

GHANA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana is a constitutional democracy with a strong presidency and a unicameral, 230-seat parliament. In late 2008 the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) won both the presidency and a small majority in parliament in an election deemed generally free and fair by domestic and international observers. NDC candidate Professor John Evans Atta Mills was inaugurated president in early 2009 for a four-year term. There were instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authorities.

The most important human rights problems included trafficking in persons; exploitive child labor, including forced child labor; and harsh and life-threatening prison conditions.

Other human rights problems included use of excessive force by police, resulting in deaths and injuries; prolonged pretrial detention; arbitrary arrest of journalists; corruption in all branches of government; violence against women and children, including female genital mutilation (FGM); societal discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and persons with HIV/AIDS; ethnic killings and vigilante violence; ethnic discrimination and politically motivated violence; and societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

The government took steps to prosecute and punish officials who committed abuses; however, police impunity remained a problem.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed politically motivated killings; however, use of excessive force by security forces resulted in the deaths of several armed criminal suspects and other persons during the year.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution and law prohibit such practices; however, there were credible reports that police beat and otherwise abused suspects, prisoners, and other citizens. Severe beatings of suspects in police custody reportedly occurred throughout the country but generally were unreported in official channels. Police generally denied allegations or claimed that the level of force used was justified. Military officials also reportedly mistreated persons during the year. During the year several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), lawyers, and civil society organizations publicly criticized police use of excessive force. In 2009 these organizations called for the inspector general of police (IGP) to take action against security force members involved in abuse. As a result, awareness-raising campaigns were conducted and internal disciplinary actions were taken against offending security officials in 2010 and 2011.

On June 27, investigators from police headquarters in Accra were dispatched to the Volta Region to investigate the death of a trader at Hohoe. Allegedly the trader died of multiple wounds inflicted by police at the Hohoe police station after the police allegedly sexually assaulted her and some of her relatives. Police allegedly detained the victim and other members of her family when they questioned why the police should collect money from a relative before granting her bail. Reports indicated other members of the family were injured. A directive was issued to the IGP to produce a report on the incident, but it had not filed a report at year's end.

There were no new developments in the 2010 case of an inmate in Koforidua Prison, Eastern Region, who died en route to the hospital.

In October 2010 police and other security personnel in Nakpanduri, Northern Region, allegedly ransacked and burned homes, injured civilians, and repeatedly fired their guns during an operation to arrest an escaped convict; the interior minister subsequently issued an apology on behalf of the government. The Commission on Human Rights and Justice (CHRAJ) noted that investigations into police culpability continued at year's end.

Violence between soldiers and police, often due to internal rivalries, resulted in injuries during the year.

For example, in November eight soldiers allegedly beat three policemen and a community protection assistant of the National Youth Employment Program while

they were directing traffic in Tamale. The incident was under investigation. The Northern Regional Police Commander and the Airborne Force official met to discuss a plan of action.

In June 2010 in Kumasi, soldiers from the Fourth Garrison allegedly attacked and beat 12 police officers stationed at various duty posts throughout the city. One officer was allegedly hit on the head with a hammer and hospitalized. Soldiers also vandalized property at police stations and forced officers to flee their posts. In July 2010 a committee composed of three top-ranking military officers, three senior police officers, and a retired appeals court judge who served as committee chair opened an investigation, but the committee had not filed a report at year's end.

In 2009 "Operation Calm Life," a joint military and police effort, was created to bridge the divide between military and police throughout the country. During the year the operation was underway in Accra.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions generally were harsh and sometimes life threatening. Police have been known to beat suspects in custody. Much of the prison population was held in buildings that were originally colonial forts or abandoned public or military buildings, with poor ventilation and sanitation, substandard construction, and limited space and light. Many prisoners slept on bare floors or took turns using beds. According to the 2010 Prisons Service Annual Report (its most recent available report), 13,507 prisoners (average daily lockup) were held in prisons designed to hold approximately one-third that number.

