

overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and a lack of food, clean drinking water and medical care. Often, detainees' families were not officially informed of their deaths; in other cases, families were told that detainees had died of heart attacks, but were denied access to their bodies, which were not returned to them for burial.

In October, a UK inquest jury ruled that British medical doctor Abbas Khan was unlawfully killed in Syrian detention in December 2013, contradicting a Syrian government finding that he had committed suicide. Security forces had arrested Dr Khan in November 2012 within 48 hours of his arrival as a medical volunteer in Syria; he was reported to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated during months in detention.

## UNFAIR TRIALS

After often lengthy periods of pre-trial detention, scores of perceived government critics and peaceful opponents were prosecuted before the Anti-Terrorism Court, established in 2012, and Military Field Courts, where they did not receive fair trials. Some defendants tried by the Anti-Terrorism Court faced charges based on their legitimate exercise of freedom of expression or other rights. Defendants before Military Field Courts, many of whom were civilians, had no right to legal representation and faced judges who were serving military officers. They also had no opportunity to appeal their sentences.

Faten Rajab Fawaz, a physicist and peaceful pro-reform activist arrested by Air Force Intelligence officials in December 2011 in Damascus, was reported in September to be facing trial before a Military Field Court on undisclosed charges. Following her arrest, she was held at several detention facilities, sometimes in solitary confinement for months at a time, and reportedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated.

Mazen Darwish, Hani al-Zitani and Hussein Gharir, activists from the independent Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), faced charges of "publicizing terrorist

acts" and possible 15-year prison terms. They were arrested when Air Force Intelligence officials raided the SCM's Damascus office in February 2012. Their trial before the Anti-Terrorism Court was adjourned continuously since February 2013; the outcome of their case remained unknown at the end of 2014.

Gebrail Moushe Kourie, president of the unauthorized political party Assyrian Democratic Organization, was arrested in December 2013 in Qamishly in northern Syria. After months of detention in facilities where torture was rife, he was charged with belonging to "an unlicensed secret political party" and "incitement of violence to topple the government" before a criminal court judge who referred him for trial by the Anti-Terrorism Court.

## DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty remained in force for a wide range of offences. No information was available on death sentences handed down or executions carried out during the year.

# TAIWAN

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## Taiwan

Head of state: **Ma Ying-jeou**

Head of government: **Ma Chi-kuo (replaced Jiang Yi-huah in December)**

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**While Taiwan took further steps to implement international human rights standards, serious concerns remained.**

**Notable among these were the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, the death penalty, torture and other ill-treatment, housing and land rights, and gender discrimination.**

## INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

International groups of independent experts reviewed national reports on the

implementation of the ICCPR and ICESCR in February 2013 and CEDAW in June 2014. In September the government pledged to amend 228 laws and regulations to comply with CEDAW. Laws were enacted to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by 2017.

## **FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY**

From 18 March to 10 April, hundreds of students and other activists occupied the Legislative Yuan (Parliament) to protest against a trade deal with China.<sup>1</sup> On 23 March, a group of protesters forced their way into the Executive Yuan (Cabinet) complex, and a crowd gathered in the surrounding areas. The police used excessive force while dispersing them. To date there has been no independent and impartial investigation into the police conduct.

Over several subsequent months, over 200 protesters were summoned for questioning under the Criminal Code and Assembly and Parade Act; they remained under threat of prosecution. At least 46 people who suffered injuries during the protests filed a series of private criminal lawsuits against the Premier and high-ranking police officers. By the end of the year, however, courts had declined to hear two of these cases on the grounds that they were too similar to one already under court review.

## **DEATH PENALTY**

Little progress was made towards the abolition of the death penalty as Taiwan continued to impose death sentences and carry out executions.<sup>2</sup> In June the death sentence was abolished for two crimes related to kidnapping, but 55 offences remained punishable by death.

