

## **AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

### *The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights v. Republic of Kenya, application 006/2012 – 04/12/2025*

In this appeal, the Court ruled on the merits of 26 May 2017. In the above judgment, the Court held as follows in operative part: it declares that the defendant has infringed Articles 1, 2, 8, 14, 17(2) and (3), 21 and 22 of the Charter. Subsequently, on June 23, 2022, the Court issued its judgment on reparations (hereinafter referred to as the “Ruling on Reparations”). In that judgment the Court held, in part, the following in operative part. In its judgment on reparations, the Court ordered the respondent State to pay the sum of KES 57 850 000, exempt from any government tax, as compensation for the material injury suffered by the Ogiek. It also ordered the respondent State to pay the sum of KES 100,000,000, exempt from any government tax, as compensation for the moral prejudice suffered by the Ogiek.

### *Institute For Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) v. Republic of Malawi, application 006/2025 – 04/12/2025*

The appeal shows that, on 12 June 2020, the President of the respondent State placed Judge Andrew Nyirenda SC, former Chief Justice of Malawi and Judge Edward Twea SC, former Supreme Court of Appeal judge, on administrative leave pending their retirement from the judiciary. On June 14, 2020, the Malawi High Court granted HRDC and the others permission to apply for judicial review and issued an injunction limiting the implementation of the decision that placed the former Chief Justice and the former Justice on leave. On August 27, 2020, the High Court issued its ruling declaring the actions of the President of the respondent state and the Secretary to the President and Cabinet unconstitutional. The complainant argues that the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal, requiring HRDC and others to bear the costs of public interest disputes themselves, violates several human rights protected by the Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Furthermore, the petitioner claims that the Supreme Court of Appeal violated the right to a fair trial on the grounds that “it had promised to issue a reasoned judgement within 90 days of the ex-tempore order” it had failed to do so.

## **COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### *International protection: the refusal by an applicant for international protection to be transferred to another accommodation centre cannot justify the withdrawal of all material reception conditions*

An applicant for international protection and his minor child challenged a national decision withdrawing all material reception conditions after the applicant repeatedly refused a transfer to another accommodation centre within the same city. The refusal was based on concerns related to the child’s schooling near the current accommodation. The applicant argued that the withdrawal left him unable to meet his and his child’s basic needs.

The Court of Justice held that the applicant had neither abandoned the accommodation centre nor withdrawn, expressly or implicitly, the application for international protection. Consequently, material reception conditions could not be withdrawn or reduced on those grounds. While EU law allows Member States to impose sanctions for serious breaches of accommodation centre rules, such sanctions must be proportionate and must respect human dignity.

The Court acknowledged that a persistent and unjustified refusal to move to accommodation appropriate to the applicant's circumstances may seriously disrupt the reception system and may therefore justify the imposition of a sanction. However, it ruled that such a sanction cannot entail the complete withdrawal of material reception conditions or deprive applicants of the means to meet their most basic needs, such as housing, food and clothing, especially where vulnerable persons, including a single parent and a minor child, are involved.

Accordingly, the Court concluded that EU law precludes national legislation allowing the total withdrawal of material reception conditions in such situations. At the same time, it confirmed that national authorities may, in compliance with the principle of proportionality and fundamental rights, use lawful coercive measures under national law to enforce a transfer to another suitable accommodation centre.

## **EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)**

### *OLAF awarded for protection of industrial and intellectual property rights in Europe*

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has received a prestigious award from the Association for the Defence of Trademarks (ANDEMA), Spain's leading industrial property body, in recognition of its extraordinary commitment to combating counterfeiting and defending intellectual and industrial property rights across Europe. The award was presented at a ceremony held on November 27 in Barcelona, as part of the European Industrial Property Forum. OLAF withdrew the honour, underlining its lasting role in safeguarding a fair, secure and competitive European market. OLAF's work in protecting intellectual property and combating counterfeiting is essential for building confidence between EU citizens, businesses and institutions. Counterfeits undermine legitimate economic activity and undermine confidence in the internal market. Even more worrying is the fact that counterfeits pose serious risks to the health and safety of consumers, as well as to the environment, as they often bypass quality controls, use hazardous materials, and generate untraceable waste. By coordinating effective cross-border actions with partners such as the EUIPO, customs authorities and international stakeholders, OLAF helps to ensure that European industry and consumers are protected from the harmful effects of counterfeits. In recent years, OLAF has intensified joint efforts with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in strategic initiatives aimed at countering some of the most pressing threats, such as online counterfeiting and e-commerce fraud, the counterfeiting of building materials and everyday products.

## **EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY (FRONTEX)**

### *Frontex, Europol and national authorities seize over 420,000 counterfeit items and 17.5 million cigarettes at EU borders*

Between 6 and 17 October, Frontex and Europol coordinated "Pirates 3," a major Joint Action Day operation led by Bulgaria and Portugal to combat cross-border crime under the EU's EMPACT framework. In collaboration with law enforcement from 13 nations and the EUIPO, the initiative targeted smuggling networks, resulting in the detection of 64 irregular border crossings and the seizure of 261 fraudulent documents. Significant confiscations included over 420,000 counterfeit items, 17.5 million cigarettes, firearms, illicit drugs, and nearly €1.16 million in undeclared cash. The operation underscored the critical value of inter-agency cooperation. Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens emphasized that shared intelligence and unified action are essential to dismantling criminal networks. With Europol providing analytical support and Frontex officers assisting in tactical screening, "Pirates 3" demonstrated the efficacy of a multidisciplinary approach in securing the EU's external borders against complex threats.

*Weeks of monitoring lead to major cocaine seizure with key Frontex support*

Following weeks of sustained surveillance, a joint international operation involving Frontex, the French Navy, and Greek authorities resulted in the interception of a fishing vessel in the Caribbean Sea on 14 December. The operation culminated in the seizure of over four tonnes of cocaine and the arrest of ten individuals linked to a Greek criminal network. Frontex played a pivotal role in the mission by utilizing Eurosur Fusion Services to track the vessel across vast distances. By integrating satellite imagery with vessel tracking data, the Agency successfully countered the target's attempts to evade detection, providing national authorities with the precise intelligence needed to execute the interception. Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens stated that the operation highlights the necessity of removing the "distance and invisibility" upon which criminal networks rely. The successful collaboration, supported by Europol, led to arrests both at sea and on land in Greece, effectively disrupting a major trafficking route from Latin America to Europe. The case serves as a testament that countering the transnational nature of organized crime requires unified cross-border surveillance and information sharing.

## EUROPEAN COUNCIL

*Human rights violations in Russia: EU imposes sanctions on two additional individuals*

The Council has imposed restrictive measures on two members of the Russian judiciary for their involvement in serious human rights violations, the repression of civil society and democratic opposition, and actions undermining democracy and the rule of law in Russia.

The measures target a judge and a prosecutor who have played key roles in politically motivated proceedings against opposition figures, human rights defenders and individuals critical of the Russian authorities or supportive of Ukraine. Their conduct has been characterised by a lack of judicial independence, the misuse of legal procedures, and the pursuit of charges aimed at silencing dissent and legitimising state narratives that equate peaceful criticism with extremism or terrorism.

As a result of the sanctions, the designated individuals are subject to an asset freeze, a prohibition on EU citizens and companies making funds available to them, and a travel ban within the European Union.

