



GLOBAL UPDATE

Under strict embargo for 23.01 Wednesday 23 May 2012 GMT / 00.01 Thursday 24 May 2012 BST

Since the Amnesty International Annual Report went to press on 31 December 2011, some key moments in human rights have hit the headlines around the world. This is a summary of some of those events.

- 11 January was the tenth anniversary of the first detainees being transferred to the **US** Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Despite President Obama's pledge to close the detention facility by 22 January 2010, 171 men were still held there in mid-December 2011 including at least 12 of those transferred to Guantánamo on 11 January 2002.
- At least 186 people were killed in **Nigeria** on 21 January when members of the Islamist armed group Boko Haram bombed security forces at eight locations in Kano. People in Nigeria are caught between being targeted by Boko Haram and Nigeria's counter-terrorism measures that often result in new human rights violations.
- On 7 February, **Maldives** military and police ousted President Mohamed Nasheed. Supporters of his Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) remain under attack. Unrest had sparked in late 2011 with influential Islamist groups and opposition politicians in particular rejecting calls for religious freedom and a moratorium on flogging.
- The run-up to the first round of **Senegal's** presidential election in February was marred by political violence. Public demonstrations were banned and security forces repeatedly used excessive force against protesters in the capital Dakar and other cities, killing several. One policeman also died in the clashes.
- On 22 February, the UN Security Council passed a resolution extending AMISOM's (African Union Mission in **Somalia**) mandate, increasing its forces to over 17,000, and incorporating Kenyan forces. A UK led conference on 23 February agreed to international action to stabilise Somalia in advance of the end of the transitional period in August
- On 14 March the **International Criminal Court** (ICC) found Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, the leader of a Congolese armed group, guilty of using children in armed conflict in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** between 2002 and 2003.
- The **UN Human Rights Council's** 22 March resolution calling on **Sri Lanka** to end longstanding impunity for human rights abuses was adopted in Geneva, with 24 states voting in favour, 15 against, and eight abstaining. The resolution came amid credible allegations of serious violations of international law in Sri Lanka's long armed conflict.
- The same day the UN voted on the resolution for Sri Lanka, a military coup in **Mali** toppled President Amadou Toumani Touré. The coup followed a military uprising by Tuareg and Islamist armed groups.
- **Japan** took a big step backwards on 29 March when it carried out its first executions in almost two years hanging three at prisons in Tokyo, Hiroshima and Fukuoka. Justice Minister Toshio Ogawa gave authorization, explaining it was his "duty".



- Also in March, **Singapore's** government disclosed that in 2011 at least four people were executed and five were sentenced to death. In 2011, the government took the welcome step of publishing its 2010 statistics in its Prison Service's annual report. According to the Singapore Prison Service, there were six judicial executions in 2008, five in 2009 and none in 2010.
- In April **Democratic Republic of Congo** President Kabila raised the prospect Bosco Ntaganda – a leader of armed groups who had been brought into the DRC armed forces – could be arrested and put on trial. The subsequent withdrawal of Ntaganda and some of his troops from the armed forces led to renewed conflict in eastern DRC which caused thousands to be displaced.
- A military coup in **Guinea-Bissau** on 12 April saw the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations and severe restrictions on the media. Various politicians remain in hiding fearing arrest.
- On 14 April, the **United Nations Security Council** finally decided to tackle the ongoing violence and human rights violations in **Syria**, voting to deploy military observers to implement a ceasefire in the country. The blocking of a similar resolution in October 2011 – when China and Russia deployed their veto – was seen as a betrayal of the Syrian people. Violence continues to spiral despite the presence of UN observers.
- On 26 April, international judges found former Liberian president Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity during the **Sierra Leone** civil war.
- Also in April, the UN Security Council called for an end to the escalating tension between **South Sudan** and **Sudan**. Increasing border clashes in recent months have raised concerns the situation between the neighbouring countries could worsen over failed attempts to resolve oil, security and border disputes after South Sudan seceded in July 2011.
- Human rights in **Myanmar** took a step forwards on 2 May when Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), was sworn into parliament. She was released from house arrest in November 2010 after spending 15 out of 21 years under house arrest. Altogether the NLD won 44 seats in the elections.
- Five Guantánamo inmates alleged to have planned the 9/11 attacks were arraigned for trial before a military commission in the **USA** on 5 May.
- The capture of Lords Resistance Army commander Caesar Acellam by Ugandan forces raises the prospect that Joseph Kony too may soon be brought to justice

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