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imprisonment for their suspected links to Turkmen-Turkish schools understood to have been previously affiliated to Fethullah Gülen. The men were allegedly tortured and held in inhumane conditions in pre-trial detention. A 19th man detained at the same time was thought to have died as a result of torture. The trial held at the pre-trial detention centre in the town of Yashlyk, Ahal Province, reportedly fell far short of international standards of fairness.

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Alternative Turkmenistan News reported that on 24 June the body of Aziz Gafurov was delivered to his family in the village of Urgendzhi, near Turkmenabat. An eyewitness described the body as emaciated and covered in bruises. Aziz Gafurov was one of dozens of practising Muslims who were sentenced in recent years for conspiracy to overthrow the state, violent calls to overthrow the constitutional order, and incitement of social, national and religious enmity.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

The fate and whereabouts of at least 80 prisoners subjected to enforced disappearance after an alleged assassination attempt on then President Saparmurat Niyazov in November 2002 remained unclarified.

The bodies of three former senior state officials, who were forcibly disappeared following their arrest and criminal prosecution in connection with the assassination attempt, were delivered to their relatives in the course of the year. Turkish Tyrrmyev reportedly died on 13 January; Bairam Khasanov died in May; and on 18 August, the Russian NGO Human Rights Centre Memorial reported that Akmurad Redzhepov had died on 10 August.

On 26 January, the EU Delegation to the International Organizations in Vienna published a statement expressing concern about Turkish Tyrrmyev's death and called on Turkmenistan to immediately and effectively address and eradicate enforced disappearances.

RIGHT TO HOUSING AND FORCED EVICTIONS

Reports continued of mass house demolitions and forced evictions in connection with construction and development projects, including those implemented in preparation for the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games that were held in September. On 21 February, a group of women gathered in Ashgabat to demand the alternative housing that they had been denied due to the lack of documentation confirming ownership of their demolished homes. The authorities had not issued them with such documents because many of the women were not registered in Ashgabat.

RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

Consensual same-sex relations between men remained a criminal offence punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. LGBTI people were subjected to discrimination including violence, arbitrary arrests and detention.

UGANDA

Republic of Uganda

Head of state and government: Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

The rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly were restricted. Journalists and others who criticized the President or his family were arrested, detained and harassed. There was a sharp rise in the number of women killed, some of whom were subjected to sexual violence. The government said it would investigate and prosecute those responsible. Draft constitutional amendments to the land laws gave the government authority to expropriate private land. Uganda hosted the largest number of refugees in the region, including over 1 million from South Sudan.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

On 19 March, immigration officials at Entebbe International Airport prevented

academic Stella Nyanzi from boarding a flight to the Netherlands to attend a conference. This followed her criticism of the President and his wife, the Education Minister, for the government's failure to fulfil a 2015 commitment to provide sanitary towels in girls' schools.

On 8 April, police arrested Stella Nyanzi for insulting President Museveni on social media. She was charged under the Computer Misuse Act of 2011 and detained for 33 days in Luzira Maximum Security Prison in the capital, Kampala, before being released on bail. The charges against her were later dropped.

On 8 April, Nation TV journalist Gertrude Tumusiime Uwitware was abducted, blindfolded and interrogated by unknown assailants for several hours, after she had posted her support for Stella Nyanzi on social media. The spokesperson for the Kampala Metropolitan Police promised to investigate the incident but there was no further information on its progress by the end of the year.

On 27 September, the Ugandan Communications Commission threatened to revoke or suspend licences of media outlets which broadcast live parliamentary debates on a proposed constitutional amendment to remove the presidential age limit of 75 which was passed by Parliament in December and, according to the government, became law in the same month. The Commission said that such broadcasts promoted a "culture of violence". The opposition viewed the amendment as a means to enable President Museveni to stand for re-election in 2021. He had already been in power for 31 years.

On 10 October, the police summoned editors Arinaitwe Rugyendo of the *Red Pepper* newspaper and the online Daily Monitor, and Charles Bichachi of the Nation Media Group which owns the Daily Monitor, about stories they published on the age limit debate. Police questioned them after an MP, who was leading on moves to remove the age limit, filed a complaint claiming that the stories tarnished his reputation. They were

charged in connection with these allegations under Section 27A of the Police Act.

On 24 November, after *Red Pepper* published an article alleging that the President was involved in a plot to overthrow Rwanda's President, the police searched the newspaper's office including computers and mobile phones, and closed it down. At the same time, they arrested Arinaitwe Rugyendo and other members of staff Richard Kintu, James Mujuni, Patrick Mugumya, Richard Tusiime, Johnson Musinguzi, Ben Byarabaha and Francis Tumusiime. They remained in detention at the end of the year.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

On 2 and 20 September, approximately 20 police officers and security officials raided ActionAid Uganda's offices in Kansanga, an area of Kampala, preventing staff from leaving the premises for several hours. The police warrant stated that ActionAid was being investigated for "illicit transfers of funds to support unlawful activities". The police removed documents and confiscated the organization's laptops and mobile phones belonging to staff members. On 9 October, the Bank of Uganda froze ActionAid's bank accounts. On 13 October, the NGO Bureau, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, sent a letter to 25 development NGOs demanding their bank account details.

On 20 September, police raided the Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies offices with a warrant to search computers and mobile phones as well as financial and banking documents. The raid came after the organization's executive director, Godber Tumushabe, spoke against the proposal to lift the presidential age limit.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

According to the police, 28 women were killed in Entebbe town in Wakiso District. The media reported that a man had confessed to killing eight of the women on the orders of a local businessman. In a public statement on 3 September the police spokesperson said that four categories of murder had been identified and that 13 people had been

arrested and charged in connection with the 28 killings. Twelve of the victims had been raped or sexually assaulted before they were killed; four of them were killed by their husbands or partners; one woman was killed by her two brothers in what the police classified as a revenge killing; the other cases were described as "ritual murders".

