

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FEATURE

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2012: A YEAR IN HUMAN RIGHTS: TIMELINE

2012 has been a good and a bad year for human rights. Below are some of the highlights of the past 12 months. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but gives an overview of human rights trends and events around the world.

For more information, photos or to request an interview with one of Amnesty International's experts, please contact: +44 207 413 5566 or press@amnesty.org.

JANUARY

03 – Cambodia: Violent forced eviction at Phnom Penh's Borei Keila neighbourhood leaves 300 families homeless.

17 – European Court of Human Rights blocks UK deportation of Muslim cleric Abu Qatada to Jordan.

21 – Yemen: Yemeni authorities pass a law granting immunity to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, despite protests.

22 – Brazil: Forced eviction of more than 6,000 people from Pinheirinho slum in São Paulo state.

24 – China unleashes deadly force on pro-Tibet protests in Sichuan province.

26 – Guatemala: Former military ruler Efraín Ríos Montt appears before a court, charged with genocide of Maya Indigenous people in 1982-1983.

30 – Haiti: Government drops case against former leader Jean-Claude Duvalier, accused of torture, disappearances and extrajudicial executions between 1971 and 1986.

FEBRUARY

03 – Cambodia: UN-backed tribunal upholds ruling against former Khmer Rouge jailer Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, for crimes against humanity and war crimes described as "amongst the worst in human history".

03 – Syria: Armed forces begin large-scale military assault on city of Homs in which a significant number of civilians were injured or killed.

07 – Uganda: Parliament re-tables a bill institutionalizing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The law was scheduled to be voted on in November.

07 – Maldives: President Mohamed Nasheed steps down under controversial circumstances – he claims to have been the victim of a coup and forced to resign at gunpoint.

13 – USA: Johnnie Kamahi Warren, 43, becomes the 500th fatal victim of Taser use, after a police officer in Dothan, Alabama deployed a Taser on him at least twice.

15 – Honduras: 300 prisoners die after a fire at Comayagua prison 85 km north of Tegucigalpa.

23 – Afghanistan: Around 100 people die from cold or illness in refugee camps in Kabul. At least 28 were children.

23 – Italy: European Court of Human Rights rules that Italy violated human rights principles by spurning African migrants and asylum-seekers on the high seas.

27 – Spain: Supreme Court dismisses charges against pioneering investigative judge Baltasar Garzón, over probe into human rights violations during the Spanish Civil War.

28 – Somalia: A third journalist is killed in under two months by armed groups.

29 – Russia: The St Petersburg Legislative Assembly passes a homophobic bill restricting the publication of any material related to LGBT rights

MARCH

04 – Russia: Vladimir Putin is voted President.

08 – Jamaica: 21 people are killed in a wave of police shootings over six days, bringing the total to 45 since the beginning of the year.

12 – Afghanistan: US soldier serving with ISAF forces in Kandahar allegedly shoots dead 16 Afghan civilians.

14 – Guatemala: A former soldier is sentenced 6,060 years in prison for taking part in a massacre in the village of Dos Erres that left more than 250 people dead in 1982.

14 – DRC: The International Criminal Court issues its first ever conviction against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, leader of a Congolese armed group, for recruiting and using child soldiers in conflict.

16 – Belarus: The mother of one of two men convicted over the 2011 Minsk Metro bombing receives a letter informing her of her son's execution. The exact date of the executions of the two men is unknown.

17 – Azerbaijan: Musicians are violently beaten, arbitrarily arrested and tortured in detention after allegedly insulting President Ilham Aliyev's late mother during a performance in the capital Baku.

21 – Mali: A military coup takes place in Bamako, the capital, plunging the country into a period of danger and insecurity.

27 – Cuba: Crackdown against dissidents increases during the Pope's visit.

29 – Japan carries out its first executions in nearly two years.

APRIL

01 – Afghanistan: US forces begin six-month transfer of 3,000 prisoners held at Bagram prison to Afghan authorities.

01 – Female administrative detainee and West Bank resident Hana Shalabi is transferred to the Gaza Strip from Israel after 43 days on hunger strike.

02 – Brazil: The Supreme Court acquits a man accused of raping three 12-year-old girls on the basis that they were allegedly "sex-workers" and therefore had consented.

04 – The International Criminal Court orders Libya to surrender Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi to be investigated on charges of crimes against humanity.

12 – A military takeover takes place in Guinea-Bissau.

22 – China: Blind Chinese activist Chen Guangcheng makes a daring escape from illegal house arrest in his home village Linyi, Shandong Province.

26 – Liberia: International judges in The Hague find former Liberian President Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes during the Sierra Leone civil war.

26 – Serbia: Almost 1,000 Roma are forcibly evicted from Belvil settlement in Belgrade.