The EU reaffirmed its strong condemnation of human rights violations and repression in Russia and expressed deep concern over the continued deterioration of the human rights situation, particularly in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

*Haiti: Council lists three individuals and one entity over gang violence and related human rights abuses*

The Council has adopted additional restrictive measures against three individuals and one entity in response to escalating gang violence in Haiti, widespread serious human rights abuses, and the ongoing impunity of those responsible. The sanctions target political figures accused of arming and financing gangs to advance political agendas, protect personal and economic interests, and exercise territorial control. They also include a former senator linked to violence involving armed groups, smuggling activities, and the orchestration of the killing of a journalist who had exposed corruption and illegal conduct. In addition, a powerful gang operating in Port-au-Prince has been listed for its involvement in serious crimes, including killings, sexual violence, kidnappings, extortion, trafficking, piracy, and obstruction of humanitarian assistance. All designated persons and entities are subject to an asset freeze, and EU individuals and entities are prohibited from making funds or

economic resources available to them, directly or indirectly. The listed individuals are also subject to a travel ban to the European Union.

## **EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

### *Judgment Ortega Ortega v. Spain - successful litigant in sex discrimination proceedings dismissed from her job, application no. 36325/22 – 04/12/2025*

The case of Ortega Ortega v. Spain concerned the dismissal of the applicant from her job, following a complaint she made of sex discrimination. In today's House ruling on the case, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously found that there had been a violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) in conjunction with Article 8 (right to privacy) of the European Convention on Human Rights. In 2017, a sex discrimination complaint filed by Ms. Ortega Ortega against her employer was upheld by an employment tribunal. In the meantime, she was fired from her job for breach of confidentiality, having disclosed personal data as part of the discrimination complaint. He initiated a second series of proceedings, claiming that his dismissal had been retaliation. In 2019, the decision to fire her was upheld, as the labor court found that she had committed very serious misconduct by using and communicating other people's protected personal data for a purpose unrelated to work. Subsequent appeals by Ms Ortega Ortega against that decision were declared inadmissible. The Court held, in particular, that the reasons given by the national courts for confirming the applicant's dismissal were not sufficient. Dismissal had had the effect of denying the protection against discrimination afforded in separate discrimination proceedings and national courts had not dealt with that consequence. Moreover, they had not given sufficient weight to the relevant elements that might have been indicative of a ground for retaliation.

### *Judgment Nejjar v. Switzerland - Use of legal fiction that applicant had withdrawn challenge to conviction, application no. 9087/18 – 11/12/2025*

In the Chamber's judgment in Nejjar v. Switzerland, the Court unanimously held that there had been a violation of Article 6 § 1 (right of access to a court) of the Convention. The case concerned the applicant's appeal against a summary sanction order of the prosecutor's office imposing a fine on her. The applicant complained that, due to her absence from the hearing before the police court, her appeal to that effect had been considered withdrawn. The Court held that, in itself, the procedure for summary sanctions provided for in articles 352 et seq. of the Code of Criminal Procedure was not incompatible with the right to a court, under article 6 § 1 of the Convention. In the present case, however, the use of the legal fiction that the application had been withdrawn pursuant to Article 356 § 4 of the same Code had disproportionately limited the applicant's ability to exercise that right. In particular, the Court found that the use of that legal fiction constituted an indisputable presumption that the applicant had withdrawn its application, despite the fact that it was clear that it intended to pursue the matter and to obtain a judicial examination of the criminal charges against it.

### *Judgment Intranuovo v. Italy - Failure to provide convincing explanation for the death of a soldier in barracks, application no. 46569/19 – 11/12/2025*

The Intranuovo v. Italia case concerned the death on 6 July 2014 of the applicant's son, A.D., who was serving in the Italian army, following an alleged fall from a window of the barracks where he was stationed. During the ensuing investigation, Ms. Intranuovo argued that there were a number of factors that seriously questioned the initial conclusion that A.D.'s death was caused by jumping suicide and that, rather, they indicated a criminal act. In today's judgment of the Chamber in the case in question, the Court unanimously ruled that there had been a violation of both aspects of Article 2 (right to life/lack of effective investigation) of the Convention. The Court found that the investigation into A.D.'s death had been ineffective and that the Italian authorities had not sufficiently satisfied the burden of proof on him to provide a satisfactory and convincing

explanation as regards the circumstances of AD's death. In particular, the investigative authorities had not taken reasonable and sufficient measures to ensure the relevant evidence, nor had they made an adequate attempt to establish the facts.

*Judgment anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and Others v. Russia - dismantling of Navalnyy network, multiple violations of the European Convention, application no. 13505/20 and 138 others – 16/12/2025*

The case Anti-Corruption Foundation and Others v. Russia concerned a cumulative pattern of measures taken since 2019 against organizations linked to Aleksey Navalnyy, his family members, his associates, and their families. These measures included coordinated mass searches of homes and offices, seizure of property during such searches, freezing of bank accounts, listing the FBK as “foreign agent” and subsequently designating it, together with the other requesting organizations, as “extremist”. In the Chamber's ruling, the European Court unanimously held that there had been violations of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life, the home and correspondence), Article 10 (freedom of expression), Article 11 (freedom of association), Article 18 (limitation of the use of restrictions of rights) and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property) to the European Convention. The Court found in particular that the measures were part of a concerted effort on an unprecedented scale to strike at the heart and eliminate the organized democratic opposition centered on Navalnyy. The official motives for the measures, namely the fight against money-laundering and extremism, were not supported by any evidence of real criminal conduct but served as a pretext for dismantling independent political and civic structures. The Court stressed that the measures were taken in the context of reprisals against Navalnyy and his associates and the progressive repression of political pluralism in Russia.

## **EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY**

*EU Member States and Switzerland agree to expand defence cooperation through EDA*

The European Defence Agency (EDA) and Switzerland have officially updated their 2012 cooperation framework to encompass a broader spectrum of defence initiatives, while strictly adhering to the principles of Swiss neutrality. This revised Administrative Arrangement significantly expands the scope of collaboration beyond the previous focus on research and innovation, granting Switzerland structured access to critical areas such as capability development, training, industrial cooperation, and notably, joint procurement. In addition, some areas of cooperation were not possible under the original arrangement, signed in 2012, for example joint procurement.

*EU Member States consider expanding EDA's role in defence cooperation*

In response to the heightened geopolitical instability caused by the war in Ukraine, EU Defence Ministers convened on December 1 to review strategic proposals aimed at reinforcing the European Defence Agency (EDA) as the central driver of EU defence cooperation. The discussions focused on empowering the EDA to become the primary decision-making body for capability development, thereby ensuring greater interoperability and convergence among Member States. The proposed roadmap, scheduled for final presentation in March 2026, is structured around five key lines of action: scaling innovation via the Hub for European Defence Innovation (HEDI), consolidating monitoring tools like the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), establishing a direct defence acquisition function for joint procurement, internal organizational restructuring, and expanding strategic partnerships with NATO and Ukraine. These initiatives are pivotal to the Defence Readiness 2030 agenda, which seeks to provide the organizational backbone necessary for a resilient and efficient European defence landscape.

## **EUROPEAN JUDICIAL COOPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS (EJN)**

### *Agreement on stricter EU rules to guarantee victims' rights*

On 10 December, the European Parliament and the Council reached political agreement on the Commission's proposal for a revision of the Victims' Rights Directive. This is not a formal adoption, but an interim agreement. The adoption of the political agreement on the revised directive. The directive will follow and be a step forward in improving the rights of victims in the European Union.

