

education amounted to discrimination (*Sampani and others v. Greece*). This was the second time that Greece was found to have violated the European Convention on Human Rights by segregating Romani children in primary education in Aspropyrgos.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

In November, LGBTI activists reported that incidents of homophobic violence had escalated in Athens. Victims reported that their attackers were members of extreme right-wing groups allegedly including individuals belonging to the Golden Dawn party.

Conscientious objectors

Repeated prosecutions of conscientious objectors continued.

■ In February, the Athens Military Court convicted 49-year-old Avraam Pouliasis, one of the first conscientious objectors in Greece, to six months' imprisonment, suspended for three years. Avraam Pouliasis was no longer obliged under the law to serve his military service as he was over 45.

Prison conditions

During the year, the European Court of Human Rights found Greece in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights in three cases, due to poor detention conditions in the prisons of Ioannina, Korydallos and at the detention facility of Thessaloniki Police Headquarters.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression was threatened on several occasions.

■ In November, Kostas Vaxevanis, a journalist and magazine editor, was put on trial in Athens for breach of privacy, after he published the names of 2,000 Greeks alleged to have private bank accounts in Switzerland and called for investigations into possible tax evasion. He was acquitted after a day's hearing. The Prosecutor's Office of the Athens First Instance Courts appealed, and Kostas Vaxevanis was referred for trial before the Athens Misdemeanours Court.

■ In October, members of extreme Christian groups and the far-right party Golden Dawn, including some MPs, tried to prevent the premiere of the play *Corpus Christi*, by verbally abusing and threatening the actors and members of the audience. In November, the people who had staged the play were charged with blasphemy.

Amnesty International visits/reports

✈ Amnesty International delegates visited the country in January, July and October.

📄 Police violence in Greece: Not just 'isolated incidents' (EUR 25/005/2012)

📄 Greece: The end of the road for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants (EUR 25/011/2012)

GUATEMALA

REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

Head of state and government:

Otto Pérez Molina
(replaced Álvaro Colom in January)

Large-scale mining and hydroelectric projects continued to be imposed on rural communities without prior consultation and regardless of the risks to human rights. Some cases of human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict (1960-1996) progressed, but the army refused to co-operate in any meaningful way with such efforts. Human rights defenders were attacked and threatened because of their work.

Background

The public security situation remained a concern. Rival drug-trafficking organizations and street gangs contributed to high levels of violent crime; 4,614 men and 560 women were killed during the year.

In April, Guatemala became a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Also in April, the UN Human Rights Committee urged the government not to undermine efforts to prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity committed during the 1960-1996 internal armed conflict after President Molina denied that genocide had ever occurred during the conflict.

In October, the UN Human Rights Council urged Guatemala to abolish the death penalty, increase promotion of women's rights, improve prison conditions, protect human rights defenders and guarantee effective consultation of Indigenous Peoples in relation to development proposals in their territory.

Corporate accountability

The lack of consultation prior to the installation of mining, hydroelectric and other projects in rural areas led to increased tension. Despite repeated calls for Guatemala to observe its international obligations, the authorities failed to ensure meaningful consultation with affected communities, while international companies failed to observe international standards on business and human rights.

■ In May, one person was killed and another injured in Santa Cruz Barillas, Huehuetenango Department, allegedly by security guards working for the hydroelectric company Hidro Santa Cruz, a subsidiary of Spanish company Hidralia Energía. The killing led to protests and further clashes, including the occupation of the local army base and the imposition of martial law. The community argued they had not been consulted prior to the installation of the hydroelectric project.

■ Local activists in Santa Rosa Department opposed to the activities of silver mining company Minera San Rafael, a subsidiary of Canadian company Tahoe Resources Inc, were the subject of spurious criminal complaints that appeared to be aimed at curtailing their activism. In October, the municipal council of San Rafael las Flores announced that due to legal challenges and irregularities in the process it would not hold a Municipal Consultation of Residents in relation to the mine's activities.

Impunity

Some former junior officers and soldiers were convicted for their involvement in the 1982 massacres in Plan de Sánchez and Dos Erres in which more than 500 people were killed in total. However, the army failed to provide any meaningful information for ongoing investigations and efforts to locate victims of enforced disappearance. In May the government closed down the Peace Archives, where some documents relating to the conflict had been previously deposited.

The former head of state, retired General Efraín Ríos Montt, appeared in court in January charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. He was accused of bearing command responsibility for hundreds of massacres and a "scorched earth" policy targeting Indigenous Peoples while he was the de facto head of state (March 1982-August 1983). Proceedings were continuing at the end of the year.

In October the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held the state responsible for a series of massacres in Río Negro, Baja Verapaz department, between March 1980 and May 1982.

Indigenous Peoples' rights

Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples meant they were disproportionately represented among those living in poverty.

Indigenous Peoples' organizations organized protests to demand consultation prior to the installation of mining and hydroelectric projects in rural communities.

Eight protesters from the Maya K'che' Indigenous community were killed during a protest against rising electricity costs and proposed constitutional amendments in October in the town of Totonicapán, Totonicapán Department. One army officer and eight soldiers were charged in connection with their deaths.

Human rights defenders

At least 305 attacks against human rights defenders were reported during 2012. In March, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the government to adopt and implement effective protection measures for human rights defenders.

■ In June, anti-mining activist Yolanda Oqueli was seriously wounded on her way home from a protest against the presence of the El Tambor gold mine in the municipalities of San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc.

■ Luis Ovidio Ortíz Cajas, leader of the National Trade Union of Health Workers and a campaigner against corruption in the health service, was shot dead in March. No one had been brought to justice for the killing by the end of the year.

Death penalty

One prisoner remained on death row. No new death sentences were handed down during the year. There were no executions.