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Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 - Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda is a constitutional republic led since 1986 by President Yoweri Museveni of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party. Voters re-elected Museveni to a fourth five-year term and returned an NRM majority to the National Assembly in 2011. While the election marked an improvement over previous elections, it was marred by irregularities. Authorities usually maintained effective control over state security forces (SSF).

The three most serious human rights problems in the country were a lack of respect for the integrity of the person (including unlawful killings, torture, and other abuse of suspects and detainees); restrictions on civil liberties (including freedoms of assembly, the media, and association); and violence and discrimination against marginalized groups, such as women (including gender-based violence), children (including sexual abuse and ritual killing), persons with disabilities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

Other human rights problems included harsh prison conditions, arbitrary and politically motivated arrest and detention, incommunicado and lengthy pretrial detention, restrictions on the right to a fair trial, official corruption, mob violence, trafficking in persons, and child labor.

Although the government occasionally took steps to punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere, impunity was a problem.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were several reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

According to media reports, the SSF used excessive force, included firing live ammunition during joint security operations, to disperse demonstrators and armed robbers in various districts, including Kampala, Wakiso, Jinja, Sembabule, Entebbe, Tororo, Gulu, Mbale, Arua, Lira, Luweero, and Jinja, resulting in at least 16 deaths.

On January 20, police in Jinja killed Rahsid Ntale, a seventh-grade pupil, when they fired live bullets to stop a student riot in the Bugembe sports stadium. On February 24, authorities arrested two police officers, Patrick Nuwagaba and Constable Julian Mucunguzi. On February 25, a court in Jinja charged them with murder and remanded them to prison. The case was pending at year's end.

On July 5, more than 100 persons were killed in 13 coordinated attacks in the Rwenzori Region. In the largest of the attacks, a group of ethnic Bakonzo attacked the Kanyamwirima Army Barracks in Bundibugyo. The Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) reportedly killed up to 50 of the attackers, who were subsequently buried in a mass grave along with other victims of attacks in Bundibugyo. Local politicians and lawyers claimed that among the deceased were civilians who were caught in the crossfire as they were running toward the barracks to seek shelter, a charge government and UPDF officials denied. The UPDF claimed it had conducted internal investigations into the matter and planned to exhume the grave, but it had not made its findings public by year's end. Local residents also claimed that civilians in Bamba and Basongoro committed reprisal attacks and killings against Bakonzos in Bundibugyo in the days following the initial attack. Officials arrested 183 suspects and imprisoned 170 of them during their trial by two court martials (see section 1.e.). On December 8, the military court in Bundibugyo freed all 126 of its suspects after the government dropped charges; 44 suspects still faced trial by a court martial in Kasese. Officials granted amnesty to at least 540 persons who were not arrested and voluntarily claimed involvement in the attacks after they completed a two-month "psycho-social" rehabilitation. Human Rights Watch called the government's investigation of the violence and response to alleged reprisal attacks "inadequate."

There were developments in the 2013 arbitrary killings by the UPDF. For example, on May 21, a court martial in Mbarara District sentenced Corporal Peter Maliamungu to 40 years' imprisonment after finding him guilty of killing Angel Kobushenshe in February 2013.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution and law prohibit such practices. The 2012 Antitorture Bill stipulates that any person convicted of an act of torture may be subject to 15 years' imprisonment, a fine of 7.2 million shillings (\$2,860), or both. The penalty for aggravated torture is life imprisonment. There were credible reports the SSF tortured and beat suspects.

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), and international and local human rights organizations reported incidents of torture by the SSF, including rape, severe beating, and kicking. Between January and September, the African Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV) registered 224 allegations of torture against police, 65 against the UPDF, 23 against prison inmates, 27 against local officials and crime preventers (individuals trained by police to provide village security), and 29 against prison officials. In addition, the ACTV assisted 162 former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abductees in filing claims against the LRA for torture in years past.

The SSF's use of excessive force and torture during arrests and other law enforcement operations resulted in casualties. For example, on May 8, authorities arrested three police officers for shooting and injuring Richard Ojulo, a suspected robber in Tororo District. After the investigation, police exonerated two of the suspected officers. On June 13, a court charged police corporal Tomasi Okumu with the attempted murder of Ojulo and remanded him to prison. A hearing of the case was scheduled for January 20, 2015.

There were numerous reports of torture and abuse in police detention facilities. For example, on August 25, police in Mityana District allegedly tortured and extorted money from Hassan Matovu after accusing him of being a terrorist on the police wanted list. Matovu said he was released after two days without charge. Matovu filed a complaint with the police Professional Standards Unit, and an investigation was pending at year's end.

On November 6, police authorities in Mityana District reported that Naboth Rwabihegye, an officer in charge of the Kiryokaya police post, and crime preventers Robert Ndiwalana and Isma Kiggundu were exonerated for the February 2013 alleged torture and death of suspect Anatoli Kisebo after a post mortem showed he died of natural causes.

In 2013 the UHRC reported awarding 1.3 billion shillings (\$480,000) to victims of torture and other abuses. The director of litigation in the office of the attorney general reported that the government paid about 500 million shilling (\$185,000) in compensation to torture victims in the last financial year. During 2013 the UHRC reported registering 13 human rights complaints against private individuals, 36 against UPDF soldiers, 188 against police

officers, eight against local government authorities, three against Internal Security Organization personnel, 26 against prison wardens, and two against other government departments. Of the complaints, 34 percent involved allegations of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment. Despite a reduction from the previous year, UHRC noted the alleged violations mostly occurred during pretrial detention, interrogation, and arrest of suspected offenders.

There were reports that some UPDF soldiers in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) sexually exploited and abused Somali women and girls. For example, in August the minister of defense, while appearing before the Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Internal Affairs, reported the arrest in Somalia of an unnamed UPDF soldier, who allegedly defiled a Somali girl and was deported to the country to face a court martial. A September 8 Human Rights Watch report documented 24 cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, including rape, by Ugandan and Burundian AMISOM personnel. In an October 23 editorial in the *New Vision* newspaper, UPDF spokesperson Paddy Ankunda confirmed that the UPDF was "instituting an inquiry into allegations of sexual harassment of Somali women by its soldiers in AMISOM. Those found culpable will feel the full wrath of the law." UPDF investigations into the allegations continued as of the end of 2014.

Mob violence remained a problem. Mobs attacked and killed persons suspected of robbery, murder, rape, ritual sacrifice, and witchcraft, among other crimes. Mobs beat, lynched, burned, and otherwise brutalized their victims (see section 6).

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions remained poor and, in some cases, life threatening. Serious problems included long periods of pretrial custody, overcrowding, inadequate food, and understaffing. Local human rights groups, including the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives (FHRI), received reports the SSF and prison wardens tortured inmates, particularly in government prisons, military facilities, and unregistered detention centers. Isolated reports of forced labor continued (see section 7.b.). Most prisons across the country were not designed to accommodate persons with disabilities (see section 6).

Physical Conditions: Prisons in Kampala provided medical care, running water, and adequate sanitation, ventilation, and lighting. According to a 2012 Bureau of Statistics report, however, Kampala prisons were among the most overcrowded. Prison authorities blamed overcrowding on the criminal justice system, which did not process cases in a timely manner. Prisons outside Kampala lacked food, water, medical care, means to transport inmates to court, bedding, adequate infrastructure, and sanitation facilities.

In a system with an approved capacity of 15,000, the Uganda Prisons Service reported in late August a total population of 42,193 prisoners, including 1,907 women. In November the Katojo Prison in Fort Portal, with a capacity of 317 inmates, held 1,321. Severe overcrowding was also a problem at juvenile detention facilities and in women's wings of prisons. As of August the Naguru Remand Home, designed for 45 children, held 180.

Although separate facilities existed for female prisoners in the central prisons (the largest prisons located in Kampala District), services and facilities for women in local prisons, including separate cells, were lacking in some areas. The prisons service had no budget for accommodating pregnant women or mothers with infants, and the number of infants in women's prisons increased during the year. Due to lack of space in juvenile facilities, the prisons service held minors in prisons with adults. In Kampala authorities separated pretrial detainees from convicted prisoners, but this was not the case in other prisons due to lack of space.

Abuse of prisoners resulted in death. According to the FHRI, three inmates died during the year as a result of torture in Kitalya Prison, Wakiso District. In July a warden at the prison allegedly beat to death convict Serapio Makai, who was working on a prison farm at the time. Prison authorities and police took no action on the case. The prisons service reported seven cases of assault between January and March, two of which were between prisoners, and five in which staff assaulted prisoners. Authorities took disciplinary action against the culprits.

Administration: Prison authorities reported some improvements in recordkeeping due to the purchase of computers for the regional level, but insufficient recordkeeping remained a problem. One computer was used for recordkeeping for all 14 regional prisons in the country.

Community service was available as a sentencing option. Between January and August, officials sentenced at least 7,427 persons across the country to community service, according to community service authorities.

The prisons service had an officer with the rank of commissioner who investigated and mediated complaints between management and prisoners. The prison ombudsman is responsible for ensuring that complaints, disputes, or deaths are verified or resolved as they occur. Prisoners could submit complaints through their leaders, regular staff meetings, the prisoners' application book, meetings with top management, or human rights organizations that visited the prisons. Authorities organized weekly meetings at which prisoners could

submit complaints without censorship and seek resolution of problems. Prison authorities acknowledged a backlog in the investigation of complaints.

Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) reported prisoners and detainees had reasonable access to visitors including family and legal representation.

Authorities allowed prisoners to practice their religion.

Independent Monitoring: Information was limited on conditions in unregistered and illegal detention facilities, although the SSF allowed the UHRC as well as local and some international NGOs access to selected unregistered facilities. Observers, including the FHRI, reported poor conditions and numerous cases of abuse in illegal and unregistered detention facilities, known also as safe houses.

Authorities allowed international NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), foreign diplomats, and local NGOs to conduct prison visits with advance notification.

