

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Amnesty International calls on states to stop predatory, anti-rights order from taking hold in pivotal moment for humanity

- *Predatory attacks on multilateralism, international law and civil society marked 2025*
- *The alternative on offer is a racist, patriarchal, unequal and anti-rights world order*
- *Protesters, activists and global bodies are working to resist, disrupt and transform*

The world is on the brink of a perilous new era, driven by powerful states', corporations' and anti-rights movements' assaults on multilateralism, international law and human rights, Amnesty International warned today upon launching its annual report, [*The State of the World's Human Rights*](#). States, international bodies and civil society must reject the politics of appeasement and collectively resist these attacks to prevent this new order from taking hold, the organization said in its assessment of the human rights situation in 144 countries.

"We are confronting *the* most challenging moment of our age. Humanity is under attack from transnational anti-rights movements and predatory governments determined to assert their dominance through unlawful wars and brazen economic blackmail," said Amnesty International's Secretary General, Agnès Callamard.

"For years, Amnesty International has denounced the gradual disintegration of human rights in every part of the world, warning of the consequences of flagrant rule-breaking by governments and corporate actors. We've also demonstrated time and again how double standards and selective compliance with international law have weakened the multilateral system and accountability.

"What marks this moment as fundamentally different is that we're no longer documenting erosion around the system's edges. This is a direct assault on the foundations of human rights and the international rules-based order by the most powerful actors for the purpose of control, impunity and profit.

"The spiralling conflict in the Middle East is a product of this descent into lawlessness. Following the initial unlawful US-Israeli attacks in violation of the UN Charter, which triggered Iran's indiscriminate retaliation, the conflict has quickly morphed into an open warfare against civilians and civilian infrastructure, exacerbating the already catastrophic suffering of people across the region. It is now engulfing countries around the world, impacting populations everywhere, and threatening the livelihood of millions. This is what happens when the norms, institutions and legal framework painstakingly built to safeguard humanity are hollowed out for the purpose of domination."

"Amnesty's 2025 annual report moves beyond warning of imminent breakdown to documenting a collapse now underway, and exposing its devastating consequences for human rights, global

stability and the lives of millions in 2026 and beyond. It calls on states around the world to urgently reject the politics of appeasement embraced in 2025, overcome fear, and resist in words and actions the construction of a predatory world order.”

Predatory attacks are accelerating the destruction of international law

The State of the World's Human Rights, and Amnesty International's documentation so far this year, detail pervasive crimes under international law and mounting attacks on the international justice system, which are gravely harming the foundations that underpin human rights globally.

[Israel has maintained its genocide](#) against Palestinians in Gaza, despite the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, and its system of apartheid over Palestinians, while [accelerating the expansion of illegal settlements](#) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and taking steps toward annexation. Israeli authorities have increasingly allowed or encouraged settlers to attack and terrorize Palestinians with impunity, and prominent officials have praised and glorified violence against Palestinians, including arbitrary arrests and the torture of detainees.

The United States of America has committed [over 150 extrajudicial executions](#) by bombing boats in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and carried out an [act of aggression against Venezuela](#) in January 2026. Russia has [intensified its aerial attacks on critical civilian infrastructure](#) in Ukraine, while Myanmar's military used motorized paragliders to drop explosive munitions on villages last year, killing dozens of civilians, including children.

The United Arab Emirates has fuelled the conflict in Sudan by [providing advanced Chinese weaponry to the Rapid Support Forces](#), who seized control of El Fasher last October after an 18-month siege of the city and committed [mass civilian killings and sexual violence](#). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the M23 armed group, with the active support of Rwanda, captured the cities of Goma and Bukavu and [unlawfully killed civilians and tortured detainees](#).

In early 2026, the USA and Israel's unlawful use of force against Iran, in violation of the UN Charter, has triggered retaliatory Iranian strikes on Israel and Gulf Cooperation Council countries, while Israel has [escalated its attacks on Lebanon](#). From the killing of over 100 children in [an unlawful US strike on a school](#) in Iran, to the devastating [attacks by all parties on energy infrastructure](#), the conflict has endangered the lives and health of millions of civilians and threatens to inflict vast, predictable and long-term civilian and environmental harm, impacting access to energy, healthcare, food and water across an already turbulent region and beyond.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban escalated its predatory policies against the female population, with further bans prohibiting them from education, work and freedom of movement, while in Iran, the authorities [massacred protesters](#) in January 2026, in what was likely the most lethal such repression for decades.