## **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

### *Parliament denounces continuous Belarusian hybrid attacks against Lithuania*

The European Parliament condemned Belarus for coordinated hybrid attacks against Lithuania and the EU, including airspace violations, cyberattacks, disinformation, economic pressure, and the use of migration as a political tool. MEPs expressed solidarity with Lithuania, called for Belarus to stop these actions, release detained EU hauliers, and compensate for losses, and urged additional EU sanctions. The resolution also highlighted the need for stronger EU–NATO cooperation, improved border and airspace security, counter-UAV measures, and efforts to counter disinformation and strengthen societal resilience.

## **EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR OFFICE (EPPO)**

### *Belgium: EPPO conducts research at the College of Europe and the European External Action Service*

On 2 December 2025, searches were carried out at the College of Europe in Bruges (Belgium) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, as part of an investigation into alleged fraud relating to EU-funded training for young diplomats, conducted by the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Brussels. Three suspects have been arrested. At the request of the EPPO, which was approved by the investigating judge, the Federal Police (FGP West-Vlaanderen) carried out searches in several buildings of the College of Europe in Bruges, at the European External Action Service in Brussels and at the homes of the suspects. The investigative activities also drew on the support of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). The issue concerns the project for the European Union Diplomatic Academy, a nine-month training programme for young diplomats in the Member States, awarded by the European External Action Service to the College of Europe in Belgium, in the period 2021-2022, following a tender procedure. The investigation focuses on whether the College of Europe and/or its representatives were informed in advance of the selection criteria for the tender procedure and had sufficient reason to believe that they would be entrusted with the implementation of the project, prior to the official publication of the tender notice by the EEAS. There are strong suspicions that, during the tendering procedure for the programme, Article 169 of the Financial Regulation on fair competition was infringed and that confidential information relating to the ongoing procurement was shared with one of the candidates participating in the tender. Before the searches, the EPPO requested the waiver of immunity of several suspects, a request that was granted. The facts under investigation were initially reported to OLAF. They could constitute procurement fraud, corruption, conflict of interest and breach of professional secrecy. The investigation is ongoing to clarify the facts and determine any crimes.

### *Bulgaria: EPPO conducts more than 80 searches as part of investigation into €13 million VAT fraud*

At the request of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Sofia (Bulgaria), over 80 searches and investigative measures are underway in the country as part of an investigation into cross-border VAT fraud,

which caused an estimated damage of over 13 million euros. Six Bulgarian citizens were arrested. The searches were carried out in nine cities, including Sofia, Haskovo, Plovdiv, Ruse, Dobrich, Vratsa, Dimitrovgrad, Kozloduy and Mizia, by the General Directorate for the Fight against Organized Crime (Главна дирекция "Борба с организираната престъпност"), with the support of the State National Security Agency of Bulgaria (Държавна Агенция "Национална сигурност"). Documents and evidence were seized, as well as mobile phones, gold coins and investment medals, and over €255,000 (BGN 500,000) in cash. The EPPO is targeting a criminal group active since 2019, which operates a VAT carousel fraud scheme, a complex criminal scheme that exploits EU rules on cross-border transactions between its member states, as they are exempt from value added tax (VAT). The system under investigation aimed to create and exercise control over "missing trader" companies. Through more than 60 companies established in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, fictitious business transactions were declared, in order to request VAT refunds from national tax authorities, to which the suspects were not entitled, since the alleged suppliers, also controlled by the group, had disappeared without making any payment. One of the systems involved simulated trade in animal feed, generating a total turnover of over 51 million euros (100 million leva). Another system involved false deliveries of goods in the construction industry. The damage caused by the activities under investigation is estimated at 13,2 million euro.

*Croatia: Former deputy minister and former dean of Geodesy's Faculty among 29 indicted for misuse of EU funds*

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Zagreb has filed an indictment against 29 Croatian nationals, including a former deputy minister of Culture and Media, a former dean of the Faculty of Geodesy, an ex-professor, and one company. The charges include misuse of public and EU funds, abuse of office, corruption, forgery of official documents and money laundering.

The case concerns the manipulation of multiple public procurement procedures linked to several projects at the Faculty of Geodesy, largely financed by the European Union. The former dean and the ex-professor are accused of rigging procurement procedures to favour specific companies in exchange for kickbacks, as well as submitting inflated or invalid bids. Project funds were allegedly misused to purchase vehicles and a motorboat for private purposes, and false travel expenses and daily allowances were claimed for journeys that never took place.

The former deputy minister is accused of facilitating fraudulent practices related to the assessment of earthquake damage. He allegedly enabled the Faculty of Geodesy to obtain contracts despite lacking the necessary capacity, while certifying reports without proper verification. These reports included false or duplicate claims, resulting in inflated payments by the Ministry of Culture and Media.

As a consequence, substantial sums were improperly paid from both the EU budget and Croatia's State Budget, causing significant financial damage. Additional costs were incurred when the work had to be repeated by other companies. Overall, the alleged conduct resulted in total damage of approximately €2.8 million, while the defendants obtained undue financial gains of around €670 000.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty by the competent Croatian courts. The EPPO, as the independent prosecution office of the European Union, is responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes affecting the EU's financial interests.

*France: €113 000 seized in investigation into suspected fraud involving EU research and innovation funds*

At the request of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Paris (France), the competent judge of the Paris Criminal Court has ordered the seizure of €113 000, in an investigation into suspected subsidy fraud

affecting the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The investigation concerns an engineering consultancy company based in the Paris region that participated in three EU-funded projects as part of a consortium. According to the evidence gathered, the company, managed by a French couple, is suspected of having failed to disclose information that it was contractually obliged to report to the EU authorities. It is also believed to have submitted incorrect time sheets to give the false impression that staff had dedicated the required number of hours to the implementation of the funded projects. These actions allegedly resulted in the undue obtainment of €113 000, out of a total of around €800 000 in EU funds granted under Horizon 2020. To ensure the potential confiscation in case of a criminal conviction, the competent judge at the High Court of Paris ordered the seizure of assets held in a bank account in France. The amount seized corresponds to the suspected proceeds of the offences identified by the investigators. The investigation is being carried out with the support of the French Anti-Fraud Office of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (ONAF) and the facts were initially reported by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), which also provided expert support and analysis during the investigation.

## EUROJUST

### *Prison sentences of up to 15 years for migrant traffickers*

The investigation into the migrant smuggling network, led by JUNALCO in France, began after the deaths of six migrants attempting to cross the English Channel illegally. That night, the group attempted to smuggle 67 migrants into the UK aboard dangerous vessels. Following an accident with one of the boats, six migrants lost their lives. Witnesses on the vessel rescued by French authorities identified one of the pilots, who was later arrested. Another individual, present in a refugee camp in Calais, was identified by witnesses as the transport organizer. He and his accomplice were also arrested. international judicial cooperation, coordinated by Eurojust, was established to execute European arrest warrants for three suspects in Greece, Poland, and Germany. One of the suspects was known to have been involved in migrant smuggling since 2009. The Italian authorities have also launched investigations into the organization's Italian subsidiary, sharing the findings with their French counterparts during a meeting at the Agency. As some of the witnesses from the vessels were rescued and brought to safety in the United Kingdom, Eurojust arranged for a request for mutual legal assistance to be sent to the British authorities to obtain witness statements for use in the French investigation. Successful judicial cooperation led to the arrest of eight people between August 2023 and March 2025. Seven of the suspects were convicted by the Paris Court. They received prison sentences ranging from 3 to 15 years and fines ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 euros. They appealed the decision.

