

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS

13

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*By Salil Shetty, Secretary General of
Amnesty International*

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Hana Shalabi, a West Bank resident, sits in a solidarity tent for Palestinian prisoners, Gaza City, May 2012. She was transferred by the Israeli authorities to Gaza in April following her 43-day hunger strike in protest against her administrative detention.







AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013
FOREWORD

13



Secretary General Salil Shetty and other Amnesty International delegates, with residents of the Bodo community, visit an oil spill site near the outskirts of Bodo town, Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. November 2012.

HUMAN RIGHTS KNOW NO BORDERS

Salil Shetty, Secretary General

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, 16 April 1963, USA

On 9 October 2012, 15-year-old Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen in Pakistan. Her crime was to advocate the right to education for girls. Her medium was a blog. Like Mohamed Bouazizi, whose act in 2010 sparked widespread protests across the Middle East and North Africa, Malala’s determination reached far beyond the borders of Pakistan. Human courage and suffering combined with the power of social media unbounded by borders has changed our understanding of the struggle for human rights, equality and justice, even as it has led to a perceptible shift in discourse around sovereignty and human rights.

People everywhere – at great personal risk – have taken to the streets as well as to the digital sphere to expose repression and violence by governments and other powerful actors. They have created a sense of international solidarity – through blogs, other social media and the traditional press to keep alive the memory of Mohamed and the dreams of Malala.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013
FOREWORD

Such courage, coupled with the ability to communicate our profound hunger for freedom and justice and rights, has alarmed those in power. Soundbites of support for those protesting against oppression and discrimination stand in stark contrast to

the actions of many governments cracking down on peaceful protests and trying desperately to control the digital sphere – not least by rebuilding their national borders in this sphere.



For what does it mean to those in power who hold tight to, and abuse the concept of, ‘sovereignty’, once they realize the potential power of the people to dismantle ruling structures, and to shine the spotlight on the tools of repression and disinformation they use to stay in power? The economic, political and trade system created by those in power often lead to human rights abuses. For example, the trade in arms destroys lives but is defended by governments who either use the arms to repress their own people or profit from the trade. Their justification is sovereignty.

Sovereignty and solidarity

In pursuit of freedoms, rights and equality, we need to rethink sovereignty. The power of sovereignty should – and can – arise through taking hold of one’s own destiny, such as states that have emerged from colonialism or from overbearing neighbours or that have risen from the ashes of movements that have overthrown repressive and corrupt regimes. This is sovereignty’s power for good. To keep that alive, and to contain its exploitative side, we need to redefine sovereignty and recognize both global solidarity and global responsibility. We are citizens of the world. We care because we have access to information and we can choose to be unbound.

States routinely claim sovereignty – equating it to control over internal affairs without external interference – so they can do what they want. They have made this claim to sovereignty – however specious – to hide or deny mass murder, genocide, oppression, corruption, starvation, or gender-based persecution.

But those who abuse their power and privilege can no longer easily hide that abuse. People with mobile phones record and upload videos that reveal the reality of human rights abuses in real time and expose the truth behind the hypocritical rhetoric and self-serving justifications. Likewise, corporates and other powerful private actors are more easily subjected to scrutiny because it is increasingly difficult to hide the consequences of their actions when they are devious or criminal.

We work in a human rights framework that assumes sovereignty but does not inherently defend it – not least following the establishment of the doctrine of Responsibility to

Protect, agreed at a UN world summit in 2005, and repeatedly reaffirmed since then. It is easy to see why; 2012 alone gives us ample evidence of governments violating the rights of the people they govern.

A key element of human rights protection is the right of all people to be free from violence. Another key element is the strong limits on the state's ability to interfere in our personal and family lives. This includes protecting our freedom of expression, of association and of conscience. It includes not interfering with our bodies and how we use them – the decisions we make over reproduction, the sexual and gender identities we embrace, how we choose to dress.

In the first few days of 2012, 300 families were left homeless in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, after being violently evicted from their neighbourhood. Just a few weeks later, 600 Brazilians met the same fate in Pinheirinho slum in São Paulo state. In March, 21 people were killed in Jamaica in a wave of police shootings, Azerbaijani musicians were beaten, arrested and tortured in detention, and Mali was plunged into crisis after a coup took place in the capital Bamako.

And so it continued: more forced evictions in Nigeria; journalists killed in Somalia and Mexico and elsewhere; women raped or sexually assaulted in the home, in the street, or as they exercised their right to protest; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities banned from holding Pride festivals and their members beaten up; human rights activists murdered or thrown in jail on trumped-up charges. In September, Japan executed a woman for the first time in more than 15 years. November saw a new escalation in the Israel/Gaza conflict, while tens of thousands of civilians fled their homes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the Rwandan-backed armed group March 23 Movement (M23) marched on the capital of North Kivu province.



And then there was Syria. At year-end, the death toll according to the UN had reached 60,000, and was still rising.

Failure to protect

Too often over the last few decades, state sovereignty – increasingly closely linked with the concept of national security – has been used to justify actions that are antithetical to human rights. Internally, those who are powerful claim that they and only they can make decisions regarding the lives of the people they govern.

Like his father before him, President Bashar al-Assad has stayed in power by turning the Syrian army and security forces against the people calling for him to step down.



MORE THAN
60,000 PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN KILLED SINCE
THE SYRIAN CONFLICT
BEGAN

But there is a key difference. At the time of the Hama massacre in 1982, Amnesty International and others highlighted what was happening and worked tirelessly to

try to stop it. But the mass killings took place largely out of view of the rest of the world. In the past two years, by contrast, brave Syrian bloggers and activists have been able to tell the world directly about what is happening to them in their country, even as it happens.

Despite the mounting death toll – and despite the abundant evidence of crimes committed – the UN Security Council again failed to act to protect civilians.

For nearly two years the Syrian military and security forces have launched indiscriminate attacks and detained, tortured and killed people they perceived to support the rebels. One Amnesty International report documented 31 different forms of torture and other ill-treatment. Armed opposition groups have also carried out summary killings and torture, albeit on a much smaller scale. The UN Security Council's failure to act is defended, particularly by Russia and China, as respecting the sovereignty of the state.

The idea that neither individual states nor the international community should act decisively to protect civilians when governments and their security forces target their own people – unless there is something in it for them – is unacceptable. Whether we are talking about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the corralling of Tamils into the lethal “no fire zone” in northern Sri Lanka, in which tens of thousands of civilians died in 2009, the ongoing starvation of people in North Korea or the Syrian conflict – inaction in the name of respect for state sovereignty is inexcusable.

Ultimately, states are responsible for upholding the rights of the people in their territory. But no one who believes in justice and human rights could argue that these concepts are currently served by sovereignty in any way but their lack of fulfilment.

Surely it is time to challenge this toxic mix of states' claims to absolute sovereignty and their focus on national security rather than human rights and human security. Let's have no more excuses. Now it is time for the international community to step up and reframe its duty to protect all global citizens.

Our countries have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil our rights. And many have not done so. At best they have done so inconsistently. Despite all the successes of the human rights movement over the last few decades – from the prisoners of conscience released to the global prohibition of torture and the creation of an International Criminal Court – this distortion of sovereignty means billions are still left behind.

Guardianship or exploitation

One of the starkest examples of this over the last decades has been the treatment of the world's Indigenous Peoples. A key value that unites Indigenous communities around the world is their rejection of the concept of "owning" land. Instead, they have traditionally identified as guardians of the land on which they live. This rejection of the concept of owning real property has come at a huge price. Many of the lands on which Indigenous Peoples live have proven to be rich in resources. So the government that is meant to protect their rights appropriates the land for the 'sovereign state', then sells it, leases it or allows it to be plundered by others.

Instead of respecting the value of communities being guardians of the land and its resources, states and corporations have moved into these areas, forcibly displacing Indigenous communities and seizing ownership of the land or the mineral rights associated with it.

In Paraguay, the Sawhoyamaya spent 2012 as they have spent the last 20 years; displaced from their traditional lands, despite a ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2006 recognizing their right to their lands. Further north, dozens of First Nations communities in Canada were continuing to oppose a proposal to build a pipeline connecting the Alberta oil sands to the British Columbia coast, crossing their traditional lands.