The body of one of the victims, Rose Nakimuli, was discovered on 24 July in a banana plantation in Wakiso District.

RIGHT TO HOUSING AND FORCED EVICTIONS

In July, the government tabled a bill to amend Article 26(2) of the Constitution. This would allow compulsory acquisition by the government of private land for infrastructure projects without providing prompt, prior and fair compensation to the owners, and potentially while negotiations on compensation were pending.

Under existing law, the government can acquire private land only after the payment of "fair and adequate" compensation has been made. If the owner disputes the compensation amount, a High Court can block the government from acquiring the land until a resolution is reached. If passed, the new law would increase the risk of forced evictions and undermine the ability of those facing eviction to participate in consultations over acquisitions. It would also frustrate transparent and fair negotiations on compensation, and the possibility of appeal. Marginalized groups, including people living in poverty, and in rural areas, would be particularly affected.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

On 10 October, the doctors' union Uganda Medical Association (UMA) declared an indefinite strike protesting against low salaries and shortages of essential supplies. However, they continued to provide services to children, pregnant women and emergency accident victims.

President Museveni said the strike was illegal and ordered the doctors to return to work or face disciplinary action. The

government said it would increase doctors' salaries only after the outcome of a salary review conducted by a commission set up by the President to review salaries of all civil servants.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

As of 10 November, Uganda hosted around 1,379,768 refugees and asylum-seekers. Some 1,037,359 were from South Sudan, 348,782 having arrived between January and September; 61% of them were children, mostly unaccompanied or separated from their parents. Around 236,572 of the refugees were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); 39,041 were from Burundi (see Burundi entry); 35,373 were from Somalia; and the rest were from various other countries.

Asylum-seekers from South Sudan and the DRC were granted *prima facie* refugee status, and those of other nationalities underwent an individual refugee status determination process conducted by the Refugee Eligibility Committee. The government had revoked the automatic refugee status for Burundian asylum-seekers in June.

Under the 2006 Refugee Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulations, refugees were allowed relative freedom of movement, equal access to basic services, such as primary education and health care, and the right to work and establish a business.

In May, the World Food Programme was forced to cut cereal rations by half for over 800,000 South Sudanese refugees.

Appeals for funding from international donors to address the regional refugee crisis failed to secure adequate funds. This proved to be the most significant challenge to Uganda's refugee response. In June, the Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees had rallied for international support, but as of November 2017, the South Sudan Refugee Response Plan (a joint government/UNHCR initiative) secured only 68% of the funds needed; and the Burundi Refugee Response Plan secured only 20%.

In October, there was a temporary 50% reduction in food assistance to refugees due

to donors' payment delays. The cuts led to riots and protests by refugees in Nyumanzi settlement in Adjumani district.

UKRAINE

Ukraine

Head of state: Petro Poroshenko

Head of government: Volodymyr Hrynsman

The investigation into the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) for its alleged secret prisons failed to make any progress. Law enforcement officials continued to use torture and other ill-treatment.

The Ukrainian authorities increased pressure on their critics and independent NGOs, including journalists and anti-corruption activists. The authorities launched criminal investigations and passed laws aimed at restricting the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association, among other things. The de facto authorities in the separatist-controlled territories continued to unlawfully detain and imprison their critics. In November, the de facto Supreme Court in Donetsk ordered a man to be put to death. In Russian-occupied Crimea, critics of the authorities faced intimidation, harassment and criminal prosecution. The LGBTI Pride march was held in the capital Kyiv, under effective police protection. The number of attacks on LGBTI events rose across the country. The government failed to adequately address sexual and domestic violence. The authorities announced that Ukraine was freezing all arms supplies to South Sudan.

BACKGROUND

Social discontent continued to grow. Mounting economic problems, the slow pace of reforms and pervasive corruption sparked regular protests in Kyiv that occasionally turned violent. Some of the protests brought together several hundred people. In April, the World Bank reported that the Ukrainian economy had stopped contracting, projected

a 2% growth for 2017, and urged further reforms. On 14 June, the EU lifted its visa requirements for Ukrainian citizens. The government adopted wide-ranging medical and educational reforms, which for the first time included human rights as part of the future school curriculum.

In eastern Ukraine, the separatist and government forces continued fighting, in violation of the 2015 ceasefire agreement. Casualties among the forces and civilians continued to grow, and according to the UN had reached 10,225 dead by 15 August, including 2,505 civilians. On 27 December, the two sides exchanged prisoners, releasing a total of 380 people.

According to the September report of the UN Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, "increased levels of poverty and unemployment coupled with record-high food prices have affected the lives of 3.8 million people in the conflict-affected zones, in addition to daily hardships caused by the armed hostilities and related policies imposed by all sides." Laws introduced in previous years further impeded access to social rights and pensions for people living in the conflict-affected areas.

Crimea remained under Russian occupation. Russia continued to deny international human rights mechanisms access to the peninsula.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Members of law enforcement agencies continued to use torture and other ill-treatment, and committed other human rights violations; there was continued impunity for past and ongoing violations of international humanitarian law.

On 15 August, the SBU apprehended Daria Mastikasheva, a Ukrainian citizen resident in Russia who was visiting her mother in Ukraine, and held her incommunicado for two days. She was accused of treason and illegal weapons possession. Photos taken by her lawyer of her outside the court showed signs of beatings and possible torture by SBU officers. Her lawyer also reported that she was issued with threats targeting her mother