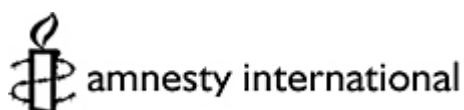


Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	224
Land:	Uganda
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Annual Report 2012 - Uganda
Udgivet:	24. maj 2012
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	28. juni 2012

Title	Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Uganda
Publisher	Amnesty International
Country	Uganda
Publication Date	24 May 2012
Cite as	Amnesty International, <i>Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Uganda</i> , 24 May 2012, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fbe39043a.html [accessed 31 May 2012]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.



Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Uganda

Head of state and government: **Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**

Death penalty: **retentionist**

Population: **34.5 million**

Life expectancy: **54.1 years**

Under-5 mortality: **127.5 per 1,000**

Adult literacy: **73.2 per cent**

Restrictions increased on freedom of expression. Authorities clamped down on peaceful protests, including by using excessive force which led to deaths. Law enforcement officials continued to commit human rights violations, including unlawful killings and torture. Perpetrators were not held to account. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people continued to face discrimination and violence.

Background

Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in February. President Museveni was re-elected with 68 per cent of the vote for a new five-year term. Opposition parties disputed the results, citing fraud and electoral irregularities. The ruling National Resistance Movement party won a majority of seats in Parliament. There were some violent clashes between political supporters, the police and other security personnel before, during and after the elections.

In October, three government ministers were charged with alleged embezzlement of public funds intended for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2007. Uganda also presented its report under the Universal Periodic Review to the UN Human Rights Council.

Freedom of assembly

In February, the government imposed a general ban on all public protests, which mainly affected political activity. In April, the lobby group Activists for Change called on people to walk to work in protest at the rising cost of fuel and other essential commodities.

Several weeks of public demonstrations followed in the capital, Kampala, and elsewhere. The police declared the protests unlawful and intervened to disrupt a number of initially peaceful events. Some protesters subsequently hurled objects at law enforcement officials, who responded with excessive force. Leaders of political opposition parties and hundreds of their supporters were arrested.

The authorities claimed that the protest organizers intended to organize violence and "overthrow the government", without providing evidence to support this. In October, four political activists were charged with treason – which carries the death penalty – for their participation in organizing the protests. The opposition leader, Dr Kizza Besigye, was prevented from leaving his Kampala home under the measure of "preventive arrest". This appeared to be specifically designed to stop him exercising his right to freedom of assembly.

Dozens of political supporters remained in pre-trial detention and faced various criminal charges for participating in the protests.

Unlawful killings

The police and military personnel used excessive force during public demonstrations on at least six different occasions in April and May. Live ammunition was fired into crowds of protesters, killing at least nine people – including a two-year-old girl – and injuring dozens of others. The shooting of the child on 21 April was highly publicized and led to a criminal investigation and a government commitment to try the police officer involved. No action was taken to hold law enforcement officials responsible for the other killings and related human rights violations, or to grant victims and their families the right to an effective remedy.

Torture and other ill-treatment

A number of political leaders and their supporters were ill-treated during their arrest by police and other security personnel.

- On 28 April, Dr Kizza Besigye (see above) suffered serious injuries during his arrest by police and unidentified law enforcement personnel. Government officials stated that the level of force used against him was justified.

In June, the Uganda Human Rights Commission reported that torture and other ill-treatment by the police, other law enforcement officials and the military remained widespread.

Freedom of expression

Journalists, opposition politicians and activists faced arbitrary arrest, intimidation, threats and politically motivated criminal charges for expressing views deemed critical of the authorities. Up to 30 Ugandan journalists faced criminal charges in connection with their media work.

During the April/May protests, the authorities attempted to block social networking sites and banned live television broadcasts, based on unverified claims of threats to national security and public safety. Many journalists were harassed, intimidated and beaten by the police and other law enforcement officials, particularly while covering the protests.

The proposed Press and Journalists (Amendment) Bill remained pending for cabinet discussion. If enacted, it could give the authorities the power to refuse print media licences on vaguely defined grounds such as "national security".

In October, the Public Order Management Bill was submitted for debate in Parliament. If the bill became law, it could unduly restrict the freedoms of assembly and expression.

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls – particularly sexual and other forms of gender-based violence – remained widespread. The government made some positive efforts to address this, including by developing a manual for health workers on managing cases of gender-based violence. However, female victims of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence continued to face economic and social obstacles to justice. Survivors of such violence committed during the northern Uganda conflict continued to urge for official reparations to address the resulting physical and emotional trauma.

International justice

International Criminal Court arrest warrants issued in 2005 remained in force for Joseph Kony, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader, and three LRA commanders. The men were still at large.

- In July, former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo appeared before the International Crimes Division of the High Court to answer charges of murder, wilful killing, kidnap with intent to kill, aggravated robbery, destruction of property and other offences committed as part of attacks that he had allegedly commanded during the conflict in northern Uganda. He denied the charges and applied to the Constitutional Court for an amnesty under the Amnesty Act of 2000. In September, the Court ruled that he was entitled to an amnesty, consistent with those granted to thousands of other fighters who had later renounced conflict. The government appealed against the decision to the Supreme Court. The appeal hearing was pending at the end of 2011. However, the government did not repeal legal provisions which provide for amnesties for crimes under international law.

Bomb attacks

In September, the trial of 19 people of different nationalities charged with terrorism, murder and attempted murder during the 2010 bomb attacks began at the High Court in Kampala. Two defendants pleaded guilty to terrorism and conspiracy to commit terrorism and were sentenced to prison terms of 25 and 5 years respectively.

Charges were dropped due to a lack of evidence against five suspects, including Kenyan human rights activist Al-Amin Kimathi, who had spent a year in pre-trial custody. It appeared that he had been arrested, charged and detained solely for carrying out his legitimate work. The hearing of the prosecution's evidence in the trial against the remaining 12 defendants had not begun by the end of 2011.

In April, four Kenyan human rights defenders were arbitrarily excluded from entering Uganda by immigration authorities, forced to sign deportation papers and ordered to return to Kenya. They had travelled alongside others to attend a scheduled meeting with the Ugandan authorities to discuss Al-Amin Kimathi's case (see above).

Refugees and asylum-seekers

The possible cessation of international refugee protection of Rwandan refugees and asylum-seekers in Uganda left thousands living in fear of being forcibly returned. There was no guarantee that refugees could access a fair and satisfactory procedure for the consideration of any fears regarding a return.

A 2009 ban on food cultivation by Rwandan refugees living in refugee settlements continued to greatly reduce their access to food compared with other refugee communities.

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

In January, the activist David Kato was murdered in his Kampala home. He had called for the Ugandan authorities to end discrimination, particularly in tabloid newspapers that had published names, pictures and personal details of people believed to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. In November, the person accused of David Kato's murder was sentenced to 30 years in prison after pleading guilty.

The government remained conspicuously silent about discriminatory rhetoric against lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people. In January, the High Court delivered a landmark ruling banning the media from publishing their names.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill, 2009 which would further entrench discrimination and lead to other human rights violations, was still pending in Parliament at the end of the year. It was presented for legislative debate in May, but Parliament did not debate it, nor a number of other bills. Following a vote in October in favour of a motion by the new Parliament to retain bills that had not been considered in the previous Parliament, it was listed for consideration.

Death penalty

Civilian and military courts continued to impose the death penalty for capital offences. According to official statistics from September, around 505 people – 35 of them women – were held on death row. There were no executions.

A Ugandan army soldier was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death by a Ugandan field court martial in eastern Central African Republic in August.

Copyright notice: © Copyright Amnesty International
