach Plato](#),” *New York Times* (7 January 2026); Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, “[Texas A&M University](#),” *Scholars at Risk* ([no date]).

³⁷⁵ “[Historians Under Fire](#)” (session at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, 9 January 2026).

memorialized the nine people that were enslaved by President George Washington (1732–1799; in office as president between 1789–1797) at the President’s House in Philadelphia to “examine the paradox between slavery and freedom in the founding of the nation.” The Interior Department, which held direct authority over the NPS, issued a statement outlining how the exhibition violated President Donald Trump’s Executive Order “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History” which instructed national sites to “focus on the greatness of the achievements and progress of the American people” and to not “inappropriately disparage Americans” [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].

Within hours of the removal, the City of Philadelphia sued the Trump administration before the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, arguing that NPS had violated a 2006 agreement creating the site. In the wake of the lawsuit, it became clear that further rewrites of the history of slavery were planned in other parts of the site such as the Liberty Bell Center and Independence Hall. On 16 February 2026, District Judge Cynthia Rufe ordered the Trump administration to restore the exhibit. The ruling read: “As if the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell’s 1984 now existed with its motto ‘Ignorance is Strength,’ this Court is now asked to determine whether the federal government has the power it claims – to dissemble and disassemble historical truths when it has some domain over historical facts. It does not.”³⁷⁶

In February 2026, library, historical, and museum associations expressed concern that new funding guidelines at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*] could encourage a more constrained or distorted view of American history. In March 2025, the administration of President Donald Trump had dismissed IMLS director, Cyndee Landrum, a librarian, replacing her with Deputy Secretary of Labor Keith Sonderling, who had no known prior professional experience in museums or libraries. An attempt to dismantle the agency was halted temporarily by the courts in December 2025, but many previously awarded grants were revoked, and major reorganizations and mass dismissal of staff nevertheless took place.³⁷⁷

On 19 February 2026, several United Nations (UN) Mechanisms expressed concern to the government of President Donald Trump about the alleged lack of effective investigation, sanction, remedy, and reparation for the serious human rights violations committed against people of African descent during the “Tulsa Race Massacre,” as well as the insufficient measures in the fields of memorialization and satisfaction, and

³⁷⁶ Ashley Ahn, “[National Park Service Dismantles Slavery Exhibit in Philadelphia](#),” *New York Times* (22 January 2026); Mattathias Schwartz & Maxine Joselow, “[Judge Weighs Trump’s Removal of Slavery Markers From George Washington’s House](#),” *New York Times* (30 January 2026); Jennifer Schuessler, “[How Trump Brought the Fight Over American History to Philadelphia](#),” *New York Times* (5 February 2026); Piper Hudspeth Blackburn, “[Slavery Exhibit Returns to Philadelphia Museum Following Judge’s Orders That Cited Orwell’s ‘1984’](#),” *CNN* (19 February 2026).

³⁷⁷ Jaimie Seaton, “[Grant Guidelines for Libraries and Museums Take “Chilling” Political Turn Under Trump](#),” *ProPublica* (6 February 2026).

the insufficient progress in the search and identification and return of the remains of the victims. The Tulsa Race Massacre referred to the 1921 killing of about 300 African Americans, the decades of failed investigations, the denial of insurance or legal claims, and the blocked reparations, despite recent truth-seeking efforts (a 2001 Oklahoma Commission report, ongoing grave excavations since 2018, and a 2025 Department of Justice report confirming a coordinated attack) [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2025*]. The UN Special Mechanisms also argued that statutes of limitations should not apply to the massacre, which was a serious human rights violation constituting a crime under international law.³⁷⁸

On 20 February 2026, PEN America noted an unprecedented 23,000 book bans in public schools since 2021. The bans disproportionately targeted books about race and racism, titles by or about people of color, and books featuring LGBTQ+ characters and themes [See NCH *Annual Reports 2021–2025*].³⁷⁹