The USA, Israel and Russia further undermined international accountability mechanisms, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in particular, last year. The Trump administration enacted [sanctions against ICC staff, collaborators](#) and the [UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), while Russian courts issued arrest warrants against ICC officials. Several other states withdrew or announced their intention to withdraw from the Rome Statute and treaties banning cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines.

The vast majority of states have been unwilling or unable to consistently denounce predatory acts by the USA, Russia, Israel or China, or to chisel out diplomatic solutions. The European Union and most European states appeased US assaults on international law and multilateral mechanisms. They have failed to take meaningful action to stop Israel's genocide or end the irresponsible arms and technology transfers fuelling crimes under international law around the world. They have also been unwilling to enact blocking statutes to protect the targets of US sanctions, including on ICC judges and prosecutors. Italy and Hungary declined to arrest individuals subject to ICC warrants in their territory, while France, Germany and Poland implied they would do the same.

“World leaders have been far too submissive in the face of attacks on international law and the multilateral system. Their silence and inaction are inexcusable. It is morally bankrupt and will bring nothing but retreat, defeat and the erasure of decades of hard-fought human rights gains. To appease aggressors is to pour fuel on a fire that will burn us all and scorch the future for generations to come,” said Agnès Callamard.

“Some may be tempted to dismiss the system built over the last 80 years as nothing but an illusion. This is to ignore the hard-fought achievements towards the recognition of universal rights, the adoption of multiple international conventions and national laws protecting against racial discrimination and violence against women, enshrining the rights of workers and trade unions, and recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is to forget the poverty addressed, the reproductive rights strengthened and the justice delivered when states chose to uphold the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“The political and economic predators, and their enablers, are declaring the multilateral system dead not because it's inefficient but because it's not serving their hegemony and control. The response is not to proclaim it an illusion or beyond repair, but to confront its failures, end its selective application and keep transforming it so that it's fully capable of defending all people with equal resolve.”

Ramped-up assaults on civil society spread around the world

The proliferation of attacks on civil society and social movements deepened in 2025, with sustained efforts to silence and disempower human rights defenders, organizations and dissenters spreading to almost every part of the world.

Authorities in [Nepal](#) and [Tanzania](#) were particularly brazen in their unlawful use of lethal force to repress protests expressing political and socio-economic grievances. The governments of Afghanistan, China, Egypt, India, Kenya, the USA and Venezuela, among others, also violently repressed protests, criminalized dissent through counterterrorism and security laws, or used abusive policing tactics, enforced disappearances or extrajudicial executions.

In the United Kingdom, authorities proscribed Palestine Action, a direct-action protest network primarily targeting Israeli arms manufacturers and their subsidiaries, under overly broad counterterrorism laws and arrested more than 2,700 people for peacefully opposing the ban. The UK High Court [ruled this unlawful](#) in February 2026. The government is appealing the decision.

Turkish authorities detained hundreds of peacefully protesters after [the arrest of Istanbul mayor and presidential candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu](#), who is among over 400 people facing politically motivated prosecution under alleged corruption charges.

US authorities launched an unlawful clampdown on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, committing unnecessary and excessive use of force, racial profiling, arbitrary detention, and practices that amounted to [torture and enforced disappearance](#). In Latin America, states such as Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela [adopted or reformed legal frameworks](#) that impose disproportionate controls on civil society organizations directly impacting their ability to operate, access resources, support communities and defend human rights.

Many governments, facilitated by corporate actors, used spyware and digital censorship to restrict freedom of expression and the right to information. [US authorities used AI-powered surveillance tools](#) to target foreign students expressing solidarity with Palestinians with arrest and deportation. Serbia's government used spyware and digital forensics tools against student protesters, civil society and journalists. Kenyan authorities systematically deployed [technology-facilitated repression tactics](#), including online intimidation, threats, incitement to hatred and unlawful surveillance, to suppress youth-led protests.

