

Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Senegal

Head of state

Macky Sall (replaced Abdoulaye Wade in April)

Head of government

Abdoul Mbaye (replaced Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye in April)

The unrest which marked the pre-election period in January and February resulted in serious human rights violations, including excessive use of force leading to the death of several protesters; torture and other ill-treatment; and attacks on freedom of expression. In Casamance, in the south, clashes between the army and an armed group intensified at the beginning of the year leading to arrests and targeting of civilians. An agreement was signed between Senegal and the AU to establish a special court to try former Chadian President Hissène Habré.

Background

In January and February, security forces violently repressed opponents to the candidacy for a third term of the outgoing President Wade and used excessive force, leading to several casualties. Despite this unrest, new President Macky Sall was elected in March; the results were not challenged.

In October, representatives of the Senegalese government and members of the Democratic Forces of Casamance Movement (MFDC) met in Rome, Italy, under mediation undertaken by the Catholic community Sant'Egidio.

Excessive use of force

At least six people were killed by security forces during the pre-elections unrest.

- In January, gendarmes (paramilitary police) used live ammunition against peaceful demonstrators in Podor. Two people were killed: Mamadou Sy and Bana Ndiaye, a woman aged around 60 who was not participating in the protest.
- In January, Mamadou Diop was killed by a police vehicle during a peaceful demonstration at the Place de l'Obélisque in Dakar. An inquiry was opened but had not concluded by the end of the year.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Several people were tortured and otherwise ill-treated by security forces and at least two of them died in detention, reportedly as a result of torture.

- In February, Ibrahima Fall was tortured and otherwise ill-treated after being arrested in Tivavouane while returning from a demonstration against President Wade's candidacy. He was tortured by gendarmes who hit him with batons, water hoses and electric cables.
- In February, Ousseynou Seck died after being tortured in custody. All the police officers implicated were arrested and were awaiting trial at the end of the year.
- In August, Kécouta Sidibé, a man who was deaf and mute, died reportedly as a result of torture in custody in Kédougou after he was arrested for consuming Indian hemp. In December, the Kaolack Appeal Court declared the deputy commander of the Kédougou gendarmerie guilty of murder and he was arrested. An investigation into the involvement of five other gendarmes was in progress at the end of the year.

Freedom of expression

Political activists and human rights defenders were assaulted and imprisoned for peacefully expressing their opposition to President Wade's candidacy.

- In January, three journalists were beaten by the police. Two worked for the Senegalese daily Le Populaire, and one for the French news agency, Agence France Presse.
- In February, security forces prevented members of the Y'en a marre (We are fed up) movement from organizing a sit-in at the Place de l'Obélisque in Dakar and arrested several people. All were released shortly afterwards without charge.

Human rights violations and abuses in Casamance

Several civilians were arrested or targeted as tension escalated between the MFDC and the army.

- In January, eight people were arrested by the security forces in the village of Affiniam (30km north of Ziguinchor, the main city of the region), reportedly as part of reprisals by the army a few hours after a Senegalese gendarme was killed and three others were injured in the area by alleged armed members of the MFDC. The eight were charged with undermining state security and released without trial in June.
- In February and March, armed people claiming to be members of the MFDC assaulted and robbed civilians to dissuade them from voting in the Presidential election.
- In December, eight hostages, including Senegalese soldiers, who had been held for more than a year by armed branches of the MFDC, were released in the Gambia.

International justice – Hissène Habré

In August, an agreement was signed between Senegal and the AU to establish a special court to try former Chadian President Hissène Habré. This court would have jurisdiction to try those responsible for crimes under international law committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990.

On 19 December, the National Assembly adopted a law establishing special chambers within the existing court structure. However, some key elements to the successful conduct of a fair trial had not been set up, such as a programme for protection of victims and witnesses, and an effective mutual legal assistance agreement with other countries, including France and Chad, where victims, witnesses, evidence and assets may be located.

Country Reports

- [Senegal: The human rights situation – brief overview in the run-up to the presidential election](#)
- [Senegal: An agenda for human rights – an opportunity not to be missed by the authorities elected in the March 2012 presidential election](#)

Country Visits

- Amnesty International delegates visited Senegal in February, March and June.

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