On 6 March 2026, the American Historical Association and other organizations filed a motion for summary judgment in their lawsuit opposing the illegal dismantling of the National Endowment for the Humanities [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. Depositions and records detailed how Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) staff canceled humanities grants and how the First and Fifth Amendments (free speech and equal protection) of the Constitution and the Federal Records Acts were violated in the process. In particular, DOGE staff used a flawed ChatGPT (Open AI's artificial intelligence chatbot) process to identify "DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] programs." Among the more than thousand terminated programs were an Indigenous languages archive in Alaska; the digitization of Black newspapers and their integration into a historical database; work on a forty-volume scholarly series on the history of American music; a documentary about Jewish women's slave labor during the Holocaust; an archival project on the lives of Italian Americans; a project to digitize photograph collections of Appalachian residents; the digitization of the papers of Thomas Gage ([1719]–1787), a British general in the American Revolution; a three-week program on nineteenth- and twentieth-century environmental history; and a documentary about the 1873 massacre in Colfax, Louisiana (where dozens of Black men were murdered by a mob of former Confederates and Ku Klux Klan members). Funding for National History Day, a history competition that reached 500,000 middle and high school students across the country each year, was also canceled. The plaintiffs asked to reinstate the grants.³⁸⁰

On 17 March 2026, the nationwide book ban bill, HR 7661 (the "Stop the Sexualization of Children Act")

³⁷⁸ United Nations Special Mechanisms, [Allegation Letter AL USA 5/2026](#) (19 February 2026).

³⁷⁹ Lisa Tolin, "[Banned Books List 2026](#)" (Press release; Washington: PEN America, 20 February 2026).

³⁸⁰ American Historical Association, "[Major Update in Our NEH Lawsuit](#)" (Press release; Washington, 7 March 2026); Jennifer Schuessler, "[When DOGE Unleashed ChatGPT on the Humanities](#)," *New York Times* (7 March 2026); Nathan Greenfield, "[Scholars Press On With Lawsuit Against DOGE-Led Grant Cuts](#)," *University World News* (18 March 2026).

progressed out of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce into the United States House of Congress. The bill drew widespread criticism, including for rejecting proposed amendments to protect the teaching of gender, racial, and religiously diverse histories. Amendments providing robust protections for teaching global religions and culturally diverse history did not pass. Several representatives noted that the bill implied that historical atrocities, including the whitewashing of the sexual exploitation of Black women throughout American history, would not be taught in schools.³⁸¹

On 30 March 2026, the National Security Archive (NSA) published the “Disappearing Data Chronology,” an exhibit documenting “fundamental changes to the federal information landscape under the Trump administration,” including threats to (online) archives and deletion of online information and webpages [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. The exhibit also included some examples of declassified information, including the release of archival documents related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1917–1963).³⁸²

On 31 March 2026, the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice issued an opinion claiming that the 1978 Presidential Records Act (PRA) – which stated that the government “shall reserve and retain complete ownership, possession and control of presidential records” and also set rules for how the National Archives should store and handle them – was unconstitutional and marked Congressional overreach. The opinion would allow President Donald Trump (in office 2016–2020 and since 2024) to refuse handing over official records after his departure. On 14 April, the American Historical Association and American Oversight filed a motion for a preliminary injunction seeking immediate court action to block the Trump administration from disregarding PRA and to prevent the destruction or loss of presidential records.³⁸³

On 31 March 2026, a Federal District court in California declared that the private archives of Li Rui (1917–2019) – a veteran Chinese Communist Party (CCP) insider and one-time secretary to its leader, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) – would remain permanently at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, protecting forty boxes of handwritten manuscripts (roughly ten million words, including diaries from 1935 to 2018) that the Chinese state spent seven years attempting to seize and suppress [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Kelly Jensen, “[The Nationwide Book Ban Bill Moves to the House: How to Take Action Now](#),” *Book Riot* (18 March 2026).

³⁸² Rachel Santarsiero, “[A Disappearing Data Chronology](#),” *National Security Archive* (30 March 2026).

