

On 14 February 2013, the Oslo District Court sentenced him to 21 years' imprisonment. He was convicted of premeditated murder under especially aggravating circumstances, but not of genocide, as the article defining the latter only entered into force in 2008 and does not have retrospective effect.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Following Norway's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture in 2013, the National Preventive Mechanism, taken on by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, was fully operational by April 2014. The Mechanism was created with an advisory committee of members from the National Institution for Human Rights, the other Ombudspersons and civil society and NGO representatives.

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1. The state decides who I am: Lack of legal gender recognition for transgender people in Europe (EUR 01/001/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR01/001/2014/en

OMAN

Sultanate of Oman

Head of state and government: **Sultan Qaboos bin Said**

State authorities continued to restrict freedom of expression, including in the media and online. Freedom of assembly was not permitted. Several government critics were detained and held incommunicado for some weeks. Authorities forcibly returned a political activist to Bahrain despite a risk that he would face torture there. Women continued to face discrimination in law and practice. The death penalty remained in force; no executions were reported.

BACKGROUND

In January, Oman ratified the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Security Agreement, the provisions of which jeopardized freedom of expression and other individual rights guaranteed in Oman's Constitution and in international treaties.

The government decreed a new citizenship law in August, to take effect in February 2015. It empowered the authorities to strip Omani nationals of their citizenship and associated rights if they are found to belong to a group deemed to uphold principles or beliefs that undermine Oman's "best interests", potentially allowing the government to arbitrarily withdraw the nationality of and expel its critics.

Also in August, Oman ratified the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

FREEDOMS OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

On 27 January, the Omani authorities arrested Bahraini actor and political activist Sadeq Ja'far Mansoor al-Sha'bani and forcibly returned him to Bahrain despite fears that he may be tortured there. He subsequently received a five-year prison sentence in Bahrain along with eight others on charges including "inciting hatred of the regime".

In May, police arrested and detained several men, who were subsequently released on 12 July after they reportedly signed pledges not to participate in advocacy activities or incite sectarianism. Two bloggers who criticized the authorities online were arrested in July and released without charge after several weeks.

In August, Dr Talib al-Ma'mari, a member of the Shura Council, and Saqr al-Balushi, a councillor in the city of Liwa, were sentenced to four years' and one year's imprisonment respectively, on charges including "public gathering with the aim of disturbing law and order" and "closing a road". The two men had participated in an anti-pollution demonstration in Liwa in August 2013.

Following a six-day visit to Oman in September, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association stated that limits on peaceful assembly in Oman were “quite restrictive, to the point where they often annul the essence of the right”.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women were not accorded equal rights with men under the criminal law, which attached less weight to the evidence of a woman than to the evidence of a man, and under personal status law, which accorded men greater rights in relation to divorce, child custody and inheritance.

MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Migrant workers received inadequate protection under labour laws and faced exploitation and abuse. In May and November,, the government renewed for a further six months a bar on the entry of most foreign migrant workers for construction and other work sectors. In July, a new decree amended the labour law to prevent the employment of expatriates in professions reserved for Omani nationals. The government also stated that it would begin to strictly enforce a rule barring migrant workers who leave Oman from returning for two years, which was reported to facilitate labour exploitation.

DEATH PENALTY

Oman retained the death penalty for murder and other offences. In June, the State Council approved proposals to extend its use to drug trafficking offences. No executions were reported.

PAKISTAN

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Head of state: **Mamnoon Hussain**

Head of government: **Muhammad Nawaz Sharif**

In December, the Pakistani Taliban-led attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar resulted in 149 deaths, including 132 children, marking the deadliest terrorist attack in Pakistan's history. In response, the government lifted the moratorium on carrying out death sentences and swiftly executed seven men previously convicted for other terror-related offences. The Prime Minister announced plans for allowing military courts to try terror suspects as part of the government's National Action Plan against terrorism, adding to concerns over fair trials. In October education rights activist Malala Yousafzai jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in October along with Indian child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi. The National Assembly approved the Protection of Pakistan Act in July and other security laws during the year that enshrined sweeping powers for law enforcement and security forces, expanding the scope for arbitrary arrests, indefinite detention, the use of lethal force, and secret court proceedings which go well beyond international law enforcement and fair trial standards. Pakistan's media faced sustained harassment and other abuse, and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority briefly ordered the closure of the two largest private broadcasters because of content critical of the authorities. Religious minorities continued to face discrimination and persecution, especially due to the blasphemy laws.

BACKGROUND

Hearings in the treason trial of former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf continued to be delayed, creating tensions between the