Gaza; others were detainees who had faced no formal charges or trial. On 5 August the de facto Ministry of Interior removed five inmates of Katiba Prison who were extrajudicially executed outside the prison. On 22 August Hamas forces removed 11 prisoners from Katiba Prison whose trials or appeals were pending, and extrajudicially executed them at the al-Jawazat Police Station. Later the same morning six men arrested during Operation Protective Edge were shot dead in public after Friday prayers. Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades reportedly shot other suspected "collaborators" in the street during Operation Protective Edge.

IMPUNITY

Palestinian authorities failed to take any steps to investigate alleged war crimes and possible crimes against humanity committed by Hamas' military wing and other Palestinian armed groups in the run-up to and during the conflict in July and August or during previous conflicts with Israel in which Palestinian armed groups fired indiscriminate rockets and mortars into Israel. They also failed to hold to account officials who committed human rights violations, including excessive use of force against peaceful protesters and the torture of detainees.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls continued to face discrimination in both law and practice, and remained inadequately protected against gender-based violence committed by male relatives, ostensibly for reasons of family "honour". At least 11 women and girls were murdered by male relatives in so-called "honour killings" during the year, according to reports of the ICHR. They included Islam Mohammad Al-Shami, 18, who died after she was stabbed in the neck on 20 October while praying inside her family home at Bani Suheila, Khan Yunis governorate.

DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty remained in force for murder and other crimes. There were no executions reported in the West Bank, but in Gaza, Hamas military and first instance courts sentenced at least eight people to death on murder charges. In May, Gaza authorities executed two men, both of whom had been sentenced to death on treason and murder charges.

PANAMA

Republic of Panama
Head of state and government: **Juan Carlos Varela (replaced Ricardo Martinelli in July)**

Former President Manuel Noriega faced new trials relating to human rights violations during his presidency and the killing of a soldier in 1969. A Special National Commission on victims of enforced disappearance had yet to be established. The rights of Indigenous Peoples were threatened by hydroelectricity projects. Local NGOs were prevented by the authorities from following up complaints of harsh prison conditions.

BACKGROUND

In July, Juan Carlos Varela was sworn in as President. In August, the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent noted that, despite the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation, patterns of racial discrimination prevailed and persons of African descent - around 10% of the population - continued to suffer from political, social and economic marginalization.

IMPUNITY

In September the Supreme Court of Justice decided that Manuel Noriega, former de facto ruler of the country from 1983 to 1989,

should face trial for his alleged role in the killing of a soldier in 1969. The decision came as Manuel Noriega was serving sentences related to the killing of two political opponents. He also faced new trials for enforced disappearances and killings during his presidency.

Despite previous pledges to search for people forcibly disappeared during the 1970s and 1980s, the government failed to make any progress. A Special National Commission to search for victims of enforced disappearance, which the government pledged to create in 2012, had still not been established by the end of the year.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

There were protests in February, April and May in the area of Barro Blanco, resulting in clashes between members of the Ngöbe-Buglé Indigenous community and the police. The Ngöbe-Buglé opposed the construction of a large hydroelectric dam on their lands, claiming that future flooding resulting from it would render them homeless. They also alleged that their right to be consulted over the project prior to construction commencing was not met.

In May the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples noted that although the *comarca* system of Indigenous Peoples' administrative zones offered some protection, more needed to be done to protect Indigenous Peoples' land rights. The Special Rapporteur recommended that Panama ensure consultation of Indigenous Peoples and their free and informed consent, prior to proposing large construction projects on or near their lands. He also recommended that Panama increase its efforts to improve Indigenous Peoples' access to health, education and economic development. With regard to the Barro Blanco dam, he recommended that flooding of the local areas be halted until agreement with the Ngöbe-Buglé community had been reached.

PRISON CONDITIONS

In April, local human rights NGOs wrote to the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, raising concerns that they were being prevented by the authorities from accessing prisons, which was impeding their work in following up complaints of inhuman conditions in prisons.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Independent State of Papua New Guinea
Head of state: **Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Governor General Michael Ogio**
Head of government: **Peter Charles Paire O'Neill**

There were further reports of violence against women and children, including as a result of sorcery accusations. Reports of unnecessary and excessive use of force by police persisted. There were reports of violence and sexual assault by police during a forced eviction near Porgera mine. Violence and alleged inadequate medical treatment resulted in the deaths of two asylum-seekers at the Australian-run immigration detention centre on Manus Island.

BACKGROUND

The government took little action to address violence against women or sorcery-related violence, in spite of legal reforms in 2013 providing for harsher penalties.

As at 31 August there were 1,084 asylum-seekers at the Australian-run immigration detention centre on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. Little progress had been made to improve conditions or to implement laws and policies required to process and settle asylum-seekers.[1]