

On 16 May, just two days before the planned annual events to mark the 70th anniversary of the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944, the de facto Prime Minister of Crimea announced that all mass meetings in Crimea would be banned until 6 June, in order to “eliminate possible provocations by extremists” and to prevent “disruption of the summer holiday season”. Just one commemorative Crimean Tatar event was allowed on the day, on the outskirts of Simferopol, with a heavy police presence.

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

An LGBTI Pride March planned for 5 July in Kyiv was cancelled after the police told the organizing committee that they could not secure the safety of participants in the face of expected counter-demonstrations.\*The newly elected Mayor of Kyiv, Vitaliy Klychko, stated on 27 June that this was not the time for such “entertainment events” in Ukraine.

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1. Ukraine: Mounting evidence of war crimes and Russian involvement (News story)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/news/ukraine-mounting-evidence-war-crimes-and-russian-involvement-2014-09-05](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/ukraine-mounting-evidence-war-crimes-and-russian-involvement-2014-09-05)
  2. Ukraine: Kyiv protest ban blatant attempt to “gag peaceful protesters” (News story)  
[www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-kiev-protest-ban-blatant-attempt-gag-peaceful-protesters](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-kiev-protest-ban-blatant-attempt-gag-peaceful-protesters)
  3. Ukraine: a new country or business as usual? (EUR 50/028/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR50/028/2014/en/da555a1a-99a1-4d76-a52b-8f020712e0fa/eur500282014en.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR50/028/2014/en/da555a1a-99a1-4d76-a52b-8f020712e0fa/eur500282014en.pdf)
  4. Ukraine: Abuses and war crimes by the Aidar Volunteer Battalion in the north Luhansk region (EUR 50/040/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR50/040/2014/en/e6776c69-fe66-4924-bfc0-d15c9539c667/eur500402014en.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR50/040/2014/en/e6776c69-fe66-4924-bfc0-d15c9539c667/eur500402014en.pdf)
  5. Summary: killings during the conflict in eastern Ukraine (EUR 50/042/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/042/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/042/2014/en)
  6. Eastern Ukraine: Both sides responsible for indiscriminate attacks (Press release)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/eastern-ukraine-both-sides-responsible-indiscriminate-attacks-2014-11-06](http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/eastern-ukraine-both-sides-responsible-indiscriminate-attacks-2014-11-06)

7. Ukraine: Journalists at risk of abduction in Crimea (EUR 50/015/2014)  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/015/2014/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/015/2014/en)

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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## United Arab Emirates

Head of state: **Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**  
Head of government: **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

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**The government restricted the rights to freedom of expression and association, and prosecuted critics using provisions of the Penal Code and the 2012 cybercrimes law. Prisoners of conscience continued to be held after unfair trials in which courts accepted evidence allegedly obtained through torture and other violations of their rights. Women faced discrimination in law and practice. Migrants, especially women domestic workers, were inadequately protected by law and faced exploitation and abuse. The government declared a partial moratorium on executions after carrying out an execution in January.**

## BACKGROUND

The Federal National Council approved a draft child rights law. It was awaiting presidential approval at the end of the year. In April, a government minister announced that the authorities were preparing a law to regulate the activities of foreign NGOs. No draft had been published by the end of the year.

## FREEDOMS OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

The authorities used provisions of the Penal Code and the cybercrimes law of 2012 to stifle dissent and to prosecute and imprison government critics on charges including “instigating hatred against the state”, and

“contacting foreign organizations”, based on comments they had posted on social media. Those imprisoned included Osama al-Najjar, who was prosecuted on charges arising from his use of Twitter to campaign for the release of his father, Hussain Ali al-Najjar al-Hammadi.

Hussain Ali al-Najjar al-Hammadi and 60 others associated with al-Islah, the Reform and Social Guidance Association, remained in prison serving sentences of up to 10 years. They were convicted on national security charges in July 2013 after the unfair “UAE 94” trial before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court (FSC). The Court failed to investigate allegations that some defendants were tortured during months of pre-trial incommunicado detention to obtain “confessions” that formed the basis of the prosecution case against them, and which the court accepted as evidence. The defendants were denied a right of appeal, in breach of international fair trial standards. They included prisoners of conscience Mohammed al-Roken, a prominent human rights lawyer, former judge Ahmed al-Zaabi, and bloggers Saleh Mohammed al-Dhufairi and Khalifa al-Nuaimi. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that the 61 defendants imprisoned were victims of arbitrary arrest and detention, and urged the government to release them and afford them appropriate reparation.