In 2010, 78 prisoners died in custody. The CHRAJ noted the most common ailments (including tuberculosis, malnutrition, dysentery, HIV/AIDS, and skin disease) affecting prisoners stemmed from overcrowding, poor nutrition, and a lack of ventilation. Medical facilities were inadequate, and the prisons supplied only the most basic medicines. Prisoners relied on families or outside organizations for additional food, medicine, and other necessities. According to the CHRAJ, the daily food stipend for prisoners was 60 Ghana pesewa (\$0.40), which the CHRAJ deemed too low. Shortages of food, bedding, clean water, and clothing for prisoners persisted.

For example, in February 2010 two inmates in a police cell in Ashaiman, Greater Accra Region, allegedly suffocated to death. The cell in which the two were

incarcerated was built to accommodate 10 persons but held 43 prisoners on remand and 19 convicted prisoners at the time of the deaths.

On average there were 187 female and 115 juvenile inmates in the 42 prisons and prison camps. Juvenile detainees were not housed separately from adults, and pretrial detainees were held with convicted prisoners. In 2011 Amnesty International reported that access to legal aid was inadequate, which resulted in some prisoners spending more than 10 years awaiting trial. It also stated that 123 people, including three women, were on death row at year's end; however, no executions had been carried out since 1993. The Constitutional Review Commission recommended abolishing the death penalty in its final report on the amendment of the 1992 Constitution.

Prisoners and detainees had reasonable access to visitors and were permitted religious observance. Authorities permitted prisoners and detainees to submit complaints to judicial authorities without censorship and to request investigation of credible allegations of inhumane conditions and treatment; however, submission of complaints by prisoners was not common practice. Authorities investigated credible allegations of inhumane conditions and treatment and documented the results. Whenever allegations of inhumane treatment are made, the accused officer is asked to respond. If prison authorities are unsatisfied with the response of the officer, an internal inquiry is launched and recommendations for disciplinary action are submitted to the director general of the prisons service.

The government permitted independent monitoring of prison conditions by the CHRAJ, which served as the official ombudsman, and the welfare unit of the prisons service. During the year the CHRAJ monitored 28 of the 42 prisons and prison camps. The CHRAJ and other NGOs worked on behalf of prisoners and detainees to help alleviate inhumane overcrowding, address the status and circumstances of confinement of juvenile offenders, and improve pretrial detention, bail, and recordkeeping procedures to ensure prisoners do not serve beyond the maximum sentence for the charged offenses.

The government permits independent monitoring of prison conditions by local and international human rights groups, including the International Committee of the Red Cross; however, no such visits were conducted during the year.

During the year 1,150 inmates were discharged under the "Justice for All" program, which was begun in 2008 to ease prison overcrowding and to accelerate judicial processes; another 727 inmates were released on bail.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law provide for protection against arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the government did not always observe these prohibitions.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The police, under the Ministry of Interior, were responsible for maintaining law and order. However, the military continued to participate in law enforcement activities. A separate entity, the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), handled cases considered critical to state security and answered directly to the Ministry of National Security. Police maintained specialized units in Accra for homicide, forensics, domestic violence, trafficking in persons, visa fraud, narcotics, and cybercrimes. Such services were unavailable nationwide due to lack of office space, vehicles, and other equipment outside the capital. In May 2010 the police unveiled a five-year strategic plan to increase police personnel, housing, vehicles, equipment, and establish new training academies.

Police brutality, corruption, negligence, and impunity were problems. Delays in prosecuting suspects, rumors of police collaboration with criminals, and a widespread perception of police ineptitude contributed to vigilante violence during the year. There were credible reports that police extorted money by acting as private debt collectors, setting up illegal checkpoints, and arresting citizens in exchange for bribes from disgruntled business associates of those detained. Low salaries, which were sometimes not paid on time, contributed to police corruption. In July 2010 the government implemented the Single Spine Salary Structure, which increased the salaries of all police officers, partly in an effort to reduce corruption.

The Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Unit (PIPS) investigated human rights abuses and police misconduct. From January through December, PIPS received 366 new cases; of those, 219 were closed, and 147 remained under investigation at year's end. Among the 366 cases, 13 involved complaints of harassment, eight of extortion, 72 of misconduct, 24 of unlawful arrest and detention, 92 of unprofessional handling of a case, 51 of unfair treatment, 51 of undue delay of investigation, and 37 of alleged police brutality with human rights violations.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention

The constitution and law provide for protection against arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the government frequently violated these prohibitions. The law requires judicial warrants for arrest and provides for arraignment within 48 hours; however, persons were frequently arrested without warrants, and detention without charge for periods longer than 48 hours occurred. Officials detained some prisoners for indefinite periods by renewing warrants or by simply allowing them to lapse while an investigation was conducted. The constitution provides that a detained individual be informed immediately, in a language the person understands, of the reasons for detention and of his or her right to a lawyer at state expense if unemployed or indigent. The government did not consistently protect these rights, but lawyers were generally assigned promptly to detainees. The law requires that a detainee who has not been tried within a “reasonable time” as determined by the court be released either unconditionally or subject to conditions necessary to ensure that the person will appear in court at a later date; however, in practice, this provision was rarely observed.

The law provides for bail, and the court has unlimited discretion to set bail, which was often prohibitively high. The court may refuse to release prisoners on bail and instead detain them without charge for an indefinite period, subject to weekly review by judicial authorities. In September 2010 a man was granted bail after spending 10 years in detention. On occasion police also demanded money from suspects as a precondition for their release on bail.

Lengthy pretrial detention remained a serious problem. According to the Prisons Service 2010 Annual Report, 25 percent of the prison population was in pretrial status. Detainees sometimes served more time in detention awaiting trial than the maximum sentence for the crime required.

During the year prison officials, courts, and police continued efforts to reconstruct the files of at least 300 pretrial inmates; the files had been missing since at least 2007. As of 2010, 136 inmates had been released.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary was inefficient and subject to influence and corruption (see section 4).

Members of the military were tried separately under the criminal code in a military court. Military courts, which provide the same rights as civil courts, were not

permitted to try civilians. Despite alternate dispute resolution (ADR) procedures to decongest the courts and address judicial inefficiency, court delays persisted. Mediators were trained throughout the country to implement ADR, mediation desks were established in some district courts, and an ADR secretariat was established within the judicial service. Nevertheless, even in fast-track courts, which were established to hear cases to conclusion within six months, trials could go on for years.

The Chieftaincy Act gives village and other traditional chiefs the power to mediate local matters and enforce customary tribal laws dealing with such matters as divorce, child custody, and property disputes; however, the authority of traditional rulers had steadily eroded because of a commensurate increase in the power of civil institutions, including courts and district assemblies.

A judicial complaints unit, headed by a retired Supreme Court justice, addressed public complaints, such as unfair treatment by a court or judge, unlawful arrest or detention, missing dockets, delayed trials and delivery of judgments, and alleged bribery of judges. In 2009, the most recent statistics available, the unit received 345 complaints, of which 294 were resolved, and 51 were under investigation at year's end.

Trial Procedures

The constitution and law provide for the right to a fair trial, and the judiciary generally enforced this right. However, the judiciary was sometimes inefficient and subject to influence and corruption. Defendants are presumed innocent and trials are public. Juries are used in murder trials. Defendants have a right to be present, to be represented by an attorney (at public expense if necessary), and to cross-examine witnesses. Defendants have the right also to present witnesses and evidence. Defendants and their attorneys have access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases and have a right to appeal. The law extends the above rights to all citizens. In practice authorities generally respected these safeguards.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

There is an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters, and citizens had access to a court to bring lawsuits seeking damages for, or cessation of, a human rights violation.

Fast-track courts and automated commercial courts continued efforts to streamline resolution of disputes, although delays were common. A growing number of automated courts, whose proceedings were expedited through electronic data management, were established across the country. They succeeded in case tracking management, and also randomly selected judges for case assignment, which was useful in reducing judicial corruption.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution prohibits such actions, and the government respected these prohibitions in practice.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

Status of Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press; however, the government sometimes restricted those rights during the year. Journalists were arbitrarily arrested and detained during the year, and some practiced self-censorship.

Freedom of Speech: Individuals generally could criticize the government publicly or privately without reprisal.

Freedom of Press: Local authorities sometimes detained, arrested, or harassed critics of the government.

