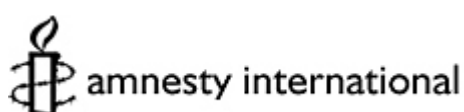


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Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 - Ghana

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

Death penalty: **abolitionist in practice**

Population: **24.3 million**

Life expectancy: **57.1 years**

Under-5 mortality (m/f): **119/115 per 1,000**

Adult literacy: **65.8 per cent**

Threats to freedom of expression grew. Thousands of people were forcibly evicted and thousands remained under threat of forced eviction. The criminal justice system remained slow, and prisons were overcrowded and poorly resourced. Violence against women continued to be pervasive.

Background

A Constitution Review Commission was inaugurated by President Mills in January to conduct public consultations on the 1992 Constitution. It received over 60,000 submissions during the year.

In February, March and April, intra-communal violence in the Bunkpurugu/Yunyoo District of the Northern Region left at least five dead and over 300 houses burned down. Thousands of people fled their homes, some crossing into Togo. At least five people were killed and several houses burned down in May in renewed inter-communal violence in Bawku in the Upper East Region. The ongoing violence prevented local residents from carrying out normal farming and trading activities, resulting in food shortages and leaving approximately 2,000 families in need of food aid.

Freedom of expression

Threats to freedom of expression grew. At least six people were arrested, detained or prosecuted for "causing fear and panic".

- In October, Amina Mohammad was arrested after saying on a local radio station in Tema that there had been an armed robbery and rape on a bus. She was charged with "causing fear and panic", denied bail by the Accra Circuit Court and

remanded in police custody. She was eventually granted bail by a Human Rights Court in Accra in November and her case was adjourned until 2011.

Police and security forces

Individuals were regularly detained in police custody for longer than allowed by law. Police cells were overcrowded and insanitary, and detainees often relied on family members for food and water.

- In February, two people died in a police cell in Ashiamang, a suburb of Tema. Fifty-two people were being held in a cell built for 20.
- In September, at least two people were killed and 15 seriously injured in Tema when combined troops of the military and police used live and rubber bullets and tear gas against people protesting against the demolition of their businesses. No investigation was carried out.
- In October, approximately 19 homes and businesses in Nankpanduri village in the Northern Region were burned down by military and police officers and several people were injured when they were shot or beaten by security forces, who were searching for an escaped prisoner who had killed two police officers.

Justice system

Access to legal aid was inadequate and some prisoners spent over 10 years awaiting trial, although the proportion of remand prisoners began to fall. Prisons were overcrowded and under-resourced.

Death penalty

Seventeen people were sentenced to death by hanging, all for murder. At the end of the year, 123 people were on death row, including three women. No executions were carried out.

Housing rights

Thousands of people were forcibly evicted from their homes. Evictions were carried out without adequate prior consultation, adequate notice and compensation or alternative accommodation. Thousands remained under threat of forced eviction.

- In May up to 2,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes in "Abinkyi slum" in Kumasi. Residents were given just two weeks' notice and were not offered any alternative accommodation or compensation.
- In July, scores of people were forcibly evicted from their homes in "Abuja slum" in Accra. Residents were informed about the demolition only two days before and they were not offered any compensation or alternative accommodation.

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