27 – USA: Connecticut abolishes death penalty.

28-29 – DRC: Violent clashes flare up between the Congolese army, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), and FARDC deserters reportedly loyal to General Bosco Ntaganda.

30 – Iran: Human rights activist and Executive Chairperson of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders Narges Mohammadi begins serving a six-year prison sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison.

MAY

02 – Libyan National Transitional Council passes a law granting blanket immunity to armed militias for acts committed with the aim of "protecting the 17 February Revolution".

10 – Brazil: President Dilma Rousseff announces the seven members of a Truth Commission to investigate past human rights crimes.

14 – Azerbaijan: Police in the capital Baku violently break up two separate peaceful protests called by opposition groups ahead of the Eurovision Song Contest.

18 – Mexico: Killing of experienced crime reporter Marco Antonio Ávila García marks six assassinations of journalists in less than a month.

20 – Ukraine: First-ever Pride is cancelled due to threat of violence from ultra-right hooligans. Two LGBT activists are beaten up and tear gassed in central Kyiv on the same day.

25 – Syria: Military assault on Houla kills scores of civilians, including around 50 children.

JUNE

02 – Egypt: Ex-president Hosni Mubarak and his Interior Minister Habib El-Adly are sentenced to life imprisonment for complicity in the killing of protesters during the "25 January revolution" in 2011.

04 – Pakistan: Details are revealed about a death plot by the country's security forces against Asma Jahangir, an internationally acclaimed human rights lawyer and founder of the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

06 – China: Veteran dissident Li Wangyang, who was released from prison last year, is found dead amid mysterious circumstances in a hospital ward in Shaoyang city, Hunan province.

07 – Iraq: Former Saddam Hussein aide is hanged, bringing the number of executions to 70 since the year began.

08 – Egypt: Women protesting against sexual harassment are attacked and sexually assaulted by a mob of men in Cairo's Tahrir Square.

13 – Tunisia: Former President Ben Ali is sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment by the Kef military tribunal for complicity in the murder of protesters during the uprisings that led to his ousting. Former Minister of Interior Rafiq Haj Kacem gets 12 years on same charge.

18 – Saudi Arabia: Saudi human rights group founders Dr Abdullah al-Hamid and Mohammad al-Qahtani are put on trial for charges related to their human rights activism.

27 – Ethiopia: Iconic dissident journalist Eskinder Nega and leading members of the political opposition are among 24 people convicted of trumped-up terrorism and treason charges.

27 – Nigeria: The Rivers State government starts to demolish Abonnema Wharf in Port Harcourt which leads to an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people being forced out of their homes.

30 – Egypt: President Mohamed Morsi takes office, ending the 17-month rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which saw the deaths of more than 120 protesters, as well as the unfair trials of 12,000 civilians before military courts.

JULY

05 – Argentina: Former Presidents Jorge Rafael Videla and Reynaldo Bignone are sentenced to 50 and 15 years respectively for the taking, retention and hiding of minors and the suspension of their identity during the military regime that ruled the country between 1976 and 1983.

05 – Italy: A court condemned 25 police officers for the violence against unarmed protesters in the Diaz school in the context of protests against the G8 in 2001.

13 – Russia: Parliament approves a draft bill that severely restricts the independence of all NGOs, furthering a government smear campaign against civil society.

16-18 – UAE: Two prominent human rights lawyers are among 13 people arrested as part of an intensified government crackdown on human rights activists.

19 – Syria: The Russian Federation and China veto a UN Security Council Resolution that proposes diplomatic and economic sanctions on the Syrian authorities.

20 – Senegal: The International Court of Justice rules that Senegal must begin proceedings to try former Chad leader Hissène Habré on charges relating to large-scale human rights abuses during his time in power or extradite him 'right away'.

27 – Arms Trade Treaty: A vote on the final treaty text is scuppered as USA, Russia and China stall.

31 – Sudan: At least 10 people are killed – mostly student activists – when security forces open fire on unarmed protesters in Nyala, South Darfur.

31 – Syria: 14 members of the Berri clan, believed to be part of a state-armed militia responsible for many human rights abuses are captured and shot dead by opposition fighters in Aleppo.

AUGUST

05 – Viet Nam: Around 30 people are arrested at a peaceful rally in Ha Noi, the latest in a series of moves to clamp down on free expression of bloggers and activists.

06 – Oman: A court in the capital, Muscat, sentences eight human rights activists to one year's imprisonment and fines of around US\$2,600 for charges relating to the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression. Two days later, a further 11 are sentenced.

07 – Greece: More than 7,500 foreign nationals are detained in raids in Athens.

16 – South Africa: Police open fire on protesting miners at the Marikana Mine Complex in the north-east of the country, killing 34 people.