At a time when governments should be learning from Indigenous communities in order to rethink the relationship with natural resources, Indigenous communities the world over are under siege.

What makes this devastation particularly distressing is the extent to which states and corporate actors are ignoring the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which explicitly requires states to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in all matters that concern them. Indigenous rights activists face violence and even murder when they seek to defend their communities and their lands.

Such discrimination, marginalization and violence were not limited to the Americas, but took place across the globe – from the Philippines to Namibia, where 2012 saw the children of the San, Ovahimba people and other ethnic minorities facing numerous barriers preventing them from accessing education. This was particularly the case in Opuwo among the Ovahimba children who were forced to cut their hair and to not wear traditional dress to attend public schools.

**80 COUNTRIES SYSTEMATICALLY
CONDUCTED UNFAIR TRIALS
DENYING THEIR CITIZENS
JUSTICE IN 2012**



The flow of money and people

The race for resources is just one element of our globalized world. Another is the flow of capital through borders, across oceans, and into the pockets of the powerful. Yes, globalization has brought economic growth and prosperity for some, but the Indigenous experience is playing out in other communities who watch governments and corporations benefiting from the land they are living, and starving, on.

In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, despite significant growth in many countries, untold millions continue to live in life-threatening poverty. Corruption and the flow of capital into tax havens outside Africa continue to be two key reasons. The region's mineral wealth continues to fuel deals between corporations and politicians in which both profit – but at a price. A lack of transparency about concession agreements and the utter lack of accountability mean that both the shareholders of the corporations and the politicians are unjustly enriched, while those whose labour is exploited, whose land is degraded and whose rights are violated, suffer. Justice is largely beyond their reach.

Another example of the free flow of capital is the remittances sent home by migrant workers around the world. According to the World Bank, remittances from migrant workers in developing countries are three times as much as official international development assistance. Yet those very same migrant workers were often left in 2012 with neither

their home nor host states adequately protecting their rights.

Recruitment agencies in Nepal in 2012, for example, continued to traffic migrant workers for exploitation and forced labour, and charged fees above government-imposed limits, compelling workers to take large loans at

high interest rates. Recruiters deceived many migrants on terms and conditions of work. Recruitment agencies that violated Nepalese law were rarely punished. In an example of a law that pays little more than lip service to women's rights, in August the government banned women under the age of 30 from migrating for domestic work to Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates due to complaints of sexual and other physical abuse in those countries. But the bans potentially increased risks to women now forced to seek work through informal routes. What the government should have done is fought to secure safe working environments for the women.



**ALMOST 1/2 OF ALL MIGRANTS
TO CITIES ARE WOMEN AND THERE IS
AN EMERGING TREND OF WOMEN MIGRATING
ON THEIR OWN – MAKING THEM MORE
VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE AND MORE
SUSCEPTIBLE TO FORCED EVICTIONS**

Once people have left, the sending states claim that since their migrant workers are no longer within their territory, they have no obligations and the host states claim that because they are not citizens they have no rights. In the meantime, the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, which was opened for signature in 1990, remains one of the least ratified human rights conventions. No migrant-receiving state in Western Europe has ratified the Convention. Nor have others with large migrant populations such as the USA, Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and states in the Gulf.

12 MILLION
PEOPLE WERE STATELESS
AT THE BEGINNING OF 2012

This vulnerability is even greater for refugees. The most vulnerable are the 12 million stateless people in the world, equivalent in numbers to the world's great agglomerations such as London, Lagos or Rio. And around 80% of them are women. Without the protection of their 'sovereign' state these people are true global citizens. And their protection falls to all of us. They are the purest argument for the fulfilment of the duty to protect there is. For human rights protections must be applied to all humans, whether at home or not.

At the moment, this protection is seen as subservient to state sovereignty. Women are raped in camps across South Sudan, asylum-seekers from Australia to Kenya are locked up in detention centres or metal crates, hundreds die in leaky boats as they desperately search for safe harbour.

Boats of Africans floundering off the coast of Italy were turned away from the safety of European shores again in 2012, because states claimed that control of their borders was sacrosanct. The Australian government continued to interdict boats of refugees and migrants at sea. The US Coast Guard defended its practice: "Interdicting migrants at sea means they can be quickly returned to their countries of origin without the costly processes required if they successfully enter the United States." In each case – sovereignty trumped the right of individuals to seek asylum.

Around 200 people die every year trying to cross the desert into the US – a direct result of measures taken by the US government to make safer passages impassable for migrants. These numbers have remained steady even as immigration is declining.

These examples show the most heinous abnegation of the responsibility to promote human rights – including the right to life – and they stand in stark contrast to the free flow of capital detailed earlier.

Immigration controls also stand in stark contrast to the largely unimpeded flow of conventional weapons – including small arms and light weapons – across borders. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, injured, raped and forced to flee from

their homes as a result of this trade. The arms trade also has direct links to discrimination and gender-based violence, disproportionately affecting women. This has far-reaching implications for efforts to consolidate peace, security, gender equality and secure development. The abuses are fuelled in part by the ease with which weapons



**BETWEEN
794,000 AND 1,115,000
PEOPLE HAVE DIED
AS A DIRECT RESULT
OF BATTLES FOUGHT IN
131 ARMED CONFLICTS**

are easily bought and sold, bartered and shipped around the world – too often ending up in the hands of abusive governments and their security forces, warlords and criminal gangs. It's a lucrative business – US\$70 billion a year – and so those with entrenched interests try to protect the trade from regulation. As this report goes to print, the top arms-brokering governments

are poised to enter negotiations for an arms trade treaty. Our demand is that where there is a substantial risk that these weapons will be used to commit violations of international humanitarian law or serious violations of human rights law – the transfer should be prohibited.

The flow of information

The crucial positive to take from these examples, however, is that we know about them. For half a century, Amnesty International has documented human rights violations around the world and uses every resource it has to try to halt and prevent abuses and protect our rights. Globalized communication is creating opportunities the founders of the modern human rights movement could never have imagined. Increasingly, there is very little that governments and corporations can do in hiding behind “sovereign” boundaries.

The speed with which new forms of communication have taken root in our lives is breathtaking. From 1985, when the dotcom domain name was created, to today, when 2.5 billion people can access the internet, the wheels of change have spun with extraordinary speed. 1989 saw Tim Berners-Lee propose the document retrieval element of the internet, Hotmail was born in 1996, blogs in 1999, Wikipedia launched in 2001. In 2004 Facebook was born, followed by YouTube a year later – along with the internet's billionth user, said to be “statistically likely to be a 24-year-old woman in Shanghai”. 2006 brought Twitter, and Google's censored Chinese site Gu Ge. By 2008 China had more people online than the USA. And in the same year, activists working with Kenyan citizen journalists developed a website called Ushahidi – the Swahili word for “testimony” – initially to map reports of violence in Kenya after the election, and since developed into a platform used around the world with the mission to “democratize information”.

We live in an information-rich world. Activists have the tools to make sure violations are not hidden. Information creates an imperative to act. We face a crucial time: will we continue to have access to this information or will states in collusion with other powerful actors block that access? Amnesty International wants to make sure everyone has the tools to access and share information and to challenge power and sovereignty when it is abused. With the internet, we can build a model of global citizenship. The internet forms a counterpoint to the whole concept of sovereignty and citizenship-based rights.

What Martin Luther King Jr. phrased so eloquently around the “inescapable network of mutuality” and the “single garment of destiny”, has been espoused and promoted by many great thinkers and defenders of rights before and after him. But now is the moment to seed it into the very “fabric” of our international model of citizenship. The African concept of ‘Ubuntu’ puts it most clearly: “I am because we are”.

IN FEBRUARY 2012,
100 INTERNALLY DISPLACED
PEOPLE DIED IN AFGHANISTAN
FROM COLD OR ILLNESS
IN KABUL REFUGEE CAMPS

It is about connecting all of us, not allowing borders, walls, seas, portrayals of enemies as “the other” to pollute our natural sense of justice and human-hood. Now the digital world has truly connected us with information.

Agency and participation

It is simple. The openness of the digital world levels the playing field and allows many more people access to the information they need to challenge governments and corporations. It is a tool that encourages transparency and accountability. Information is power. The internet has the potential to significantly empower all 7 billion people living in the world today. It is a tool that allows us to see and document and challenge human rights abuses wherever they may be happening. It enables us to share information so that we can work together to solve problems, promote human security and human development and fulfil the promise of human rights.

