

at the time, was questioned without the presence of his legal guardian. Four of his front teeth were missing as a result of beating when he subsequently appeared in court. No investigation was launched into his ill-treatment.

BAHAMAS

Commonwealth of the Bahamas

Head of state: **Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Dame Marguerite Pindling (replaced Sir Arthur Alexander Foulkes in July 2014)**

Head of government: **Perry Gladstone Christie**

There were calls for resumptions in executions. Excessive use of force was reported and sentences had yet to be handed down in cases of torture or other ill-treatment in detention.

BACKGROUND

A referendum on amendments to the Constitution on gender equality was postponed until 2015. The referendum followed recommendations made in a 2013 report by the Constitutional Commission, and had originally been scheduled for November 2014. There was opposition to these amendments, including from local churches, due to concern that they would allow same-sex marriage.

Violent crime continued to rise. In 2013, police reported the second highest homicide rate since 2000, with 120 murders. No further statistics on homicide rates were published in 2014.

DEATH PENALTY

There had been no executions in the Bahamas since 2000. Hundreds demonstrated in 2014 for the resumption of executions in order to reduce crime.

In March, the Bahamas rejected a call for abolition of the death penalty and reiterated its retentionist position at the OAS.

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

Torture or other ill-treatment and excessive use of force by police officers continued to be reported.

In April, Leslie Louis required medical treatment after police attempted to arrest him. He was allegedly beaten, but was not charged with any criminal offence. When his sister asked the police why he was being interrogated, she was pushed and grabbed by the throat.

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

By the end of the year, no judicial sentence had been handed down in the case of Aaron Rolle who died in police custody in February 2013. In May 2013, the coroner's inquest found the death to be an "unlawful killing".

REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

The sentencing of five marines before a military court in November 2013 was still pending at the end of the year. They were charged following allegations of ill-treatment of Cuban asylum-seekers at the Carmichael Road Detention Centre in May 2013.

A new migration policy put in place on 1 November resulted in dozens of arbitrary detentions of migrants, disproportionately targeting Haitians and Bahamian-Haitian communities with the risk of deportation without due process.

RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

In February, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration publicly advocated for greater tolerance in member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) towards LGBTI people. In August, the Bahamas' first ever Pride event was cancelled due to threats and intimidation against the organizers.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Despite promises made during the Bahamas' 2013 UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to criminalize marital rape, no legislation had been approved by the end of the year.

BAHRAIN

Kingdom of Bahrain

Head of state: **King Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa**

Head of government: **Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa**

The government continued to stifle and punish dissent and to curtail freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Security forces used excessive force to disperse protests, killing at least two people. Opposition activists sentenced after unfair trials in previous years continued to be held, including prisoners of conscience. Torture of detainees continued and a climate of impunity prevailed. Twenty-one Bahrainis convicted on terrorism charges were stripped of their nationality. The courts sentenced five people to death; there were no executions.

BACKGROUND

Tension between the Sunni-dominated government and main opposition political associations remained high throughout the year following the suspension in January of the National Dialogue initiative. There were new protests by activists from the Shi'a majority population demanding political reform, including some violent protests, to which the security forces frequently responded with excessive force, including shotgun fire. In March, a bomb explosion at al-Daih village killed three police officers. In December, bomb attacks in the villages of Karzakan and Demistan killed a police officer and another person. The government

banned the "14 February Coalition", a youth movement, and two other organizations declaring them terrorist groups.

Bahrain's first parliamentary elections since unrest broke out in 2011 were held on 22 November but were boycotted by the main opposition, led by al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, the largest Shi'a political association.

Amendments to anti-terrorism legislation adopted in December increased police powers, allowing them to detain terrorism suspects incommunicado for up to 28 days.

Representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Bahrain from February to May to assess human rights training needs. In September, the government issued a mid-term review of its progress in implementing recommendations it had accepted at the UN Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain in 2012.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The authorities continued to clamp down on dissent. In February, shortly before the third anniversary of the outbreak of public protests in 2011, the government increased the penalty for publicly insulting the King, the Bahraini flag or the national emblem to between one and seven years in prison and a heavy fine.

Dr Sa'eed Mothaher Habib al-Samahiji, an ophthalmologist, was arrested on 1 July to serve a one-year prison term imposed on him in December 2013 on a charge of "publicly insulting the King" in a speech at the funeral of a protester killed by a police car. He was held at Jaw Prison, south of Manama, at the end of the year.

Other prisoners of conscience held at Jaw Prison included opposition leaders and human rights activists sentenced after unfair trials in previous years. Human rights defender Nabeel Rajab was released in May after completing a two-year prison term for "illegal gathering" but was rearrested in October on charges of insulting public institutions. He was released on bail in November but banned from travel, pending