



Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Montenegro

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Head of state: **Filip Vujanović**

Head of government: **Milo Djukanović (replaced Igor Luksić in December)**

Verdicts in war crimes cases were inconsistent with international law. Independent journalists continued to face intimidation and attacks.

Background

Demonstrations against the government's economic and social policies continued throughout the year.

Negotiations on Montenegro's accession to the EU began in June, focusing on the rule of law, including combatting organized crime and high-level corruption.

After October elections, the longstanding ruling Democratic Party of Socialists was only able to form a coalition government with ethnic minority party support. Former President Milo Djukanović became Prime Minister for the sixth time.

Crimes under international law

Prosecution of crimes under international law continued. In some cases proceedings were not fully in line with international standards, and verdicts were inconsistent with international law.

- In January, following a retrial, four former members of the Yugoslav People's Army were convicted and each sentenced to up to four years' imprisonment for war crimes against Croatian prisoners of war and civilians at Morinj camp. The sentences were less than the statutory minimum. Appeals were allowed in July.
- In April, the prosecution appeal against the acquittal in 2011 of army reservists and police officials charged with inhuman treatment of Bosniaks in Bukovica in 1992 was dismissed.

The court found that at the time of the offence, the defendants' actions "did not constitute a criminal act in the eyes of the law", although inhuman treatment was defined as a crime against humanity in the 2003 Criminal Code which ought, under established principles of international law, to have been applied retroactively.

- The retrial of four members of the Yugoslav Army (which succeeded the Yugoslav People's Army) indicted for the murder of six Kosovo Albanians in Kaludjeruski Laz in 1999 started in September.
- In November, nine former police officials were again acquitted of war crimes in a retrial for the enforced disappearance of more than 79 Bosnian refugees in May 1992, on the basis that although they had unlawfully detained the Bosniaks, the defendants were not parties to the international armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Freedom of expression

Prime Minister Igor Luksić publicly criticized NGOs and media opposed to the government. Independent journalists also faced intimidation and threats from private actors.

- In March, Olivera Lakić – a journalist for the independent newspaper Vijesti – was hospitalized after being beaten outside her home. Her reporting on alleged industrial fraud had resulted in the opening of criminal investigations.
- In April, the Supreme State Prosecutor replied to a 2010 request by the NGO Human Rights Action, for information on investigations into 12 unresolved human rights violations, including the murders of journalists and other politically motivated killings. The partial information supplied revealed little progress in investigations.

Discrimination

Discrimination against LGBTI people continued.

- In September three gay men, including an actor and the director of a video against homophobia, were violently attacked by members of a Podgorica football supporters' organization. Despite requests for police protection, actor Todor Vujosević was attacked again in October.

Refugees and migrants

Around 3,200 Kosovo Roma and Ashkali refugees remained in Montenegro. In July, 800 of them were made homeless after a fire at the Konik collective centre, where they had lived since 1999. The refugees protested when they were provided with tents; in November they were inadequately housed in metal containers. Long-term plans for permanent housing to replace the collective centre were delayed.

Montenegro remained a transit route for irregular migrants: of 1,531 new asylum applicants, one was granted asylum and one other subsidiary protection.

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