The abuse of state sovereignty is the opposite. It is about walls and control of information and communication and hiding behind state secrecy laws and other claims of privilege. The narrative behind the claim of sovereignty is that what the government is doing is no one’s business but its own, and as long it acts within its own borders, it cannot be challenged. It is about the powerful acting on the powerless.

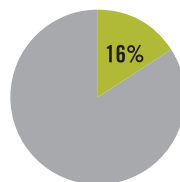
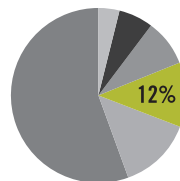
The power and possibilities of the digital world are immense. And, as technology is value neutral, these possibilities can enable actions that are coherent with building rights respecting societies or enable actions that are antithetical to human rights.

“THE SPEED WITH WHICH NEW FORMS OF COMMUNICATION HAVE TAKEN ROOT IN OUR LIVES IS BREATHTAKING”

INTERNET USERS BY REGION 2013*

Europe is the region with the highest internet penetration rate in the world (75%), followed by the Americas (61%).

In Africa, 16% of people are using the internet – only half the penetration rate of Asia and the Pacific.



AFRICA

IN BRIEF INTERNET ACCESS

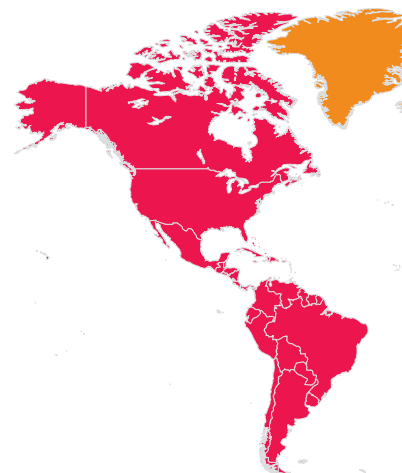
THE GENDER GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ONLINE TOTALS AND PENETRATION RATES, 2013*

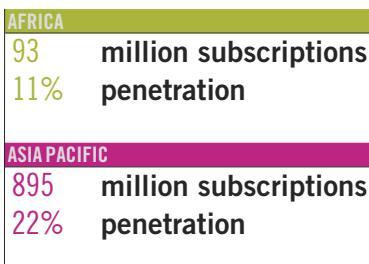
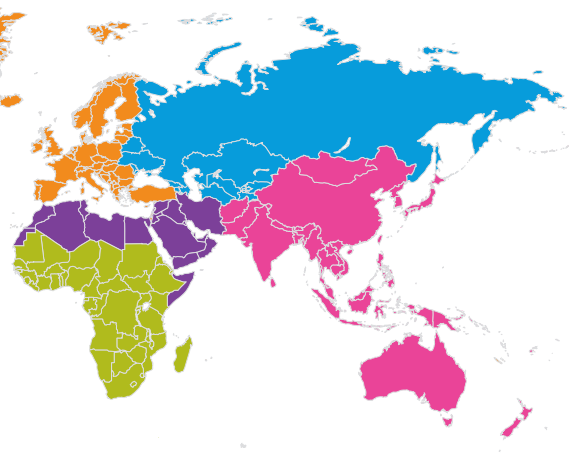
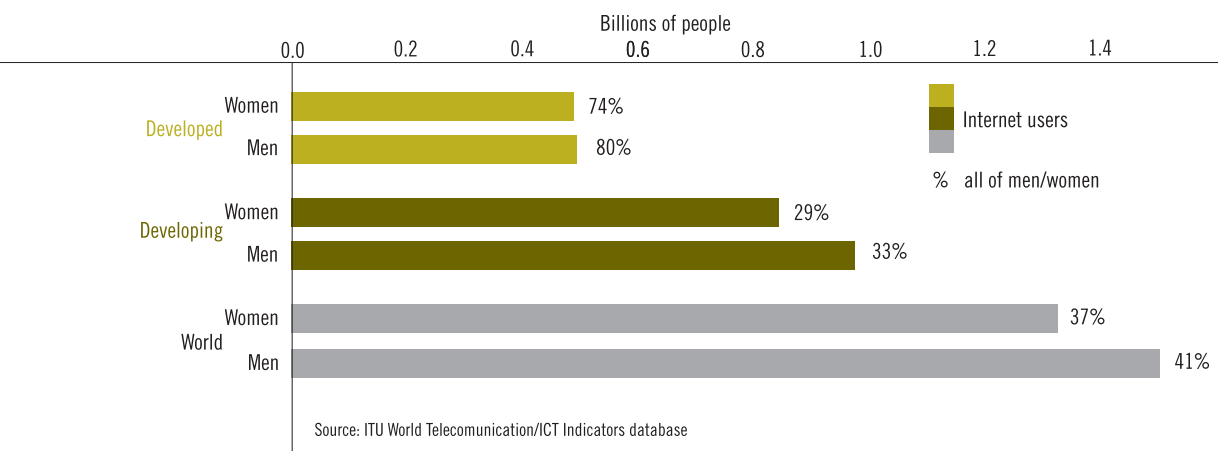
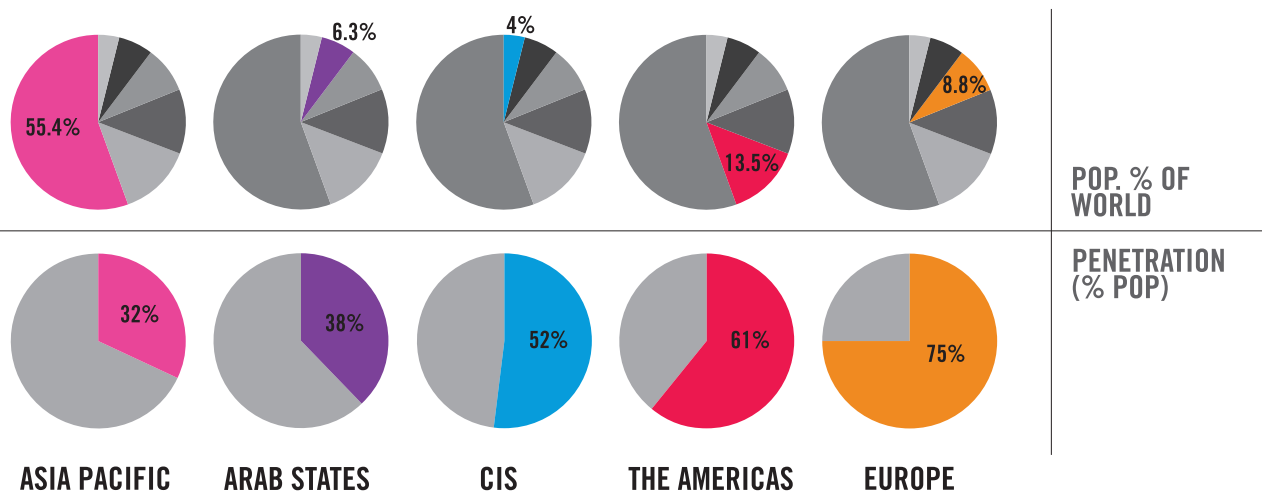
The gender gap is more pronounced in the developing world, where 16% fewer women than men use the internet, compared with only 2% fewer women than men in the developed world.

CONTINUOUS HIGH GROWTH OF MOBILE BROADBAND

MORE THAN 2 BILLION SUBSCRIPTIONS WORLDWIDE BY END 2013*

AMERICAS	CIS
460 million subscriptions	129 million subscriptions
48% penetration	46% penetration
EUROPE	ARAB STATES
422 million subscriptions	71 million subscriptions
68% penetration	19% penetration





Note: * Estimate
See page 15 for sources.

