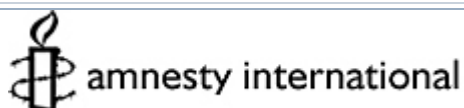


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Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Ghana

Head of state and government: **John Evans Atta Mills**

Death penalty: **abolitionist in practice**

Population: **25 million**

Life expectancy: **64.2 years**

Under-5 mortality: **68.5 per 1,000**

Adult literacy: **66.6 per cent**

Thousands remained under threat of forced eviction. The criminal justice system remained slow, and prisons overcrowded and poorly resourced. Four people were sentenced to death; there were no executions. High levels of violence against women and girls were reported.

Background

The Constitution Review Commission, inaugurated in January 2010 by President Mills to conduct public consultation on the 1992 Constitution, published its report in December. Its recommendations included abolition of the death penalty, and direct enforcement of decisions by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). It also recommended that the powers of the CHRAJ be increased to initiate any investigation within its mandate without formal complaint.

Police and security forces

Violence and unlawful killings by the police and security forces were reported. In June, the UN Committee against Torture expressed concern about impunity for police brutality and excessive use of force, and about the authorities' admission that torture in detention centres was likely.

In February, the police were accused of firing indiscriminately in an attempt to restore order in the Buduburam refugee camp. One person was reportedly killed.

Justice system

There were continued long delays in police and court procedures. Access to legal aid was inadequate and many prisoners spent years awaiting trial. Prisons were overcrowded and under-resourced. The government agreed to increase the budget for food in prison, but by the end of the year this had not yet been implemented.

Death penalty

Four people, including a woman, were sentenced to be hanged for murder. At the end of the year, 138 people were on death row, including four women. No executions were carried out, and in December the Constitutional Review Commission recommended that the death penalty be abolished.

Housing rights

In January, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly announced a plan to demolish structures built next to Accra's disused railways as part of a railway refurbishment project, threatening the forcible eviction of thousands of people. By the end of the year, no forced evictions had been carried out.

In Old Fadama, Ghana's biggest informal settlement in Accra, between 55,000 and 79,000 people continued to live without security of tenure. In previous years, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly repeatedly announced plans to demolish the settlement, but the process had not begun by the end of the year. In September, President Mills publicly committed not to forcibly evict the people living in Old Fadama, and said that discussions were ongoing to relocate people.

Violence against women and girls

High levels of violence against women and girls continued to be reported throughout the country. In December, a member of parliament was arrested on suspicion of raping a 12-year-old girl.

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

Human rights abuses against individuals suspected of same-sex relations continued. On 20 July, Paul Evans Aidoo, the Western Region Minister, ordered security forces to arrest all gay men and lesbians in the west of the country, and called on landlords and tenants to report anyone they suspected of being gay or lesbian.