Improvements: The government took several steps to improve prison conditions, including improving water and sanitation, renovating and reconstructing old prison units, and procuring vehicles to improve transport of prisoners to court. For example, Kitalya Prison was renovated and a security fence was erected to improve security. In Kasangati and Ntenjuru prisons, potable water became available during the year. Both prisons had flush toilets and water tanks that provided a consistent water supply for the first time.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

Although the constitution and law prohibit such practices, the SSF sometimes arbitrarily arrested and detained persons, including journalists, activists, demonstrators, politicians, and opposition leaders.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The Uganda Police Force (UPF), under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has primary responsibility for law enforcement. The UPDF is charged with external security but also had significant responsibility for recovering cattle stolen by rustlers in the Karamoja subregion and providing election-related security for by-elections held during the year. The Internal Security Organization and External Security Organization, security agencies and intelligence-gathering entities under the minister of security, occasionally detained civilians. The Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) is legally under UPDF authority and may detain civilians suspected of rebel and terrorist activity. CMI denied media reports it detained and tortured businessperson Francis Matovu in August but confirmed it questioned Matovu for three hours over his links with David Sejusa, a former top general and security advisor. Other agencies included the Joint Antiterrorism Taskforce (JATT), the Joint Intelligence Committee, Special Forces Brigade, Special Revenue Protection Unit, Popular Intelligence Network, and the State House Counterintelligence Unit, among others.

The UPF was constrained by limited resources, including low pay and lack of vehicles, equipment, and training. The UPF's Professional Standards Unit (PSU) investigated complaints of police abuse, including torture, assault, unlawful arrest and detention, death in custody, mismanagement of case papers, and corrupt practices. The UPF was the sole government agency with responsibility for investigating charges of impunity. As of September the PSU received and investigated 196 complaints of human rights violations by police officers. Of these, 45 involved criminal conduct and were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), 81 were being handled through UPF disciplinary mechanisms, and 70 were under inquiry.

In conjunction with the UHRC and international organizations, including the ICRC and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UPDF and UPF continued to train officers in internationally recognized human rights standards. During the year the UHRC trained 982 police officers in human rights and constitutional law. The UPF, the UPDF, and the prisons service also used human rights manuals in their training programs.

Impunity was a problem. Trials of SSF officers accused of using excessive force were frequently delayed due to weaknesses in investigative mechanisms, and some cases were not investigated or brought to trial.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

The law requires that judges or prosecutors issue arrest warrants before arrests are made. This requirement does not apply to an arrest made during commission of a crime or while in pursuit of a perpetrator. Authorities often arrested suspects without warrants, however. The law requires authorities to charge suspects within 48 hours of arrest, but they frequently held suspects longer. Authorities must bring suspects arrested under the Antiterrorism Law to trial within 120 days (360 days if charged with a capital offense) or release them on bail; if the case is presented to the court before the expiration of this period, there is no limit on further pretrial

detention. While the law requires authorities to inform detainees immediately of the reasons for their detention, they did not always do so. The law provides for bail at the discretion of the judge. Judges generally granted bail, albeit with stringent conditions. The law requires detainees to have access to a lawyer, but authorities denied many of them their legal right to representation. According to the law, the government provides attorneys for indigent defendants charged with capital offenses, but funds were rarely available to retain counsel.

Incommunicado detention remained a problem, particularly with regard to the JATT and Special Investigation Unit (SIU). Local and international human rights groups, including the FHRI and the African Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, reported the government detained civilians incommunicado in military facilities and in unregistered locations where they were at risk of abuse.

In February the OHCHR reported improved security in Karamoja subregion but was concerned about the continued absence of a tribunal to address the large backlog of human rights cases. The OHCHR received several complaints of torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention in military facilities in conjunction with the UPDF's response to cattle raids and the government's disarmament campaign there.

Arbitrary Arrest: Arbitrary arrests during police sweeps remained a problem, as did arbitrary arrests based supposedly on preventive action, suspicion of treason, disobeying lawful orders, and incitement of violence charges. For example, on February 11, police in Lira District arrested Jonathan Odur and David Angulu, two activists associated with the local NGO Facilitation for Peace and Development, to prevent them from leading a procession through Lira town center. On February 13, a court in Lira charged Odur and Angulu with disobeying lawful orders and participating in unlawful assembly and released them on bail. Trial of the case began on September 25, and the next hearing was scheduled for February 3, 2015 (see section 2.b.).

On August 4, six persons sued the government in the High Court for their unlawful arrest in 2002 by agents of a government anticrime operation known as "Operation Wembley." In their petition to the court, Hannington Mwesigwa, Martin Ochieng, David Mpasa, Geoffrey Waninda, Christopher Ssozi, and Wilson Mukama claimed they were detained and tortured in unregistered locations for five days. Hearing of the lawsuit was pending at year's end.

Authorities arbitrarily arrested between 50 and 200 persons for inciting violence in land disputes and being idle and disorderly in various districts, including Wakiso, Mbarara, and Ntungamo. Authorities often did not inform those arrested of the charges against them at time of arrest.

Police arbitrarily arrested thousands of persons for drunk driving and prostitution as well as soldiers for desertion. In April 2013 activists belonging to the Human Rights Defenders Association released a report that condemned police for their conduct and assault on members of the public during night operations reintroduced in March to crack down on drunk drivers and sex workers. According to the report, police arrested at least 30,000 youths and women in a humiliating or criminal manner, including engaging in sexual harassment, rape, groping, and extortion. Police held most suspects overnight and released them the following day. Police who investigated the allegations claimed the report contained general complaints rather than individual claims of mistreatment. Police officials confirmed that night operations continued and stated they investigated all allegations of misconduct.

The 2012 treason case against the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) deputy electoral commissioner, Michael Kabaziguruka; the FDC chairman for the Ntungamo District, John Kareebe; former UPDF soldier Frederick Namara; and primary school teacher John Rutagorwa was pending hearing scheduled for January 22, 2015; the suspects remained free on bail.

Pretrial Detention: Case backlogs in the judicial system routinely contributed to pretrial detentions of two to three years but sometimes as long as seven years. The prisons service reported that more than half of its inmates were pretrial detainees.

Suspects complained of long periods of pretrial custody. The FHRI reported police arrested Moses Tumusime in 2008 on murder charges. He last appeared in court in October 2008 and remained in custody in Kitalya prison.

Amnesty: Since 2000 the government has offered blanket, unconditional amnesty for all crimes committed by individuals who engaged in war or armed rebellion against the government. During the year the minister of internal affairs, acting under the powers enumerated in the Amnesty Act, extended for 12 months parts of the act providing for settling and integrating at least 27,320 persons who received amnesty since 2000. Officials of the Uganda Amnesty Commission reported that, of these, the government only integrated approximately 6,500, more than half of whom were former LRA combatants. During the year the government processed 600 new amnesty cases, which were awaiting approval.

Following July violence in the Rwenzori Region that left more than 100 persons dead, the government in September granted amnesty to at least 540 alleged attackers who completed a two-month "psycho-social rehabilitation."

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected this provision. The president appoints Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Court judges with the approval of the National Assembly. The president also nominates, with the approval of the National Assembly, members of the Judicial Service Commission, which makes recommendations on appointments to the judiciary.

A shortage of judges in the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, High Court, and the lower courts affected the delivery of justice during the year, since the lack of a judicial quorum meant cases could not be heard. On April 29, President Museveni appointed six judges to the High Court to reduce the length of pretrial detention. In July 2013 a member of the National Assembly, Gerald Karuhanga, filed a petition challenging the reappointment of former chief justice Benjamin Odoki to the Constitutional Court. The Appointments Committee delayed confirmation hearings for Odoki until a ruling was rendered. On August 4, four constitutional court judges ruled the reappointment of Odoki was unconstitutional. On August 5, the attorney general appealed the ruling, and a hearing was pending at year's end. The judiciary remained without a leader for more than a year.

Lower courts remained understaffed, weak, and inefficient. In April the Judicial Service Commission appointed and deployed 29 lower court magistrates to reduce the caseload.

Judicial corruption was a problem. For example, a June report by the civil society group Anticorruption Coalition in Uganda investigated 15 courts across the country and found significant evidence of extortion, bribery, and delayed justice. The report did not identify officials responsible for the problem.

A September report by the Judicial Service Commission also reported corruption in the judiciary. The report cited several problems, including bribery, delayed judgment, abuse of judicial power, theft of bail money, ex parte communication, and rape of case witnesses and suspects.

Civilians remained in military custody and were tried under military law, as provided by law. Military law establishes a court-martial appeals process. Only senior UPDF leadership can grant appeals of sentences, including the death penalty. Under circumstances they deem exigent, military authorities can convene a field court martial at the scene of an alleged crime. The law does not permit appeal of a conviction under a field court martial.

Between July 5 and August 6, in the districts of Kasese and Bundibugyo, authorities arrested and detained 183 civilians in military facilities following July 5 attacks on security facilities in the Rwenzori Region that killed more than 100 civilians, soldiers, and police officers (see section 1.a.). On August 7, military courts opened the trial of the 183 suspects, with 170 held in prison while awaiting trial by court martial. On December 8, the Bundibugyo court martial freed all 126 of its suspects after the government dropped charges; 44 suspects still faced trial by the Kasese court martial, and hearings were pending at year's end.

Trial Procedures

An inadequate system of judicial administration resulted in a serious backlog of cases and impaired the right to a fair and speedy trial. There is a presumption of innocence. All nonmilitary trials are public, but juries are not used. Defendants have the right to be present and consult with an attorney in a timely manner. The law requires the government to provide an attorney for indigent defendants accused of capital offenses, but funds were rarely available to provide counsel. By law defendants may confront or question witnesses against them and present witnesses and evidence on their own behalf. Authorities sometimes did not respect this right. Defendants have the right to obtain documentary evidence the state intends to use against them before a trial starts. This right of disclosure is not absolute in highly sensitive cases. Defendants have the right of appeal and had adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense. They have the right to be informed promptly and in detail of charges against them with free interpretation as necessary. Defendants cannot be compelled to testify against themselves or to confess guilt. These rights extend to all groups.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

The Uganda Prisons Service held 34 political prisoners on treason charges. Of these, three were committed for trial in the High Court after an initial appearance, and the other 31 remained in custody pending case hearings.