It is interesting for Amnesty International, whose history is rooted in defending freedom of expression, to live again what governments do when unable to control it, and decide to manipulate access to information. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the prosecution or harassment of bloggers from Azerbaijan to Tunisia, and from Cuba to the Palestinian Authority. In Viet Nam, for example, popular bloggers Nguyen Van Hai, known as Dieu Cay, “Justice and Truth” blogger Ta Phong Tan, and Phan Thanh Hai, known as AnhBaSaiGon, were tried in September for “conducting propaganda” against the state. They were sentenced to 12, 10 and four years’ imprisonment respectively, with three to five years’ house arrest on release. The trial lasted only a few hours, and their families were harassed and detained to prevent them from attending. Their trial was postponed three times, the last time because the mother of Ta Phong Tan died after setting herself on fire outside government offices in protest at her daughter’s treatment.

But imprisoning people for exercising their freedom of expression and challenging those in power using digital technology is only the first line of defence of governments. We increasingly see states trying to build firewalls around any digital communications or information systems. Iran, China and Viet Nam have all tried to build a system that

allows them to regain control over both communications and access to information available in the digital sphere.

**ON 31 MAY 2012 INDONESIA
RATIFIED THE INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION
OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT
WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR
FAMILIES – ONLY THE 46TH STATE
TO DO SO. THAT’S 147 LEFT TO GO.**

What may be even more worrisome is the number of countries that are exploring less obvious means of control in this area through massive surveillance and more artful means of manipulating access to information. The USA, which continues to demonstrate a remarkable lack of respect for recognizing parameters – as evidenced by the drone strikes being carried out

around the world – has recently proclaimed the right to conduct surveillance of any information kept in cloud storage systems – digital filing cabinets that are not bound to territorial domains. To be clear, this includes information owned by individuals and companies that are not based in or citizens of the USA.

This struggle over access to information and control of the means of communication is just beginning. So what can the international community do to show its respect for those who so bravely risked their lives and freedoms to mobilize during the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa? What can all of us do to show solidarity with Malala Yousafzai and all the others who dare to stand up and say “Enough”?

We can demand that states ensure that all the people they govern have meaningful access to the digital world – preferably through high-speed and truly affordable internet access whether via a portable hand-held device such as a mobile phone, or a desktop

computer. In doing so they would be fulfilling one of the principles of human rights as articulated in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications.” And Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

Meaningful access to the internet surely qualifies as enjoying the benefit of scientific progress.

Many years ago, states created an international postal service that would be set up nationally but would interconnect with all other postal services creating a global mail system. Every person could write a letter, buy a stamp and send that letter to somewhere else, pretty much anywhere else, in the world. If there was no delivery to your doorstep – there was the system of *poste restante* or general delivery that designated a place where one could call for one’s mail.

And that mail was considered private – no matter how many borders it crossed. This form of communications and information sharing, which can seem rather quaint in today’s world, changed the way we communicated and was built on a presumption of the right to privacy of those communications. Most importantly, states undertook to ensure that all people had access to this service. And while many governments undoubtedly used their access to mail to read what was private, they did not challenge the principle of the right to privacy of these communications. In countless countries it opened people up to the sharing of information and family and community life.

Today, access to the internet is critical to ensure that people can communicate, and also to ensure people’s access to information. Transparency, access to information and the ability to participate in political debates and decisions are critical to building a rights respecting society.

Few actions by governments can have such immediate, powerful and far-reaching positive consequences for human rights.

Each government of the world has a decision to make. Will it take this value-neutral technology and use it to reclaim its power over others – or will it use it to empower and promote the freedom of individuals?

The advent of the internet and its global penetration – via cellphones, internet cafés, and computers accessible at schools, public libraries, workplaces and homes – has created a huge opportunity for empowering people to claim their rights.

21 GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTED
PEOPLE IN 2012



“STATES HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEIZE THIS MOMENT AND ENSURE THAT ALL THE PEOPLE THEY GOVERN HAVE AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET”

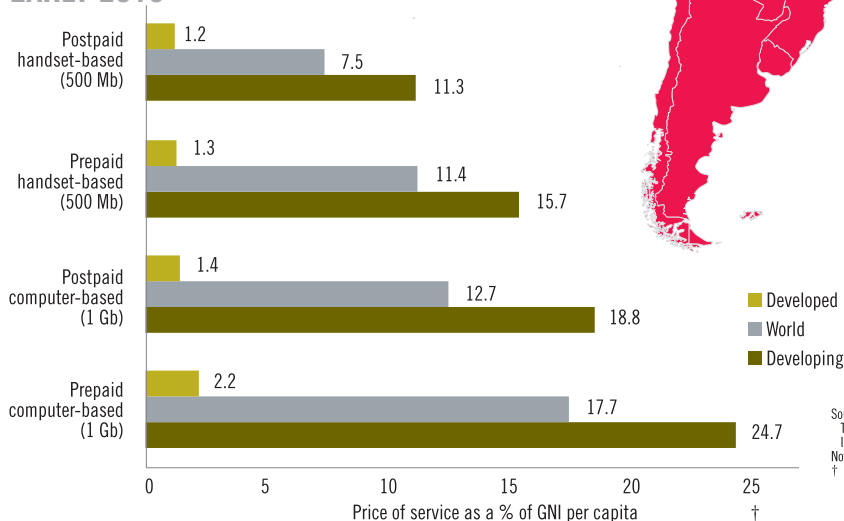
IN BRIEF INTERNET AT WHAT PRICE?

The majority of households in the Americas are online (61%)

Services are most affordable in Europe, where they represent on average less than 2% GNI per capita.

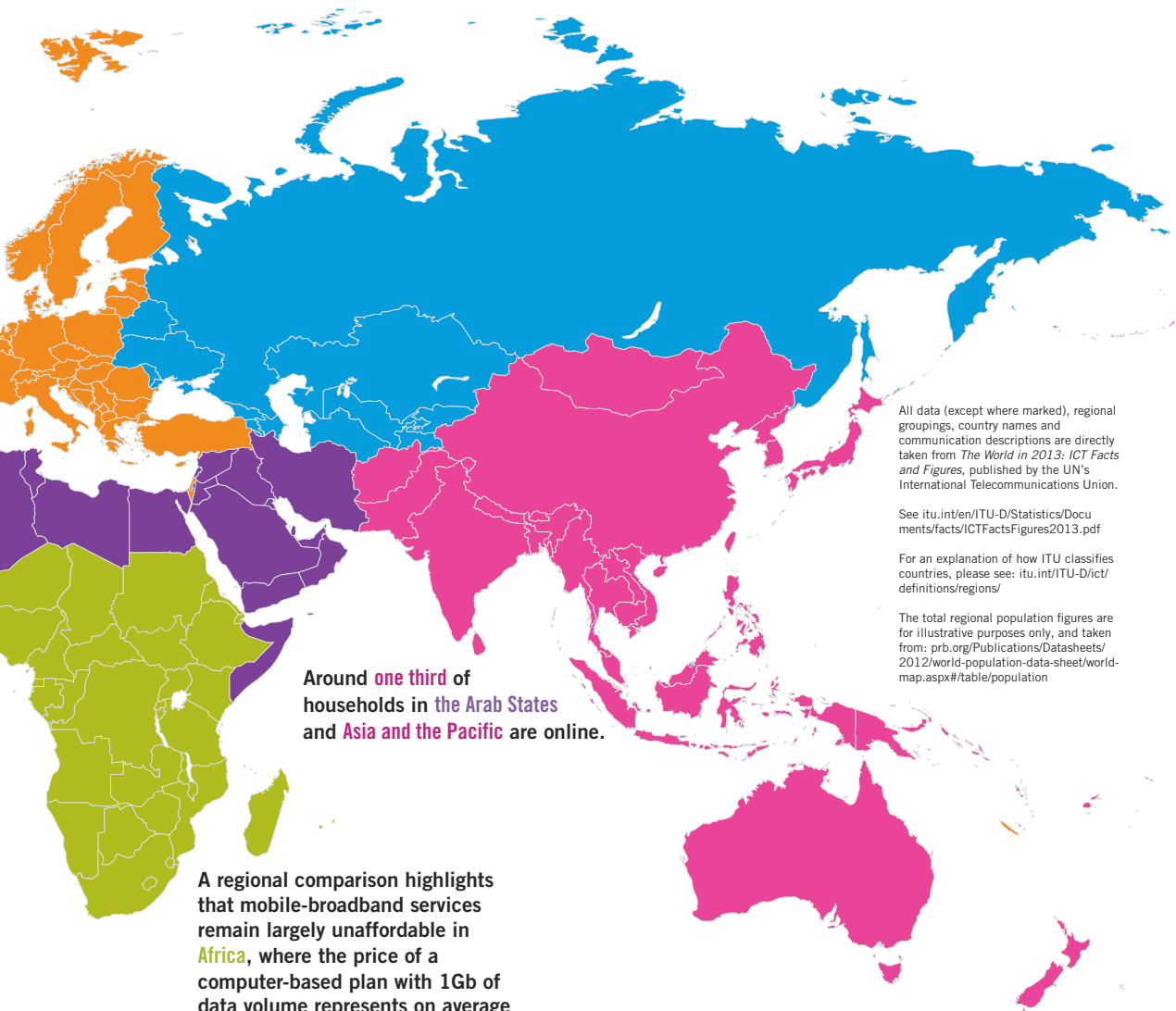
Europe and Africa are the regions with the highest and the lowest levels of household internet penetration respectively: 77% in Europe, compared with 7% in Africa.

