

on Sierra Leone to review its legislation to ensure that discrimination against the LGBTI community is prohibited.

Three LGBTI activists were assaulted, sent threatening messages and one of their homes was repeatedly broken into in 2013. Despite reporting these incidents to the police, no credible investigations were initiated. The harassment forced the activists to flee Sierra Leone and they were granted asylum in Europe.

## SINGAPORE

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### Republic of Singapore

Head of state: **Tony Tan Keng Yam**

Head of government: **Lee Hsien Loong**

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**Human rights defenders and small opposition parties called for broader human rights change through public gatherings, online activities and constitutional challenges. The People's Action Party remained in power for a sixth decade.**

### DEATH PENALTY

The execution of one death row prisoner was stayed in March, but Singapore broke its three-year moratorium on executions in July when two men were hanged - a mandatory death sentence had been imposed under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) prior to the November 2012 amendments abolishing some instances in which murder and drug trafficking carry a mandatory death penalty.

Commutations of death sentences to life imprisonment with 15 strokes of the cane continued, following the November 2012 legislative amendments. Some of those whose sentences were commuted had been judged as having "diminished responsibility" and others had aided anti-drug trafficking efforts and obtained "certificates of cooperation".

In July, parliament amended the Radiation Protection Act to allow for the imposition of the death penalty for nuclear-related offences with an intent to harm and that cause fatalities. There were no nuclear facilities in Singapore.

### TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Caning remained a penalty for various offences, including immigration violations, vandalism and as an alternative (with life imprisonment) to the death penalty. In August, Yong Vui Kong, whose death sentence had been commuted to life imprisonment and caning, challenged his penalty of 15 strokes on the grounds that the Constitution prohibited torture. The Court of Appeal judgment was pending at the end of the year, but the Attorney-General took the position that caning did not amount to torture and that torture is not prohibited by the Constitution.

### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Opposition activists, former prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders expressed concerns about the shrinking space for public discussion of issues such as freedom of expression, the death penalty, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights, labour rights, poverty and inadequate living standards.

The government persisted in using defamation suits against critics. In May the Prime Minister sued blogger Roy Ngerng Yi Leng for defamation after Ngerng was alleged to have accused the Prime Minister of "criminal misappropriation" of public retirement funds in his blog. Despite a retraction and a public apology, as well as an offer of damages, the Prime Minister called for a summary judgment on the case in July. Ngerng was dismissed from his job with a public hospital in June. In view of financially ruinous outcomes from previous suits against critics, Ngerng turned to crowdfunding to finance his legal defence.

## DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL

Around 12 suspected Islamist militants remained held without trial under the Internal Security Act.

# SLOVAKIA

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### Slovak Republic

Head of state: **Andrej Kiska (replaced Ivan Gašparovič in June)**

Head of government: **Robert Fico**

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**Roma children continued to face discrimination in the education system. The authorities extradited an asylum-seeker to the Russian Federation despite the risk of torture and other ill-treatment upon return. A referendum on proposals, which would block further rights for same-sex partnerships, was declared constitutional. In November, two detainees from the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay were transferred to Slovakia for resettlement. Slovakia had not ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.**

## DISCRIMINATION - ROMA

In June, during the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Slovakia restated its commitment to tackling the issue of large numbers of Roma children in schools for children with mental disabilities. However, in July the Slovak Public Defender of Rights noted that Slovakia continued to violate Roma children's right to education through discriminatory diagnostic procedures.

The Ministry of Education persisted with plans developed together with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities to construct "modular schools" ostensibly with the aim of increasing access to education.

The Ministry planned to construct 15 such schools over the course of the year, several of them in Roma settlements. In May, however, the Plenipotentiary acknowledged that the project could result in increased segregation in education.

As part of the UPR, Slovakia acknowledged the need for measures to legalize informal Roma settlements. The Ministry of Transport and Construction developed proposals for a new Construction Act to address the issue of "illegal constructions", including informal Roma settlements. In July, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights expressed concern that the proposals lacked safeguards to protect residents of unauthorized buildings from forced evictions. It emphasized that eviction decisions should be subject to judicial review and that affected residents had to have access to remedies and compensation.

### Police violence

In January, the Inspection of the Ministry of Interior initiated a criminal investigation into the excessive use of force during a police operation in the Roma settlement of Budulovská in the town of Moldava nad Bodvou on 19 June 2013. Earlier complaints by affected residents had been dismissed. The police operation was criticized by the Public Defender of Rights for having used excessive force, derogatory treatment and arbitrary searches.

At the end of the year, the trial of police officers, accused of the ill-treatment of six Roma boys at a police station in 2009 in the city of Košice, was still pending before the district court. In March, one of the police officers, who was dismissed following the allegations of ill-treatment, was reinstated.

## RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

On 4 June, the National Council (Parliament) adopted a constitutional amendment which defined marriage as "a unique union between a man and a woman". The amendment explicitly excluded same-sex couples from