³⁸³ Alan Feuer, “[Justice Dept. Says Trump Doesn’t Need to Hand over Presidential Records After Office](#),” *New York Times* (2 April 2026); American Historical Association, “[Supporting the Presidential Records Act: Defending Presidential Records](#)” (14 April 2026).

³⁸⁴ Chen Jing, “[Li Rui Archives Win Landmark US Court Ruling against CCP Efforts to Reclaim Diaries](#)” (5 May 2026).

On 24 April 2026, the American Historical Association stated its strong opposition against the Texas Tech University Course Content Guidelines issued on 9 April 2026 for imposing sweeping restrictions on teaching and learning related to “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity,” including by preventing students from learning entire swathes of human history, such as the movements to abolish slavery or introduce voting rights for women, or the 1969 Stonewall Riots against government-sponsored persecution of sexual minorities.³⁸⁵

On 29 April 2026, Sharon McMahon, author and former history teacher, saw her commencement speech for Utah Valley University (UVU) canceled over safety concerns after four politicians from Utah had led a campaign of several weeks against her because she had criticized the rhetoric of conservative commentator Charlie Kirk after he was killed at UVU on 10 September 2025. McMahon received death threats during the campaign.³⁸⁶

On 30 April 2026, a group of long-term residents of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, filed a lawsuit against three new residents alleging that their properties impeded access to burial sites, including the Talbird and Big House cemeteries, and spaces with spiritual and sacred importance for the Gullah Geechee, a community descended from enslaved West Africans.³⁸⁷

On 2 May 2026, in a speech at the university-wide commencement ceremony, Derek R. Peterson, a professor of East African history and colonialism, and outgoing chair of the faculty senate at the University of Michigan (UM) Ann Arbor, credited “pro-Palestinian student activists who have over these past two years opened our hearts to the injustice and inhumanity of Israel’s war in Gaza.” The comments followed his praise for Moritz Levi, the first Jewish professor at UM, who he said had advanced causes of justice through the school’s history. Within hours, video of the pro-Palestinian portion of Peterson’s speech widely circulated online, drawing condemnations from Jewish groups. The same day, UM president Domenico Grasso issued a public apology, saying the comments were “inappropriate and do not represent our institutional position.” Some Republican politicians called for sanctions against Peterson and for defunding UM. The speech was temporarily removed from a YouTube channel. In a joint 5 May 2026 letter, the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers,

³⁸⁵ American Historical Association, “[AHA Opposes Restrictions on Teaching and Learning at Texas Tech University](#)” (Press release; Washington, 24 April 2026).

³⁸⁶ Courtney Tanner, “[Sharon McMahon Says Utah Politicians Led ‘Coercive Pressure Campaign’ to Upend Her UVU Speech](#),” *Salt Lake Tribune* (24 April 2026).

³⁸⁷ Clyde McGrady, “[Class and Identity in Hilton Head: The Gullah v. Wealthy Landowners](#),” *New York Times* (29 July 2026).

among others, condemned the UM statement. Later that day, UM issued a formal apology to Peterson.³⁸⁸

On 26 May 2026, the American Historical Association (AHA) Executive Committee sent its members a message defending its two vetoes of a “Resolution to Oppose Scholasticide in Gaza,” submitted by Historians for Peace and Democracy (HPAD) and allied groups, and passed at AHA meetings in January 2025 and January 2026, arguing that it exceeded the AHA’s chartered, nonpartisan mission and could jeopardize its nonprofit status. In addition, it warned that, in the elections then underway, “by petition” election candidates (candidates whose nomination was supported by enough members signing a petition) were nominated by HPAD, a political 501(c)(4) group (a political advocacy organization), in collaboration with Historians4Palestine and the Palestinian Historians Group. On 7 July 2026, the coalition US Scholars Speak responded with a statement accusing the AHA leadership of failing to condemn the genocide and scholasticide in Gaza (2023–), improperly warning voters against the HPAD candidates, and undermining internal democracy, and demanded a public apology and urged AHA members to vote [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. None of the HPAD-nominated candidates eventually won a seat on the next AHA Council taking office in January 2027.³⁸⁹

