

survivors and in cases where carrying the pregnancy to term would place the woman's life at risk. However, the law was vetted by the governor leaving Buenos Aires under previous legislation that does not comply with the Supreme Court's decision.

■ In October, a Buenos Aires court prevented a 32-year-old woman from having an abortion. She was a victim of trafficking and her pregnancy was the result of rape. A public outcry followed and the Supreme Court overturned the lower court's decision. The woman was eventually able to access abortion services.

Concerns remained at the lack of full implementation of the legislation to prevent and punish violence against women passed in 2009, including the failure to collect reliable data.

Legislation was passed making gender-based motivation an aggravating factor in homicides.

Impunity

Progress continued in securing prosecutions and convictions of those responsible for grave human rights violations under military rule (1976-1983).

■ In June, former military officer Alfredo Omar Feito and former federal police officer Pedro Santiago Godoy were sentenced to 18 and 25 years' imprisonment respectively for the torture and unlawful detention of 181 people in the clandestine detention centres of Primer Cuerpo del Ejército Atlético, Banco and Olimpo.

■ Former Argentine Presidents Jorge Rafael Videla and Reynaldo Bignone were convicted in July of the systematic kidnapping of children and sentenced to 50 and 15 years' imprisonment respectively.

■ In October, three former marines were sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with the "Trelew massacre" in which 16 political prisoners were executed after an attempt to escape from a prison in Chubut province in 1972.

Torture and other ill-treatment and prison conditions

In November, the establishment of a national mechanism for the prevention of torture was approved.

In July, video footage appeared on the internet showing at least five police officers torturing two detainees in the police detention office of General Güemes, Salta province. The footage which was allegedly filmed in 2011 shows the detainees being beaten up and suffocated with a bag. Investigations into the torture remained open at the end of the year.

Amnesty International visits/reports

📄 Argentina: Amnesty International submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review: 14th session of the UPR working group (Index: AMR 13/003/2012)

ARMENIA

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Head of state:

Serzh Sargsyan

Head of government:

Tigran Sargsyan

Public attitudes were hostile towards topics which were perceived as unpatriotic. Conditions in prisons were reported to amount to inhuman treatment.

Background

President Sargsyan's Republican Party won parliamentary elections on 6 May. While freedom of expression, assembly and movement were largely unrestricted around the election, monitors reported widespread vote buying as well as instances of pressure on voters.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression was largely unrestricted. However, those expressing opinions perceived as unpatriotic or anti-nationalist faced widespread public hostility and occasionally violence. Police and local authorities appeared at times to be colluding in the attacks. They also failed to properly investigate or to publicly and unequivocally denounce such acts.

■ Civil society activists attempting to hold a festival of Azerbaijani films in Armenia were subjected to violent attacks and forced to cancel the event on two occasions. On 12 April, dozens of protesters blocked the venue of the film festival, scheduled in Armenia's second city, Gumri. They physically assaulted Giorgi Vanyan, the organizer and chairman of the local Caucasus Centre for Peace-Making Initiatives, and forced him to publicly announce that the festival was cancelled. Festival organizers reported that the local authorities had harassed and used psychological pressure to dissuade them from holding the event.

On 16 April, another attempt to hold the film festival in the city of Vanadzor at the Helsinki Citizens

Assembly (HCA) office also prompted public protests and violence. Approximately 200 people – including students, political party members and veterans from the Nagorno-Karabakh war – gathered in front of the HCA office. They forced their way into the premises, vandalizing office equipment, throwing eggs and rocks and injuring one member of staff. Police officers present throughout failed to intervene to ensure the safety of the staff members or to stop the violence. Despite the HCA's requests, additional police did not arrive until after the incident. After an investigation, one woman was fined for throwing a stone at the building, but no thorough or impartial investigation took place. The authorities failed to condemn the violence.

■ On 8 May, a gay-friendly bar in the capital, Yerevan, was attacked. Two people were caught on a security camera throwing Molotov cocktails through the windows. However, police reportedly only arrived at the scene 12 hours later to investigate the attack. Two young men were arrested as part of the investigation, but were bailed shortly afterwards by two MPs for the nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun party (ARF). They condoned the attack, saying it was in line with “the context of societal and national ideology”. Eduard Sharmazanov, spokesperson for the ruling Republican Party and Parliamentary Deputy Speaker was quoted justifying the violent attack in local newspapers.

Torture and other ill-treatment

On 3 October, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture published a report following their visit to Armenia in December 2011. It stated that “virtually none of the recommendations made after previous visits as regards the detention of lifers have been implemented”. The report also noted that the poor conditions at Kentron Prison in Yerevan made it unsuitable for lengthy periods of detention. The Committee found that the detention conditions of life-sentenced prisoners held at Kentron amounted to inhuman treatment.

Conscientious objectors

By the end of the year, more than 30 men were serving prison sentences for refusing to perform military service on grounds of conscience. Alternative civilian service remained under military control. On 27 November, the European Court of Human Rights, in its fourth decision against Armenia on conscientious

objection, found that Armenia had violated the rights of 17 Jehovah's Witnesses in the case of *Khachatryan and Others v. Armenia*. The Court found that the rights of the Jehovah's Witnesses to liberty and security, as well as the right to compensation for unlawful detention, had been violated. They faced criminal charges and detention because they had left their alternative service when they realized that they were under military control.

Amnesty International visits/reports

✈️ Amnesty International delegates visited Armenia in June.

📺 Armenian authorities must protect free speech and ensure safety for Azerbaijani film festival organizers (EUR 54/001/2012)

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AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA

Head of state:

Queen Elizabeth II, represented by
Quentin Bryce

Head of government:

Julia Gillard

Despite the establishment of a federal human rights committee to consider all new bills before Parliament, laws were passed restricting the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Northern Territory and reintroducing a policy of offshore processing where asylum-seekers arriving by boat are sent to Nauru or Papua New Guinea.

Background

The government announced that it would ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture in January 2011. However, it had not done so by the end of the year. A parliamentary human rights scrutiny committee was established in March to consider all new bills, and ensure that they included a statement of human rights compatibility.

Indigenous Peoples' rights

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth continued to be over-represented in Australia's criminal justice system. Indigenous youth accounted for 59% of the national juvenile detention rates while Indigenous Peoples as a whole only made up 2% of the total