### *Fifty jurisdictions, one target: Eurojust unites prosecutors from around the world to fight organised crime*

Organized crime groups operate on a global scale and evolve at an unprecedented rate, exploiting new technologies and geopolitical instability. These once local groups span continents and currencies, well beyond the EU's borders. To effectively combat globalised criminal networks, Eurojust is stepping up its cooperation with judicial authorities outside the European Union. High-level representatives, including a minister and attorneys general from 50 jurisdictions representing Latin America, of the Western Balkans, North Africa, the Middle East and the European Union, have come together to develop strategic and operational actions to counter the threat posed by criminal groups. The event included the approval of a joint declaration and the signing of new working agreements with the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay, allowing for long-term structural cooperation with Eurojust.

*Joint investigation team at Eurojust brings juvenile murder suspects to court*

A three-year cross-border investigation into the murder of a 26-year-old man has been successfully concluded by a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) composed of Italian and Slovenian authorities and coordinated by Eurojust.

The victim's body was discovered on 11 January 2022 in a border area between Gorizia (Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia). As the body was found just beyond the Slovenian border, Slovenian authorities were immediately involved. The investigation established that the death had occurred the previous evening and was caused by multiple stab wounds. Attention soon focused on two Italian suspects, who were minors at the time of the crime and had no prior criminal records.

Given the cross-border nature and complexity of the case, a JIT was established at Eurojust to enable real-time exchange of information and coordinated investigative actions in both countries. Several coordination meetings were held at Eurojust involving prosecutors and police authorities from Italy and Slovenia. The investigation included more than 270 interviews, extensive analysis of electronic data and surveillance footage, searches of the suspects' residences, and the collection and examination of biological traces. DNA analyses carried out in both countries confirmed a match between the suspects and the biological evidence found at the crime scene.

In 2024, sufficient evidence was gathered to impose precautionary measures on the suspects, including a ban on leaving Italy. In recent days, the investigation was formally concluded with the completion of preliminary inquiries and final interviews. The suspects will now stand trial in Italy, pending the final judgment of the court.

Eurojust played a key role in facilitating judicial and operational cooperation between the Italian and Slovenian authorities throughout the investigation.

## **EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR CYBERSECURITY**

*What's Driving Cybersecurity Investments and where lie the challenges?*

ENISA has released its annual NIS Investments report, based on a survey of 1,080 public and private organizations across the EU, to analyze the implementation of the NIS2 Directive. The findings reveal a strategic shift in cybersecurity spending: while investment levels remain steady at approximately 9% of IT budgets, resources are increasingly directed toward technology and outsourcing rather than internal teams. This trend is largely driven by a severe "talent crunch," with 76% of organizations reporting difficulties in attracting cybersecurity professionals. While compliance remains the primary driver for investment (70%), the report notes that it successfully enhances risk management and detection capabilities. However, NIS2 implementation presents significant challenges, particularly regarding patching (50%), business continuity (49%), and supply-chain risk management (37%). Vulnerability management remains critical, as 28% of entities take over three months to patch critical flaws. Looking ahead, while Denial of Service attacks currently cause operational strain, ransomware (55%) and supply-chain compromises are cited as the most significant future threats, underscoring the need for continued support in building cyber resilience.

## **EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION (EUROPOL)**

*Europol and partners shut down 'Cryptomixer'*

From 24 to 28 November 2025, Swiss and German law enforcement, supported by Europol, conducted an operation in Zurich targeting the illegal cryptocurrency mixing service Cryptomixer. Authorities seized three

servers, the cryptomixer.io domain, over 12 terabytes of data, and more than EUR 25 million in Bitcoin. Cryptomixer, active since 2016, was used to launder over EUR 1.3 billion by obfuscating the origin of funds for ransomware, drug and weapons trafficking, and other cybercrimes. The service pooled and redistributed deposits to conceal transactions. Europol facilitated coordination, information exchange through J-CAT, and provided forensic and operational support.

#### *Firm stand against migrant smuggling: global alliance convened in Brussels*

On 10 December 2025, Europol participated in the second International Conference of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, hosted by the European Commission. Over 50 delegations endorsed a joint declaration to strengthen cooperation along smuggling routes and tackle the growing digital dimension of these crimes. Europol co-chaired a panel on digital migrant smuggling and highlighted the upcoming European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling (ECAMS) to reinforce operational and cyber capabilities. Digital platforms, encrypted communication, and cryptocurrency are increasingly exploited by smugglers, making online investigations essential. Europol's DigiNex initiative, including the October 2025 Common Action Days, enabled EU Member States and partners to map networks, monitor social media, and share intelligence. The Global Alliance operates through three pillars: preventing smuggling, enhancing operational response, and promoting safe, regular migration alternatives.

#### *New report explores use of robotics and unmanned systems in the fight against crime*

Europol published *The Unmanned Future(s): The Impact of Robotics and Unmanned Systems on Law Enforcement*, produced by the Europol Innovation Lab. The report examines how drones, robots, and other unmanned systems could transform society, crime, and policing. While offering opportunities for situational awareness, search and rescue, crime scene mapping, and operational reach, these technologies also pose technical, regulatory, and security challenges, including misuse by criminals and terrorists. The report emphasizes the need for public trust, transparency, and regulation, and explores how war-driven innovation, such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine, accelerates development. Recommendations include establishing strategic direction, creating competency hubs, integrating unmanned systems into existing platforms, and investing in training, education, and public engagement.

#### *A rapidly evolving criminal ecosystem: the escalating exploitation of vulnerable individuals*

Europol's 2025 European Migrant Smuggling Centre yearly overview highlights the evolving threat of migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the EU, increasingly driven by geopolitical instability, economic pressures, and digitalisation. Criminal networks now use AI-generated ads, social media campaigns, encrypted communications, and crypto-enabled payments to recruit, transport, and exploit vulnerable individuals, often employing violence and life-threatening transport conditions. Dual-cell and modular structures make networks agile, resilient, and increasingly poly-criminal. In 2024, Europol supported 266 cross-border operations against smuggling and 188 against human trafficking, contributing thousands of intelligence reports and SIENA messages—over 40% more than in 2016. The European Commission's 2023 proposal aims to strengthen Europol's operational, biometric, and information-sharing capabilities through the European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling.

## **INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

#### *IACHR issues report on the situation of human rights in Guatemala – 01/12/2025*

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has published the report *Situation of Human Rights in Guatemala*, the result of a site visit to the country conducted between July 22–26, 2024. The report

examines the structural changes that have affected the enjoyment of human rights in Guatemala since the IACHR's previous visit to the country in 2017, with updates through 2025. The report explains how the Public Prosecutor's Office is ignoring its legal and constitutional mandate to prosecute independently, autonomously, and objectively in defense of the general interest of citizens.' This institution has been co-opted and dismantled to operate as an instrument of selective persecution. The Office of the Special Prosecutor against Impunity (FECI), which in the past conducted historic cases to combat impunity, now works to perpetuate the status quo and persecute anyone who questions the current state of affairs. Evidence of this is evident in the actions taken by the Attorney General's Office and supported by some judicial officials to challenge the results of the 2023 general elections, in an ongoing effort to undermine the government's democratic mandate and legitimacy. The IACHR stresses the urgent need to adopt structural reforms in the judicial system in order to ensure the independence of the judiciary, allow recruitment and appointment procedures based on international standards of merit, objectivity and transparency.