During the year authorities also detained several opposition politicians and activists on politically motivated grounds for short periods. Authorities released many of these individuals without charge but charged others with crimes such as terrorism, treason, inciting violence, holding illegal meetings, and abuse of office.

For example, on March 26, police in Kampala arrested two young NRM party members, Adam Buyinza Ruzindana and Omodo Omodo, on charges of abuse of office. The youths, who were opposed to President Museveni's expected sole candidacy in the 2016 elections, were reportedly found mobilizing for a presidential bid by Amama Mbabazi, who was then prime minister. The court released the youths on bail after they had spent a week on remand in Luzira Prison. On May 3, the DPP dropped charges against the youths.

The 2011 terrorism case against Democratic Party activist Annet Namwanga and nine others was pending trial, and a hearing was scheduled for February 9, 2015. The suspects remained released on bail.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

There is an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters. Victims may report cases of human rights violations through the regular court system or the UHRC, which has judicial powers under the constitution. These powers include the authority to order the release of detainees, pay compensation to victims, and pursue other legal and administrative remedies, such as mediation. Victims can appeal their cases to the Court of Appeal and thereafter to the Supreme Court but not to an international regional court. Civil courts and the UHRC have no ability to hold perpetrators of human rights abuses criminally liable, and bureaucratic delays hampered enforcement of judgments that granted financial compensation.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, and there were some reports that the government failed to respect these prohibitions. Police did not always obtain search warrants, as required by law, to enter private homes and offices.

The Antiterrorism Act (AA) authorizes certain law enforcement officials to intercept communications to detect and prevent terrorist activities. The Regulation of Interception of Communications Bill authorizes government security agencies to tap private conversations as part of efforts to combat terrorism-related offenses. The government utilized both statutes to monitor telephone and internet communications.

For example, on May 5, police in Kampala arrested five members of the Masjid Mosque in Ntinda--Ismail Kalule, Hamza Mansul, Yunus Musa, Sheikh Yunus Kabuye, and Abdallah Kasule--on allegations of terrorism. Police reportedly found incriminating information on computers and CDs seized from the suspects. On May 7, police released Mansul, Musa, Kabuye, and Kasule after an investigation exonerated them, and on July 25 a court charged Kalule with terrorism and released him on bail. The case was pending at year's end.

Between September 13 and 17, police used the AA to arrest and detain 21 Al-Shabaab suspects in foiled terror attacks. On September 24, a court charged 10 of the 21 suspects, nine Somalis and a Kenyan, with aiding and abetting terrorism and belonging to a terrorist organization. The court remanded the suspects to the police SIU for further interrogation.

The government continued to encourage university students and government officials, including members of the judiciary, to attend NRM political education and military science courses known as "chaka mchaka." While the government claimed the courses were not compulsory, human rights activists and opposition politicians reported authorities pressured civil servants and students to attend.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, but the government at times restricted these rights.

Freedom of Speech: The SSF and government officials occasionally interrogated and detained radio presenters and political leaders who made public statements critical of the government and used libel laws and national security as grounds to restrict freedom of speech. There were reports the government periodically deployed officials to monitor public meetings in schools to ensure students did not engage in debates about a successor to President Museveni. On April 16, police in Gulu blocked former Vice President Gilbert Bukenya from addressing Gulu University students. Bukenya had expressed his intention to contest the presidency in 2016.

Authorities blocked opposition and civic leaders from participating in radio talk shows in various parts of the country on grounds they would use the media to incite the public. On March 27, police in Kabale Town blocked

FDC president General Mugisha Muntu and retired Bishop Zac Niringiye from participating in a Voice of Kigezi radio talk show focusing on electoral reforms.

The June 2013 defamation case against the president of the Uganda People's Congress, Olara Otunnu, was scheduled for hearing on January 19, 2015.

Press Freedoms: Independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views. Nevertheless, the government and the SSF imposed restrictions. On March 18, the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) announced guidelines that require electronic media to broadcast NRM government events and programs free of charge, effective April 8. On March 23, the government instituted new regulations for practicing journalists and revised the Journalism Code of Ethics. According to the new regulations, journalists are required to pay 200,000 shillings (\$75) for a certificate to practice and 100,000 shillings (\$37) for each annual renewal. Media houses that failed to comply risked losing their licenses. On March 28, the Human Rights Network for Journalists criticized the new regulations, stating that they infringed on press freedom and permitted excessive state interference in media operations.

The UPF's Media Crimes Unit closely monitored all radio, television, and print media, and the SSF subjected numerous journalists to harassment, intimidation, and arrest. Although there were a number of private, rural radio stations, government officials and ruling party members owned many of them and imposed reporting restrictions.

Violence and Harassment: The SSF arrested, assaulted, harassed, and intimidated journalists. In July the Human Rights Network for Journalists (HRNJ) reported that, although it lodged over a dozen complaints with the SIU against errant police officers, authorities took no appropriate remedial actions in most cases.

Police arrested and detained several journalists on allegations of disobeying lawful orders, criminal trespass, and obstruction of the law.

On September 2, police in Kampala arrested and imprisoned Adrian Bwanika Bbaale, a journalist with the government-owned newspaper *New Vision*, for disobeying orders from a police officer on duty. Bbaale was reportedly covering a story involving a land dispute. He claimed police manhandled him during the arrest and confiscated his camera. On September 23, the court held a hearing. On October 7, the DPP withdrew the charges, and Bbaale was released.

A hearing on a February petition challenging the indefinite suspension of the right of *The Observer* journalists Tash Lumu and Sulaiman Kakaire to cover legislative proceedings was pending in the Constitutional Court.

The July 2013 case against Tadius Katalemwa, a teacher at Old Kampala Secondary School, for assaulting Mathais Sebwatto, a Bukedde Television reporter, was pending hearing at year's end.

On August 12, the UHRC Tribunal started hearing the case of Gideon Tugume, a former journalist with Capital Radio, who accused police of shooting and injuring him while he covered the 2011 return of former FDC leader Kizza Besigye from Nairobi. The case was pending at year's end.

Censorship or Content Restrictions: To avoid government intimidation or harassment, many print and broadcast journalists practiced self-censorship, particularly when reporting on President Museveni, the first family, senior members of the ruling NRM party, the SSF, or the exploration and use of oil resources. Many rural radio stations claimed unnamed government officials ordered them to deny broadcast time to opposition politicians, and police questioned several radio hosts for having opposition members on their shows. Media activists reported authorities censored the footage, especially of protests or demonstrations.

The government prevented some independent and government-owned television and radio stations from hosting opposition political candidates critical of the government. For example, on March 29, police in Kasese blocked the president of the FDC, General Muntu and two National Assembly members from the Kasese District, Winnie Kiiza and Yokasi Bihande, from taking part in a talk show on Guide Radio. The three participated in the program for 25 minutes when police ordered them out of the studio. Police claimed the participants were inciting violence but provided no evidence to support the claim.

On June 25, a Buganda Road magistrate's court barred journalists from covering the trial of Ronald Poteri, a police detective who was accused of stealing recordings of investigations from Inspector General of Police Kale Kayihura and leaking them to the public. The prosecution sought an "in camera" trial on grounds the case dealt with sensitive security issues that could cause disorder within the police and cabinet. On October 18, the High Court canceled the decision and ordered the magistrate's court to conduct a retrial of the case in open court accessible to journalists. On December 9, the director of public prosecutions dropped the charges against Poteri, saying the government had lost interest in the case.

There were no reports of developments in the May 2013 case in which *Daily Monitor* managing editor Don Wanyama and journalists Richard Wanambwa and Residel Kasasira were charged with "refusal to cooperate

and divulge information" relating to a classified government letter to authorities. An appeal challenging the May 2013 court order directing the newspaper to hand over the letter was pending. The journalists remained free on bail.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports authorities interfered with the publication of books critical of President Museveni.

The HRNJ reported that the government initiated the dismissal of several journalists who hosted panelists on radio talk shows and were critical of the government's electoral reform efforts. For example, in August the management of Kabale-based Hope FM radio dismissed journalist Goodluck Musinguzi for hosting former FDC president Besigye. The Kabale resident district commissioner, Darius Nandida, had previously issued an order banning opposition politicians from appearing on radio stations based in the district.

Libel Laws/National Security: Authorities used libel laws to suppress criticism of government officials. For example, on March 19, the Media Council of Uganda summoned Uganda Radio Network staffer Tom Malaba after he reported the minister of state for tourism, Agnes Akiror Egungu, had plotted to seize property belonging to a deceased person. Alleging defamation and malice, Egungu reportedly petitioned the council to charge Malaba with professional misconduct, suspend his practicing certificate for six months, and order him to pay compensatory damages. A ruling on the case was pending at year's end.

Authorities and the SSF also prevented journalists from covering public events they considered sensitive. For example, on January 29, the general court martial chairman, Brigadier Moses Ddiba Ssentongo, blocked the media from covering the trial of the former commander of the Ugandan contingent in Somalia, Michael Ondonga. Ssentongo claimed that press coverage of the trial would jeopardize the country's mission in Somalia under AMISOM. The military court charged Ondonga with various offenses that allegedly resulted in loss of lives and army equipment, diversion of fuel, and loss of troop morale between in 2012-13.

Several libel cases from previous years came to trial. For example, on October 3, a court in Kalangala District found Central Broadcasting Station journalist Ronald Ssemuusi guilty of defamation. The prosecution alleged Ssemuusi defamed the chair of Kalangala District, Daniel Kikoola, when he reported Kikoola's involvement in the 2011 theft of solar panels intended for the district offices. On October 22, Ssemuusi filed an appeal in the high court, and a hearing was pending at year's end.