On 28 May 2026, a statement of the American Historical Association criticized the Florida Advanced Courses and Tests (FACT) United States History course framework, published on 4 May 2026, for imposing an overt ideological agenda on Florida public school students who sought to earn college credit before enrolling in higher education. Created in 2023, the FACT initiative established state-designed alternatives to Advanced Placement courses. State officials justified the effort with unsubstantiated claims of widespread political indoctrination in classrooms. The new course marginalized Native American history, advanced American exceptionalism – including the idea that state-sponsored violence and human rights violations constituted “aberrations from an otherwise admirable story” –, presented the founders as anti-slavery, downplayed the work of Black people challenging slavery, and highlighted the roots of the Constitution in European Protestantism, including through Biblical passages that historians argued no founder would have intended to serve as a government model.³⁹⁰

On 12 June 2026, federal judge Angel Kelley of the United States District Court for the District of

³⁸⁸ Jake Offenhartz, “[Professor’s Speech Praising Pro-Palestinian Students Sparks Backlash at University of Michigan](#),” *AP News* (5 May 2026); Alice Speri, “[Rutgers Graduation Speaker Canceled for Pro-Palestinian Posts Says Decision Sends ‘Dangerous’ Message](#),” *Guardian* (6 May 2026).

³⁸⁹ American Historical Association, “[A Message from the Executive Committee: Crucial Information for Members on the AHA Election](#)” (26 May 2026); Juan Cole, “[Confronting the Palestine Exception of the American Historical Association](#),” *Scheerpost* (7 July 2026); American Historical Association, “[2026 AHA Election Results](#)” (16 July 2026).

³⁹⁰ Dana Goldstein, “[Florida Creates a More Conservative U.S. History Course to Rival A.P.](#),” *New York Times* (7 May 2026); American Historical Association, “[AHA Statement on Florida FACT US History Course Framework](#)” (28 May 2026).

Massachusetts, temporarily blocked the National Park Service from removing or revising signs, films, and other materials at national parks across the country to comply with an executive order from President Donald Trump that had called for removing or covering up materials at national parks that “inappropriately disparage[d] Americans” or cast the United States “in a negative light.” She also ruled that any exhibits that it had dismantled or altered be restored. Among the removed items were plaques about slavery at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia and among the revised items were the slavery exhibit at the President’s House Site at Independence National Historical Park (*See items above*).³⁹¹

On 26 June 2026, the Republican-controlled State Board of Education in Texas approved, in a 9 to 5 vote, plans to make Bible stories mandatory for all five million public school students in the state, sparking a row about the separation of church and state. The required readings, which would not come into effect until 2030, included several Bible passages. Supporters said that schoolchildren ought to learn about “Judeo-Christian traditions” that they argued were essential to the nation’s founding, while critics maintained that the new requirements infringed on religious freedoms and lacked diversity. Felicia Martin, executive director of the left-wing activist group Texas Freedom Network, said that the reading list had “a very Western-centric view of the world that omit[ted] the contributions and the histories of black, brown, indigenous people, of other religious faiths and traditions that [we]re critical to the overall understanding of our history.” In 2025, Texas became the largest state to require classrooms to display the Ten Commandments. In April 2026, a federal appeals court had upheld the law mandating the display after a legal challenge [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*].³⁹²

On 4 July 2026, the sixtieth anniversary of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA; reluctantly signed by President Lyndon Johnson [in office 1963–1969] at the time) and the 250th anniversary of United States independence, the NGO National Security Archive diagnosed current problems with the FOIA as “massive agency backlogs, the dismantling of FOIA offices, and, more recently, disappearing public datasets and renewed assertions of executive control over government records.” It further noted that under the second Trump administration (in office 2025–), “federal agencies ha[d] been sapped of resources for FOIA offices and FOIA staff, entire FOIA offices ha[d] been dismantled, agencies ha[d] increasingly refused to engage in good-faith correspondence with requesters, and the government ha[d] removed, deleted, and sanitized thousands of federal webpages, databases, and other government information” [*See NCH Annual Report 2025*], and questioned the recent opinion by the Office of Legal

³⁹¹ Maxine Joselow, “[Judge Blocks National Parks From Removing ‘Negative’ Signs](#),” *New York Times* (12 June 2026).

