

only the five Coptic families unconnected to the original dispute were able to return.

Housing rights – forced eviction

The Constitution upheld the right to adequate housing, but did not explicitly prohibit forced evictions. Guarantees against forced eviction remained absent in Egypt's laws and policies.

The government's Informal Settlements Development Facility (ISDF) estimated that some 11,500 homes, mainly in Cairo, were located in "unsafe areas" and posed an imminent threat to life, requiring immediate clearance. The ISDF also marked a further 120,000 homes in "unsafe areas" for clearance before 2017. The ISDF reportedly considered the options of upgrading slums and providing alternative housing near existing dwellings.

Housing Ministry officials said the Cairo 2050 plan had been reviewed and some projects which would have involved mass evictions had been dropped. A new urban Egypt 2052 master plan was under development, but communities in informal settlements were not consulted.

■ In August, police clashed with residents of Ramlet Bulaq informal settlement, central Cairo, after a policeman allegedly killed a resident. Police then raided Ramlet Bulaq several times, arresting men and forcing many male community members to flee the area. Residents said the police threatened to continue such intimidation until they cleared the area. Ramlet Bulaq is planned for demolition.

Refugees and migrants

Egyptian security forces continued to shoot foreign migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers who sought to cross Egypt's Sinai border into Israel, killing at least eight people. Human traffickers reportedly extorted and abused refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants crossing the Sinai Peninsula into Israel.

Death penalty

At least 91 people were sentenced to death, including after unfair trials by emergency courts. It was not known whether there were any executions.

■ In September, an emergency court sentenced to death 14 men, including eight in their absence, in relation to an attack which led to the killing of six people. They were also convicted of belonging to a Jihadist group.

Amnesty International visits/reports

✈ Amnesty International delegates visited Egypt several times in 2012 to conduct research.

📖 Brutality unpunished and unchecked: Egypt's military kill and torture protesters with impunity (MDE 12/017/2012)

📖 Agents of repression: Egypt's police and the case for reform (MDE 12/029/2012)

📖 Egypt: New President must restore rule of law, govern for all (PRE01/316/2012)

📖 Egypt's new Constitution limits fundamental freedoms and ignores the rights of women (PRE01/590/2012)

EL SALVADOR

REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

Head of state and government:

Carlos Mauricio Funes
Cartagena

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Impunity for human rights violations committed during the armed conflict (1980-1992) persisted. A crisis gripped the judicial system as members of congress were accused of attempting to interfere in the selection and appointment of judges. Violations of sexual and reproductive rights remained a concern.

Background

Violent crime continued to dominate the political agenda, although the government reported an overall fall in the murder rate.

Impunity

Impunity for past human rights violations continued to be a concern.

■ In January, in accordance with a 2010 ruling by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the President apologized on behalf of the state for the massacre of over 700 men, women and children in El Mozote and surrounding hamlets in Morazán province. The victims had been tortured and killed by the armed forces over a three-day period in 1981. In December, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights set down its final decision on the massacre, ordering the state to conduct investigations, and to hold those responsible to account. The ruling also called on the state to ensure

the 1993 Amnesty Law was not an obstacle to the prosecution of war criminals; to continue compiling a list of victims; to conduct exhumations; and to ensure reparations for the relatives.

■ In August, survivors and relatives of victims marked 30 years of impunity for the 1982 El Calabozo massacre in which more than 200 women, men and children were killed by the armed forces. In a public event in November, representatives of the relatives and survivors handed in over 5,000 signatures urging the government to take action and respond to the demands of victims and their relatives for truth, justice and reparation.

Sexual and reproductive rights

Abortion in all circumstances remained a criminal offence.

■ Mery (not her real name) a 27-year-old woman, sought a clandestine medically induced abortion when she was eight weeks pregnant. When she sought medical assistance after taking the medication, some medical staff at the hospital reported her to the police. Although Mery was in a state of extreme distress and still undergoing treatment, she was handcuffed to a stretcher and kept under police guard. In August Mery was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison for an induced abortion. Just a few days into serving her sentence, Mery attempted suicide and was transferred from the prison to a psychiatric hospital where she was kept under guard. At the end of the year, she was awaiting the results of her appeal.

International justice

At a hearing in a US court in September, Inocente Orlando Montano, former Salvadoran Vice-Minister for Public Security and a former military commander, faced charges of lying to the US immigration authorities in order to stay in the USA. If found guilty, this could pave the way for Inocente Orlando Montano's extradition to Spain to face charges for his alleged role in the killing of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her 16-year-old daughter in 1989 in El Salvador.

Justice system

In April, members of Congress made statements apparently indicating that the rules governing the appointment of judges would be bypassed, particularly in relation to two members of the

Constitutional section of the Supreme Court. Concerns were raised that the attempts to bypass the appointments procedure would facilitate the appointment of judges on the basis of their political affiliation rather than their professional capabilities. In November, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers visited the country to assess the situation. At the end of her visit she reminded the authorities of the state's obligations to respect the independence of the judiciary and to refrain from any interference in the judiciary. She also recommended a review of the appointments procedure. No such review had been carried out by the end of the year.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Head of state: **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**

Head of government: **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**
(replaced Ignacio Milán Tang in May)

The amended Constitution which increased the power of the President was promulgated in February. A transitional government was appointed pending elections in 2013. There were reports of unlawful killings by soldiers. Human rights defenders as well as political activists and government critics were harassed, arbitrarily arrested and detained. Some detainees were subjected to torture. A prisoner of conscience and at least 20 other political prisoners were released in a presidential pardon. Freedom of expression and of the press continued to be restricted.

Background

The amended Constitution, which was approved by referendum in November 2011, was promulgated in February. In accordance with the new Constitution and pending elections in early 2013, a caretaker government was appointed in May which included 12 members of President Obiang Nguema's family. Although not provided for by the Constitution, the