Internet Freedom

There were no reports the government attempted to restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content. The government monitored internet communication in accordance with the Antiterrorism Act and the Regulation of Interception of Communications Bill (see section 1.f.). According to the July Uganda Telecommunications Market report, approximately 22 percent of the population used the internet during the year.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

The government restricted academic freedom. Research clearance was required in certain academic areas, such as history and political science, and there were reported delays in the process. Academic lecturers reported authorities required permission to conduct public dialogue meetings at universities. They also claimed security operatives monitored public lectures. Officials from Makerere University reported authorities attempted to influence academic appointments, especially in government universities.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

While the constitution provides for freedoms of assembly and association, the government did not respect these rights. In 2013 the government passed the Public Order Management Act, which defines the process by which citizens may organize public meetings and political rallies. Under the act the UPF retains arbitrary authority to prevent gatherings from being held. The act also places a significant bureaucratic burden on those wishing to organize or host gatherings, and the UPF routinely denied permission on technicalities. In some instances the UPF either gave no official response to requests to hold public meetings or instructed applicants not to assemble.

Opposition political parties, NRM party members critical of Museveni and his continued rule, and civil society critics claimed they were singled out for restriction of their right to assemble. The media also reported several cases in which police actively facilitated meetings organized by supporters of President Museveni. Early in the year, opposition leaders and civil society activists complained police illegally blocked opposition gatherings

focused on electoral reforms. For example, in March electoral reform meetings in Mbale, Soroti, Kabale, and Kasese were blocked on the disputed ground that organizers did not seek police permission (see section 3). On April 3, authorities agreed not to interfere with the campaign for electoral reforms following a meeting with opposition and civic leaders in Kampala. The opposition and civil society leaders subsequently held a series of regional town hall meetings throughout the country without significant incident.

Police claimed the powers of “preventive arrest” under the law, which broadly gives them power to prevent and detect crime. The law specifically tasks police proactively to remove and detain persons to prevent them from committing an offense or engaging in other acts that would cause harm to themselves, other persons, or property. Police preventively arrested several opposition leaders during attempts to hold meetings and processions in Kampala and later released them. For example, on March 19, police in Kampala surrounded the homes of former FDC leader Besigye and the mayor of Kampala, Erias Lukwago, to stop them from participating in a rally organized by the outlawed civil society group For God and My Country (4GC) (see section 1.d.).

Police often used excessive force to disperse opposition activists, students, and workers. For example, on March 23, an unidentified man was injured when police used tear gas to disperse persons who had gathered to attend an opposition meeting on electoral reforms in Soroti District. Police said they were under strict instruction to prevent the meeting.

Police arrested more than 20 persons for unlawful assembly in various districts, including Sembabule, Kabarole, Oyam, Otuke, Kampala, and Kabarole. For example, on June 17, police in Kampala arrested two youths, Robert Mayanja and Norman Tumuhimbise, for unlawful assembly. The youths reportedly brought two piglets painted yellow (the ruling party’s color) into parliamentary premises to protest and demonstrate their displeasure with the level of unemployment and poverty in the country. On July 4, a court charged the suspects with criminal trespass and interrupting parliamentary business and released them on bail. The case was pending at year’s end.

There were developments in cases from previous years. On August 13, the DPP dropped unlawful assembly charges against Besigye and Kampala mayor Lukwago. The prosecution alleged Besigye, Lukwago, and others still at large identified themselves as members of the illegal 4GC civil society group while at Katonga Road in Kampala in July 2013. On August 14, Besigye and Lukwago appeared in a court in Kabale on separate charges of inciting violence; prosecutors alleged they organized an outlawed 4GC public rally in 2012. The case was pending at year’s end.

There were no reports of progress in the August 2013 case against 11 university students accused of participating in unlawful assembly and inciting violence. The suspects remained free on bail at year’s end.

Police in Kampala blocked opposition members and activists from participating in processions. On several occasions police confined former FDC leader Besigye and other opposition leaders to their residences to prevent them from participating in protests.

Police blocked labor union meetings (see section 7).

Freedom of Association

While the constitution and law provide for freedom of association, the government did not always respect this right. The law limits NGO activity and requires NGOs seeking registration to obtain letters of approval from local government and community officials. Official registration affords some legal protections and enables NGOs to open local bank accounts. The NGO Board, a government regulatory body that approves NGO registrations, reports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and is composed of representatives from various government ministries, including the security services. Discriminatory aspects of the law prevented LGBT organizations from registering as NGOs (see section 6). In September 2013 the board began requiring all NGOs to reregister in a move to update the national NGO registry. The board increasingly scrutinized the work of NGOs it believed were involved in advocacy rather than service delivery.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State’s *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The government at times limited these rights.

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

Foreign Travel: A married woman must obtain her husband's written permission on her passport application to list children on her passport.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Torrential rains and floods resulted in IDPs. For example, in May an estimated 6,500 persons were temporarily displaced in Kasese District, Western Region, but they later returned to their homes.

Protection of Refugees

Access to Asylum: The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. As of November 24, the UNHCR in partnership with the government had registered an estimated 405,000 refugees and asylum seekers of different nationalities. While the majority were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, other countries of origin included Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi. The government provided adequate protection to refugees, including temporary protection, resettlement, and other long-term solutions. The government made progress in clearing a backlog of asylum requests.

The government did not implement the UNHCR's 2012-13 recommendation to implement a cessation clause and lift the blanket refugee status conferred on approximately 16,000 Rwandan refugees who arrived in Uganda prior to 1999. The government resisted locally integrating long-staying refugees, including the Rwandan refugees.

Refoulement: In October 2013 the government expelled a high-profile Rwandan refugee, Joel Mutabazi (a former bodyguard for Rwandan President Paul Kagame), and handed him over to Rwandan security forces despite his refugee status. The officer in charge, Joel Aguma, was suspended for his role in the affair, although a police investigation had not produced findings more than a year later.

Access to Basic Services: The government granted refugees, without charge, the same access as citizens to public health, education, and other services. There were anecdotal reports of discrimination against some refugees seeking services due to language barriers or xenophobia. The Refugee Commission of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the UNHCR, its implementing partners, and other NGOs worked to reduce barriers to access.

On March 14, in the wake of the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), the government ordered the suspension of the Refugee Law Project (RLP), a legal aid organization based at Kampala's Makerere University School of Law that provided services to refugees, including victims of gender-based and sexual violence, across Uganda. The suspension continued at year's end, despite the annulment of the AHA in August. Humanitarian partners estimated the government's suspension of the RLP prevented thousands of minority members and vulnerable refugees from receiving legal, medical, and other assistance.

Durable Solutions: The government did not accept refugees for resettlement from third countries, but it facilitated UNHCR efforts to resettle refugees in third countries. The government assisted the safe and voluntary return of refugees to their homes. Between January and September, the government assisted the UNHCR in the voluntary repatriation of 31 refugees to Rwanda and 1,204 refugees to the DRC.

Section 3. Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to change their government through free and fair elections. The 2011 presidential and National Assembly elections marked an improvement over previous elections but were marred by serious irregularities.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: In 2011 the country held its fourth (second multi-party) presidential and legislative election since President Museveni came to power in 1986. President Museveni won re-election with 68 percent of the vote. Kizza Besigye, the FDC president, finished second with 26 percent. The ruling NRM party captured approximately 75 percent of the seats in the 375-member unicameral National Assembly (at year's end there were 386 members). While the elections and campaign period were generally peaceful, domestic and international election observers noted several serious irregularities. Problems included the diversion of government resources before and during the elections for partisan gain, unfair access to the media for NRM candidates and restrictions on access for opposition candidates, the heavy deployment of the SSF on election day, government intimidation, disorganized polling stations, and the absence of many voters' names from voter rolls. In addition, opposition parties claimed that the Electoral Commission lacked independence.

Political Parties and Political Participation: There were approximately 30 registered parties at year's end, following the Electoral Commission's April deregistration of 10 parties for violating the 2005 Political Parties Organization Act. The affected parties included the Action Party, the Bridge Party, the Movement for Democratic Change, the Movement Volunteer Mobilisers Organization, the National Redemption Party, New Order Democracy, the Peoples Independent Party, the Progressive Alliance Party, the Reform Party, and the Uganda Mandate Party. The Electoral Commission reported the parties failed to submit annual audits for 2005 through 2011. In addition, the parties failed to submit declarations of assets and liabilities for the same period and failed to hold delegates' conferences to elect executive members as required under the law.

The ruling NRM party operated without restriction, regularly holding rallies and conducting political activities. Authorities occasionally restricted the activities of the main opposition parties by refusing them permission to hold public demonstrations and preventing opposition leaders from appearing on local radio stations. Police used tear gas to disperse rallies of opposition leaders. For example, on March 22 and 23, several persons were injured when police used tear gas and fired live bullets to disperse a crowd that had gathered for a town hall meeting on electoral reforms in Mbale District. Police also arrested several persons, including a National Assembly member from Mbale Municipality, Jack Wamai, but later released them without charge. The government took no action to follow up on the injured (see section 2.b.).

There were developments in the November 2013 impeachment case against Kampala mayor Lukwago. On February 4, Attorney General Peter Nyombi applied to have Constitutional Court judge Vincent Nyanzi recuse himself from hearing the legal challenge of the impeachment on grounds Nyanzi was biased. On February 7, following Nyanzi's refusal to recuse himself, Nyombi appealed to the Court of Appeal, which had not ruled on the matter. On March 28, Justice Lydia Mugambe of the High Court ordered the Electoral Commission to halt all preparations for a mayoral by-election until Justice Nyanzi adjudicated Lukwago's legal challenge against the tribunal report. On March 31, a single justice of the Court of Appeal, Stephen Kavuma, reversed Mugambe's ruling. On April 1, Lukwago's lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court, seeking a reversal of Kavuma's ruling, but the court advised Lukwago to ask a fully constituted court of appeal to "review" the (single justice) ruling by Kavuma.

Police arrested several opposition leaders during the year. For example, on August 4, police in Kampala arrested and later released without charge the president of the Conservative Party, Ken Lukyamuzi, for assembling an illegal rally and inciting violence. Lukyamuzi was scheduled to address persons who were evicted from the railroad corridors in Ndeeba, a suburb of Kampala.