PRICE OF MOBILE-BROADBAND SERVICES EARLY 2013



Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database
 Note: Simple averages.
 † Preliminary result

PRICE OF MOBILE-BROADBAND SERVICES SELECTED REGIONS, 2013



All data (except where marked), regional groupings, country names and communication descriptions are directly taken from *The World in 2013: ICT Facts and Figures*, published by the UN's International Telecommunications Union.

See itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013.pdf

For an explanation of how ITU classifies countries, please see: itu.int/ITU-D/ict/definitions/regions/

The total regional population figures are for illustrative purposes only, and taken from: prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2012/world-population-data-sheet/world-map.aspx#table/population

Around **one third** of households in the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific are online.

A regional comparison highlights that mobile-broadband services remain largely unaffordable in **Africa**, where the price of a computer-based plan with 1Gb of data volume represents on average more than **50% of Gross National Income (GNI)** per capita.

Africa is the region with the highest growth rates over the past three years and mobile-broadband penetration has **increased from 2% in 2010 to 11% in 2013**.

In **developing countries**, the number of mobile broadband subscriptions **more than doubled from 2011 to 2013 (from 472 million to 1.16 billion)** and surpassed those in developed countries in 2013.

By **2012**, fixed broadband prices represented **1.7% of monthly GNI p.c.** in developed countries.

In **developing countries**, fixed broadband services remain expensive, accounting for **30.1% of average monthly incomes**.

The choice for the future

States have an opportunity to seize this moment and ensure that all the people they govern have meaningful access to the internet. They can ensure that people have affordable access to the internet. States can also support the creation of many more venues such as libraries and cafés where people can access the internet for free or at affordable rates.

Crucially, states can ensure women – only 37% of whom currently access the internet – can actively participate in this information system and therefore in the actions and decisions being taken in the world they live in. As a new report by UN Women, Intel and the US State Department details, there is a huge internet gender gap in countries such as India, Mexico and Uganda. This means states must create systems that enable access in homes, schools and workplaces, as places such as internet cafés are impractical for women who can't leave their homes for religious and cultural reasons.

States can also work to eradicate social discrimination against women and negative stereotyping. An Indian woman with an engineering degree told the report's authors that she was banned from the computer "for fear that if she touched it, something would go wrong". Other anecdotal evidence pointed to some husbands forbidding their wives to use the family computer in case they saw inappropriate sexual content. That is one reason cited for why only 14% of women in Azerbaijan have ever gone online, although 70% of men there have.

**30% OF WOMEN
AGED 15-19
IN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
ARE MARRIED. IF PRESENT PATTERNS
CONTINUE, IN THE NEXT DECADE
AROUND 100 MILLION GIRLS
WILL BE MARRIED AS CHILDREN**

In recognizing the right of people to access the internet, states would be fulfilling their duties with respect to freedom of expression and the right to information. But they must do so in a manner that respects the right to privacy.

To fail to do so risks creating two tiers of people domestically and globally – in which some people have access to the tools they need to claim their rights while others are left behind.

Knowledge, information and the ability to speak are power. Rights respecting states do not fear that power. Rights respecting states promote empowerment. And the borderless nature of the digital sphere means that we can all engage in an exercise of global citizenship to use these tools to promote respect for human rights in small places close to home and in solidarity with people living far away.

Traditional forms of solidarity can have even greater impact as they go 'viral'. Take the 12 individuals that thousands of activists campaigned for as part of Amnesty

International's 10th global "Write for Rights" marathon in December 2012. This is the world's largest human rights event and in the last few years has embraced emails, digital petitions, SMS messages, faxes, tweets, leading to 2 million actions taken expressing solidarity, providing support and helping get those imprisoned for their beliefs released.

For Amnesty International we see in the internet the radical promise and possibilities that our founder Peter Benenson saw more than 50 years ago – the possibility of people working together across borders to demand freedom and rights for all. His dream was dismissed as one of the larger lunacies of our time.

Many former prisoners of conscience owe their freedom and lives to that dream. We are on the cusp of creating and fulfilling another dream that some will dismiss as lunacy. But today, Amnesty International embraces the challenge and calls on states to recognize our changed world and create the tools of empowerment for all people.

THERE WERE
15.2 MILLION
REFUGEES WORLDWIDE
AT THE BEGINNING OF 2012.
46% WERE UNDER 18



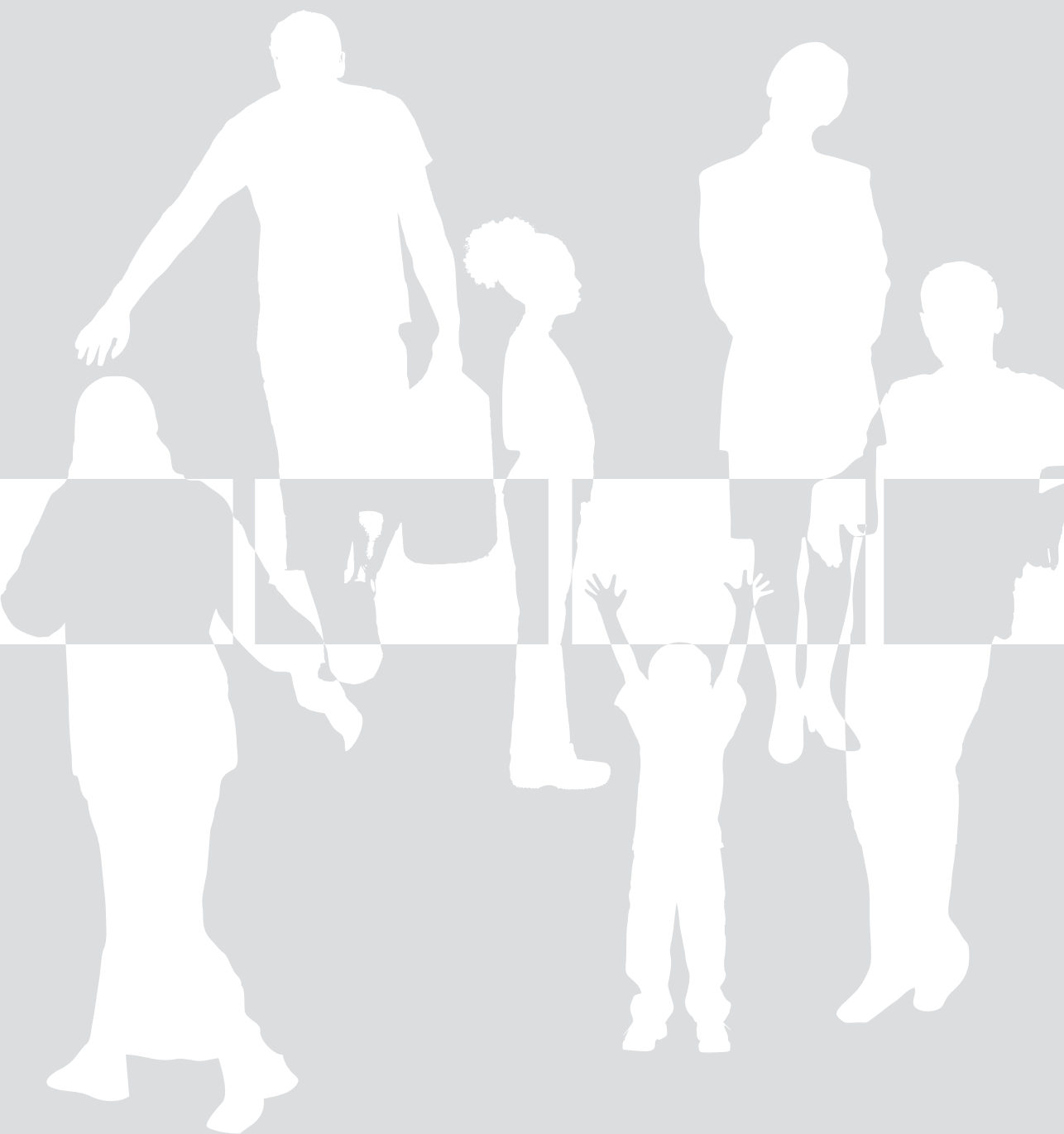
"One thing that gives us hope is the support and solidarity from regular people. People are the only impetus for change. Governments will not do anything unless there is pressure from people... The amount of messages I received [from Amnesty activists] gives me so much hope, despite all the challenges."

