

# MALDIVES

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## Republic of Maldives

Head of state and government: **Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom**

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**Preparations to resume executions put at risk the lives of at least 20 people on death row. Judicial flogging continued and the majority of those flogged were women. The government failed to bring to justice vigilantes who used violence against people promoting religious tolerance. Impunity continued for police and army officers responsible for unnecessary or excessive use of force.**

## BACKGROUND

Parliamentary elections took place in March and parties allied to the President won a majority. In April, the parliament adopted a new Penal Code, due to come into force in 2015.

## DEATH PENALTY

The country was preparing to resume executions after more than 60 years. In April, the government introduced “procedural regulations on investigating and penalizing the crime of murder” under the Police Act and Clemency Act, clearing the way for executions to be carried out. The regulations also contained new procedures relating to the execution of individuals who were below 18 years old when the crime was committed, allowing for them to be executed once they turned 18. Two people were sentenced to death by the Juvenile Court for crimes committed when the offenders were under 18.

## CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENT

People continued to be sentenced to flogging following convictions for having had sex outside marriage. Media reports and human

rights defenders said that in the majority of cases, only women were convicted and flogged. The Office of the Prosecutor General told Amnesty International that convictions were primarily based on confessions. If the accused denied the allegations, the charge of “fornication” was dropped. They said men usually denied the allegations and were not charged. This was also true for some women, unless they had become pregnant or were under pressure from their communities to admit to the allegations.

Amnesty International spoke with a woman in 2013 who had been convicted of “fornication”. She had been sentenced to 20 lashes and four months in prison in June 2012, when she was 17 years old. She said someone witnessed her having sex with her boyfriend and reported it to the police, after which she was arrested and taken to the Juvenile Court where she confessed. The woman said that this was the second time she had been flogged - the first time she was just 14 years old. She said that flogging was always carried out by a man and she described her experience: “It was very painful when they flogged me. I was bruised and had marks on my body for some time.” Following the flogging she was sent to prison.

## FREEDOMS OF RELIGION AND EXPRESSION

No one was brought to justice for the stabbing and serious wounding of religious freedom advocate Ismail “Hilath” Rasheed in 2012. He had also been attacked in 2011.

In June, an Islamist vigilante group abducted several young men, held them for hours, ill-treated them and warned them not to promote “atheism”. None of the perpetrators were brought to justice.

In August, Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, a well-known journalist with *Minivan News*, disappeared, possibly by force. He was last seen in the early hours of 8 August on the Malé-Hulhumalé ferry. There were national and international calls on the authorities to do more to uncover his whereabouts.

He had been investigating, among other things, the activities of vigilante Islamist groups. His possible enforced disappearance was believed to be linked to his work as a journalist.

## EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

The government did not confirm whether it was investigating police officers who had used unnecessary force against youths peacefully attending a private music festival in April. Police ransacked their belongings, held 79 youths in handcuffs overnight and ill-treated some of them. One participant said she was kicked hard in the back by a policeman and another was sprayed with pepper spray without any provocation.

## IMPUNITY

No police or army officers were brought to justice for beating and injuring dozens of members and leaders of the Maldivian Democratic Party in February 2012.

# MALI

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## Republic of Mali

Head of state: **Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta**

Head of government: **Moussa Mara (replaced Oumar Tatam Ly in April)**

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**Internal armed conflict continued to create a climate of persistent insecurity, particularly in the north of the country. Armed groups committed abuses including abductions and killings. The authorities were slow to take action against those who committed human rights violations during the 2012 conflict.**

## BACKGROUND

Although a peace agreement was signed between the Malian government and several armed groups in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June 2013, the north of the country

remained unstable, with parts of it beyond the control of the Malian authorities.

Violent clashes continued to erupt between armed groups and the Malian army in Kidal in May, in which at least 41 people, including eight civilians, were killed. Peace discussions continued in Algeria between the Malian government and armed groups, but outbreaks of violence persisted. There were repeated incidents of rocket attacks, mines and explosive devices in the north injuring and killing Malian and international military personnel. Between May and September, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was repeatedly attacked by armed groups. In October, nine Nigerian UN peacekeepers were killed when their convoy was ambushed by an armed group between the towns of Menaka and Ansongo in the Gao region of northeastern Mali.

In March, the National Assembly approved a law creating a commission for truth, justice and reconciliation. It also created a high court of justice to try officials suspected of treason and crimes during their terms in office.

Issaka Sidibé was elected President of the National Assembly in January. In April, Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly resigned and President Keïta named Moussa Mara the new Prime Minister.

## ABUSES BY ARMED GROUPS

Investigations continued into the killings of two Radio France Internationale journalists, Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, after they were abducted in Kidal in November 2013. Both the French and Malian authorities opened judicial inquiries.

Five Malian staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were taken hostage in February and held until April. The armed group Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa claimed responsibility for the abductions.

In May, members of armed groups deliberately killed eight male civilians, including six government officials, at the