

Denmark 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Denmark, which includes Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands, during the year.

There were no credible reports of significant human rights abuses.

The government had mechanisms in place to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

In August, Greenland's parliament approved the establishment of an international expert group to investigate Denmark's role in the forced

implantation of intrauterine devices in Greenlandic women and girls during the 1960s and 1970s. The group was to assess whether there were violations of universal human rights and Indigenous peoples' rights, including whether these violations met the definition of genocide.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution and law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right. An independent media, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for media members.

The law prohibited any public speech or the dissemination of statements or other pronouncements that threatened, derided, or degraded a group because of sex, race, skin color, national or ethnic background, religion, or sexual orientation. Authorities could fine offenders or imprison them for up to two years.

The law criminalized the explicit condoning of incest, pedophilia, and polygamy and the incitement of terrorism, murder, or rape in connection with religious training. Punishment included an unspecified fine or imprisonment of up to three years.

In February, a man was convicted of explicit public endorsement of Hamas' October 2023 terrorist attack in Israel. He was found guilty of publicly endorsing Hamas' terrorist attack in statements he publicized on the same day of the attacks in a video on his Snapchat profile, where he had more than 80,000 followers. There were convictions in other such cases, and at least four other such cases were pending in the court system.

The law banned improper treatment of scriptures of significance to recognized religious communities. The law prohibited such acts committed in public as well as the distribution of recordings of such acts committed in private. The law allowed for such acts if done as a minor part of a larger work of art. The law included a punishment consisting of a fine and up to two years in prison.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The law stated all workers could form or join independent unions. The right to strike was a part of the "Danish Model," which determined that participating parties in the labor market, including employer associations and trade unions, negotiated collective agreements that determined the terms and conditions applicable to employees. The law did not specifically protect nor prohibit the right to strike except for certain essential services. The government was legally allowed to intervene in strikes after a certain

amount of time if parties had not reached an agreement. The Danish Model provided for the right to collective bargaining but did not provide nonresident foreign workers on Danish ships the right to participate in the country's collective bargaining agreements. It allowed unions to conduct their activities without interference, prohibited antiunion discrimination, and provided for reinstatement of workers fired for union activity.

The government effectively enforced the law, and penalties were regularly applied against violators. Resources, inspections, and remediation including supporting regulations were adequate. Penalties were commensurate with similar violations. Breaches of collective agreement were typically referred to industrial arbitration tribunals to decide whether a breach took place. If the parties agreed, the Labor Court could deal with cases that would otherwise be subject to industrial arbitration. The court determined penalties on the facts of the case and with due regard to the degree that the breach of agreement was excusable.

Employers and the government generally respected freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Annual collective bargaining agreements covered members of the workforce associated with unions and indirectly affected the wages and working conditions of nonunion employees.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The law did not mandate a national minimum wage. Unions and employer associations negotiated minimum wages in collective bargaining agreements that were more than the estimate for the poverty income level. The law required equal pay for equal work.

Workers in Denmark generally worked a 37.5-hour week established by contract rather than law. Workers received premium pay for overtime if covered by a collective agreement, and there was no compulsory overtime.

Greenland and the Faroe Islands had similar work conditions, except in both cases collective bargaining agreements set the standard work week at 40 hours.

Occupational Safety and Health

The law prescribed conditions of work, including appropriate safety and health standards. Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards were generally appropriate for the main industries in the country. The Ministry of

Employment was responsible for the framework and rules regarding working conditions, health and safety, industrial injuries, financial support, and disability allowances. The government proactively identified unsafe conditions. Workers could remove themselves from situations they believed endangered their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, and authorities effectively protected employees in these situations. The government reported the employment sectors that saw the most OSH violations were social and health work, pedagogical work, and carpentry and joinery.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The government effectively enforced wage and hour laws, and penalties for violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes. The Danish Working Environment Authority (DWEA) was responsible for the enforcement of wage and hour laws. The number of inspectors was sufficient to enforce compliance, and inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. Vulnerable groups generally included migrant and seasonal laborers, as well as young workers. These groups often worked in the agricultural and service sectors.

Authorities effectively enforced compliance with labor regulations. The same inspectors with authority over minimum wage and hours conducted occupational safety and health inspections. Standards were enforced effectively for wage, hours and occupational safety and health in all sectors.

Penalties for safety and health violations, for both employees and employers, were commensurate with those for similar violations. DWEA could settle cases subject only to fines without trial. Penalties were regularly applied against violators.

DWEA was responsible for enforcing health and safety rules and regulations. This was carried out through inspection visits as well as guidance to companies and their internal safety organizations. DWEA's scope applied to all industrial sectors except for work carried out in the employer's private household, exclusively by members of the employer's family, and by military personnel. The Danish Energy Agency was responsible for supervision of offshore energy installations, the Maritime Authority was responsible for supervision of shipping, and the Civil Aviation Administration was responsible for supervision in the aviation sector.

DWEA had authority to report violations to police or the courts if an employer failed to make required improvements by the deadline set by DWEA. Court decisions regarding violations were released to the public and showed past fines imposed against noncompliant companies or court-ordered reinstatement of employment.

