

right to same-gender marriage emanates from the Constitution, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico should not be compelled to recognize such unions." An appeal was pending before the US Federal Appeals Court at the end of the year.

In February 2013, the Supreme Court affirmed the ban on same-sex adoption. In a 5-4 vote, judges upheld the constitutionality of a law that states that a person cannot adopt a single-parent child if the would-be adopter is of the same sex as the child's mother or father without that parent losing their legal rights.

In 2013 there were advances in the creation of laws to protect the rights of LGBTI people, including a bill that prohibits employment discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation and a bill to extend domestic violence protections to same-sex couples. However, a proposed amendment to the Penal Code, which would have criminalized discrimination against LGBTI people, was removed. The revised Penal Code was before Governor Padilla awaiting endorsement at the end of the year.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A civil society campaign to remove a 2011 amendment to the Penal Code limiting a woman's right to abortion to circumstances to protect life or health and making breaches of the law punishable with a fixed prison term of two years was unsuccessful. The 2011 statute violates the US Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade* and the Puerto Rico Supreme Court ruling in *Pueblo v. Duarte*.

POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES

In April 2013, Governor Padilla revoked provisions in the Penal Code that restricted the right to freedom of assembly and expression. These laws had criminalized protests in schools, universities and health institutions as well as those that interfered with local government.

In July 2013, the US Department of Justice and the government of Puerto

Rico reached an agreement to reform the country's police force after a 2011 federal report found unconstitutional conduct by the police, including unlawful killings. Under the federally mandated reform programme, Puerto Rico has 10 years to carry out the reforms.

DEATH PENALTY

As a commonwealth of the USA, Puerto Rico is subject to some US federal laws. Although the death penalty on the island was abolished in 1929, the US Department of Justice has attempted over the years to obtain a death sentence on federal charges in a number of cases. During 2013, Puerto Rico juries voted for life imprisonment in three cases in which the US administration had been pursuing the death penalty. By the end of 2014, there were no authorized federal capital prosecutions pending trial in Puerto Rico.

QATAR

State of Qatar

Head of state: **Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani**

Head of government: **Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani**

Migrant workers remained inadequately protected under the law and were exploited and abused. Women faced discrimination and violence. The authorities restricted freedom of expression and courts failed to uphold fair trial standards. At least two death sentences were passed; no executions were reported.

BACKGROUND

Elections for the advisory Shura Council, originally planned for 2013, did not take place. The term of the Shura Council had been extended until 2016 by the former

Emir prior to his abdication as head of state in 2013.

A rift between Qatar and other Gulf Cooperation Council states, reportedly over Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, among other things, saw Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates withdraw their ambassadors from Qatar in March. In November, it was announced that they would be reinstated. In September, Qatar asked seven prominent Egyptian members of the Muslim Brotherhood to leave Qatar.

The government faced growing international pressure to address abuses of the rights of migrant workers. FIFA, football's world governing body, discussed the issue of migrant labour abuse at its March Executive Committee meeting, intensifying pressure on the authorities to address the abuse of workers ahead of the 2022 football World Cup in Qatar.

The UN Human Rights Council expressed concern about abuses of the rights of migrants, discrimination and violence against women, and restrictions on freedoms of expression and assembly during its Universal Periodic Review of Qatar in May.

MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Employers continued to abuse and exploit foreign migrant workers, who comprised more than 90% of Qatar's total workforce. The authorities failed to adequately enforce the 2004 Labour Law and related decrees, which contained some protective provisions.

Workers' living conditions were often grossly inadequate and many workers said they were made to work excessive hours beyond the legal maximum or were paid far less than agreed when they were contracted. Some employers failed to pay workers their wages, and some did not issue residency permits to employees, leaving them undocumented and at risk of arrest and detention. Few workers possessed their own passports and some employers denied workers the exit permits they required to leave Qatar. Construction workers were exposed to

hazardous conditions. Under the Labour Law, migrant workers were prohibited from forming or joining trade unions.

The government announced that it had increased the number of labour inspectors; that it was subjecting more companies to punitive sanctions; and that it had planned measures to improve conditions for migrant workers, including new accommodation standards and an electronic wage protection system. However, these measures had not been made law by the end of the year.

Migrant domestic workers, mostly women, and certain other workers were specifically excluded from the Labour Law, exposing them to greater labour exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse.¹ The government repeatedly stated its commitment to enact legislation to address this problem but it had not done so by the end of the year. Women domestic workers were liable to face prosecution and imprisonment for "illicit relations" if they reported sexual abuse by employers.

The 2009 Sponsorship Law, which requires foreign workers to obtain a sponsor's permission to leave Qatar or change employer, continued to be exploited by employers to prevent workers from complaining to the authorities or moving to a new job in the event of abuse. The sponsorship system increased the likelihood of workers being subjected to forced labour and human trafficking. In May, the government announced proposed reforms to the sponsorship system to amend the procedure for workers to leave Qatar and allow workers to change employers after the completion of their contract or after five years with the same employer. At the end of the year, no legislation had been passed and no drafts had been published.² In April the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants urged the government to abolish the sponsorship system.

An international law firm commissioned by the government to review migrant labour in Qatar submitted its report in April. The authorities did not publish the report,

although a leaked version containing more than 60 recommendations appeared on the internet. The government did not say whether it would implement the recommendations.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women remained unable to fully exercise their human rights due to barriers in law, policy and practice. The absence of a law specifically criminalizing domestic violence exposed women to abuse within the family, while personal status laws discriminated against women in relation to marriage, divorce, nationality and freedom of movement.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression remained strictly controlled and the press routinely exercised self-censorship.

The poet Mohammed al-Ajami, also known as Mohammed Ibn al-Dheeb, remained in prison in solitary confinement after Qatar's highest court upheld his 15-year sentence on 20 October 2013. He had been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in November 2012 for writing and reciting poems deemed offensive to the state and the Emir, but his sentence was reduced on appeal. He was detained incommunicado for three months after his arrest and tried in secret. He was in solitary confinement throughout most of his imprisonment.

A new cybercrimes law was enacted in September. The law criminalized the dissemination of "false" news and the publication online of content deemed harmful to Qatar's "social values" or national interests. The law's vaguely worded provisions risked increasing self-censorship among journalists and further stifling online criticism of the authorities.

ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

On 31 August, security authorities in Doha detained two human rights workers, Krishna Prasad Upadhyaya and Ghimire Gundev, both UK nationals. They were subjected to

enforced disappearance for one week, before officials acknowledged their detention and allowed them access to UK consular officials. They were held incommunicado and released without charge on 9 September. They were not able to leave Qatar until 19 September.³

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Following her visit to Qatar in January, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers expressed concern at, among other things, the government's "interference" in judicial procedures, particularly in cases involving high-profile individuals or businesses, as well as violations of due process and the failure of the judiciary to meet international fair trial standards.

On 30 April, Doha Criminal Court convicted three Filipino nationals of espionage; one was sentenced to death, the other two to life imprisonment. The convictions were based largely on confessions reportedly extracted under torture. All three men lodged appeals.

DEATH PENALTY

At least two people were sentenced to death. No executions were reported.

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1. 'My sleep is my break': Exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Qatar (MDE 22/004/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE22/004/2014/en
 2. No extra time: How Qatar is still failing on workers' rights ahead of the World Cup (MDE 22/010/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE22/010/2014/en
 3. Qatar: Further information - UK nationals released (MDE 22/008/2014)
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