

Amnesty: Slovenia strips refugees of EU and international law protections

The Slovenian parliament passed amendments to the **Aliens Act** to enact emergency measures to deny refugees entry into the country and to expel those whom did not have their asylum claims properly assessed on Wednesday. **Amnesty International reported** that refugees are entitled the protections being stripped by these amendments under international and EU law. AI has denounced this action as a "serious backward step for human rights in Slovenia." AI's Researcher for the Balkans and the European Union Jelena Sesar has stated:

By sealing its borders to these desperate people and turning its back on its international obligations, Slovenia is treading the same unseemly path as its neighbours—Hungary and Austria. This is deeply regrettable for a country which has traditionally upheld core human rights values and has been a true leader in the region.

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India top court rejects petition seeking nationwide ban on cow slaughter

The **Supreme Court of India** on Friday rejected a public interest litigation seeking an all-India ban on cow slaughter. The order sought a total ban on the slaughter of all cattle including calves or a writ of mandamus ordering the enactment of a uniform policy for banning the slaughtering and preservation of cattle. The **court stated** it will not interfere with state laws on the killing of cattle. The court also noted that there are already laws prohibiting the illegal interstate transportation of cattle.

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Russia lower house passes domestic violence decriminalization bill

The **State Duma**, Russia's lower house of the Federal Assembly, gave final approval to a **bill** Friday that **decriminalizes** "assaults that inflict physical pain but do not cause bodily injury that threatens the victim's health." If the bill passes the upper house and is approved by President Vladimir Putin, it would decrease the penalty for first offenders from two years in jail to 30,000 rubles (USD \$500) and up to 15 days detention or up to 120 hours community service. The bill passed with a **vote** of 380-3, with 67 not voting. It is **estimated** that 36,000 women are beaten daily by their husbands in Russia, and 12,000 women die yearly due to domestic violence.

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Safe Spaces and First Amendment Rights: Do Safe Spaces Belong on College Campuses?

Do safe places belong on college campuses? On November 22, 2016, Yue Zhang wrote a critical piece about colleges not having safe spaces. Yue personally believes safe spaces only spoils kids and makes them more **fragile**. Although there might be some basis on Yue's conclusion, that is not the purpose of safe spaces. The purpose of safe spaces is to protect college students and listeners from sensitive topics like sexual assault. Colleges should have an area where students can get away if they need to. The best example is when a college brings a speaker about **sexual assault**. In March 2015, **Brown University** in Rhode Island brought speakers to speak about sexual assault. The safe spaces initial purpose was to protect students or listeners from being traumatized of past memories. This is a laudable purpose and an important reason to force universities to have safe spaces. These types of topics affect the students and leaves them at a disadvantage because past memories impact on how well these students perform in school. Also, topics like sexual assault place students at risk of mental disorders like depression. It is important to protect the universities' free speech, but it is also important to protect the students' health and safety.

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Sports Betting and the Supreme Court

In a move that caught many people by surprise, on **January 16 the United Supreme Court invited the Solicitor General** to set forth the government's view of the validity of a federal law that prohibits states other than Nevada from offering sports betting. Although the significance of the Court's order won't be known for some time, it raises tantalizing questions about the future of sports gambling in the United States. Could nationwide sports betting lie over the horizon?

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UN: senior judge or prosecutor to head Syria war crimes investigation

The UN **announced** on Thursday that the independent panel charged with assisting in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes or crimes against humanity in Syria will be headed by a senior judge or prosecutor with extensive experience in criminal investigation and prosecution. The head of the panel, which is officially called the "International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011," will be further assisted by a deputy and a secretariat. The panel is primarily charged with "collecting, consolidating, preserving, and analyzing" evidence of human rights violations, and facilitating and expediting independent criminal proceedings in accordance with standards of international law. The panel will be **established in phases** and the new **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** will name the head of the panel by the end of February.

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Thinking Beyond the ICJ's Marshall Islands Judgment

On 5 October, the [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) ruled in favor of [India](#) in a case brought forward by the [Republic of the Marshall Islands](#) concerning its allegation levied that India had not fulfilled its obligations under customary international law, as it had failed in good faith negotiations to cease its efforts in the nuclear arms race or calls to simply disarm. Yet instead, the Marshall Islands stated that India continued to take actions to improve, expand and maintain its nuclear forces.

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Federal judge blocks Trump executive order on immigration restrictions the day after signing

The US District Court for the Eastern District of NY in an [emergency ruling](#) stayed the execution, until further notice, of an executive order signed by US President [Donald Trump](#), which would restrict access to the US for visa holders and refugees from certain countries. Trump signed the executive order: '[Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States](#)' [text] on Friday. The order suspends entry into the US for nationals from any country who was facing restrictions under the [Visa Waiver program](#) [official website]. In the lawsuit, the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) filed a [petition](#) on behalf of two Iraqi refugees who were holding valid US visas, but had been denied entry because of the order. The order has already been challenged in court by several lawsuits, claiming that the order is unconstitutional and that it is in conflict with several federal statutes. The US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia also issued a [decision](#) stating, that all legal permanent residents detained had the right to a lawyer and they could not be removed from the US for the next seven days.

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