Azza Hilal Ahmad Suleiman, who is still recovering from a vicious attack near Tahrir Square, Egypt, was one of the 12 cases featured in December 2012's Write for Rights campaign. She intervened after seeing a group of soldiers beating and removing a young woman's clothes, and was left with a fractured skull and memory problems. She is now suing the military.



Protesters mark the fifth anniversary of the murder of Hrant Dink, January 2012 Istanbul, Turkey. As the editor of the newspaper Agos, Hrant Dink had published articles on Armenian identity.





AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013
REGIONAL OVERVIEWS



REGIONAL OVERVIEW
AFRICA

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
AFRICA



A young boy guides a blind Nuba refugee through the main market of Yida refugee camp in South Sudan, April 2012. Thousands of refugees from Sudan's conflict-affected areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states fled to South Sudan throughout the year.

The deepening crisis in Mali in 2012 reflected many of the region's deep-rooted problems. Across Africa, people's lives and their ability to realize their rights continued to be hindered by conflict, ubiquitous poverty and abuses by security forces and armed groups. These highlighted the inherent weakness of regional and international human rights, peace and security mechanisms.

In January, in the context of long-running discontent in northern Mali over poverty, discrimination and the lack of progress on development, Tuareg and Islamist armed groups staged an uprising. This triggered a successful military coup in the capital Bamako in March, and resulted in the effective partition of Mali by April. For the rest of 2012, the north remained controlled by armed groups. Tuareg and Islamist groups committed numerous grave abuses, including the summary killing of captured soldiers, amputating people's limbs, stoning some to death, and raping girls and women.

Meanwhile, Malian security forces carried out extrajudicial executions and indiscriminate shelling of Tuareg-controlled areas. Armed groups and government sponsored militias recruited child soldiers. More than 400,000 men, women and children fled their homes to seek safety.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW AFRICA

MALI DEMOCRATIC
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SECURITY
AN RIGHTS
TH PENAL
MEN'S R

Civilians also bore the brunt of human rights abuses by security forces and proliferating armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

"THE GRANDSON OF MY KORANIC MASTER SOLD US TO THE ISLAMISTS... THEY TRAINED US TO SHOOT [AND GAVE US POWDER TO EAT] AND INJECTIONS. AFTER THIS I COULD DO ANYTHING... I SAW OUR ENEMIES [AS] DOGS, AND ALL THAT WAS IN MY MIND WAS TO SHOOT THEM."

A 16-year-old Malian boy – arrested when Diabaly was re-captured by French and Malian armies – told Amnesty International of his experience of being forced to join an Islamist armed group. January 2013.

The precarious security situation deteriorated significantly as armed groups, including the March 23 Movement, strengthened their hold over areas of North Kivu province in the east of the country.

Meanwhile, tensions between South Sudan and Sudan mounted over oil, citizenship and demarcation of the border. The human rights situation remained dire as a result of

ongoing conflict in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Fighting intensified in late 2012, resulting in heavy civilian casualties, a growing humanitarian crisis and the flight of over 200,000 people to nearby states. Mass protests were also staged against government austerity measures, triggering abuses by security forces.

Brutality by police and security forces was a common feature in several countries in the region. In Nigeria, the Islamist armed group Boko Haram killed more than 1,000 people in bombings and gun attacks. Nigeria's security forces perpetrated serious human rights violations in their response – including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, house-burning and unlawful detention.

In August, the police authorities in South Africa deployed units armed with assault rifles and live ammunition to crush a strike at the LONMIN Marikana platinum mine in North West Province. Sixteen miners died at the scene and 14 others at another location where they had fled to escape police fire. There were indications that the majority had been shot while attempting to flee or surrender. Four other miners died later that day from their injuries. The striking miners had been involved in a wage dispute with LONMIN. The scale and visibility of the killings, as well as the growing unrest across the mining sector, caused a national crisis.

Human rights defenders, journalists and members of opposition groups faced intense repression: sentenced to lengthy prison terms such as in Ethiopia, or arbitrarily arrested, harassed and sent death threats, such as in the Gambia. In Côte d'Ivoire, attacks by unidentified armed combatants led to severe repression based on presumed ethnic or political affiliations.

The death penalty was imposed in several countries, but applied only in a very few – and in a worrying move, the Gambia executed its first prisoners for 30 years.

Women and girls continued to be particularly vulnerable to discrimination and gender-based violence – domestic violence was widespread as well as state-sponsored and conflict-related violence. Rapes by soldiers and members of armed groups occurred in many conflict zones, including Mali, Chad, Sudan and the DRC. In Sudan some women protesters were reportedly subjected to “virginity tests”, and in many countries harmful traditional practices such as genital cutting continued.

Throughout Africa, widespread corruption and conflict continued to bring challenges as Africans prepared to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the African Union in 2013. But there were seeds of hope all across the region as people continued to use peaceful means to demand their right to dignity, social justice and human rights.

A young Malian refugee in the Tinfaguate refugee camp, Ayorou region, Niger, April 2012. She was shot in the arm when she tried to protect her daughter during an attack by militia in her village.

© Amnesty International





REGIONAL OVERVIEW
AMERICAS

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
AMERICAS



Indigenous people at judicial proceedings for Efraín Ríos Montt, Guatemala City, January 2012. Efraín Ríos Montt, who ruled the country from 1982-1983, faced charges of genocide dating from Guatemala's bloody civil war.

The widespread human rights violations of the past, and the failure to hold those responsible to account, have cast a long shadow over many countries in the region. However, key prosecutions in 2012 in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay marked further important advances in the quest for justice for violations committed during past military governments. Nevertheless, for some, the struggle for meaningful access to justice and an end to impunity continued. In Haiti, for example, proceedings against former President Jean-Claude Duvalier remained stalled in the courts. And in the USA, little progress was made in holding to account those responsible for abuses committed as part of the CIA's programme of secret detentions during the Bush administration.

Social conflict over natural resources continued and, for many, attacks on their rights intensified. However, recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples received a boost as court rulings reaffirmed their right to free, prior and informed consent to development projects affecting them. In June, for example, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a landmark ruling in favour of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku and found Ecuador guilty of violating their rights.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW AMERICAS

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NICARAGUA THE
DOMINICAN REP
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RS WOM
RIGHTS

The Inter-American human rights system itself came under renewed criticism by a number of governments in the region in response to its decisions. Venezuela went so far as to officially give notice that it was withdrawing from the American Convention on Human Rights.

“IT’S NOT EASY SAYING YOU’VE BEEN RAPED... WE BEGAN TO REBUILD OUR LIVES, TALKING ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED... THAT’S WHEN I THOUGHT I CAN’T KEEP QUIET ANY MORE... IF WE DON’T STAND UP, THE ATTACKS AGAINST WOMEN WILL CONTINUE. WE WON’T BE SILENT.

Members of the self-help group for women victims of violence, Colombia

There was some progress in ending the use of the death penalty in the region. In the USA – the only country in the region that continued to execute people – Connecticut became the 17th state to abolish the death penalty. And while death sentences continued to be imposed in the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, there were no executions during the year.