In February, after visiting the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers urged the government to conduct an independent investigation into allegations of torture of detainees and institute a right of appeal in cases heard in first instance by the FSC, among other reforms.

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

The authorities failed to conduct independent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment made by defendants in trials before the State Security Chamber of the FSC in 2013 and 2014 and by several

British nationals detained by police on suspicion of drugs offences. Reported methods of torture and other ill-treatment included beating, electric shocks, exposure to extreme temperatures and continuous bright lights, sleep deprivation, and threats of rape and death.

In September, UAE authorities forcibly returned an Ethiopian national, despite fears that he would face torture in Ethiopia.

## **COUNTER-TERROR AND SECURITY**

The authorities detained scores of people, including foreign nationals, as terrorism suspects and held them in undisclosed locations without access to their families or legal counsel, often for long periods.

In January, the State Security Chamber of the FSC imposed prison terms of up to five years on 10 Emiratis and 20 Egyptians after convicting them of secretly establishing an “international branch” of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE. The 10 Emiratis were already serving lengthy prison terms imposed at the end of the “UAE 94” trial in July 2013. Their trial did not meet international fair trial standards.

In March, the FSC convicted three men on charges including “financially and morally” supporting al-Islah, sentencing two Emiratis to five-year prison terms and a Qatari national to seven years’ imprisonment. The defendants denied the charges but were convicted on the basis of “confessions” that they said security officials had obtained from them under torture or other duress.

In June, the FSC convicted seven foreign nationals on terrorism-related charges, imposing sentences of between seven years’ and life imprisonment, and in September the Court began trying 15 defendants accused of involvement with armed groups participating in the Syrian conflict. In December, 11 of the defendants were convicted and sentenced to between three years’ and life imprisonment; the others were acquitted.

A new anti-terrorism law enacted in August prescribed severe penalties, including death,

for people convicted of terrorism, defined broadly to include any acts resulting in a “terrorist outcome,” such as declaring by any public means “enmity to the state or regime” or “non-allegiance to its leadership”.

In November, the government declared al-Islah and more than 80 other groups “terrorist” organizations; they included many armed groups active in other countries as well as several Muslim aid organizations.

## WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Women faced discrimination in law and practice. The UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers recorded “institutionalized gender discrimination within the administration of justice”. She highlighted that women were not allowed to become federal court judges, in violation of CEDAW, to which the UAE is a party.

## MIGRANT WORKER’S RIGHTS

Despite protective provisions in the 1980 Labour Law and subsequent decrees, foreign migrant workers were exploited and abused. Many workers, who had generally paid fees to recruiting agents, reported that they were deceived over the terms and conditions of their work. Construction workers often lived in poor and inadequate accommodation, while few held their own passports. Late payment or non-payment of wages was common. The *kafala* sponsorship system made workers vulnerable to abuse by employers, while those involved in collective action such as strikes or sit-ins were liable to arrest and deportation.

Domestic workers, mostly women from Asia, continued to be excluded from the protections afforded to other migrant workers, and faced physical violence, confinement to places of work and labour abuses. The authorities had been considering a draft law on domestic workers since at least 2012 but did not enact it in 2014.

## DEATH PENALTY

Courts continued to impose death sentences, mostly for murder. In January, the authorities

in Sharjah emirate executed a Sri Lankan man by firing squad. The following month, the President declared a stay on all pending executions for murder to enable the authorities to contact victims’ families and ascertain whether they would accept “blood money” for their relatives’ deaths. In May, press reports indicated that a court in Abu Dhabi sentenced a woman to death by stoning for adultery.

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# UNITED KINGDOM

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Head of state: **Queen Elizabeth II**

Head of government: **David Cameron**

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**The Prime Minister confirmed that a Conservative Party government would repeal the Human Rights Act if elected in 2015. Allegations of torture in relation to counter-terrorism operations overseas remained unresolved. The government passed legislation extending communications data interception powers. Accountability mechanisms for historical human rights violations and abuses in Northern Ireland remained inadequate. Access to abortion remained extremely limited in Northern Ireland.**

## LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In a referendum held in Scotland in September, voters opted against independence.

Charities and civil society organizations expressed concerns about the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014, which entered into force in September. The Act could significantly restrict their public-facing