[IACHR brings case before the IA Court over lack of investigation and sanction of extrajudicial execution in Chile – 02/12/2025](#)

On 9 September this year the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights appealed to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in respect of case 13.406 against Chile, concerning the lack of investigation and sanctions against those responsible for the extrajudicial execution of Jimmy Freddy Torres Villalva, carried out by State agents in 1973. The IACHR concluded that these violations also caused profound emotional and moral damage to Torres Villalva's relatives, whose suffering was compounded by impunity and prolonged delays in the investigation and punishment of those responsible. On the basis of these findings, the IACHR declared that the State of Chile is responsible for violations of the rights to judicial guarantees, judicial protection and personal integrity set out in articles 8.1, 25 and 5 of the American Convention on Human Rights, in relation to article 1.1, to the detriment of the individuals identified in the report and that it will have to follow various restorative measures.

[IACHR brings case before IA Court over due process violations and denial of judicial guarantees against political leader in Venezuela – 17/12/2025](#)

On October 8, 2025, the IACHR filed an appeal with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding case 13,311, concerning Venezuela. The case concerns violations of due process and judicial guarantees in the criminal proceedings initiated against Orlando José Fernández Medina as part of his public role and political leadership. The IACHR also determined that the case was the subject of an unjustified delay of nearly twenty years, which violates the right to be tried within a reasonable time. It was concluded that the shortcomings of the proceedings reflect the use of the judicial system as a tool for political persecution against individuals critical of or opposed to the Government. Based on these findings, the IACHR requested the Court to conclude and declare that the Venezuelan State is responsible for violations of the rights to judicial guarantees and judicial protection, as established in Articles 8.1 and 25.1 of the American Convention on Human Rights, in relation to Article 1.1, against Orlando José Fernández Medina. Accordingly, the IACHR requested the IA Court to impose various reparations.

## **INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION**

[Assembly adopts new Capacity Development Strategy](#)

In conclusion of the 34th session of the International Maritime Organization, the Assembly adopted a landmark Capacity Development Strategy. This new framework is designed to enhance Member State compliance with international maritime standards by providing targeted technical support, particularly to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This strategy also allows the alignment of

national maritime policies with global economic growth while ensuring environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable commercial practices.

The Assembly also approved a Revised Strategic Plan for the 2024-2029 period, whose priorities include the integration of emerging technologies, a robust response to climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping, and the enhancement of global supply chain resilience.

## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

### *Chief Visits Libya in Call to Prevent Loss of Life on Central Mediterranean Route*

The Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Amy Pope, led an official visit to Libya from 16 to 19 December 2025, reaffirming the Organization's commitment to engage with national authorities, civil society, and international partners. The mission was primarily focused on addressing the complex migration dynamics of the region, with a critical emphasis on preventing the loss of life along the Central Mediterranean Route, which remains a focal point of humanitarian concern.

About tragedies occurring at sea, the Director General emphasized the enhancement of mechanisms to tackle human trafficking and to strengthen humanitarian aid frameworks.

### *Nearly 795,000 Displaced Palestinians at Flood Risk after Storm Byron Makes Landfall in Gaza*

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has reached a critical point following the landfall of Storm Byron on 11th December 2025. This severe weather phenomenon, which previously affected Greece and Cyprus, has brought torrential rainfall to an area where infrastructure is already devastated. The situation in the Strip has been worsened by this adverse meteorological disaster, having a deep negative impact on the inhabitants.

Currently, approximately 795,000 displaced Palestinians are at heightened risk as hundreds of displacement sites, many situated on low-lying, debris-filled land with inadequate drainage, have been overwhelmed by rising water levels.

Despite the ceasefire in the region, the IOM warns that the crisis is compounded by protracted access restrictions that delay the entry of essential and vital means to prevent further loss of life. The scale of the damage to infrastructure needs an urgent international response.

## **ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)**

### *OSCE attends eleventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in Doha*

The OSCE participated in the 11th UNCAC Conference of States Parties (15–19 December, Doha), contributing to five special events under the theme “Shaping Tomorrow’s Integrity.” The OSCE addressed key anti-corruption challenges, including regulation of virtual assets, cryptoasset recovery, DLT and open data for transparent governance, youth exploitation as money mules, and anti-corruption reforms in small and medium-sized states. The OSCE emphasized international co-operation, national coordination, practitioner training, and translating technical standards into actionable legal frameworks, reaffirming its commitment to implementing UNCAC and advancing good governance across the OSCE region.

### *Hybrid Training for better policing*

On 15 December 2025 in Skopje, the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the Ministry of Internal Affairs marked the completion of a new Hybrid Education System for police training. The system combines classroom instruction with digital learning tools, enhancing accessibility, flexibility, and quality of training nationwide. Through investments in infrastructure, digital platforms, and trained national instructors, the initiative strengthens long-term institutional capacity and sustainability. Supported by international partners, the project contributes to higher professional standards, improved police services, and increased public trust.

### *Law enforcement officers from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan enhance skills in combating organized crime at joint training in Ankara*

From 8 to 12 December, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and TADOC organized a five-day training in Ankara for 15 mid- and senior-level law enforcement officers from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. The training focused on investigating and dismantling transnational organized crime, covering intelligence analysis, surveillance, interrogations, and operational decision-making. Practical exercises strengthened participants' skills for combating drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and human trafficking. The initiative is part of the OSCE SENTINEL Project, funded by France and Austria, supporting regional capacity-building, cooperation, and exchange of best practices.

### *Advancing action against human trafficking in Mediterranean region aim of OSCE symposium*

The OSCE Symposium on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean, held at CoESPU in Vicenza, focused on delivering faster and more effective support for vulnerable migrants and trafficking victims. Participants from OSCE Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia) and States (Italy, Greece, Malta, Spain), along with international organizations, discussed cross-border rescue, prosecution, and victim protection. Building on prior simulation exercises, the event highlighted practical collaboration, emerging trafficking trends, and best practices. Participants strengthened knowledge, networks, and actionable strategies to enhance prevention, protection, and prosecution across the Mediterranean. The event was part of the OSCE Extra-Budgetary Project on trafficking, supported by CoESPU, the Arma dei Carabinieri, and Italian institutions.

### *Strong co-operation crucial in fight against transnational organized crime, say speakers at OSCE Ministerial Council side event*

On 5 December 2025, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the Delegations of Albania, Finland, and the UK, supported by Switzerland, held a side event at the 32nd OSCE Ministerial Council to mark the fifth anniversary of the Tirana Declaration on Countering Transnational Organized Crime. Participants reflected on OSCE efforts since 2020, emphasizing the importance of cooperation among states, civil society, the private sector, and academia in addressing organized crime. The event highlighted emerging threats, the OSCE's unique role in capacity-building, and launched the publication *Strengthening Co-operation in Countering Transnational Organized Crime: Taking Stock of Five Years of the Tirana Declaration*, showcasing the impact of OSCE activities in building resilient societies.

### *Preparedness, co-ordination, and action to prevent traffickers exploiting chaos in crises focus of OSCE Ministerial Council side event*

At the 32nd OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna, a side event focused on developing crisis-ready responses to human trafficking. Participants, including government officials, civil society, and experts with lived experience, emphasized that traffickers exploit crises rapidly, targeting children, refugees, displaced persons,

and economically vulnerable populations. Discussions highlighted the need for proactive, adaptable strategies grounded in human rights, flexible national referral mechanisms, cross-sector partnerships, and survivor inclusion. The event stressed integrating anti-trafficking measures into all crisis response plans and strengthening emergency preparedness. It was organized by the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking, in partnership with ODIHR and the Transnational Threats Department.

