

tens of thousands of Bidun, although a small number were officially recognized as Kuwaiti citizens.

In October 2012, the Prime Minister had assured Amnesty International that the government would resolve the issue of citizenship for Kuwait's Bidun residents within five years; at the end of 2014 that appeared unlikely.

Members of the Bidun community demonstrated to demand an end to discrimination, despite the ban on public gatherings by "non-citizens". Some demonstrations were dispersed by police, but the government denied using excessive force. Scores of Bidun continued to face trial on charges of illegal gathering or public order offences. Many trials were repeatedly postponed, but in September 67 were acquitted. The authorities also detained at least 15 Bidun activists, mostly on charges relating to public order offences or "illegal gathering".

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Kuwaiti women enjoyed greater rights than women in most other Gulf region states, including rights to stand as candidates and vote in elections, but they were not accorded equality under the law with men. The law required that women have a male "guardian" in family matters, such as divorce, child custody and inheritance, and when receiving medical treatment.

## MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Migrant workers, who made up the majority of Kuwait's workforce, continued to face exploitation and abuse linked partly to the official *kafala* sponsorship system. Migrant domestic workers, mostly women from Asian countries, were especially vulnerable as they were excluded from forms of protection afforded to other workers by Kuwait's labour laws.

## DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty remained in force for murder and other crimes. At least five people were sentenced to death; no executions were reported.

- 
1. Urgent Action: Mother of activist at risk of deportation (MDE 17/007/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE17/007/2014/en/6e01aa07-e1d7-48aa-84a1-e81352d47889/mde170072014en.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE17/007/2014/en/6e01aa07-e1d7-48aa-84a1-e81352d47889/mde170072014en.pdf)
  2. Kuwait: Halt the deplorable revocation of nationality of naturalized citizens (MDE 17/004/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE17/004/2014/en/a228d7d3-6b58-4be3-9aac-20f5bad79319/mde170042014en.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE17/004/2014/en/a228d7d3-6b58-4be3-9aac-20f5bad79319/mde170042014en.pdf)

## KYRGYZSTAN

### Kyrgyz Republic

Head of state: **Almaz Atambaev**

Head of government: **Dzhoomart Otorbayev**  
(replaced **Zhantoro Satimbaldiev** in April)

---

**The authorities failed to take effective measures to address allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and bring perpetrators to justice. No impartial and effective investigation took place into human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, committed during the June 2010 violence and its aftermath. MPs initiated draft laws that if adopted would have a negative impact on civil society. Prisoner of conscience Azimjan Askarov remained in detention.**

## TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Torture and other ill-treatment persisted despite a programme of independent monitoring of places of detention and the establishment of the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.

On 20 December 2013, the UN Committee against Torture issued its concluding observations on the second periodic report on Kyrgyzstan. The Committee expressed grave concern “about the ongoing and widespread practice of torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty, in particular while in police custody to extract confessions”. On 23 April 2014, the UN Human Rights Committee considered the second periodic report of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Both Committees highlighted the failure of the authorities to promptly, impartially and fully investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and to prosecute perpetrators. They expressed concern about the lack of a full and effective investigation into the June 2010 violence.<sup>1</sup> The Committees also urged Kyrgyzstan to address these concerns by taking immediate and effective measures to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment, by tackling impunity, prosecuting perpetrators and conducting investigations into all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, including in cases related to the June 2010 violence.

On 16 June 2014, the Jalal-Abad regional human rights organization Spravedlivost (Justice) recorded two incidents of torture during a monitoring visit to the Jalal-Abad temporary detention centre. A medical practitioner, who was part of the monitoring group, documented the signs of torture. One detainee alleged that police officers had beaten him with hands and fists and a book, and put a plastic bag over his head. He was handcuffed to a radiator until the next day. He suffered concussion as a result of the ill-treatment. Another detainee alleged that police officers hit him in the larynx, kicked him in the stomach and beat his head with a book. Spravedlivost submitted complaints to the Jalal-Abad city prosecutor. After conducting an initial check and ordering two forensic medical examinations, the city prosecutor nevertheless refused to open criminal investigations into these allegations.