Participation of Women and Minorities: There were 22 female ministers in the president's 75-member cabinet. The speaker of the National Assembly and the inspector of government, who headed the leading government anticorruption investigative body, were women. There were 135 women in the 386-member National Assembly. The law requires elections for seats reserved for special interest groups: 112 for women, five for organized labor, five for persons with disabilities, five for youth, and 10 for the UPDF. An opaque "electoral college" process organized by a single government-supported NGO selected the five persons with disabilities. There was no minority representation in the National Assembly.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption. The government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. In April the auditor general's annual report for the year ending in June 2013 stated the government lost 300 billion shillings (\$111 million) through theft of public funds, mismanagement, and dubious deals. The report to the National Assembly attributed the losses to irregular payments to contractors, refunds to donors for stolen money, and court awards and compensation; it did not include other common allegations, such as mismanagement and theft.

Police arrested and suspended several police officers implicated in bribery, extortion, and corruption. Authorities arrested several magistrates and judicial officials for forgery as well as for soliciting and receiving bribes.

Corruption: Government agencies responsible for combating corruption included the inspector of government, the DPP, the Anticorruption Division (ACD) of the High Court, the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee, the police Criminal Investigation Division, the Office of the Auditor General, and the Directorate for Ethics and Integrity. There was weak political will to combat corruption at the highest levels of government, and many corruption cases remained pending for years. The ACD had four judges and three magistrates. Since its 2009 inception, the ACD heard more than 1,000 corruption cases, of which 624 were concluded; several involved senior-level officials.

In July 2013 the Constitutional Court halted all ACD operations following a petition, filed in January, challenging the constitutionality of its structure. In September 2013 the Constitutional Court started hearing the petition and in December 2013 the court ruled 4-1 the ACD was legally constituted.

On January 7, the ACD reopened and started hearing cases, including the 2012 pension scam in which Jimmy Lwamafa, the suspended permanent secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, and seven others were charged with causing government financial losses of more than 165 billion shillings (\$61 million) by creating 2,605 ghost pensioners. Another new case was that of jailed former chief accountant in the OPM, Godfrey Kazinda, and three others on trial for alleged embezzlement, false accounting, forgery, conspiracy, and causing financial loss to the government. Kazinda was already serving a five-year prison sentence. The government ignored the National Assembly's call to investigate and prosecute former OPM permanent secretary Pius Birigimana, who presided over the thefts.

On September 1, after the *New Vision* newspaper published numerous detailed stories, police in Kampala questioned four suspended officials of the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) over the controversy surrounding the tender for construction of the 74-kilometer road from Mukono to Katosi, a project in which the government lost some of its 24.7 billion shillings (\$9.3 million) advance payment. On August 29, the UNRA governing board suspended executive director Ssebuga Kimeze, director of finance Joe Semugoomu, director of planning David Luyimbazi, and director for legal counsel Marvin Baryaruha. Investigations in the matter were pending at year's end.

There were developments in 2013 corruption cases. For example, on July 17, the ACD found John Muwanguzi Kashaka, the former permanent secretary in the Ministry of Local Government, and five others guilty of causing financial loss of more than 4.2 billion shillings (\$1.5 million) to the government in a deal to procure 70,000 bicycles from India. The court sentenced Kashaka along with principal accountant Henry Bamutura to 10 years in prison and ordered them to contribute to the refund of the money stolen from the government. The court also sentenced principal accountant Robert Mwebaze to six years' imprisonment, principal procurement officer Sam Emorut to six years in prison, consultant Timothy Musherure to 20 months' incarceration, and Adam Bond Alum to a one-year term. The court further banned the convicted men from government employment for 10 years. On July 21, Kashaka appealed the 10-year sentence but remained on remand in prison. On November 25, the Court of Appeal released Kashaka on bail pending hearing and determination of his appeal.

The Constitutional Court petition filed against Kampala mayor Lukwago, which accused him of neglecting his official accounting duties when he failed to ensure the proper expenditure of the ministry's funds, was pending hearing at year's end (see section 3). Lukwago applied to the Constitutional Court for an injunction to suspend hearing of the case, arguing the ACD proceedings contravened the July 2013 Constitutional Court interim order that stayed ACD operations.

Financial Disclosure: The law provides that a person shall disclose information within three months of becoming an elected official or assuming public office and thereafter in December every two years. The government selectively enforced financial disclosure laws, under which an estimated 28,000 public officials are subject to biannual reporting requirements, which apply to spouses and dependent children as well. Public officers are required to disclose their income and assets upon assuming and leaving office. The inspector of government is responsible for monitoring compliance. Penalties for noncompliance include a warning or caution, demotion, dismissal, and/or administrative leave from office. For example, authorities dismissed National Assembly member Ken Lukyamuzi from the seventh National Assembly (2001-06) for noncompliance. He was re-elected to the ninth National Assembly (2011-16) and was permitted to take his seat after filing financial disclosure documents. According to the inspector of government, 19,886 officials reported in the 2013-14 cycle, including those from previous cycles who had not submitted their forms. Although the law requires public disclosure, authorities did not make the reports public.

Public Access to Information: The law provides for public access to government information, but the government rarely provided such access. The law allows individuals to petition any government department to access information. The Secrecy Act, however, bars public servants from revealing information.

The law provides that requesters pay 20,000 shillings (\$8) to access information held by the government. Under the law information can be denied on security or sovereignty grounds, and the law provides for redress through internal dispute resolution processes or courts. The HRNJ reported that government officials often used the Public Service Standing Orders on Dissemination of Information to deny journalists vital information, especially about public spending.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Local LGBT-related NGOs were denied official status due to the discriminatory law preventing their registration.

The government was increasingly unresponsive to concerns of local and international human rights organizations. In May unknown persons broke into several civil society organizations and stole office equipment and sensitive internal information and records. Targeted organizations included the Uganda Land Alliance, the Uganda Human Rights Network, Action Aid, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, and the Anticorruption Coalition. Noting that the robberies only targeted civil society organizations dealing with human rights and corruption, the organizations complained to Inspector General of the Police Kayihura over police failure to investigate fully and produce reports on the break-ins. No reports were produced by year's end.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The UHRC is a constitutionally mandated institution with quasi-judicial powers to investigate allegations of human rights abuses and award compensation to abuse victims. The president appointed its seven-member board, and observers criticized the commission for its weak leadership and political interference. Under the law the UHRC may subpoena information, direct the release of detainees, and order the payment of compensation for abuses. The UHRC pursued suspected human rights abusers, including in the military and police forces, and had branches countrywide. Its resources were inadequate to investigate all the complaints it received, and it lacked political will to investigate or identify senior-level perpetrators of abuses.

In its June 2013 annual report, the UHRC reported registering 720 human rights complaints against 714 individuals, including 55 UPDF members, 424 police officers, 29 local government officials, 36 prison wardens, and 163 private citizens. Of the 720 complaints, 33 percent involved allegations of torture or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment and punishment (see section 1.c.).

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status but is silent on sexual orientation and gender identity. The penal code, however, prohibits "unnatural offenses." The government did not enforce the law in matters of locally or culturally prevalent discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities, or certain ethnic groups.

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape, including spousal rape, which is punishable by life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Rape remained a serious problem throughout the country, and the government did not consistently enforce the law. Although the government arrested, prosecuted, and convicted persons for rape, the crime was seriously underreported, and authorities did not investigate most cases. Police lacked the criminal forensic capacity to collect evidence, which hampered prosecution and conviction. The 2013 police crime report registered 1,042 rape cases throughout the country, of which 365 were tried. Of these, 11 convictions were secured, with sentences ranging from three years to life imprisonment; 11 cases were dismissed; and 343 cases were still pending in court at year's end.

The law criminalizes domestic violence and provides penalties for abusers, ranging from fines to two years' imprisonment. Women's rights activists, however, were concerned the law was not enforced. The 2013 UPF annual crime report listed 315 reported cases of domestic violence, an increase of 164 from 154 cases in 2012.

Domestic violence against women remained widespread. According to the 2011 *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, at least 27 percent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 experienced some form of domestic violence during the year prior to the survey. The same survey showed at least 56 percent of married women reported having experienced some form of domestic violence during their marital life.

A 2012 report by the Center for Basic Research, a local research NGO, reported that 70 percent of women interviewed from eastern and northern regions had been beaten by their husbands. In addition the findings indicated 17 percent of the same women had been raped, 23 percent forced into marriage, 1 percent denied inheritance rights, and 10 percent denied political rights.

Many law enforcement officials viewed wife beating as a husband's prerogative, as did the majority of the population, and police rarely intervened in cases of domestic violence. Between January and September, the government arrested 21 persons for domestic violence offenses. For example, on January 15, a court in Entebbe, Wakiso District sentenced Emmanuel Drazua to death for killing his wife, Erina Amaite, following a domestic dispute in August 2013.

Local NGOs operated hotlines in 11 districts, including Kampala, Mukono, and Jinja. The government worked with local NGOs to strengthen understanding of domestic violence as a human rights abuse. The Center for Domestic Violence and Prevention sponsored four police training courses focused on gender-based violence. On May 30, the center conducted training for 30 police officers in Jinja District to increase UPF knowledge of human rights, gender inequality, and violence against women and children.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law and constitution prohibit FGM/C and establish a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. The government, women's groups, and international organizations continued to combat the practice through education. These programs, which received some support from local leaders, emphasized close cooperation with traditional authority figures and peer counseling. Nevertheless, the Sabinu ethnic group in rural Kapchorwa District and the Pokot ethnic group along the northeastern border with Kenya continued to practice FGM/C (see section 6, Children). Per the World Health Organization FGM/C categories, the Sabinu practiced types I and II, and the Pokot practiced type III.

According to the most recent 2011 *Uganda Demographic Health Survey*, the estimated prevalence of FGM/C in girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49 was 1.4 percent.

In November the Reproductive Education and Community Health program, a local NGO that monitored the prevalence of FGM/C, received reports that 37 women were victims of the practice during the year.

In February the government worked with local and international agencies to celebrate the FGM/C Zero Tolerance Day in Moroto District.

Sexual Harassment: The law criminalizes sexual harassment and provides for penalties of up to 14 years' imprisonment, but authorities did not effectively enforce it. Sexual harassment was a serious and widespread problem in schools, universities, and workplaces.

