

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

According to government figures, at least 13 people have been sentenced to death since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1991. The government completed a global study tour in 2014 to research execution methods, even though none have taken place in the country since 1954.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

A 2013 report by the UN Development Programme found that 80% of men in Bougainville admitted using physical or sexual violence against women.

There were further reports of women and children being subjected to violence, sometimes resulting in death, following accusations of sorcery. The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions highlighted sorcery-related killings as a major concern. He was the third Special Rapporteur to report on this issue in recent years.

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

Unnecessary and excessive use of force, including lethal force, by police was highlighted as one of the key concerns by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions following his visit to the country in March. Reports of physical and sexual assault of people in custody and extrajudicial killings by police continued.

In March a video surfaced of a man being attacked in the street by three police dogs. Police officers stood by and made no attempt to arrest or detain the man. While police authorities have attempted to investigate and address complaints against officers, reports of police brutality remained frequent.

HOUSING RIGHTS - FORCED EVICTIONS

Tensions escalated at the site of Porgera gold mine between the mining company and local residents. In June, around 200 homes were burned to the ground by police. Reports were

received of physical and sexual violence by police during the forced eviction.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

In February, violence erupted at the Australian-run immigration detention centre on Manus Island. After weeks of protests, asylum-seekers were attacked by private security guards and local police. In August, police charged two former employees of the Salvation Army and security contractor G4S in connection with the death of Iranian asylum-seeker Reza Berati, who died from severe head trauma during a riot at the detention centre on 17 February.² In September, human rights organizations lodged a complaint with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development against G4S, alleging that it had failed to maintain basic human rights standards and protect asylum-seekers.

In September another Iranian asylum-seeker from Manus Island, Hamid Kehazaei, died in hospital in Australia after developing septicaemia from a cut on his foot. Reports claimed that inadequate or delayed medical treatment had led to his death.

Of the 1,084 asylum-seekers on Manus Island, a total of 79 applications for interim refugee status were processed, of which 41 were successful and 38 were rejected. Refugees and asylum-seekers remained detained at the facility at the end of the year.

Asylum-seekers continued to suffer lengthy delays, poor conditions and risk of harm.

1. This is breaking people: Human rights violations at Australia's asylum-seeker processing centre on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea (ASA 12/002/2013)

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA12/002/2013/en

2. This is still breaking people: Update on human rights violations at Australia's asylum-seeker processing centre on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea (ASA 12/002/2014)

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA12/002/2014/en