*OSCE Ministerial Council reaffirms continued relevance of Helsinki principles and sets the path for reforms to strengthen the Organization*

The 32nd OSCE Ministerial Council concluded on 5 December 2025 in Vienna, welcoming over 1,200 participants from States, Partners, international organizations, civil society, and media. The Council reviewed regional security, highlighting the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine and reaffirmed the OSCE's role as a platform for dialogue and reform. Finland, as Chair, led the Helsinki+50 Discussions and established the Helsinki+50 Fund (€17 million pledged) to strengthen the Organization's capacity. Ministers appreciated US mediation efforts in Ukraine and emphasized the importance of supporting a just and lasting peace. Switzerland will assume the 2026 Chairmanship, committing to diplomacy, dialogue, and revitalization of the OSCE. The Council also highlighted the need to finalize the unified budget, not approved since 2021.

**ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE POLICE CRIMINELLE – INTERPOL**

*574 arrests and USD 3 million recovered in coordinated cybercrime operation across Africa*

From 27 October to 27 November, law enforcement across 19 African countries conducted Operation Sentinel, targeting business email compromise (BEC), ransomware, and digital extortion. The operation led to 574 arrests, recovery of around USD 3 million, and mitigation of estimated losses exceeding USD 21 million. Key interventions included stopping a USD 7.9 million BEC transfer in Senegal, decrypting ransomware and recovering 30 terabytes of data in Ghana, dismantling a cyber-fraud network across Ghana and Nigeria, and shutting down 43 malicious domains and over 4,300 social media accounts in Benin. The operation, coordinated by INTERPOL and supported by private sector partners, highlights the growing sophistication of cybercrime in Africa and the importance of international cooperation. It was conducted under the African Joint Operation against Cybercrime (AFJOC) and the EU–CoE GLACY-e project, funded by the UK.

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

*Corruption measurement starts with data and strengthened coordination*

Every year, more than two trillion USD are lost to corruption and illicit financial flows, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support said, during the Second Global Conference on Harnessing Data to Improve Corruption Measurement. Two are the key opportunities identified. Collaborative efforts to fight corruption can mobilize resources for development, while ensuring integrity in public procurement has the potential to save billions. Political recognition of the importance of measuring corruption is essential to address it effectively. On the other hand, we still lack actionable data and reliable indicators. Many national data systems are fragmented and have limited capacity, resources, and coordination for systematic data collection. Although new technologies like AI, machine learning, blockchain, and big data analytics can help measure corruption, they must be used to improve accuracy, ethics, inclusion, and trust.

*UNDP is seeking innovative ways to ensure more safety from underwater explosives*

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a global innovation challenge to find practical solutions for crisis-affected communities. In collaboration with Wazoku and SeaFreight Labs, UNDP will crowdsource ideas from scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs worldwide through open-innovation challenges. The first challenge aims to develop methods for detecting and mapping underwater mines and unexploded ordnance in areas with ongoing UN mine action programmes.

*Making digital space safe from gender-based violence*

While the ongoing digital transformation brings considerable advantages, its convergence with political and economic instability presents significant risks, particularly for gender equality and women's rights. Women and marginalised groups are especially vulnerable to online harassment, cyberstalking, and digital abuse. A recent global survey has shown that more than 38 percent of women have encountered online violence. Despite this alarming statistic, less than half of all countries have legislation addressing online abuse, and where such laws exist, enforcement is often inadequate. This leaves survivors with limited recourse and allows perpetrators to act with impunity. In response to these challenges, UNDP is examining strategies to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance the capacity of law enforcement, and encourage collaboration among a variety of stakeholders. Discussions have highlighted the importance of survivor-centred policing, trauma-informed approaches, and the development of legislation that can keep pace with rapid technological change. Additionally, there is growing concern over emerging threats, such as politically motivated digital violence and the misuse of artificial intelligence for harassment, which have also been addressed in these efforts.

*International anti-corruption day*

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is actively engaging with young people across the globe to address the persistent challenge of corruption. By supporting the creation and strengthening of youth-led networks, UNDP is providing vital platforms—both offline and online—that enable young people to develop innovative solutions, promote transparency, and spearhead transformative change within their communities. UNDP maintains a strict zero tolerance policy towards fraud and corruption. The organisation is steadfast in its dedication to continually enhancing transparency and accountability by implementing robust internal controls, carrying out independent evaluations, and conducting rigorous audits and investigations. Adherence to the highest ethical standards remains at the core of UNDP's operations. In alignment with the aspirations and leadership of young people—the leaders of both today and tomorrow—UNDP calls for a shared commitment to constructing a future founded on integrity, fairness, and hope.

*Inter-Agency Standing Committee urges Israel to revoke Humanitarian NGO ban*

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which includes the General Directors of leading organizations such as FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, and UNICEF, has issued a strong appeal to the Israeli authorities. They urge reconsideration of the proposed plan to prohibit numerous international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from operating within the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). International NGOs play a vital role in the humanitarian response in the OPT. Collectively, these organizations provide nearly \$1 billion in assistance every year, forming the backbone of essential relief operations for communities in need. The situation in Gaza remains particularly precarious. Families are facing the compounding hardships of winter, persistent acute food insecurity, and an urgent need for life-saving aid. In this challenging environment, the ongoing presence and activities of international NGOs are crucial. Any move to ban these organizations threatens to reverse the fragile progress achieved during recent ceasefires and would have devastating consequences for vulnerable children, women, and men. Access to humanitarian assistance is not a matter of choice, condition, or political debate. It is a legal requirement under international humanitarian law and is

essential for safeguarding human rights. Ensuring unimpeded humanitarian access is fundamental to the protection and dignity of those affected by conflict.

## **UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

### *UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage: 67 cultural practices inscribed*

The UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage examined 67 elements for inscription on the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage, at the initiative of 77 countries. With this year's inscriptions, 849 cultural practices in 157 countries are now part of UNESCO's living heritage Lists. These inscriptions reflect the growing role of the Convention in strengthening dialogue and cooperation between States, as well as their shared ambition to promote the safeguarding of living heritage. A key theme that emerged from the nominations examined during the 2025 session of the Intergovernmental Committee was the 'practice by hand' highlighting traditional craftsmanship. Elements such as musical instruments, crafts, foodways and performing arts rooted in precise gestures, technical knowledge passed down through generations and deeply embedded cultural meanings, are far more than artisanal techniques. For some communities, they represent a source of sustainable livelihoods. Crucially, they demonstrate that intangible cultural heritage is not only transmitted symbolically, but represents a source of income for the bearers, echoing the thematic initiative developed on the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

## **UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)**

### *Strengthening Governance in the Minerals and Metal Sector*

A new UNEP and IGF report identify over 100 Sustainability Standards and Initiatives in minerals and metals value chains. While these standards aim to improve environmental and social outcomes, their rapid growth has led to a fragmented landscape that confuses stakeholders. The report stresses that well-crafted initiatives can support, but not replace, strong government regulation, and may enhance sustainability and data access. However, barriers like fragmentation, high compliance costs, and limited relevance—especially in producer countries—reduce their effectiveness.

### *Indigenous action takes back nature*

The UN has designated three new World Restoration Flagships in Australia, Canada, and South Africa, highlighting the role of Indigenous Peoples and local knowledge. Announced by UNEP and FAO ahead of the seventh UN Environment Assembly, these initiatives advance agrifood systems, biodiversity, and climate targets as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030). The World Restoration Flagships showcase leading, science-driven restoration efforts.