Reproductive Rights: There are no laws restricting couples or individuals from deciding the number, spacing, and timing of their children. There are no laws restricting access to reproductive information or otherwise limiting the right to attain the highest standard of reproductive health through discrimination, coercion, and violence. Family planning information and assistance were difficult to obtain, however, particularly in rural areas, where there were few health clinics. Eighteen percent of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 used a modern method of contraception. Women also faced challenges of religious restrictions imposed by their faiths.

UN Population Fund (UNFPA) officials reported the maternal mortality rate rose to 438 per 100,000 live births, compared with 435 in 2012. Skilled health personnel attended 42 percent of births. Health officials attributed the high maternal mortality rate to medical complications related to excessive bleeding after birth, obstructed labor, high blood pressure, malaria, a shortage of staff to attend to mothers, and delivery outside of health facilities. Other factors included early pregnancy in adolescents, AIDS-related deaths, and limited capacity of health facilities to manage complications.

Discrimination: The law invests women with the same legal status and rights as men. Discrimination against women, however, continued to be widespread, especially in rural areas. Many customary laws discriminate against women in adoption, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Under local customary law in many areas, women may not own or inherit property or retain custody of their children. Traditional divorce law in many areas requires women to meet stricter evidentiary standards than men to prove adultery. Polygyny is legal under both customary and Islamic law. In some ethnic groups, men can "inherit" the widows of their deceased brothers.

Women and girls had equal access to educational opportunities, but women experienced economic discrimination in access to employment, credit, income, business ownership, and senior or managerial positions. The law provides that "every employer shall pay males and females equal remuneration for work of

equal value." A 2009 study by the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, however, found women were disadvantaged in the labor market and their monthly wage was approximately 30 percent less than the average wage of men. The gender pay gap narrowed as women advanced in their careers and acquired more experience and power (see section 7.d.).

Eliminating gender inequality remained a high priority for both the central and local governments. For example, in February the Alur king, Phiolip Olarkar Rauni II, in West Nile Region abolished widow inheritance in the kingdom. On July 4, the Butaleja District administration in eastern Uganda passed the Bridal Gift Ordinance, which prohibits the demand for or refund of a bride price. The government, in conjunction with NGOs and women's rights groups, sponsored workshops and training sessions throughout the country to increase awareness of women's rights.

Children

Birth Registration: The law accords citizenship to children born in or outside the country if at least one parent or grandparent holds Ugandan citizenship at the time of the child's birth. Abandoned children under the age of 18 with no known parents are considered citizens, as are children under the age of 18 adopted by Ugandan parents.

The law requires citizens to register a birth within three months. According to the 2011 *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, only 29 percent of rural and 38 percent of urban births were registered. Lack of birth registration generally did not result in denial of public services. Many primary schools, however, required birth certificates for enrollment, especially those in urban centers. Enrollment in secondary schools, university, and other tertiary institutions required birth certificates. In 2011 the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), the government agency responsible for recording births and deaths, established a computerized system, known as the Mobile Vital Records System, which used mobile telephones to deliver timely and accurate records. The system enabled officials to send details of births and deaths as a text message to the central server at URSB headquarters in Kampala. URSB officials reported that between July 2013 and September 2014, an estimated 570,367 children under the age of five were registered. The records system operated in 135 hospitals in 58 districts.

Education: The law provides for basic education, which is the responsibility of the state and the parents of the child. The government provided free universal primary education to four children per family as well as universal secondary education, although parents are required to provide lunch and schooling materials for children in secondary school. The programs provide seven years of primary education and six years of secondary education.

Child Abuse: Child abuse remained a serious problem, particularly rape and sexual abuse of girls, and recorded cases greatly understated the prevalence of the problem. Perpetrators of sexual abuse often were family members, neighbors, or teachers.

The law considers sexual contact outside marriage with girls under the age of 18, regardless of consent or age of the perpetrator, as "defilement," which carries a maximum penalty of death. Such cases often were settled by a payment to the girl's parents. According to the 2013 annual police crime report, defilement remained the most common crime committed against children, with 9,598 cases recorded. The report also registered 1,042 cases of rape, 187 of child trafficking, 12 of child sacrifice, 11,519 of child neglect, 3,541 of child desertion, 1,332 of child abuse and torture, 1,061 of kidnapping, 82 of infanticide, and 250 of other sexual-related offenses, including assault and incest. The government worked with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and NGOs, including Save the Children, Child Fund, and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), to combat child abuse.

On June 16, the government launched a national child helpline--code 116--to enable children to report cases of abuse. The UPF provided free rape and defilement medical examinations throughout the country to assist investigations. Victims of rape and defilement received free medical examinations at Mulago Hospital in Kampala.

Corporal punishment remained a problem in some schools and sometimes resulted in permanent injuries. For example, on May 14, Lilah Babiye, a parent of Naswif Katongole, filed a suit in the High Court against Sir Apollo Kaggwa Primary School. In the suit, Babiye alleged two teachers of the school, Joseph Owino and Garace Lumu, assaulted Katongole, who developed sharp pains in the waist, psychological impairment, and mobility complications. Hearing of the suit was pending.

In 2012 the government newspaper *Saturday Vision* reported corporal punishment was pervasive in primary schools in the greater Kampala area, despite a government directive prohibiting the practice. The report indicated that, in 29 of the 30 schools surveyed in greater Kampala, pupils were caned for offenses ranging from giving wrong answers to speaking in their vernacular language instead of English.

There were no developments in the September 2013 case against Stanley Tusubira, a teacher at Miracle Academy School who allegedly beat a seventh-grade pupil to death for stealing 3,000 shillings (\$1.20).

Early and Forced Marriage: The legal minimum age for marriage is 18, but authorities did not enforce the law. Marriage of underage girls by parental arrangement was common, particularly in rural areas. Local NGOs and the police Family and Children Unit reported some parents arranged such marriages or sexual arrangements for girls as young as 12 due to poverty. According to the UNFPA, the prevalence rate for early and forced marriage was approximately 46 percent for girls who were 15 and older. According to the 2013 *African Human Social Development Report*, thousands of minors were lured or forced into early marriages. A March police probe into child marriages in the eastern Teso Region showed girls were sold to suitors for as little as 50,000 shillings (\$18).

On March 15, police in Butaleja District, Eastern Region, arrested nine persons for attempting to marry a 12-year-old girl to a 45-year-old man. Hearing of the case was pending at year's end.

In July and August, several local district governments in Karamoja and Busoga regions launched a campaign, End Early Marriages, in partnership with other child rights NGOs.

There were no developments in the August 2013 case of Saleh Kawanga, a resident of Namugongo, who was accused of marrying a fifth-grade student after he paid 50,000 shillings (\$18) to her mother as a dowry.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law and constitution prohibit FGM/C and other related activities and establishes a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for violations. On July 12, police in Moroto District arrested 13 persons for perpetrating FGM/C on seven girls between the ages of nine and 12 in Lonyik village, Tapac Subcounty. On July 16, a court in Moroto sentenced Namuton Namon, a local surgeon, to 10 years' imprisonment for practicing FGM/C. The court charged a second suspect, Nakong Nakuwam, with coercing girls into submitting to FGM/C and sentenced him to three years in prison. The court charged 11 parents with aiding, procuring, and coercing their daughters into the practice. The court remanded the suspects to prison, and hearing of the case was pending.

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: The law and constitution prohibit cultures, customs, and traditions that are against the dignity, welfare, or interest of children. There were numerous reports of ritual sacrifice of children during the year. The office in charge of monitoring Human Sacrifice and Trafficking in Persons registered nine cases between January and October. The government took steps to address the problem. For example, on September 30, police in Lwengo arrested Fred Kamuntu, Joyce Kamuntu, and Rogers Mutesasira for the ritual killing of 13-year-old Kennedy Kayibanda in Mayira village. Police detained the suspects at Mbirizi police station, and an investigation was pending at year's end.

There were developments in previous ritual sacrifice cases. For example, on June 12, the Court of Appeal upheld the conviction and life sentence of businessperson Kato Kajubi for killing a 12-year-old boy in 2008.

The government conducted a media campaign to raise awareness and training programs for security personnel.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: While the law prohibits sexual exploitation of children, the government did not enforce the law effectively, and the problem was extensive. The minimum age for consensual sex is 18 years. Defilement, which refers to any sexual contact with a minor, carries a maximum penalty of death. Such cases often were settled by a payment to the girl's parents. The law prohibits child pornography. On February 6, the president signed into law the Antipornography Bill.

Child prostitution was a problem. The local NGO Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) estimated at least 18,000 girls and women were engaged in sex work across the country. Police arrested several persons for practicing prostitution, but there were no reports of convictions at year's end.

Child Soldiers: Although LRA members who were abducted as children continued to leave the LRA and return home, an estimated 150 LRA fighters remained in the region. Despite a significant reduction in LRA size since 2008 due to military operations, the LRA continued to hold women and children against their will and to abduct children from neighboring countries. Abductees were usually held for a few hours or days and used as porters, as opposed to prior practices of long-term abductions for use as soldiers. The government led regional efforts, backed by an African Union-mandated mission, to counter the influence of the LRA in coordination with South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the DRC. In July, AMISOM initiated investigations into alleged use of child soldiers in its ranks. This followed a May report by the UN alleging 14 cases of association of children with AMISOM in various capacities, including to man checkpoints and as cooks. More than 6,000 UPDF soldiers served with the mission.

Infanticide or Infanticide of Children with Disabilities: According to the 2013 annual police crime report, 82 infanticides were reported that year.

Displaced Children: Families from the farming regions of Karamoja sent many children to Kampala during the dry season to find food and work, and most of them ended up begging on the streets. Police routinely rounded up street children and relocated them to a custodial home for juvenile delinquents, where staff attempted to locate the children's families and return them to their homes. According to the July Human Rights Watch Report *Where Do You Want Us to Go*, authorities worked jointly with social workers and community leaders to return 295 Karamojong street children to their homes in Moroto District. The report stated that, of 2,535 recorded street children, 1,906 from Karamoja were resettled and reintegrated. The report accused several government agencies, including police, of perpetrating abuse of and violence against street children. The UPF dismissed the claims, and no investigation was conducted by year's end.