In Colombia, the first formal peace talks in over a decade raised expectations that the armed conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) could finally come to an end after almost 50 years.

Throughout the region, people continued to challenge entrenched patterns of discrimination and violence against women and to campaign for sexual and reproductive rights. However, for millions of women in the region the right to make free and informed decisions, without coercion or discrimination, about when to have children and how many, remained elusive. In countries such as Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, women and girls pregnant as a result of rape or for whom continued pregnancy posed a threat to health or life, continued to be denied access to safe, legal abortions. The impact of this denial of human rights was particularly acute for young girls and women from disadvantaged groups.

**“WE SHOULD NEVER LET
FEAR OVERCOME COURAGE.”**

Laisa Santos Sampaio, schoolteacher and
environmental campaigner

Journalists continued to play a vital role in exposing human rights violations, often at great personal cost. Some faced direct repression from the government, while in other countries they were targeted by armed gangs and criminal networks. Again and again, human rights defenders, often living in precarious and difficult situations, continued to face down attempts to silence them through vilification, misuse of the courts and violence. Through their actions they showed just how strong and deep-rooted the human rights movement has become, and the hope that it inspires in millions throughout the region.

Journalists protest in Mexico City at the killing of three Mexican photojournalists in the state of Veracruz in May 2012. The placard reads: “One does not kill the truth by killing the journalist.” At least six journalists were killed during the year because of their work. Little progress was made in investigations into these killings.





REGIONAL OVERVIEW
ASIA PACIFIC

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
ASIA PACIFIC



A woman cries as her home is demolished in Yangji village, Guangzhou city, Guangdong province, China. Sudden and violent evictions were widespread, usually preceded by threats and harassment.

In countries across Asia-Pacific, the simple act of publicly expressing one's opinion – whether on the streets or online – was met with brutal state oppression. People were routinely harassed, attacked, jailed and killed for daring to challenge the authorities.

In Viet Nam, more than 20 peaceful dissidents, including bloggers and songwriters, were jailed on spurious charges relating to national security. In Indonesia, authorities locked up six people for blasphemy, and 70 peaceful political activists remained behind bars. In Cambodia, security forces gunned down people peacefully protesting against forced eviction and poor working conditions. In China, people protesting against mass forced evictions risked detention, imprisonment or being sent to Re-education Through Labour camps. In Sri Lanka, journalists and others were arbitrarily arrested or abducted – never to be seen again – for criticizing the authorities. And in India, activists working for the rights of Indigenous communities – whose desire to protect their traditional land rights ran counter to corporate interests – were jailed on politically motivated charges.

High-profile leadership changes in various countries in the region did little to improve the human rights landscape. In China, more than 100 people were

REGIONAL OVERVIEW ASIA PACIFIC

VIET NAM INDON
ESIA CAMBODIA
SRI LANKA INDIA
CHINA KOREA M

ALDIVES AFGHA
NISTAN MYANMA
R PAKISTAN THA
ILAND PAPUA NE

W GUIN
P HILIP
ARANTA
INDONESIA

**“AS WE WERE IN HOSPITAL I
HEARD AND SAW UNIFORMED
POLICEMEN CHARGING IN. THEY
WERE HITTING PEOPLE WHO HAD
BEEN INJURED, HITTING THEM
ESPECIALLY ON THE HEAD.”**

MP Mariya Didi, who was injured by police during a demonstration against the resignation of Mohamed Nasheed, Maldives, on 7 February 2012

detained to prevent protests ahead of the Chinese Communist Party leadership change in November – the first such change in 10 years. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where Kim Jong-un continued to consolidate his leadership after assuming power in 2011, political opponents continued to be banished to remote prison camps where they faced severe malnutrition, hard labour, torture and, in many cases, death.

Protests in Maldives against the resignation in February of Prime Minister Mohamed Nasheed were met with violent repression as security forces targeted his political allies and tortured them. Armed conflict continued to blight the lives of tens of thousands of people in the region, with civilians suffering injury, death and displacement as a result of suicide attacks, indiscriminate bombings, aerial assaults or targeted killings in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand.

© Jenny Holligan

The ambitions of women and girls continued to be thwarted across the region, as states failed to adequately protect and promote their rights. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, many women and girls continued to be barred from public life, and in some cases subjected to execution-style killings by the Taliban. Public outcry at the gang-rape and subsequent death of a student in India highlighted the state's persistent failure to curb violence against women and girls. And in Papua New Guinea such violence, although pervasive, went largely unpunished. Progress for women's rights, however, was recorded in the Philippines which passed a new Reproductive Health Law after 10 years of lobbying by activists.

"THE HANDS OF CRUELTY EXTEND TO THE TRIBAL AREAS [OF NORTH-WEST PAKISTAN] BUT THE HANDS OF JUSTICE CANNOT REACH THAT FAR."

Ghulam Nabi,
Peshawar High Court Lawyer,
Pakistan

Other positive – albeit tentative – steps occurred elsewhere in the region. Although Afghanistan, India, Japan, Pakistan and Taiwan resumed executions after a hiatus of between 17 months and eight years, Singapore and Malaysia made efforts to remove mandatory death sentences from their statute books.

Surprisingly, a breath of opportunity – and change – opened up in Myanmar. In November, the authorities announced plans to develop a mechanism to review prisoner cases, and hundreds of political prisoners were freed throughout the year. Still, hundreds more remained under arbitrary arrest and detention – an indication of just how long the road to reform remains, not just in Myanmar, but the region as a whole.

Protesters hold lotus flowers as they demand the release of 13 human rights defenders from the Boeung Kak Lake community in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The women were arrested following a peaceful protest against forced evictions.





REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA**

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA**

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA**



A Romani man prepares food in Valeni 2, a Roma community in Piatra Neamt, Romania. In August, the local authority relocated about 500 Roma to segregated accommodation without basic facilities such as electricity or transport links.

A rare example of the democratic transition of power for the former Soviet Union took place in the parliamentary elections in Georgia. Elsewhere, authoritarian regimes retained their grip on power. The European Union won the Nobel Peace Prize but was unable to guarantee basic shelter and security for refugees in all its member states, nor equal rights for its six million Roma citizens. The European Court of Human Rights, for so long the jewel in the crown of Europe's human rights protection system continued to be undermined by the refusal of member states to implement judgements and by attempts to reduce the scope of its authority.

Civil and political rights were threatened across the former Soviet Union. The post-2011 clampdown continued in Belarus; in Azerbaijan several prisoners of conscience were released, new ones detained. In Russia, a new wave of repressive laws increased the ability of the state to clamp down on critical protest, demonstrations, individuals or organizations. Across the region, states also applied more insidious pressure on their critics: anonymous threats of violence, smear campaigns of drug use, promiscuity, or tax evasion.

Turkey continued to grow in influence as a regional player, without making significant progress in respecting human rights at home, with thousands of individuals still languishing in jail following convictions in unfair trials and violations of their right to freedom of expression.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA

THE EUROPEAN
UNION BELARUS
AZERBAIJAN RU
SSIA TURKEY MA

CEDONIA ITALY
UKRAINE THE BA
LKANS BOSNIA A
ND HERZEGOVIN

A MIGRA
YLUM G
HUNGAR
A DISCR

**“WHAT THE MAYOR REALLY
WANTED WAS TO THROW US OUT
OF THE CITY, SO HE WOULDN'T
SEE ROMA ANYMORE. AND THAT'S
WHAT HAPPENED.”**

Ducia, after being evicted from her home in the city of Piatra Neamț, Romania, August 2012

In a landmark ruling in December, the European Court of Human Rights found the government of Macedonia responsible for the disappearance and torture of Khaled el-Masri following his abduction by the CIA in Skopje in 2003. In September 2012, the Italian Court of Cassation upheld the convictions of 23 former CIA officers for the 2003 kidnapping and rendition of Egyptian terrorism suspect Osama Moustafa Hassan Nasr in Milan.

For the most part, however, accountability for the crimes committed in Europe as part of the US-led renditions programme remained elusive, as implicated states continued to stall on investigations or deny their involvement in human rights violations.

In the former Soviet Union, the practice of renditions continued. Russia and Ukraine collaborated in the abduction and return of wanted individuals at risk of torture in blatant defiance of European Court of Human Rights rulings blocking their extradition.