Australia: Shellfish Reef Building Programme. Canada: Respectful Returns: Restoring Resilience to Salmon Ecosystems. South Africa: Thicket Restoration Movement.

### *Planetary health would deliver higher GDP, less deaths and less poverty*

The Global Environment Outlook, Seventh Edition: A Future We Choose (GEO-7) was released during the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi. This comprehensive report is the result of collaboration among 287 multi-disciplinary scientists representing 82 countries. UNEP report highlights the severe impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, desertification, and pollution. These environmental crises are already costing the planet, its people, and economies trillions of

dollars annually. The report warns that continuing along existing development pathways will only intensify these costs. The GEO-7 report emphasizes that whole-of-society and whole-of-government strategies—aimed at transforming systems related to economy and finance, materials and waste, energy, food, and the environment—could generate global macroeconomic benefits. These benefits are projected to reach US\$20 trillion per year by 2070 and continue to grow thereafter. A crucial enabling factor for these transformative approaches is the transition from using GDP as the sole indicator to adopting measures that also track human and natural capital. This shift incentivizes economies to embrace circularity, decarbonize energy systems, promote sustainable agriculture, and prioritize ecosystem restoration. The report identifies two transformation pathways: one focuses on behavioral changes to reduce emphasis on material consumption, while the other centers on technological innovation and efficiency improvements. According to the transformation pathways, significant global macroeconomic benefits are anticipated to begin emerging by 2050, growing to US\$20 trillion per year by 2070, and surging to US\$100 trillion annually thereafter. These pathways also forecast reduced exposure to climate risks, decreased biodiversity loss by 2030, and an expansion of natural lands. The GEO-7 report calls on governments, non-governmental and multilateral organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, professional organizations, the public, and Indigenous Peoples to recognize the urgency of global environmental crises. It urges all stakeholders to build upon progress from previous decades and collaborate in designing and implementing integrated policies, strategies, and actions for a better future for everyone.

## **UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH (UNIDIR)**

### *Space Security Governance could be afflicted by the shadow of nuclear age*

Space activity has undergone substantial changes since the 1980s, with the debates surrounding it evolving in tandem. The proliferation of thousands of commercial satellites has made space-enabled services more integral to human wellbeing than ever before. The space environment now encompasses not only traditional satellites but also increasing ventures into cislunar and lunar exploration. Despite these advancements, strategic concerns persist, particularly regarding debris, congestion, and sustainability—issues that do not always have direct analogues in the nuclear sphere. In an era marked by heightened nuclear anxiety and proposals for space-based missile defence, it is necessary to re-examine the nuclear legacy within the context of contemporary space governance. The aim is not to overemphasise nuclear parallels, but to strike a balanced approach. Future safeguards must be established to manage nuclear risks and prevent escalation in outer space. Such protections should serve as the foundation for a modern and inclusive framework for space governance, rather than acting as its upper limit. Entanglement of Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Systems. Modern nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems are heavily dependent on satellites for early warning, detection, and communication functions. This reliance exposes these systems to significant vulnerabilities, as disruptions—whether through jamming, dazzling, cyber intrusion, or proximity operations—can mimic or signal hostile intent. Experts highlight the phenomenon of entanglement between nuclear and non-nuclear systems, which introduces pathways for inadvertent escalation. Space assets, therefore, are a part of this complex dynamic. Recent research points to how dual-use satellites and the growing influence of the private sector can undermine strategic stability. Ambiguous leadership roles and differing incentive structures within the private sector make technical anomalies and activities more challenging to interpret, potentially leading to misperceptions that could trigger crises. The dangers in space security governance are not limited to technological vulnerabilities but also extend to psychological factors, particularly perceptions of vulnerability. Early warning satellites and space-based communication systems underpin deterrence strategies. Any disruption—whether accidental or deliberate—can be perceived as a threat to a State’s ability to detect or respond to a nuclear attack, thereby creating strong incentives for pre-emptive action. Within this context, the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) remains critically relevant. Although progress on PAROS has been slow, its principle of prevention—acting before destabilising dynamics become entrenched—captures the essence of why shared

restraint in space is indispensable for global security. Two key obstacles complicate efforts to resolve space security issues: asymmetry and inequality. To move forward, a more inclusive approach is required for space governance, expanding the concept of prevention and ensuring that all stakeholders are represented in developing solutions.

## **UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

### *European Union: UN experts alarmed by risk of humanitarian assistance criminalisation*

UN experts expressed alarm regarding European Union discussions on proposed legislation concerning the smuggling of migrants, specifically questioning its compatibility with international human rights law. They highlighted a significant concern regarding the potential absence of a mandatory humanitarian exemption. According to the experts, the lack of such a clearly defined provision creates a serious risk of criminalizing life-saving actions and assistance provided to victims of human trafficking, refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable individuals, including children. The proposal for a revised Facilitation Directive, which was published by the European Commission on 28 November 2023 and is currently under review by the European Parliament, is seen as a threat to those assisting people in endangered situations. The experts maintained that a mandatory humanitarian exemption would be consistent with both the UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants and international obligations to assist persons in distress. They further noted an atmosphere of increasing hostility toward migrants and the civil society organizations working to protect them, pointing out that human rights defenders in Europe are increasingly subjected to criminal prosecution within a shrinking civil society space. Consequently, the experts urged the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to incorporate a binding humanitarian exemption clause. This would protect individuals from criminal liability when they assist migrants and refugees for humanitarian reasons, due to close family ties, or on a non-profit basis. They concluded that ensuring the protection of human rights in all anti-smuggling measures is a legal obligation and remains vital for the effective protection of the lives and rights of people on the move.

### *Russia's repression policy to dismantle civil society exposes fear of accountability: UN Special Rapporteur*

UN Special Rapporteur Mariana Katzarova has warned that intensifying attacks on human rights defenders and anti-war voices in Russia indicate a dramatic decline in the country's human rights situation and highlight the growing insecurity of a state that fears accountability. According to the expert, Russian authorities have accelerated their assault on civic freedoms by dismantling the remnants of independent civil society, leading to a seismic shift in the human rights landscape. A striking example of this trend is the recent wave of designating organizations as "undesirable," alongside the instrumentalization of national security and public safety legislation to target lawyers, journalists, and activists. Long-standing organizations like Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) were added to an expanding list of banned entities, with Russian law criminalizing any engagement with them and imposing sentences of up to six years in prison. To date, over 280 organizations have been labeled "undesirable," while more than 1,100 individuals and entities have been designated as "foreign agents." The Special Rapporteur characterized these figures as part of a calculated strategy to isolate the Russian population from independent information, legal assistance, and peaceful activism.

### *Corruption and Human Rights: A Practical Guide*

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published the "Corruption and Human Rights: A Practical Guide. The Practical Guide is intended to be the first in a series of knowledge products to support the understanding of the linkages between corruption and human rights. It reflects the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights commitment to advancing accountability, transparency, and appropriate

victim responsive approaches in both anti-corruption and human rights frameworks. The Guide is designed to serve as a practical tool for a wide range of stakeholders to:

- (a) Facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the linkages between corruption and human rights;
- (b) Help operationalize obligations under international law to address the negative impacts of corruption on the enjoyment of all human rights; and
- (c) Support advocacy, inform policy development, and facilitate dialogue by offering concrete guidance on how to address corruption from a human rights perspective.