Institutionalized Children: There were reports of abuses in several orphanages. Of the 412 orphanages operating in the country, only 80 were formally registered. The government lacked the ability to manage registration and monitoring of orphanages. According to new regulations issued on May 23, an approved home shall only receive children in an emergency from a police officer or under an interim care order from a judge. All approved homes are required to keep proper accounts, employ a qualified warden and registered nurse, keep health records for each child, and ensure each child is given appropriate education and sleeping facilities.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Anti-Semitism

The Jewish community was small, and there were no reports of anti-Semitic acts.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, and the provision of other state services. The law, however, does not establish penalties for those engaging in discrimination. The government did not enforce the law effectively, and persons with disabilities faced societal discrimination and limited job and educational opportunities. As in the previous year, the UHRC received complaints of discrimination in employment and access to transport and other public services. In February the FHRI noted that persons with disabilities were excluded during UPDF recruitment exercises either because they lacked academic qualification or were perceived as unable to perform (see section 7.d.).

Most schools did not accommodate persons with disabilities. In April 2012 the government launched a program on inclusive education to enhance education of children with disabilities.

The UCC noted a decline in compliance with its requirement for all television programming to carry sign language interpretation. UCC officials reported only five Kampala-based stations partially complied with the requirement, using sign language interpreters only on Sunday. In September 2013 the UCC threatened to revoke the licenses of broadcasting stations if they did not comply, but subsequently took no action against the stations.

In June the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) criticized the government for failure to plan for persons with disabilities in the ongoing national identification card registration process. For example, the NGO noted registration required taking fingerprints, and that no alternate provision for amputees existed.

In April 2013 NUDIPU released a report indicating many courts were inaccessible and did not provide sign language interpreters.

An August 2013 study conducted by architects in Kampala indicated 95 percent of buildings in the city were inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Study findings showed most buildings did not have ramps or elevators.

A July 2012 report released by the National Council on Disability (NCD) indicated 55 percent of persons with disabilities lacked functional literacy skills and only 33 percent had completed grade seven. The report found that children with mental disabilities were sometimes denied food and were tied to trees and beds with ropes to control their movements. The report further stated that the needs of children with autism and learning disabilities were ignored due to an insufficient number of appropriate schools.

The law reserves five seats in the National Assembly for representatives of persons with disabilities. The NCD, however, reported participation by persons with disabilities in elections was minimal because they could not access polling centers due to physical barriers, election materials did not accommodate persons with vision disabilities, and polling stations lacked support services such as guides, helpers, and sign language interpreters. The NCD also noted the civic education offered by the government to citizens was inaccessible to many persons with disabilities, since it was done through electronic and print media.

Government agencies responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities included the Ministry of State for Disabled Persons, the NCD, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, but these entities lacked sufficient funding to undertake any significant initiatives.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

There were isolated reports of violence between ethnic minorities in some parts of the country. On July 21, for example, 20 houses were burned, two persons injured, and several persons displaced following tribal clashes between the immigrant Bahima cattle herders and Alur farmers in Kigorobya Subcounty, Hoima District. Police reported fighting broke out when a farmer found cattle grazing in his cotton field. Police arrested seven persons who allegedly had information about the crime to assist in investigations.

Indigenous People

The government displaced the Batwa ethnic group, which has an estimated 6,700 members, in 1992 when it created Mgahinga National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and Echuya Central Forest Reserve. The displacement compounded challenges faced by the Batwa, including limited access to education, health care, land, and economic opportunities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is illegal, according to a colonial-era law that criminalizes “carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature” and provides for a penalty up to life imprisonment. While authorities did not convict any persons under the law, the government arrested persons for this and related offenses.

On February 24, President Museveni—who called LGBT persons “disgusting”—signed into law the AHA, which the National Assembly passed in 2013. The AHA criminalizes, outlaws, and provides harsh prison terms for same-sex relationships, “promoting” homosexuality, or “aiding and abetting” homosexual acts. On July 29, activists filed a petition in the Constitutional Court seeking to overturn the AHA, claiming the National Assembly passed the law without the necessary quorum and that the law violated the rights of individuals under the constitution. On August 1, the Constitutional Court nullified the law, noting the National Assembly’s speaker had “acted illegally” by not establishing a quorum before its passage.

LGBT persons faced discrimination, legal restrictions, and societal harassment and violence, intimidation, and threats. They were denied access to health services. Several LGBT persons were charged with engaging in “acts against the order of nature” and indecency, and their cases were pending at year’s end. For example, on February 12, police in Masaka District arrested John Sseruwu on charges of performing unnatural acts prohibited under the penal code. Police released Sseruwu on bail, and hearing of the case was pending.

Police arrested several persons following the passage of the AHA, and human rights organizations reported the LGBT community faced increased discrimination.

Authorities targeted several projects suspected of “promoting” homosexuality. For example, on March 14, the minister of relief, disaster preparedness, and refugees, Hilary Onek, suspended the activities of the RLP pending investigation into allegations the project was “promoting” homosexuality. On May 20, the project received a letter from the permanent secretary, signed by the OPM’s commissioner for refugees, extending the suspension of the Kampala office. Despite the nullification of the AHA and the elimination of the basis for any charge, Minister Onek refused to lift the suspension of the RLP.

On April 3, police in Kampala raided a foreign-funded project that offered HIV/AIDS services to patients, including members of the LGBT community, on suspicion the project “promoted” homosexuality. On April 4, the project suspended its activities in the country after authorities arrested a member of its local staff. Police did not produce any information regarding their investigation of the project and in October sent a letter stating they had dropped the case.

In 2013 the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) reported that, of the 15 LGBT organizations that submitted applications, eight were registered with the URSB. The HRAPF confirmed in November that the remaining seven organizations were subsequently registered with the URSB.

In November the HRAPF reported that police dropped the case against Patrick Musoke, a member of Kampus Liberty Uganda, who was arrested on suspicion of engaging in illegal “unnatural acts” in February 2013.

Some religious and political leaders delivered church sermons and wrote articles to lobby the public against LGBT persons. On March 31, the Inter-religious Council of Uganda, with substantial support from the government, held a major rally thanking parliamentarians for passing the AHA. At the rally, President Museveni and other major religious leaders pledged to continue efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals and those who called for LGBT rights.

Unlike in the previous year, the government did not block meetings organized by LGBT groups.

On June 23, the High Court in Kampala dismissed a 2012 petition filed by four LGBT activists accusing the minister of ethics and integrity and the attorney general of illegally closing a workshop organized by Freedom and Roam Uganda in Entebbe in 2012. The court ruled the minister acted in the public interest to protect the moral values of society. The minister reportedly told the court the participants were distributing literature intended to “train and recruit others into homosexuality.” The court ordered the petitioners to compensate the minister. The petitioners have not appealed.

HIV and AIDS Social Stigma

Discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS was common and prevented them from obtaining treatment and support. International and local NGOs, in cooperation with the government, sponsored public awareness campaigns to eliminate the stigma of HIV/AIDS. Counselors encouraged patients to be tested with their partners and family to ensure all received information about HIV/AIDS. Persons with HIV/AIDS formed support groups to promote awareness in their communities.

On May 13, the National Assembly passed the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Bill, which creates a legal framework for the prevention and control of HIV, disclosure of seropositive status to reduce transmissions, testing and counseling services, and prescribes penalties for the intentional spread of HIV. President Museveni signed the bill into law on July 31. Human Rights and HIV/AIDS activists criticized the bill, asserting it represented a dangerous backsliding in the country’s effort to respond to HIV. The activists were concerned about the clause in the bill that criminalizes attempted and intentional transmission of HIV. A person convicted of these offenses faces up to 10 years’ imprisonment or a fine of approximately five million shillings (\$1,850).

NGOs reported many HIV-positive inmates in prison did not have adequate access to antiretroviral medication, especially in rural areas, and that prison officials sometimes subjected HIV-positive inmates to hard labor (see section 7).

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

Mob violence continued to be a problem. Mobs attacked persons suspected of murder, rape, stealing, ritual sacrifice, other crimes, and witchcraft, resulting in deaths. For example, on January 14, a mob in Tororo District stoned to death David Basirio for allegedly robbing and raping a mother and her two daughters in Asinge Village. Investigations into the incident were pending.

Authorities arrested several mob members. On January 8, police in Kasese District arrested five persons, including Patrick Mutanaaba, Lezeo Katungu, and Gerald Kaliwo, for allegedly inciting mob violence against Joakim Bwambale. The suspects accused Bwambale of witchcraft resulting in the death of Alice Makola in January 2013. A hearing of the case was pending.

There were developments in cases involving mob killings from previous years. For example, on May 5, the High Court in Iganga sentenced local Council III Councilor Catherine Abbo and 11 others to 15 years’ imprisonment for killing traditional healers Peter Itazi and Moses Mwidu. According to the prosecution, the group planned to kill the healers following the alleged kidnaping and ritual murder of a four-year-old boy in 2011.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law allows workers, except for “essential” government employees, including police, army, and management-level officials, to form and join independent unions. All unions must be registered under the National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU) or the Central Organization of Free Trade Unions (COFTU). The law does not provide the right to collective bargaining in the public service sector. The law also does not explicitly provide trade union federations and confederations the right to engage in collective bargaining. A document of recognition must be obtained before unions could engage in collective bargaining. The law provides that, in cases where a labor dispute reported to a labor officer is not referred to the Industrial Court within eight weeks from the time the report is made, any or both of the parties to the dispute may refer the dispute to the Industrial Court. On June 26, the Industrial Court reopened after the National Assembly approved six judges to serve on the bench. Due to inadequate funding, however, the court was not operational at year’s end.

The law also empowers the minister of labor to refer disputes to the Industrial Court when one or both parties to a dispute refuse to comply with the recommendations of the report issued by a board of inquiry. In this regard the International Labor Organization (ILO) noted that recourse to compulsory arbitration is acceptable only for workers in essential services, in the strict sense of the term, and public employees engaged in the administration of the state. The law allows unions to conduct activities without interference, prohibits antiunion discrimination by an employer, and provides for reinstatement of workers dismissed for union activity, the right to strike, freedom of association, and the right to bargain collectively.

Labor officials reported that domestic and agricultural workers as well as workers in the informal sector are excluded from protection by the labor laws.

