

# EQUATORIAL GUINEA

---

## Republic of Equatorial Guinea

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

---

**Nine prisoners were executed in January shortly before a temporary moratorium on the death penalty was declared. Detainees and prisoners were routinely tortured. Several political opponents were arbitrarily arrested and held incommunicado for long periods without charge, including one man abducted from a neighbouring country by Equatorial Guinea security forces in December 2013. Military courts were used to try civilians.**

## BACKGROUND

In February President Obiang signed a decree establishing a temporary moratorium on the death penalty, apparently to secure full membership of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. Equatorial Guinea was granted full membership in July at the organization's summit in Dili, East Timor.

In May, the UN Human Rights Council, under its Universal Periodic Review process, examined the human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea and made a number of recommendations. The government accepted most recommendations in principle, but rejected those urging ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In October, President Obiang decreed a general amnesty for all those convicted or indicted for political crimes. This was

one of the demands made by opposition political parties for their participation in a national dialogue in November. However, no prisoners were released and President Obiang stated that all convicted prisoners had been convicted of common crimes. In November, three independent opposition parties withdrew from the national dialogue on the basis that their demands, including the release of prisoners, had not been met.

## DEATH PENALTY

Nine men convicted of murder were executed in late January, 13 days before the establishment of a temporary moratorium on the death penalty. This was the highest number of people known to have been executed in any one year over the past two decades, and the first known executions since 2010.<sup>1</sup>

## TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Torture by the security forces continued with impunity. Detainees and prisoners were also subjected to other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Many were held incommunicado for long periods without charge or trial and denied adequate medical treatment.

Cipriano Nguema Mba, a refugee in Belgium since 2012, was abducted by Equatorial Guinea security personnel in December 2013 while visiting relatives in Nigeria. He was taken clandestinely to the National Security Headquarters in Malabo, where he was tortured. His ankles and elbows were tied together behind his back and he was then suspended from a metal bar and his whole body was beaten with batons. He was held incommunicado throughout the year.

Roberto Berardi, an Italian businessman in partnership with President Obiang's eldest son Teodoro "Teodorín" Nguema Obiang in a civil construction company, was beaten and tortured on several occasions since his arrest in January 2013, first in Bata police station and subsequently in Bata prison. On one occasion, in January 2014, he was

held down by prison guards and flogged. Throughout the year he was held in solitary confinement for long periods and was denied medical treatment for typhoid fever and emphysema. He was taken to hospital after he became very ill in June, but was returned to prison the following day against medical advice. According to his lawyer, the purpose of Roberto Berardi's arrest was to prevent him testifying before the US Justice Department and other foreign jurisdictions about Teodorín Nguema Obiang's alleged corruption. He remained in prison at the end of the year.

## ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

Following Cipriano Nguema Mba's abduction (see above), in January, 11 people suspected of having had contact with him, including two women, were arrested without warrants in Malabo, Mongomo and Ebebiyín, and held incommunicado. Five of the male detainees were released without charge in June. Four of the remaining six people were still detained incommunicado at the end of 2014. In July, the military judicial authorities charged Cipriano Nguema, Ticiano Obama Nkogo, Timoteo Asumu, Antonio Nconi Sima, Leoncio Abeso Meye (charged in his absence) and the two women, Mercedes Obono Nconi and Emilia Aberme Nzo, with "threatening state security and the physical integrity of the head of state". According to their lawyers, they were interrogated without their lawyers present and were not informed of the charges against them.

On 27 September they were tried by a military court, again without their lawyers present. Instead, they were allocated military officers with no judicial training as their legal counsel. Three days later they were convicted as charged. Mercedes Obono and Timoteo Asumu received 15-year custodial sentences, while the other defendants were each sentenced to 27 years' imprisonment.

## PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Agustín Esono Nsogo was released from prison in February 2014, after being held

for 16 months without charge. He had been arbitrarily arrested and detained in Bata in October 2012 after exchanging money with a foreign national and accused of attempting to destabilize the country. His arrest and detention were politically motivated and unjustified.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Equatorial Guinea: Executions just weeks before announcement of a "temporary moratorium" on the death penalty raises serious questions (AFR 24/001/2014) [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR24/001/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR24/001/2014/en)
  2. See Equatorial Guinea: Free Agustín Esono Nsogo (AFR 24/015/2013) [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR24/015/2013/3n](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR24/015/2013/3n)

# ERITREA

---

## State of Eritrea

Head of state and government: **Isaias Afewerki**

---

**No political opposition parties, independent media, civil society organizations or unregistered faith groups were permitted to operate. There were severe restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Military conscription was compulsory, and frequently extended indefinitely. Thousands of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners continued to be held in arbitrary detention, in harsh conditions. Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment was common. Eritreans continued to flee the country in large numbers.**

## BACKGROUND

On 21 January 2013, around 200 soldiers took control of the Ministry of Information in the capital, Asmara, in an apparent coup attempt. The director of Eritrean state television was forced to read a statement on air containing the soldiers' demands, including freeing all political prisoners, implementing the 1997 Constitution, and