

## FREEDOMS OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

Perceived or actual opponents of the government continued to be denied the right to organize peaceful activities and demonstrations.

On 3 October, reggae singer Joe de Vinci Kameni, known as Joe La Conscience, was arrested by police outside the French consulate in Douala as he was preparing to start a peaceful demonstration. A local journalist was arrested alongside him and later released. Joe de Vinci Kameni was released on 9 October without charge.

## CANADA

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### Canada

Head of state: **Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Governor General David Johnston**  
Head of government: **Stephen Harper**

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**There were systematic violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Attacks against two Canadian soldiers provoked a debate about terrorism and national security laws.**

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

In February, the government rejected a proposed mine in the traditional territory of the Tsilhqot'in people in the province of British Columbia, which an environmental assessment concluded would cause irreversible and profound harm to Tsilhqot'in culture and society.<sup>1</sup> However, the federal government gave resource development precedence over Indigenous rights in a series of other large-scale projects, including the Northern Gateway oil sands pipeline, approved in June, and the Site C dam megaproject, approved in October.

In May, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples reported

that the situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada had reached "crisis proportions in many respects", including "distressing socio-economic conditions" and a disproportionately high number of Indigenous people in prison.

In June, the Supreme Court for the first time recognized an Indigenous nation's pre-colonial land title, upholding the right of the Tsilhqot'in to own and manage a large part of their traditional territories.

In September, Canada was the only state to take issue with part of the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples' outcome document.

In October, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal heard concluding arguments in a case alleging discriminatory federal underfunding of child protection in First Nation Indigenous communities.

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In May, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police reported that at least 1,017 Indigenous women and girls were murdered between 1980 and 2012, four and a half times the homicide rate for all other women. Despite mounting demands, including by provincial and territorial governments, the federal government refused to initiate a national action plan or public inquiry.

In November, separate allegations of sexual assault and/or harassment against a radio host and two Members of Parliament sparked a national debate about violence against women.

### COUNTER-TERROR AND SECURITY

In January, it was revealed that a national security agency, Communications Security Establishment Canada, had monitored thousands of travellers' electronic devices at a major airport and for days they left the airport.

In May, the Supreme Court ruled that using Special Advocates in "immigration security certificate" hearings provided a fair process even though they were generally barred

from communicating with the individuals concerned after accessing secret evidence.

In June, the Citizenship Act was reformed, allowing dual nationals convicted of terrorism and some other offences to be stripped of Canadian citizenship. There were concerns about dual tiers of citizenship and unfairness in the revocation procedure.

In July, the Alberta Court of Appeal ruled that Omar Khadr should be treated as a juvenile offender. He was apprehended by US forces in Afghanistan when he was 15 years old and held for 10 years at the US detention centre at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba until his transfer to Canada in 2012 to complete his prison sentence.

In October, two Canadian soldiers were killed in separate attacks; Patrice Vincent in St-Jean-Sur-Richelieu and Nathan Cirillo in Ottawa. The gunman who killed Nathan Cirillo then entered the Canadian Parliament and was killed by security officers. The government subsequently proposed law reforms to increase the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. The bill did not address concerns about inadequate national security oversight.

## **REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS**

In July, the Federal Court ruled that cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program for refugees were unconstitutional.

In October, the government proposed legislation allowing for provincial and territorial governments to deny social assistance to refugee claimants.

Also in October, a coroner's inquest into the 2013 death by hanging of Mexican national Lucía Vega Jiménez in a Vancouver airport holding cell recommended changes to immigration detention.

There were concerns about the low numbers of Syrian refugees given resettlement places in Canada.

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

In May, the Special Commission on the events of Spring 2012 (Commission

spéciale d'examen des événements du printemps 2012) criticized the Quebec provincial government's handling of student protests in 2012, including policing tactics. The Quebec government rejected the Commission's recommendations.

Numerous civil society organizations that criticized government policies were targeted for audits related to their charitable tax status and the permissibility of their advocacy work.

There were concerning disclosures about police surveillance of Indigenous land rights activists, including sharing the information with corporations.

## **JUSTICE SYSTEM**

In October, the Supreme Court upheld the State Immunity Act, barring the family of Zahra Kazemi, a Canadian/Iranian national who was tortured and died in Iranian custody in 2003, from bringing a lawsuit against Iran in Canada.

## **CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

In May, the third annual report assessing the human rights impact of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement was released. It failed to consider significant human rights concerns facing Indigenous Peoples in Colombia.

Lawsuits alleging human rights abuses were filed against Canadian mining companies Tahoe Resources in June and Nevsun Resources in November, in connection with their operations in Colombia and Eritrea respectively.

In November, changes to the Office of the Extractives Sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Counsellor fell short of calls for an Ombudsperson with power to investigate companies and recommend sanctions and remedies for non-compliance. Corporate participation in the complaints process remained voluntary, although companies faced withdrawals of certain government services if they did not respect Canada's CSR strategy.

## LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

A bill which would add gender identity to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code hate crime provisions was stalled in the Senate at the end of the year.

Despite repeated calls, the government did not ratify the Arms Trade Treaty or the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.

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1. Canada: Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, 112th Session (AMR 20/001/2014)

# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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### Central African Republic

Head of state: **Catherine Samba-Panza**

Head of government: **Mahamat Kamoun**

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**Crimes under international law such as war crimes and crimes against humanity were regularly committed, including killings, mutilation of bodies, abductions, recruitment and use of child soldiers and forced displacement of populations. In December 2013 a coalition of the mainly Christian and animist anti-Balaka armed groups attacked the capital Bangui and the mostly Muslim Séléka forces retaliated, killing dozens of civilians. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) - which replaced the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in September 2014 - has not stopped or prevented abuses in the region. Many of those suspected of criminal responsibility, including commanders of the Séléka, anti-Balaka, and their allies, have not been**

**investigated or arrested and no action has been taken to bring them to justice.**

## BACKGROUND

Violence continued in the Central African Republic (CAR) despite the deployment of MINUSCA, in September 2014, and the presence of French forces (known as Sangaris) and European Union forces (EUFOR). Deadly attacks against civilians, including on those in sites for internally displaced persons (IDP), by the anti-Balaka, Séléka and armed Peulh fighters (members of the Peulh ethnic group) continued. According to the UN, in mid-November, 7,451 military and 1,083 police personnel had been deployed to MINUSCA.

On 10 January, Séléka leader and CAR President Michel Djotodia resigned following pressure from the international community and CAR civil society organizations. Catherine Samba-Panza was sworn in as the new Transitional President on 23 January.

On 7 February 2014 the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced a new preliminary examination into crimes allegedly committed in the CAR since September 2012. In September, the Office of the Prosecutor announced its conclusion that there was a reasonable basis for investigating crimes defined under the Rome Statute committed in CAR since September 2012.

On 11 July, a Séléka congress designated former President Djotodia and former commander and Minister Nourredine Adam as the group's president and vice-president respectively. Those two individuals are under UN and US sanctions for their alleged involvement in human rights violations and abuses.

Prime Minister André Nzapayéké and his entire cabinet resigned following the ceasefire agreement signed in July 2014 in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, by armed groups' representatives, political parties, churches and civil society organizations. On 22 August, Transitional President Samba-