Several states, notably Russia, undermined the authority of the European Court of Human Rights by failing to implement its judgements, while amendments proposed to the European Convention on Human Rights threatened to undermine the independence of the Court and limit individuals' access to it. In parts of the Balkans, the likelihood receded that some victims of war crimes committed in the 1990s would receive justice. Investigation and prosecution of those cases continued to be slow and obstructed by a lack of political will. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries, victims of rape and other war crimes of sexual violence continued to be denied access to justice and social support.

"YOUR POLITICAL PASSION HAS UNITED PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, CULTURES, AND WAYS OF LIFE. THANK YOU FOR THIS MIRACLE..."

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova from the feminist punk band Pussy Riot, in a letter from prison, September 2012

European countries sought to restrict the influx of migrants and asylum-seekers through the strengthening of border controls and co-operation agreements with North African states, such as Libya, that were largely unable to respect the rights of those returned to their shores. Asylum-seekers in Greece continued to face severe obstacles in applying for asylum and increasingly risked detention in inhuman conditions – or violence at the hands of xenophobic vigilante groups.

Hungary allowed uniformed far-right groups to march through Roma neighbourhoods, chanting racist abuse and throwing rocks at the inhabitants. Across the region, Roma continued to face harassment and discrimination.

Women demonstrate in Paris, France, in support of three women from feminist punk group Pussy Riot in Russia, who were convicted of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred". Two remain in jail and are prisoners of conscience.

"THE SOLDIERS BEGAN SHOOTING, TO SCARE AND INTIMIDATE US... THE BABIES WERE CRYING, WE FEARED FOR OUR LIVES, ESPECIALLY AS WE WERE COMING FROM A WAR ZONE OURSELVES."

F., a Syrian refugee, on the small island of Farmakonisi, Greece, where he and other Syrian arrivals were being held in August 2012





REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH
AFRICA**

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH
AFRICA**



A victim of shelling by the Syrian military awaiting burial in Aleppo, Syria, October 2012. The internal armed conflict was marked by indiscriminate attacks on residential districts and gross human rights abuses.

The popular uprisings that swept across North Africa and the Middle East from late 2010 continued to shape human rights developments around the region in 2012.

In Syria, the internal armed conflict between government forces and the opposition ravaged the country. Gross human rights abuses and war crimes by all parties, as well as crimes against humanity by government forces, persisted throughout 2012 and beyond, and included indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, political killings and torture. The widespread terror and destruction displaced over 2 million people inside Syria who faced dire humanitarian conditions and by the end of the year had impelled almost 600,000 others to flee abroad, putting extreme strain on neighbouring states. With a broken economy and infrastructure, and no end in sight to the fighting, the future for Syria looked bleak indeed.

Elsewhere, the picture for 2012 was mixed. In the countries where autocratic rulers had been ousted – Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen – there was greater media freedom and expanding opportunities for civil society. However, there

REGIONAL OVERVIEW
**MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH
AFRICA**

**SYRIA HUMAN RI
GHTS ABUSES E
GYPT LIBYA TUNI
SIA YEMEN PROT**

**ESTS HARRASSM
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NSCIENCE ALGE**

**RIA JORD
URNAL
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UDI ARN**

were also setbacks, with challenges to freedom of expression on religious or moral grounds. In Libya, the failure to bring militias under control also threatened human rights progress.

**OVER THE PAST YEAR MORE THAN
20,000 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
SUPPORTERS WORLDWIDE HAVE
TAKEN ACTION IN SOLIDARITY WITH
SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN CALLING FOR
THE OVERTURN OF THE DRIVING BAN.**

Amnesty International statement, June 2012

Across the region, human rights and political activists continued to face repression. Many women and men were jailed for expressing their views, beaten or killed in peaceful protests, tortured in custody, banned from travelling, or harassed by state agents. In Gulf states, activists, poets, health workers

and others were imprisoned simply for calling for reform or for expressing their views. In Bahrain, while the authorities have trumpeted reform, they have continued to imprison prisoners of conscience, including leading members of the opposition and human rights activists. New laws in Algeria and Jordan tightened controls on the media, and the Moroccan authorities clamped down on journalists and dissidents.



In the countries in transition, debate continued on much-needed reform of the justice and security sectors, but few concrete changes were introduced. In general, impunity for human rights violations remained entrenched, although some steps were taken to address past abuses. Arbitrary arrests, torture and unfair trials remained common, and many states frequently employed the death penalty, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"I FOUND MY BOYS BURNING IN THE STREET. THEY HAD BEEN PILED ON TOP OF EACH OTHER... AND SET ON FIRE."

A mother describing to an Amnesty International researcher in Syria what happened to her three sons in Sarmin, Idlib province, on 23 March 2012

The hopes of women at the heart of the uprisings were far from realized. Their demand for an end to gender discrimination was not met, and some women protesters were abused in gender-specific ways. However, women across the region continued to challenge the discrimination that remains entrenched in law and practice, and to demand adequate protection against domestic and other gender-based violence.

A protester in Bahrain holds up a photo of imprisoned human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, December 2012. Human rights defenders and other activists were harassed, detained and sentenced by the authorities, and vilified in the state media.



Meanwhile, Israel maintained its military blockade of the Gaza Strip and expanded illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank. The result was a continuing humanitarian crisis for Gaza's 1.6 million residents and heavy restrictions on movement for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In November 2012, Israel launched an eight-day military campaign against Palestinian armed groups who fired rockets indiscriminately from Gaza into Israel; more than 160 Palestinians as well as six Israelis were killed.

Despite the setbacks of 2012, the determination and courage shown by people across the region in their continuing struggles for justice, dignity and human rights give good cause for optimism.

Amnesty International activists erect gravestones during the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in New York, USA, to raise awareness of the impact of the unregulated trade in weapons, July 2012.

2000
PEOPLE
KILLED
BY ARMS
EVERY DAY

2000
PEOPLE
KILLED
BY ARMS
EVERY DAY



2000
PEOPLE

KILLED
BY ARMS
EVERY DAY

2000
PEOPLE

KILLED
BY ARMS
EVERY DAY



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013
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13



A child waits with his father for warm clothing at a settlement for internally displaced people, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2012. Poor sanitation, lack of access to health care, and a harsh winter led to many deaths, especially among children.



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The Strategic Partnerships Project is part of the Growth Unit in Amnesty International. The project aims to grow human rights activism and impact in countries with no Amnesty International entities by establishing partnerships with local NGOs. It also aims to increase the visibility of Amnesty International and the strategic partner and create platforms for Amnesty International issues in the country. Amnesty International's Strategic Partnerships in 2012 were in Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Romania.

For more information on Strategic Partnerships, please contact: Strategic_Partnerships_Team@amnesty.org

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There are also International Members in several countries and territories around the world.

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A photograph of a man sitting on a wooden crate in front of a wall. The wall is made of corrugated metal and wood. A large piece of meat, possibly a pig or goat, is hanging on the wall behind him. The man is wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers. He is looking directly at the camera. The ground is dirt and there are some wooden planks and debris around him.

Residents of the Deep Sea informal settlement, Nairobi, Kenya, August 2012. Most of the estimated 7,000 residents do not have access to adequate sanitation, health care, schools, roads or street lighting.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS

The Amnesty International Report 2013 documents the state of human rights in 159 countries and territories during 2012. This pamphlet summarizes the rights abuses and triumphs of the year, provides regional snapshots of key human rights issues, and pulls out some key facts and statistics.

It shows how many governments paid lip service to their commitment to human rights, and continued to use national interests, national security and concerns about public security to justify violating those rights.

In response, people all over the world took to the streets and explored the explosive potential of social media to expose repression, violence and injustice. Some paid a heavy price. In many countries, they faced vilification, imprisonment or violence. Individual and collective acts of courage and resistance continued to drive forward the struggle for human rights and to ensure that the actions of governments and powerful vested interests were forced into the spotlight.

This pamphlet bears witness to the courage and determination of women and men in every region of the world who stood up to demand respect for their rights and to proclaim their solidarity with those whose rights were flouted.

It shows how, despite all the obstacles in its path, the human rights movement is growing ever stronger and more deep-rooted, and how the hope it inspires in millions remains a powerful force for change.

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