

[Egyptian death sentences a 'gross miscarriage of justice': UN human rights chief](#)

An Egyptian court's confirmation of 75 death sentences on Saturday has been condemned by [Michelle Bachelet](#), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as being the result of an unfair trial.

Ms. Bachelet expressed her extreme concern at the decision which, if carried out, would amount to "a gross and irreversible miscarriage of justice".

The trial is one outcome of the military crackdown on Muslim-Brotherhood led protests in the Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda squares in Cairo on 14 August 2013.

It is alleged that up to 900 mostly unarmed protesters were killed by members of the Egyptian security forces.

The Government later claimed that many protesters had been armed, and that a number of police were killed.

Subsequently, charges were brought against a total of 739 people during a mass trial at the Cairo Criminal Court.

These charges included murder and incitement to violence, membership of an illegal group, participation in an illegal gathering, and other crimes.

In addition to the death sentences, 47 people were sentenced to life imprisonment, while the remainder were handed jail terms of varying length.

There have been several mass trials in Egypt, involving hundreds of cases being heard at the same time, and raising many of the same issues about due process and fair trial standards.

"The conduct of the trial in the Cairo Criminal Court has been widely criticised," Bachelet said. "And rightly so. The 739 people were tried en masse, and were not permitted individual legal representation before the court. In addition, the accused were not given the right to present evidence in their defence, and the prosecution did not provide sufficient evidence to prove individual guilt. The evident disregard of basic rights of the accused places the guilt of all those convicted in serious doubt. I hope that the Egyptian Court of Appeal will review this verdict and ensure that international standards of justice are respected by setting it aside,".

Ms. Bachelet also pointed to the stark contrast between Egypt's mass trials and a recent law that effectively grants members of the security forces complete immunity for crimes they may have committed.

In July this year, the Egyptian Parliament approved a law that will effectively bestow immunity from prosecution on security force personnel for any offences committed in the course of duty between 3 July 2013 – the date the military overthrew the Government of President Morsi – and 10 January 2016.

“Justice must apply to all – no one should be immune,” the High Commissioner said. “Attempts to bestow immunity from prosecution for crimes allegedly committed by members of the security forces merely promotes impunity, and undermines the faith of the Egyptian people in the Government’s capacity to deliver justice for all. I urge the Government of Egypt to ensure that justice will be done, according to law, in relation to any individuals – including members of the State security forces – who are suspected of committing a crime.”

To date, no State security personnel have been charged in relation to the so-called “Rabaa massacre”

[Uneven progress on climate action at Bangkok conference](#)

Climate change talks wrapped up in [Bangkok](#) today, leaving several issues still to be resolved.

The talks were part of series of meetings set up to develop guidelines for countries to implement the [Paris Climate Change Agreement](#), an important element in ensuring transparent and practical climate action across the globe.

Work on preparing the guidelines has been ongoing since 2016, the year after the Paris Agreement was signed by practically every country in the world.

The guidelines are due to be adopted at the annual climate change conference, [COP24](#), to be held in the Polish city of Katowice in December.

If that goal is to be reached, urgent work is needed in the coming weeks, said [Patricia Espinosa](#), Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change: “In Bangkok, there has been uneven progress on the elements of the climate change regime that countries are working towards. Clearly, we need to increase climate action significantly. Clearly, fully implementing the Paris Agreement is the way to do this in a balanced, coordinated manner that leaves nobody behind.”

Country representatives have been working on ways to increase action to deal with the impacts of climate change, increasing support for developing

countries – in the form of finance, technology cooperation and capacity-building – and, crucially, limiting global temperature increase this century to well below 2C, ideally limiting the increase to 1.5C through emission reductions.

Key concerns include the way in which actions are regularly and transparently communicated, clarity on financing the actions, and how to reflect the contributions and responsibilities of developed and developing countries.

On this point, Ms. Espinosa was clear that the Paris Agreement strikes a delicate balance to bring all countries together: “We must recognize that countries have different realities at home. They have different levels of economic and social development that lead to different national situations.” she said.

The negotiations are taking place at a time when the world has witnessed flood-related deaths, livelihoods wiped out by droughts and expensive infrastructure lost across large stretches of the developed and the developing world.