16 – Bahrain: Prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab receives a three-year prison sentence for taking part in an “illegal gathering” among other charges, in relation to a protest in the capital Manama in February.

17 – Pakistan: A 16-year old girl, Ramsha Masih, is arrested under Pakistan’s blasphemy law after allegedly being found with burned pages of the Qur’an.

17 – Russia: A Moscow court ruling jails three Pussy Riot activists for two years, subject to appeal.

19 – The Gambia: President Yahya Jammeh announces that all death row inmates will be executed by mid-September. Nine men were executed days later.

22 – France: A high-level ministerial meeting is held to discuss response to the country’s Roma minority following a series of forced evictions of Roma settlements across the country.

29 – Israel: A court rules that the government of Israel bears no responsibility in the death of US activist Rachel Corrie when an Israeli military bulldozer ran her over in the Gaza Strip in 2003.

SEPTEMBER

07 – Italy: Lampedusa shipwreck a grim reminder of EU’s failure to protect migrants at risk.

08 – USA: Yemeni national Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif is found dead in cell in the US detention centre in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. He had been in US military detention without charge or trial for more than a decade.

11 – Iraq: Wave of bomb attacks and shootings across Iraq reportedly kill at least 81 people, many of them civilians, and leave scores more injured.

11 – Venezuela’s government formally denounces the American Convention on Human Rights, thereby pulling out of the Inter-American Court.

13 – Egypt: Activist Alber Saber Ayad is charged with “defaming religion”, reportedly because of internet posts and videos found at his home.

14 – Saudi Arabia: Rare protests are held by relatives of inmates being held, for the most part without charges, in a desert prison in Qassem province.

17 – Myanmar: Around 90 political prisoners are released in an amnesty.

18 – Jordan: King enacts new Press and Publications Law which increases restrictions on websites and electronic publications.

24 – Viet Nam: Three bloggers are sentenced to 12, 10 and four years’ imprisonment respectively for “conducting propaganda” against the state.

26 – Tunisia: A woman who had filed a complaint against police officers for raping her is summoned to court along with her fiancé on charges of “intentional indecent behaviour”.

27 – Japan: Two executions are carried out – including the first woman in more than 15 years.

29 – USA: Former Guantánamo detainee Omar Khadr is repatriated to Canada. He was originally transferred to the USA-run detention centre from Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15 years old.

29-30 – Bangladesh: Mobs burn more than 20 Buddhist temples and scores of homes of Buddhist families after an allegedly derogatory picture of the Qur’an is posted on Facebook.

OCTOBER

01 – Cambodia: Radio station owner Mam Sonando is sentenced to 20 years in prison on baseless allegations of “insurrection”.

01 – Philippines: Government imposes a repressive “cybercrime” law that puts harsh restrictions on online freedom of speech.

01 – Turkey: Two guards and a prison director are sentenced to life for torturing political activist Engin Çeber to death in October 2008.

03 – Serbia: Prime Minister Ivica Dacic bans the Belgrade Pride, due to take place on 6 October, for the second year running.

08 – Egypt: President Morsi issues a blanket pardon for those detained or tried for “supporting the revolution,” including taking part in protests since the January 2011 uprising, but falls short of providing a fair trial to around 1,100 other civilians imprisoned after unfair trials before military courts.

09 – Pakistan: The Taleban shoot Malala Yousoufzai, a 14-year-old girl who has been campaigning for girls’ access to education in north-western Pakistan.

10 – Russia: A Moscow court gives Pussy Riot member Ekaterina Samutsevich a suspended sentence and releases her while upholding jail sentences against band mates Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova.

22 – Kuwait: Authorities invoke a 1979 ban on gatherings of more than 20 people the day after thousands of Kuwaitis demonstrated against a change to the electoral law which they felt would favour pro-government candidates.

NOVEMBER

01 – Greece: In a blow to free speech, Greek journalist Kostas Vaxevanis goes on trial for publishing a list of Greeks alleged to have Swiss bank accounts. He was later acquitted.

06 – USA: President Barack Obama is re-elected.

14 – Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories: More than 160 killed in Gaza and six in Israel, including many civilians, during Israel’s eight-day “Operation Pillar of Defense” which began with the targeted killing in Gaza of Ahmad al-Ja’abari, the head of Hamas’ military wing, with the stated aim of deterring Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel.

19 – DRC: Tens of thousands of civilians flee as the armed opposition group M23 march on the city of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu in eastern DRC. M23 is led by Bosco Ntaganda who is wanted by the International Criminal court.

21 - India ends an eight-year unofficial moratorium on executions by hanging Kasab, the lone surviving Pakistani gunman convicted of terror charges for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The fate of 19 other prisoners whose death sentences have been confirmed by courts remains uncertain.