## **UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND**

### *Hospital attacks highlight worsening risks for Ukrainian pregnant women*

Over the past week, a maternity hospital in Kherson supported by UNFPA sustained damage following an attack, representing the latest incident involving facilities providing care for pregnant women and newborns in Ukraine. This event coincides with recently released UNFPA data indicating a marked increase in pregnancy and childbirth-related mortality risk within the country. According to an analysis of national health data, the maternal mortality rate has increased by approximately 37 percent, largely attributed to repeated strikes on hospitals and the deterioration of essential services, compelling many women to give birth under increasingly hazardous conditions. Since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, more than 80 maternity and neonatal facilities have been either damaged or destroyed, among a total of 2,763 healthcare sites impacted nationwide. Healthcare professionals caution that the intersection of violence, chronic stress, displacement, and widespread disruption of maternal services is contributing to a rise in pregnancy complications and preventable fatalities. Between 2023 and 2024, maternal mortality rose from 18.9 to 25.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, reflecting a notable decline in the safety of pregnancy and childbirth. UNFPA is seeking US \$52 million to sustain maternal health and protection services across Ukraine in 2026, encompassing the supply of essential medicines, equipment, skilled personnel, and secure facilities for mothers and infants. Enhancing these services remains critical to ensuring that all women, including those affected by bombardment or displacement, are able to give birth safely and that newborns receive optimal care.

## **UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (UNRWA)**

### *Situation report on the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza strip and the occupied West Bank*

In the first week of December 2025, Byron Storm exacerbated the already dire conditions for more than 79,000 individuals seeking refuge in over 100 UNRWA schools repurposed as shelters, including 85 displacement sites managed by UNRWA. These sites were further burdened by overcrowding and deteriorating living standards as rains intensified. UNRWA teams persistently worked to mitigate the effects of flooding by removing water from inundated yards, unblocking manholes and drainage collectors, repairing damaged tents within school compounds, and distributing tarpaulins and other essential materials. These efforts aimed to help families reinforce their makeshift shelter spaces and withstand the challenges presented by the ongoing winter weather. Between 7 October 2023 and 10 December 2025, the MoH in Gaza reported that 70,369 Palestinians had been killed and another 170,999 injured within the Gaza Strip. UNRWA documented the deaths of 382 colleagues in Gaza since the onset of the conflict, comprising 309 UNRWA personnel and an additional 73 individuals supporting UNRWA activities, as of 14 December 2025. Despite these losses, around 12,000 Palestinian UNRWA personnel in Gaza continue to provide services and assistance to the entire population in need. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, UNRWA maintains a pivotal role, with more than

4,000 Palestinian personnel delivering education, health, and other essential services to Palestine refugees. However, all UNRWA international staff are currently barred from entering the occupied Palestinian territory, encompassing both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This restriction follows the enforcement of laws enacted by the Israeli parliament.

### *Hunger crisis remains*

Gaza remains engulfed in a man-made hunger crisis, with persistent and severe food shortages continuing to affect the population. According to the latest report from IPC info, the situation in Gaza has shown only fragile improvements since the ceasefire began in October. Although the Gaza Governorate is no longer classified as experiencing famine, approximately 1.6 million people continue to face high levels of acute food insecurity. This underscores the precarious nature of recent gains and the urgent need for sustained humanitarian intervention. To bring an end to this crisis, it is essential that large-scale supplies are allowed to enter the territory and humanitarian workers are given unrestricted access to perform their duties effectively. UNRWA currently has food parcels prepared for 1.1 million people, along with flour sufficient for the entire population, all awaiting clearance to enter the Gaza Strip. The timely delivery and distribution of these resources are critical to alleviating the ongoing hunger and ensuring the well-being of Gaza's residents.

## **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

### *Resolution 2806 (2025): Peace and Security in Africa*

On 12 December, the Security Council extended until 30 November 2026 its sanctions on weapons entering Somalia and its authorization for Member States to intercept vessels transporting them, while simultaneously renewing until 31 December 2026 the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the Al-Shabaab sanctions regime. Unanimously adopting resolution 2806 (2025) under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the 15-member organ called on Member States to take reasonable steps to prevent the smuggling of weapons and ammunition into Somalia. Welcoming a recent technical assessment of the Al-Shabaab arms embargo (document S/2025/673), members also stressed that deliveries of all weapons, ammunition and military equipment to Somalia may only be provided in coordination with, and with prior notification to, the Federal Government of Somalia, to allow for appropriate review and consideration. They further decided that, prior to delivering any weapons, ammunition or military equipment to Somalia's Federal Member States or to "licensed private security companies" operating in the country, the supplying Member State shall notify the Federal Government to allow for appropriate review and consideration. While renewing the Council's maritime interdiction regime, the Council also expressed its intention to "review and revise" the provisions of today's resolution and take appropriate action regarding their extension or modification no later than 30 November 2026.

### *Resolution 2807 (2025): Maintenance of international peace and security*

On 12 December, the Security Council urged greater youth participation and leadership in peace processes and conflict prevention, reinforcing its ongoing efforts to mainstream youth across the peace and security agenda. Unanimously adopting resolution 2807 (2025), the Council called on all relevant actors to "consider ways to increase the full, effective, safe and meaningful youth participation and leadership in peace processes, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction at all levels", including through the Peacebuilding Commission. It also decided to continue the consideration of the youth, peace and security agenda in its work, including through open debates to discuss the Secretary-General's reports on youth, peace and security. Further, the 15-member organ encouraged Member States to consider adoption or strengthening of national action plans on youth, peace and security and support youth-led peacebuilding initiatives, including through

engagement with civil society. It then encouraged the UN Youth Office to continue to collaborate with relevant UN entities, including the Security Council, in advancing the youth, peace and security agenda.

*Resolution 2808 (2025): The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)*

On 19 December, the Security Council extended for one year the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and tasked the Mission to support the implementation of the country's permanent ceasefire with Rwanda. The renewal comes amid ongoing tensions in the country's eastern provinces, where the 23 March Movement (M23) armed group, with reported support from Rwandan forces, has continued its offensive. Unanimously adopting resolution 2808 (2025), the Council — acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations — decided that the new mandate extends until 20 December 2026. By its terms, the Council maintained the same staffing levels as in the previous mandate, authorizing MONUSCO to comprise 11,500 military personnel, 600 military observers and staff officers, 443 police personnel and 1,270 personnel in formed police units. The Council strongly condemned M23's ongoing offensive in South Kivu, with the support of Rwanda Defence Forces, including the seizure of Uvira "which risks destabilizing the whole region, gravely endangers civilian populations and imperils ongoing peace efforts". It urged the M23 to immediately halt and reverse its offensive and Rwanda to withdraw its defence forces from the neighbouring country's eastern provinces. It further demanded that all parties materialize without delay their previous commitments to establish a permanent, effective and verifiable ceasefire.

*Resolution 2809 (2025): The situation in Somalia (AUSSOM)*

On 23 December, the Security Council extended the authorization of the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) until 31 December 2026. Unanimously adopting resolution 2809 (2025), the Council authorized African Union members to continue to deploy up to 11,826 uniformed personnel, inclusive of 680 police personnel, to AUSSOM until that date. It emphasized that additional support to AUSSOM and the Somali Security Forces is necessary to enable Somalia to bolster its fight against Al-Shabaab and improve peace and security in the country and the region and urged traditional and new donors to support by providing the necessary funding to AUSSOM.