³⁹² Kwasi Gyamfi Asiedu, “[Religion Row as Texas Makes Bible Stories Required Reading in Schools](#),” *BBC News* (27 June 2026).

Counsel of the Department of Justice that the 1978 Presidential Records Act was unconstitutional and constituted Congressional overreach (*See* item above).³⁹³

On 4 July 2026, the White House Domestic Policy Council issued a 162-page report, *Saving America's Story: How Ideological Capture at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History Erases Our Heritage*. It constituted an attack on the Smithsonian Institution and on its National Museum of American History in particular (*See* also item above), accusing the museum of “trad[ing] settled truths and basic history for political activism and division” and condemning it for engaging in “anti-white activism,” supporting “illegal aliens,” and embracing transgender people. David W. Blight, a past president of the Organization of American Historians, called the report “the product of a racial and political ideology in search of a history that no longer bears scrutiny,” adding that “[t]riumphalist history, which is exactly what the Trump White House demands, cannot tolerate nuance, ambiguity, complexity.” He observed that the administration of President Donald Trump had “declared war ... on the entire history profession.”³⁹⁴

On 8 July 2026, the Texas American Association of University Professors submitted a complaint to the District Court in El Paso about two 2025–2026 memoranda by Texas Tech University System Chancellor Brandon Creighton (a former Republican state senator) regulating review and censorship of course material related to Black history, race, and sexual orientation and gender identity, arguing that they violated free expression, due process, and equality protection by intentionally discriminating against Black faculty.³⁹⁵

See also Afghanistan, Armenia, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, China, Congo (Democratic Republic), Cuba, France, Germany, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Mauritius, Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Tanzania, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Nations, Vietnam.

³⁹³ Rachel Santarsiero, “[Like King George III, Trump Claims Ownership of Public Records](#),” *National Security Archive* (9 July 2026).

³⁹⁴ White House Domestic Policy Council, [Saving America's Story: How Ideological Capture at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History Erases Our Heritage](#) (Washington: White House, 2026); David W. Blight, “[Trump Is Bending History to His Will – He Will Fail](#),” *New York Times* (17 July 2026).

³⁹⁵ District Court for the Western District of Texas El Paso Division, Texas American Association of University Professors a.o. *versus* Brandon Creighton a.o., [Complaint](#) (8 July 2026); Tom Hutt-Dixon, “[Texas Tech Sued over Policy ‘Erasing’ LGBTQ+ and Black History from Classrooms](#),” *Pink News* (9 July 2026).

URUGUAY

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001–2013, 2015–2018, 2021, 2024.

On 1 March 2025, history teacher Yamandú Ramón Antonio Orsi Martínez (1967–) became the 43rd President of Uruguay. During his campaign he pledged to “accelerate and deepen” the search for those disappeared during the military dictatorship (1973–1985). According to the Grupo de Investigación en Antropología Forense (GIAF; Investigative Group of Forensic Anthropologists), 161 of the estimated 197 enforced disappeared remained missing as of January 2025. Despite some progress in the search for them, including the 2008 creation of the Institución Nacional de Derechos Humanos y Defensoría del Pueblo Institucional (INDDHH; National human rights institution and ombudsman’s office) and the 2011 annulment of the Ley de Caducidad (Expiry Law), progress remained slow. At the same time, investigators faced anonymous violent threats and constant interference, reparations were given to an increasingly narrow group of victims, memorials and monuments were regularly vandalized, and military, police, and intelligence archives remained limitedly accessible.