## **TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT**

In January, Taiwan abolished its military court system during peacetime, including military prisons. This followed the death of Corporal Hung Chung-chiu in a military disciplinary

detention facility in July 2013.<sup>3</sup> In March, a civilian court of first instance convicted 13 military officers of Hung Chung-chiu's death, sentencing them to between three and eight months' imprisonment; five others were acquitted.

## **PRISON CONDITIONS**

Overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and lack of adequate medical care remained serious problems in prisons and detention centres. An amendment to the Prison Camp Act, aimed at addressing prison overcrowding by expanding the use of minimum security prisons, was enacted in June.

## **HOUSING RIGHTS - FORCED EVICTIONS**

Conflicts over housing and land rights continued to increase due to rising land prices and economic inequality. In July, the land expropriation for the Taoyuan Aerotropolis project, affecting an estimated 46,000 people, passed a key planning hurdle, despite concerns of inadequate consultation with residents as well as the indictment of a key official for related corruption.

### **Indigenous Peoples' rights**

Concerns were raised about the use of traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples for tourism-related development.

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

Amendments to the Civil Code that would enshrine marriage equality stalled in the Legislative Yuan.

The Ministry of Interior failed to put into effect the Ministry of Health's recommendation that genital surgery and psychiatric evaluation should no longer be needed to change one's gender.

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1. Taiwan: Restraint urged in protests over China trade deal (Press release)

[www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/taiwan-restraint-urged-protests-over-china-trade-deal-2014-03-19](http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/taiwan-restraint-urged-protests-over-china-trade-deal-2014-03-19)

2. Taiwan: Amnesty International condemns the execution of five people (ASA 38/002/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA38/002/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA38/002/2014/en)
3. Taiwan government must ensure the reform of military criminal procedure legislation lives up to its promise of greater accountability (ASA 38/001/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA38/001/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA38/001/2014/en)

# TAJIKISTAN

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## Republic of Tajikistan

Head of state: **Emomali Rahmon**

Head of government: **Qokhir Rasulzoda**

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**Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees remained pervasive and impunity for crimes of torture continued. The government imposed further restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.**

## BACKGROUND

Emomali Rahmon was re-elected as President for a fourth term in November 2013 with 84.32% of the vote.

In May, three people were killed and five injured when a police operation in Khorog, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), led to clashes between security forces and residents. An investigation into the incident was reported to be ongoing at the end of the year. There was still no effective investigation into the clashes in Khorog in July 2012, in which dozens of people and at least 22 civilians were killed. Reliable information about the number of victims was still lacking.

## TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Torture and other ill-treatment remained widespread despite the adoption of an Action Plan to implement recommendations by the UN Committee against Torture in 2013.

Tajikistani NGOs documented 24 cases of torture between 1 December 2013 and 8

October 2014. However, most relatives and victims declined to pursue complaints for fear of reprisals. Many more cases of torture were likely to have gone unreported.

Criminal prosecutions against law enforcement officials suspected of torture were rare, and frequently terminated or suspended before completion. By the end of the year, only four security officers had been convicted of torture since its criminalization in 2012. Two of them were given suspended sentences.

In April, the investigation into allegations involving two officials suspected of torturing Ismonboy Boboev (who died in custody in February 2010) was suspended again, reportedly due to the poor health of one of the suspects.

Tajikistan failed to implement decisions by UN bodies on individual cases. In June 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention urged the release of Ilhom Ismonov, who had been arbitrarily detained, tortured and forced to sign a false confession in November 2010. He remained in detention at the end of the year.

Lawyers were repeatedly denied access to their clients in detention, often for days at a time. This was particularly common in facilities run by the State Committee for National Security.

Individuals perceived to be threats to national security, including members of religious movements and Islamist groups or parties, were at particular risk of incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment.

Umed Tojiev, a member of the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), died in hospital on 19 January. He had been arrested by police on 30 October 2013 in Sughd region, and charged on 4 November 2013 with organizing a criminal group, but was denied access to his lawyer until 13 November 2013. His family claimed he was subjected to suffocation, sleep and food deprivation and electric shocks. He jumped out of the Sughd police station window on 5