In 2014 the European Court of Human Rights issued three judgments against Russia, in which it stated that if ethnic Uzbek applicants were to be extradited to Kyrgyzstan, they would be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

## **IMPUNITY**

Criminal investigations into allegations of torture were rare. In the first half of 2014, the Prosecutor General’s Office registered 109 complaints, but only in nine cases were criminal investigations initiated; of these only three went to trial. Trials were ongoing at the end of the year.

The media reported that on 26 November 2013, the Sverdlovsk District Court of Bishkek handed down the first ever conviction for torture under Article 305-1 of the Criminal Code. Police officer Adilet Motuev was sentenced to six years’ imprisonment. The Court found that he had illegally brought a man to a police station after accusing him of stealing a mobile phone. Adilet Motuev threatened the man and forced him to confess to the theft by squeezing the handcuffs and putting a plastic bag on his head and suffocating him. However, in 2014 the Court of Second Instance acquitted Adilet Motuev of all torture charges and changed the sentence to two years’ imprisonment for unauthorized conduct of an investigation.

The authorities failed to take any steps to fairly and effectively investigate the June 2010 violence and its aftermath in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad. Lawyers defending ethnic Uzbeks detained in the context of the violence continued to be targeted for their work, threatened and physically attacked, even in the courtroom, with no accountability for the perpetrators.

## **PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**

On 3 September 2014, the Supreme Court once again turned down an appeal lodged by Azimjan Askarov’s lawyer to re-investigate the case against him. Earlier in the year, Bishkek City Court had annulled the ruling by Bishkek

District Court that the case must be reviewed on the basis that the defence had presented new evidence.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Civil society activists dealing with human rights issues reported pressure from the authorities because of their work, resulting in a heightened sense of insecurity among them.

In May 2014, the Ministry of Justice proposed amendments to NGO legislation that would abolish the right to establish NGOs without legal status. If passed, the amendments would criminalize the activities of all unregistered NGOs. Some deputies called for Parliament to push through the adoption of a law similar to that passed in Russia requiring NGOs to adopt the stigmatizing label of “foreign agents” if they receive foreign funds and engage in “political” activities. In November, the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Constitutional Law and State Structure recommended that the proposed amendments be withdrawn.

## DISCRIMINATION

The UN Human Rights Committee expressed concerns about the lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting discrimination on grounds such as race, language, disability and ethnic origin.

On 15 October, Parliament passed in its first reading a draft law prohibiting the promotion of so-called non-traditional sexual relations, thus increasing the vulnerability of groups defending the rights of sexual minorities. The proposed amendments would criminalize any action aimed at creating a positive attitude to non-traditional sexual relationships and would restrict freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

Ethnic Uzbeks in the south of Kyrgyzstan continued to be vulnerable to physical attacks based on their ethnic origin. However, the authorities qualified these attacks as “petty

hooliganism”, and did not fully and impartially investigate them as alleged hate crimes.

On 4 August 2014, ethnic Uzbek Kabulzhan Osmonov needed emergency medical treatment for injuries inflicted by a group of men, described by eyewitnesses as ethnic Kyrgyz, who assaulted and beat him unconscious in an unprovoked attack at his place of work in Osh. They had addressed him as “sart”, a derogatory term indicating Uzbek ethnicity. Kabulzhan Osmonov reported the attack to his local police station but it was not until the case attracted media coverage that a criminal investigation was opened. Following this, local prosecutors and police pressured Kabulzhan Osmonov to withdraw his complaint.

- 
1. Will there ever be justice? Kyrgyzstan's failure to investigate June 2010 violence and its aftermath (EUR 58/001/2013)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR58/001/2013/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR58/001/2013/en).

## LAOS

---

**Lao People's Democratic Republic**

Head of state: **Choummaly Sayasone**

Head of government: **Thongsing Thammavong**

---

**State control over the media, judiciary and political and social institutions continued to severely restrict freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Lack of openness and a scarcity of information made independent monitoring of the human rights situation difficult. The enforced disappearance of a prominent member of civil society was unresolved at the end of the year. At least two prisoners of conscience remained imprisoned. Although Laos is abolitionist in practice, the death penalty was retained as a mandatory punishment for some drug offences.**