The USA, Canada, France, Germany and the UK, among others, announced or enacted sweeping cuts to international aid budgets, despite knowing they would likely result in millions of avoidable deaths, and in several cases while committing to massive parallel hikes in military expenditure. This has had a [catastrophic impact](#) on NGOs' efforts to advance press freedom, climate resilience, and gender justice, to protect refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, and to provide healthcare and sexual and reproductive rights.

Many states continued to resist reining in the aggressive tax avoidance and evasion by billionaires and corporate giants while weakening further restraints on corporate power. In the USA, strategic lawsuits against public participation had a chilling effect on civil society, with one such lawsuit resulting in a court ordering Greenpeace to pay a fossil fuel company \$345 million (reduced from [an initial \\$660 million](#)).

In a context dominated by the US president describing climate change as a “scam”, governments did nowhere near enough to address climate displacement, equitably transition away from [fossil fuels](#), or adequately ramp up finance for climate action – even as the UN Environment Programme warned that the world is on track to reach 3°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100.

“What alternative do the bullies and predators offer to the imperfect global experiment they're so intent on destroying? The world order they propose is one that mocks and discards racial, gender and climate justice, treats civil society as an enemy, and rejects international solidarity. It is built on silencing dissent, weaponizing the law and dehumanizing those deemed 'others'. Their vision of the world is predicated not on respect for our common humanity, but on military force, trade domination and technological hegemony. It is, ultimately, a vision with no moral compass,” said Agnès Callamard.

Protesters, civil society and international bodies lead efforts to resist, disrupt and transform

Undeterred by adversity, millions around the world are resisting injustice and authoritarian practices.

[Gen Z protests](#) swept over a dozen countries in 2025, including Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Nepal and Peru, and around 300,000 people [defied Hungary's ban on Budapest Pride](#) to defend LGBTI rights. Throughout early 2026, demonstrators from Los Angeles to Minneapolis have organized street by street and block by block against violent and highly militarized US immigration enforcement raids.

Mass demonstrations against Israel's genocide spread around the world last year and humanitarians from over 40 countries launched flotillas to show solidarity with Palestinians. Global activism against the flow of arms to Israel expanded, with dockworkers in France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Sweden seeking to disrupt arms shipment routes. Activism and legal pressure also led several states to restrict or ban arms exports to Israel.

While many governments appeased attacks on international justice, several states and bodies bucked this trend by demonstrating their commitment to multilateralism and rule of law. A growing number acknowledged that Israel was committing genocide and several states joined the Hague Group, a collective committed to holding Israel accountable for violations of international law, and contributed to South Africa's case against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The Philippines handed former president [Rodrigo Duterte](#) over to the ICC to face charges of the crime against humanity of murder, and the court issued warrants against [two Taliban leaders](#) for gender-based persecution. The Council of Europe and Ukraine agreed to establish the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, and a hybrid court in the Central African Republic convicted six former members of an armed group for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The UN Human Rights Council established an [independent investigative mechanism for Afghanistan](#) and a fact-finding mission and Commission of Inquiry on Eastern DRC, and [expanded the mandate of its fact-finding mission on Iran](#). Significant progress was made toward a binding UN tax convention and a Crimes Against Humanity Convention, and the [ICJ](#) and the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#) issued landmark advisory opinions affirming state human rights obligations to respond to climate damage.

More states have started speaking out against authoritarian practices and attacks on the rules-based order in 2026, with the Spanish government notably taking principled stands, but such calls must be backed up with decisive and sustained action.

“From city streets to multilateral forums, 2025 brought powerful displays of resistance and solidarity from protesters, diplomats, political leaders and many others around the world. We must build on their example and courage and forge bold coalitions to reimagine, rebuild and re-centre the global order around human rights, the rule of law and universal values,” said Agnès Callamard.

“Let 2026 be the year we assert our agency and demonstrate that history is not merely something imposed upon us; it is ours to make. And for the sake of humanity, the time to make history is now.”

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Amnesty International's press office: press@amnesty.org