The government enforced labor laws in the informal sector, which was estimated at 15.2 percent of the economy.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

There were no reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

The constitution and law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements.

The law allowed police both to begin investigations and to make arrests on their own initiative based upon observed evidence or to enforce a court order following an indictment filed with the courts by public prosecutors.

The law mandated that citizens and documented migrants taken into custody appear before a judge within 24 hours. The judge could extend police custody for a further 72 hours. Authorities could hold irregular migrants up to 72 hours before bringing them before a judge or releasing them. In all cases the law required police to make every effort to limit detention time after arrest to fewer than 12 hours. A migrant generally was classified as irregular when the individual did not have the required authorization or documents for legal immigration. In addition, the Ministry

of Immigration and Integration could suspend the requirement for a 72-hour case review if the volume of asylum requests exceeded the ability of the government to complete reviews within 72 hours. Authorities could extend detention beyond 72 hours to conduct additional research in cases where the migrant's country of origin or identity could not be positively verified.

According to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, police could administratively detain a person who endangered public order, the safety of individuals, or public security for a period not exceeding six hours or, in the context of public gatherings and crowds, 12 hours.

Authorities generally respected the right of detainees to a prompt judicial determination and informed them promptly of charges against them. There was no bail system; judges decided either to release detainees on their own recognizance or to keep them in detention until trial. A judge could authorize detention prior to trial only when authorities charged the detainee with a crime that could result in a prison sentence of more than 18 months or when the judge determined the detainee would seek to impede the investigation of the case, be a flight risk, or be likely to commit a new offense. The standard period of pretrial custody was up to four weeks, but a court order could further extend custody in four-week increments.

Arrested persons had the right to unsupervised visits with an attorney from the time police took them to a police station. The government provided counsel for those who could not afford legal representation. Detainees had

the right to inform their next of kin of their arrest, although authorities could deny this right if information regarding the detention could compromise the police investigation. Detainees had the right to medical treatment, and authorities generally respected this right. Consular access to detainees was provided. Police could deny other forms of visitation, subject to a court appeal, but generally did not do so.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/international-religious-freedom-reports/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution and law prohibited such practices, and there were no credible reports government officials employed them.

In February, the government settled with two patients subjected to week-

long belt restraints in 2020 and 2021 in psychiatric wards in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. The government paid 335,000 Danish kroner (\$49,000) and agreed to amend the law to make it easier for psychiatric patients to receive compensation for unjustified coercion.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

There were no confirmed reports of the worst forms of child labor. The law prohibited the worst forms of child labor, and the government effectively enforced the law. Penalties were regularly applied against violators of labor regulations and were commensurate with those for analogous serious crimes. The minimum legal age for full-time employment was 15. The law set a minimum age of 13 for part-time employment and limited school-age children to less strenuous tasks. The law limited work hours and set occupational health and safety restrictions for children, and the government effectively enforced these laws. Children could not operate heavy machinery or handle toxic substances, including harsh detergents. Children could only carry out “light work” that was the equivalent of lifting no more than 26.4 pounds from the ground and 52.8 pounds from waist height. For children working in jobs where there was a higher risk of robbery, such as a snack bar, kiosk, bakery, or gas station, a coworker older than 18 had to be present between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. on weekdays and 2 p.m.

and 6 a.m. on weekends.

Child Marriage

The legal minimum age for marriage was 18 and was effectively enforced by the government.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Provision of First Asylum

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had established a system for providing protection to refugees. The government limited the rights of persons with subsidiary or temporary protection to family reunification, restrictions not applied to persons recognized as refugees. For example, persons with subsidiary or temporary protection were required to wait at least three years before applying for family reunification for their spouse or cohabitating partner and minor children. In contrast, persons with refugee status could apply for family reunification at any time.

In May, representatives of the Association of Immigration Lawyers and the Danish Refugee Council discussed in national media that some asylum seekers were prosecuted for use of false or falsified travel documents or identification papers, contrary to guidance from the attorney general and Article 31 of the Refugee Convention, leading authorities not to consider their asylum applications. The attorney general stated 457 asylum seekers were charged with violating relevant sections of the criminal code from 2019 to 2023.

Resettlement

Parliament approved funding for up to 500 resettlement places per year.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

The Jewish community in Denmark estimated between 6,000 and 8,000 Jews lived in the country, mostly in the Copenhagen area.

The Jewish community in Denmark reported a significant rise in threats against Jewish individuals in the country after the October 2023 attacks by Hamas in Israel. The Security and Intelligence Service increased attention to the safety of Israeli, Jewish, and Palestinian interests and activities in the country. In September, the Jewish community in Denmark and the Security and Intelligence Service announced an individual had been charged with terrorism for an arson attack targeting the private residence of a Jewish

individual.

For further information on incidents of antisemitism in the country, whether or not those incidents were motivated by religion, and for reporting on the ability of Jews to exercise freedom of religion or belief, please see the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/international-religious-freedom-reports/>.