

supporters of the opposition Constitutional Liberal Party (Partido Liberal Constitucionalista, PLC) and supporters of the governing FSLN in Nueva Guinea, in the South Atlantic Autonomous Region.

Human rights organizations reported that PLC supporters were arrested by the police and ill-treated in custody. Detainees reported being beaten, and women and girl detainees said that they were forced to remove their clothes in front of male officers, who humiliated them and threatened them with sexual violence.

Violence against women and girls

During the first six months of 2012, the Police Unit for Women and Children received 1,862 reports of sexual violence. Children aged 14 or under accounted for 1,048 of the victims and 80% of all victims were aged 17 or younger. Although the statistics did not reveal the gender of victims, previous government statistics have shown that women and girls make up the majority of victims of sexual violence.

■ In October, the police in Matagalpa, in the north of Nicaragua, were instructed to execute an arrest warrant against a teacher accused of sexually abusing a 14-year-old pupil. However, the arrest warrant was not executed, allegedly due to a lack of space in the prison system and lack of police capacity; the teacher reportedly fled the city. At the end of the year, the accused remained at large.

The Integral Law Against Violence Against Women (Law 779) came into effect in June. While the law represented a positive step, lack of resources assigned to ensure its implementation remained a concern.

Sexual and reproductive rights

All forms of abortion remained illegal.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women visited Nicaragua in May and urged the government to repeal the total abortion ban and to examine the link between gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive rights.

In July, the Ministry of Health announced that over the decade 2000-2009, the number of births to girls aged between 10 and 14 had increased by 47.9%. Sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 14 is classed as statutory rape under Nicaraguan law.

On 28 September, human rights groups and women's organizations protested against the

government's refusal to repeal the total abortion ban, and at the Supreme Court of Justice's continuing failure to rule on a 2007 petition challenging the constitutionality of the total ban.

NIGER

REPUBLIC OF NIGER

Head of state:

Head of government:

Mahamadou Issoufou
Brigi Rafini

People accused of belonging to terrorist groups were ill-treated in detention. Several aid workers and their driver were abducted and held for three weeks by an armed group.

Background

There were clashes between government forces and armed groups based in Mali and Nigeria. In the north, the army strengthened the security system to oppose elements of armed groups involved in hostage-taking, drug trafficking and armed banditry.

As a result of the crisis following the March 2012 military coup in Mali, at least 50,000 people sought refuge in camps in Niger. They had very limited access to basic necessities and health care.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Several people, including nationals of Nigeria, accused of being members of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or of Boko Haram, a Nigerian Islamist armed group, and suspected of terrorist activities, were ill-treated during arrest or shortly afterwards in an attempt to extract confessions.

■ In April, Moustapha Madou Abba Kiari was arrested in Difa, near the border with Nigeria, and punched and kicked. He was accused of being a member of Boko Haram and charged with terrorism offences.

Abuses by armed groups

Several people, including foreign nationals, were abducted by armed groups.

■ In October, five aid workers – four Niger nationals and a Chad national – and their driver, a Niger citizen, were kidnapped in Dakoro by armed men and held for

three weeks. The Chadian hostage was shot and wounded during his capture and died shortly afterwards.

International justice

In May, the authorities expressed their readiness to examine the Libyan authorities' request to hand over several high-ranking Libyan officials from the government of former President Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi, who had sought refuge in Niger.

■ In February, under an Interpol operation, Saadi al-Gaddafi, son of the Libyan former leader, was put under house arrest in Niamey, the capital, after he appeared on Arab television and threatened Libya with an imminent uprising. He was still subject to restrictions to his movements and communications at the end of the year.

Amnesty International visits/reports

🚗 Amnesty International delegates visited Malian refugee sites in Niger in April.

NIGERIA

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Head of state and government:

Goodluck Jonathan

N

The situation of violence and insecurity for Nigerians intensified, with at least 1,000 people killed in attacks by Islamist armed group Boko Haram in central and northern Nigeria. Police and other soldiers carried out unlawful and summary killings with impunity. Thousands of people were forcibly evicted from their homes in different parts of the country. Unlawful detention and arbitrary arrests were commonplace.

Background

In January, the Nigeria Labour Congress, other trade unions and civil rights organizations declared a nationwide strike action in protest against proposals to remove fuel subsidies. The mostly peaceful protests began on 2 January and involved tens of thousands of people across many states. In several cases, police fired at protesters, and at least three people were

killed and 25 injured across Kaduna, Kano and Lagos states. In January, one police officer was reportedly arrested and detained in relation to the use of force but no further action was known to have been taken against the officer by the end of the year.

On 20 January, at least 186 people were killed in Kano City when members of Boko Haram attacked security forces at eight different locations. The bombings were followed by an exchange of gunfire between Boko Haram and security forces lasting several hours. Among those killed were police officers, their relatives and residents living nearby. A journalist with the news station Channels, Enenche Akogwu, was also shot dead.

In the same month, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in 15 Local Government Areas across four states, which elapsed after six months.

Renewed tensions emerged in the Niger Delta when some former members of the armed group MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) claimed they were not receiving their monthly "amnesty" stipends – part of an agreement with the government. The group also said it was dissatisfied with the operation of programmes set up to reintegrate militants into society.

Between August and October, the country's worst flooding in decades killed more than 300 people and displaced a million more, across 15 states.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram attacks

More than 1,000 people were killed in attacks by Islamist armed group Boko Haram, which claimed responsibility for bombings and gun attacks across northern and central Nigeria. The group attacked police stations, military barracks, churches, school buildings and newspaper offices and killed Muslim and Christian clerics and worshippers, politicians and journalists, as well as police and soldiers. In November, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced there was a reasonable basis to believe Boko Haram had been committing crimes against humanity since July 2009.

■ In April, at least 20 people were killed in Kaduna city on Easter Sunday as a suicide car bomb exploded near two churches.

■ On 26 April, Boko Haram bombed the offices of the Nigerian newspaper *Thisday* in Abuja and a building housing three newspapers in Kaduna. At least seven