On 28 May 2026, the Interior Ministry shared 23 boxes of documents about the military dictatorship from the Archivo Histórico de la Dirección General de Información e Inteligencia Policial (Historical archive of the general directorate of police information and intelligence) with the INDDHH and distributed digitized copies to the Specialized Prosecutor’s Office for Crimes against Humanity and to human rights group Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (Mothers and Relatives of Uruguayan Disappeared Detainees). On 22 June, the Ministry of Education and Culture signed an agreement with the INDDHH and the University of the Republic, Montevideo, meant to improve the treatment, preservation, and administration of the dictatorship archives.³⁹⁶

UZBEKISTAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2005–2014, 2016, 2020, 2025.

Thirteen May 2025 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Andijan massacre, when officials from the Davlat Xavfsizlik Xizmati (State Security Service) opened fire on protesters, killing between 187 and

³⁹⁶ Meredith Jackson, “[The Remains of Uruguay’s Dictatorship](#),” *The Dial* (16 January 2025); “[Interior entregó archivos de la dictadura a la Secretaría de Derechos Humanos para el Pasado Reciente](#),” *Uyppress* (28 May 2026); “[Uruguay Deepens Its Search for the Dictatorship’s Disappeared with Access to New Archives](#),” *MercoPress* (22 June 2026); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 39–40, 388.

1,500 people. No one had ever been held accountable for the massacre or ensuing human rights violations [See NCH *Annual Reports 2006–2010, 2012–2014, 2016*].³⁹⁷

On 30 June 2025, three United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about forced evictions, expropriations, and home demolitions in the center of Samarkand – in an area protected under UNESCO World Heritage since 2001, adjacent to the Abu Mansur al-Maturidi mausoleum and the Chokardiza cemetery – affecting 220 residential and non-residential buildings in the area and five buildings in the Dahbed settlement of Akdarya district, mainly inhabited by members of the Multoni or Mughat Roma community, as well as of the Tajik minorities, who had lived in the area for generations and maintained deep cultural and historical connections to it. The UN Special Rapporteurs criticized UNESCO and its World Heritage Committee for not having adopted yet official guidelines that would prohibit forced evictions in or around world heritage sites and ensure human rights-compliant resettlement if relocation of residents could not be avoided. They had already warned of urban regeneration projects that would result in the destruction of historic neighborhoods in Samarkand in 2019. They had also alerted UNESCO to similar problems in Cambodia in 2024 [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*].³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 499.

³⁹⁸ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Uzbekistan and UNESCO Must Address Forced Evictions at World Heritage Sites](#)” (Press release; Geneva, 30 October 2025); United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL UZB 4/2025](#) (30 June 2025); United Nations Special Rapporteurs, [Allegations Letter AL UZB 3/2019](#) (9 August 2019); Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 390.

VANUATU

Previous *Annual Report* entries: —.

VATICAN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019–2020, 2022–2025.

On 25 March 2026, Pope Leo XIV issued an apology for the Vatican's role in justifying slavery in the past and said that the delay in condemning it was "a wound in Christian memory." It was the first time a pope recognized the role played by the Christian doctrine – including in the papal bulls *Dum Diversas* (1452), issuing permission to condemn non-Christians "to perpetual slavery," and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), legitimating land seizures in the name of Christianity – in justifying enslavement [See NCH *Annual Report 2023*].³⁹⁹

VENEZUELA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003–2004, 2006, 2009–2010, 2012, 2014, 2017–2021, 2023–2025.

On 1 July 2025, the National Assembly declared the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk *persona non grata*, after his comments at the UN Human Rights Council condemning arbitrary detentions and forced disappearances. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had earlier in the year reported government "delays" in investigating and prosecuting killings, including protest-related deaths occurring in 2014, 2017, and 2019.

The International Criminal Court prosecutor's office continued its investigation of alleged crimes against humanity in Venezuela. The court had issued arrest warrants against government officials and members of the security forces, including President Nicolás Maduro (in office 2013–2026) and Diosdado Cabello, Minister of Interior, Justice and Peace since 2024.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Nicole Winfield & Paolo Santalucia, "[Pope Leo XIV Makes Historic Apology for Vatican's Role in Legitimizing Slavery](#)," *Associated Press* (25 May 2026).