Madagascar: UN Secretary-General reaffirms support for electoral process

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, [António Guterres](#), has welcomed the appointment on 7 September of Rivo Rakotovo, President of the Madagascar Senate, as acting president of the country.

On Friday evening, the President of Madagascar, Hery Rajaonarimampianina, resigned in a message to the nation, broadcast on radio and television.

Mr. Rakotovo will serve as head of state in the interim until the election of the new president.

“The Secretary-General reiterates the commitment of the United Nations to continue to support the electoral process, leading to a peaceful, credible and inclusive poll”, his spokesperson said in a press statement released on Saturday.

The Secretary-General, wrote the spokesperson, commends the ongoing close coordination between the United Nations, through his Special Adviser Abdoulaye Bathily, and international partners including the African Union and the Southern African Development Community in supporting the Malagasy-led dialogue and reconciliation. Madagascar had been facing a political crisis

for several months.

Mr. Bathily visited the island last May to facilitate a dialogue between the country's main political actors, including President Rajaonarimampianina and former heads of state Marc Ravalomanana and Andry Rajoelina. "The mission supported the facilitation of a Malagasy process to foster dialogue among key political stakeholders to create a peaceful environment for elections, in accordance with the Constitution," Bathily said on 22 May in an interview with "[Politically Speaking](#)", the online magazine of the UN's Department of Political Affairs ([DPA](#)), after his trip to Madagascar.

On June 11, 2018, a new national unity government was formed in Madagascar with Christian Ntsay as prime minister, in accordance with the May 25 decision of the Constitutional Court, the highest legal authority in the country. This new government is responsible for organizing the November 7 presidential election.

[Horn of Africa: UN chief welcomes Djibouti agreement between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia](#)

[UN Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has welcomed Thursday's meeting in Djibouti with the foreign ministers of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia with the Djiboutian head of diplomacy.

The meeting, held on 6 September in Djibouti, resulted in the signing of a cooperation agreement between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Through his spokesman, the UN chief stressed that "the agreement reached among the four Ministers to work together to restore peace and stability in the region is a positive example for the Horn and beyond."

"The Secretary-General reiterates the readiness of the United Nations to support countries in the Horn of Africa region in consolidating the recent remarkable gains." he said.

[Human traffickers in Libya are posing](#)

as UN staff, says Refugee Agency

The UN Refugee Agency, [UNHCR](#), has called on Libyan authorities to take action against criminals targeting desperate refugees and migrants, amid reports that smugglers and traffickers in the country are impersonating Agency staff.

The Agency says that reliable sources and refugees have reported criminals using vests and other items with logos similar to that of UNHCR, at disembarkation points and smuggling hubs.

Genuine UNHCR staff are present at official disembarkation points in Libya, providing medical and humanitarian assistance, such as food, water and clothes, to refugees and migrants.

UNHCR is opposed to the detention of refugees and migrants, but has staff monitoring the situation at Libyan detention centres, aiding and identifying the most vulnerable.

However, the Agency insists that they do not engage in the transfer of refugees from disembarkation points to detention centres.

The reports of criminals impersonating UNHCR staff come as the situation for refugees and migrants detained or living in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, has dramatically deteriorated.

Following the violent clashes in Tripoli that erupted on 26 August, when tanks and heavy artillery were deployed in residential neighbourhoods, UNHCR has received reports of atrocities committed against refugees and migrants in Tripoli, including rape, kidnapping and torture.

The UN Support Mission in Libya, [UNSMIL](#), says that 61 Libyans were killed, and nearly 160 were injured. Looting and crime were widespread, and the Ghassan Salamé, Head of the Mission, [described](#) the city as being “on the brink of all-out war”.

UNSMIL brokered a ceasefire between the major parties to the conflict, halting the fighting and restoring some order.

Thousands escaped the detention centres close to the clashes, in a desperate attempt to save their lives.

UNHCR is calling for alternatives to detention to be put in place, including the immediate use of the Gathering and Departure Facility in Tripoli, which will serve as a platform to find safety in third countries, and which will be managed by the Libyan Ministry of Interior and by UNHCR.

The facility has the capacity to host 1,000 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers and is ready for use.