The government did not effectively enforce applicable labor laws. The Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs was not adequately funded and failed to undertake labor inspections.

Freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively were generally not respected, and the government did not always protect these rights. NOTU officials reported that some employers used a “recognition agreement” to allow union operations at the workplace. According to labor activists, government oversight of labor practices was poor and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs was underfunded and understaffed. Labor inspectors were present in only 44 of the 112 districts. Most employers did not give employees written contracts of employment, resulting in lack of job security and union representation.

Worker organizations were independent of the government and political parties. Four members of the ruling NRM party and one independent legislator held the five seats set aside in the National Assembly for workers.

In contrast to information from 2013, NOTU officials confirmed in November the Uganda Public Employees Union was among the public service unions that the government recognized.

There were no reports of government interference in union activity.

As of September 30, local media reported 25 strikes over low salaries, wages, delayed salaries, and poor working conditions. Police occasionally used excessive force to disrupt striking workers. For example, on May 13, antiriot police arrested and later released on bail nine market vendors for participating in unlawful assembly. The vendors had gathered at the premises of the Kampala City Council Authority to seek audience with the executive director to complain about the high market dues imposed by authority officials.

In May 2013 the government and officials from the Federation of Uganda Employers, NOTU, and COFTU signed a National Tripartite Charter intended to serve as a legal framework for improving labor relations and reducing conflicts among employers and employees.

Antiunion discrimination occurred, and labor activists accused several companies of preventing employees from joining unions by denying promotions, not renewing work contracts, and sometimes refusing to recognize unions. For example, NOTU officials cited numerous companies that resisted trade unions, including Chinese companies such as Sinohydro, Pamamok, Tiang Tiang, and Entebbe Highway Express. NOTU officials reported that many workers failed to join trade unions for fear of intimidation and dismissal. NOTU was compiling the names of the companies, and a list was pending at year’s end.

Public service unions, including medical staff and teachers, were able to negotiate salaries and employment terms for members. The government fixed salaries for “essential government employees,” including police, military, and management-level officials.

Labor activists reported some employers ignored the legal requirement to enter into collective bargaining agreements with registered unions. Labor activists also reported some employers resorted to subcontracting and outsourcing services or hired workers temporarily to avoid such agreements. According to NOTU, employers continued to require a document of recognition from a union before they would engage in collective bargaining with it. NOTU reported that 22 collective bargaining agreements were signed during the year.

The Platform for Labor Action was the leading civil society organization involved in the promotion and protection of labor rights in the country. The NGO operated without government restrictions.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children, but does not expressly prohibit prison labor. The law states that prison labor becomes forced only if a worker is “hired out to or placed at the disposal of a private individual, company, or association.” The penalty violating the law against forced or compulsory labor is imprisonment. The 1975 Community Farm Settlement Decree provides that any unemployed able-bodied person may be settled on any farm settlement and required to render service and that violation of the decree is punishable with a fine and imprisonment. The government did not enforce the law.

There were isolated reports of forced labor, particularly in prisons (see section 1.c.). In addition persons being held in pretrial detention engaged in forced labor. Prison officials allegedly hired prisoners to work on private farms and construction sites where they were often overworked. Male prisoners performed arduous physical labor, while female prisoners produced marketable handicrafts, such as woven basketry. Compensation, when paid, generally was very low. Prisoners did not have savings accounts, but prison accounting staff recorded accrued wages in a book, and prisoners had access to these funds.

Forced child labor also occurred, particularly in fishing, agriculture, and domestic service.

Also see the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

Labor regulations regarding children are contradictory. The law prohibits employers from hiring workers below the age of 18 and prohibits children under 14 years from being employed except in light work that does not interfere with the child’s schooling. All children are prohibited from being employed during school hours. In contrast, regulations of the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs permit the employment of children between the ages of 14 and 18. Children who are 15 years and older who have completed their education and do not attend school may work up to seven hours per day, not to exceed 35 hours per week. The law prohibits overtime work for children who are 15 to 17 years of age. The law allows 13-year-old children to engage in “light work,” provided it does not interfere with their education. The law prohibits children from working between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. or from being employed in work that is “injurious to their health, dangerous or hazardous or otherwise unsuitable.” The law provides for government inspection of workplaces, identification of workplace hazards, and other related matters for all workers, including children. Violations of the law on child labor carry a 685,055 shillings (\$253) fine. There have been no convictions under the law since its adoption in 2006. Children’s rights activists reported that children between the ages of five and 18 were employed.

Institutions responsible for enforcing child labor laws and policies included the National Council of Children, the police force’s Child and Family Protection Unit, the Industrial Court, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs. Financial constraints limited efforts. For example, the Industrial Court lacked judges, so the High Court or the magistrates’ courts handled labor disputes. The ministry provided social services to children working in the worst forms of child labor and other vulnerable groups and conducted training for staff, local leaders, and district labor inspectors. The Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs employed approximately 40 district labor officers, who were responsible for reporting on child labor issues. Due to lack of funds and logistical support, district labor officials have not conducted any inspections exclusively for child labor since 2004. During the year officials from the ministry’s Occupational, Safety, and Health Department conducted more than 300 labor inspections with a child labor component in various districts. In February 2013 the ministry’s Child Labor Unit conducted a child-labor mapping exercise in several districts, including Tororo, Jinja, Mayuge, Nakasongola, Kyegegwa, Kabarole, Masindi, Hoima, Kibaale, Bushenyi, and Ishaka. The aim of the exercise was to collect data on the worst forms of child labor, monitor compliance with labor provisions, and establish awareness of child labor among employers and employees. In addition, unit officials disseminated information on child labor policy and the national action plan. A report of the exercise’s findings was pending at year’s end.

The government coordinated its efforts to stop child labor through the National Steering Committee on Child Labor, which included representatives of the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Education and Sports; the Ministry of Local Government; the Ministry of Agriculture; and the Ministry of Health. Other organizations represented included the National Council for Children, the UPF’s Child and Family Protection Unit, the Federation of Uganda Employers, NOTU, COFTU, UNATU, NGOs, journalists, and academics.

The government cooperated with the ILO, foreign governments, and NGOs on several initiatives to combat child labor, including to provide for the education and reintegration of child laborers into their communities. In 2012

the government initiated a national action plan for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. The plan was the first stage of an effort to mobilize policy makers and the public to act against child labor and to intensify popular awareness of the risks and consequences of child labor. Several human rights NGOs continued programs to remove children from hazardous work situations.

Child labor was common, especially in the informal sector. Exploitive and forced child labor predominantly occurred in rural areas in cattle herding, transport, mining, street vending, begging, scrap collecting, stone quarrying, brick making, road construction and repair, car washing, fishing, domestic nanny and housekeeper services, bar or club service work, border smuggling, and commercial farming (including the production of tea, coffee, sugarcane, vanilla, tobacco, rice, cotton, charcoal, and palm oil). In urban areas, children sold small items on the street, worked in shops, begged for money, and were exploited in the commercial sex industry. Many children left school and engaged in agricultural or domestic work to help meet expenses or perform the work of absent or sick parents, a situation common throughout the country. The problem was particularly acute among the large orphan population. According to UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2012* report, 41 percent of child laborers between ages five and 14 were forced to work under poor conditions and poor health and safety standards.

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/findings/.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment or Occupation

The law prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, HIV status, or disability. Some discrimination did occur based on the above categories with respect to employment and occupation. The government did not effectively enforce antidiscrimination laws and regulations with respect to persons with disabilities, and such individuals experienced discrimination in employment (see section 6).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The minimum legal wage was set in 1984 at 6,000 shillings (\$2.21) per month. In 2003 the government and the private sector negotiated a new rate of 54,000 shillings (\$19.98) per month, which the government had not implemented by year's end.

In industries that employed workers on an hourly basis, the normal workweek was 40 hours. The legal maximum workweek is 48 hours, and the maximum workday is 10 hours. The law provides that the workweek may be extended to 56 hours per week, including overtime, with the employee's agreement. An employee may work in excess of 10 hours a day if the average number of hours over a period of three weeks does not exceed 10 hours per day or 56 hours per week. The law provides for an employee who works in excess of 48 hours per week to be paid at a minimum rate of 1.5 times the normal hourly rate for the overtime hours and two times the normal hourly rate for work on public holidays. The law grants employees a 30-minute break during every eight-hour work shift. For every four months of continuous employment, an employee is entitled to seven days of paid annual leave. Many industries paid workers annual bonuses in lieu of overtime. The law allows compulsory overtime for all workers. In 2011 the Uganda Local Government Workers Union petitioned the Constitutional Court, protesting pay discrimination between employees doing the same work. A hearing on the petition was pending at year's end.

The law establishes occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development's Department of Occupational Health and Safety is responsible for enforcement of those regulations. The law covers all workers, including foreign and migrant workers. The law includes provisions for district labor inspectors to "secure the enforcement of legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers while engaged in their work." Labor officials reported OSH standards were reviewed in several sectors, including the production of beer and other beverages, sugar processing, and steel manufacturing.

Authorities did not effectively enforce the law due to a lack of vehicles and financial constraints. As a result the Department of Occupational Health and Safety carried out few inspections during the year. NOTU officials claimed the government favored investors over workers, making it difficult for labor inspectors to enforce the law. NOTU believed there was a deliberate government policy not to prevent violations or improve the wages or working conditions of workers.

NOTU officials reported that employers determined salaries. Sometimes workers were paid as few as 50,000 shillings (\$18) per month. Workers in the informal sector were subject to hazardous working conditions. For example, officials reported workers at Steel Rolling Mills, a major company, were not provided with protective gloves when handling hot metal. Violations of standard wages, overtime pay, or OSH standards were common

in several sectors, including steel fabrication factories, domestic work, and the informal sector. There were no credible estimates available on the number of workers in the informal sector.

NOTU officials recorded two deaths and four injuries during the year due to poor safety practices at several construction projects. Officials reported that, due to the high unemployment rates, workers were unable to remove themselves from situations that endangered their health. The government did not effectively protect employees in this situation due to lack of a policy to address the problem and insufficient monitoring mechanisms.

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