⁴⁰⁰ "[Venezuelan Lawmakers Declare UN Human Rights Chief Persona Non Grata](#)," *Al Jazeera* (1 July 2025); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Events of 2025](#) (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2026), 507–508.

VIETNAM

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1996–2006, 2009–2013, 2016–2017, 2019–2020, 2022–2025.

On 27 February 2025, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced journalist and author Trương Huy San (penname: Huy Đức) to thirty months’ imprisonment for “infringing upon the interests of the state” in thirteen Facebook posts he made between 2015–2024. Trương was well-known for his social and political criticism since he started working as a journalist for Báo Tuổi Trẻ (“Youth Newspaper”) in the late 1980s. In 2012, while studying at Harvard University, United States, he had written *Bên Thắng Cuộc* (“The Winning Side”), considered one of the most important books about Vietnamese post-reunification history. The book had been banned in Vietnam since its publication.⁴⁰¹

On or around 19 June 2026, the authorities recalled the book *Chuyen voi Thanh – Loi ke moi ve anh sang* (“In Conversation with Thanh – A New Account of the Light”), written by Nguyen Thanh Nam ([1961]–) and published by the Writers’ Association Publishing House in Hanoi in April 2026. Nguyen Thanh Nam was a former tech executive, who for several years also taught Ho Chi Minh ideology at VinUniversity, a private university established by the VinGroup in 2019. He decided to turn his lecture notes into a book, which, structured as a dialogue between a Gen Z student and a teacher, retold the early years abroad of the founder of Vietnamese Communism and first President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969), when he was known as Nguyen Tat Thanh. Its narrative approach – using conversational, current daily language to make history more accessible to young readers – drew accusations that it “distorted history,” “insulted President Ho Chi Minh, General [and former history teacher] Vo Nguyen Giap (1911–2013), and many other Party and State leaders,” and “insulted the Vietnamese nation.” The backlash began online on 3 June 2026, led by figures, including retired provincial Communist Party official Phan Trung Can, who had previously publicly denounced other literary and historical discussions. The authorities also suspended the publishing house for two months, fined it 100 million dong (US\$ 3,800), ordered it to surrender nearly 424 million dong in alleged “illegal proceeds,” and required all printed copies to be recalled and destroyed.

On 27 June, Nguyen Thanh Nam was arrested and later the authorities detained four more people – Tran Viet Anh ([1993]–), founder of Spiderum, an online discussion platform established in 2016 and popular with many young Vietnamese people; and Nguyen Thuy Hang ([1976]–), Dao Ba Doan ([1971]–), and Nguyen Van Yen ([1962]–), all working at the publishing house – for their roles in the

⁴⁰¹ Patricia Gossman, “[Vietnam Targets Independent Journalist](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (25 February 2025); “[Vietnamese Journalist Truong Huy San Sentenced to 30 Months in Prison](#),” *Committee to Protect Journalists* (27 February 2025); Peter Zinoman, “[Book Review: The Winning Side \(Bên Thắng Cuộc\)](#),” *New Mandala* (15 August 2018).

publication of the book, charged all of them with “carrying out anti-state propaganda” under the national security law, and published their home addresses. If convicted, they could face up to twenty years in prison. In July, the Culture Ministry’s Press Bureau also fined 23 newspapers for promoting the book. Over a dozen journalists received warnings, suspensions, or dismissals as a consequence of their perceived connection to the book. The Education Ministry ordered universities, academies, and research institutes to report whether they had invited Nguyễn Thành Nam to teach, lecture, speak, or participate in academic activities.⁴⁰²

See also France.

⁴⁰² “[A Banned Book Shows How Việt Nam Polices History and Different Narratives](#),” *Vietnamese Magazine* (29 June 2026); “[Vietnam: 5 Arrested for Ho Chi Minh Book](#),” *Human Rights Watch* (21 July 2026); “[Rights Group Urges Vietnam to Release Five Arrested over Ho Chi Minh Book](#),” *Reuters* (22 July 2026).

YEMEN

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2001, 2003, 2010, 2013–2016, 2018–2025.

On 25 September 2025, human rights lawyer Abdul Majid Sabra was arrested in his office in Sana'a by a group of Ansar Allah (also known as Houthis) armed forces and armed men in civilian clothing, and disappeared. The arrest was related to his social media posts marking the anniversary of the 26 September Revolution, during which the Yemen Arabic Republic was established in 1962 [See NCH *Annual Report 2025*]. Dozens of others in the northern governorates marking the day were also arrested. In previous years, Sabra was one of the few who had offered legal services to people detained in relation to the 26 September anniversary.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ Amnesty International, "[Yemen: Huthis Must Immediately Release Prominent Human Rights Lawyer and Cease Relentless Crackdown on Civic Space](#)" (Press release; 1 October 2025); Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2026](#) (London: AI, April 2026), 398.

ZAMBIA

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 2009, 2015, 2021, 2024–2025.

ZIMBABWE

Previous *Annual Report* entries: 1998–2001, 2004, 2006, 2008–2015, 2018, 2021, 2024–2025.

On 31 January 2026, police forces broke up a commemoration for the “disappeared ten,” a group of ten people who disappeared on 31 January 1985 as part of the Gukurahundi massacres (1983–1987), in Silobela, Midlands Province. One of the organizers, human rights organization Ibhetshu Likazulu, saw the police actions as part of an “orchestrated program to enforce community amnesia” and accused the government of suppressing memory and shielding perpetrators of the massacre.

During the massacres, which some considered a “genocide,” the Zimbabwean army, and especially the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, killed up to 20,000 mostly Ndebele and Kangala people in North and South Matabeleland and the Midlands province, as part of a political struggle between then President Robert Mugabe (in power between 1987–2017) and leader of the opposition Joshua Nkomo. On 16 July 2024, the government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa had launched a community engagement program to promote “healing, peace and unity” among survivors of the Gukurahundi, but it was met with skepticism and criticized for lacking community involvement. The massacres reportedly remained a “forbidden” topic in many public spaces [See NCH *Annual Reports* 2012, 2024–2025]. Memorial plaques dedicated to the Gukurahundi massacres were repeatedly vandalized.⁴⁰⁴

In March 2026, descendants of people who died during the Chimurenga (the Shona name for the 1896–1897 uprisings of the Ndebele and Shona people against the imposition of British colonial rule) requested the University of Cambridge and the Natural History Museum in London to help locate the remains of six ancestors and offered to provide DNA samples. In 2022, the museum and university had announced their intention to repatriate all the remains from Zimbabweans in their collections but stated that they did not have the remains of the Chimurenga fighters. The statement had prompted disbelief from descendants and officials. In a March 2026 letter to British cultural secretary Lisa Nandy, the United Kingdom (UK) All Party Parliamentary Group for African Reparations expressed support for

⁴⁰⁴ Senzeni Ncube, “[Gukurahundi Memorialization: The Fight for Justice in Zimbabwe](#),” *Center for Innovation and Technology* (20 January 2025); “[Statement on the Gukurahundi Massacres and the Failing “Peace Process” in Zimbabwe](#),” *Lemkin Institute* (11 December 2025); “[Police Stop Silobela Gukurahundi Memorial, Rights Group Says](#),” *Zimbabwe Situation* (4 February 2026); “[Gukurahundi Reconciliation Undermined by the State’s Own Hand](#),” *News Day* (6 February 2026).

the descendants and said that “no discernible progress has been made” since the 2022 decision to repatriate all remains.

A freedom of information investigation by *The Guardian* had revealed that UK universities, museums, and councils held at least 11,856 items of human remains from Africa, with the University of Cambridge and the National History Museum holding the two biggest collections, with 6,223 and 3,375 items, respectively.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁵ David Batty, “[Descendants of Zimbabwe Resistance Heroes Urge UK to Locate Looted Skulls](#),” *Guardian* (7 March 2026).