In December 2010 a journalist with Yankee Radio, a community-based station in the Brong Ahafo Region, was detained for several hours by police and charged with “publishing information with the intention to cause fear or harm to the public or to disturb the public peace.” The charge followed the broadcast of an interview with a Ghanaian citizen who was said to have fled the Ivoirian crisis. The fleeing man allegedly told the journalist that Ghanaian border police were extorting money from some stranded Ghanaians in Cote d’Ivoire. The journalist was released on

bail and told to reappear in court in a week. He went into hiding thereafter, and a writ for his arrest was issued. The following week, the general manager of Yankee Radio was allegedly assaulted by police officers, who stormed the station to prevent the rebroadcast of the interview, which police claimed was creating fear and panic in the country.

The BNI detained the editor of *Daybreak*, an Accra-based weekly newspaper, on March 16. He was released unconditionally six hours later and reported that he was interrogated on a wide range of issues, including the source for a story he published on March 15 on an alleged massive shake-up in the top levels of the military.

No action was taken against the local authorities who assaulted or detained the journalists mentioned above.

There were more than 1,200 newspapers and magazines, approximately 203 FM radio stations, and 27 television stations registered with the National Media Commission (10 were not yet operational). The most wide-reaching print outlets were state-owned, while the majority of television and radio stations had private ownership.

The independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views without restriction. There were reports that the government paid journalists “time and transportation” costs to facilitate coverage.

Internet Freedom

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in the peaceful expression of views via the Internet, including by e-mail. The Internet was accessible in Accra and other large cities; there was limited but growing access in other parts of the country.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

The constitution and law provide for freedom of peaceful assembly, and the government generally respected this right. The government does not require permits for demonstrations, but police can deny use of a particular route.

Freedom of Association

The constitution and law provide for freedom of association, and the government generally respected this right in practice. Security force members were prohibited from joining political assemblies or groups within the security services, but they were allowed to participate in political activities outside police or military compounds.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/rpt.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

In the early part of the year, thousands of residents of Cote d'Ivoire were forced to seek refuge in Ghana as a result of the political instability following the country's late 2010 presidential elections. Although the violence ended in May, many Ivoirians remained in refugee camps in Ghana. On October 6, Cote d'Ivoire, the UNHCR, and the government signed an agreement to ensure that officially registered Ivoirian refugees would be able to return to Cote d'Ivoire.

On September 14, a land dispute between clans of the Bassare tribe over land in Northern Togo resulted in 476 Togolese refugees fleeing to Ghana. Most of them returned to their homes shortly thereafter; the remaining refugees were placed in host communities in Tatale Zabzugu District in the Northern Region.

The UNHCR estimated that 30,000 refugees resided in the country during the year. This figure includes Liberian, Togolese, and Ivoirian refugees, as well as refugees of other nationalities.

Protection of Refugees

The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. In practice the government provided protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where their lives or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The law allows rejected asylum seekers to appeal and remain in the country until an appeal is adjudicated. There were delays in the appeal process, however, and the minister responsible for adjudicating appeals made no decisions on any appeals during the year. The law also accords protection to refugees who entered the country illegally without documentation.

The government established the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) in 1992 to adjudicate claims for refugee status and to ensure that refugees received all appropriate protections. Following the 2009 presidential election, the incoming administration appointed new board members. In January the government named a new GRB chair.

Sexual and gender-based violence remained a problem for refugees. In February police raided the Buduburam Refugee Camp. There were conflicting accounts regarding both the number of casualties resulting from the incident and the cause of the violence.

All refugees had freedom of movement within the country and were not required to carry identification. Refugees were allowed to apply for work permits through the same process as other foreigners. However, work permits generally were issued only for employment in the formal sector, whereas the majority of refugees worked in the informal sector. Refugee children had access to public primary schools. Refugees in Krisan Camp, the Buduburam Settlement, and the Volta Region were enrolled in the national health insurance system with funding from the UNHCR. Urban refugees had access to health care on a fee-for-service basis.

Section 3. Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The constitution and law provide citizens the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right through periodic, free, and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: Following a narrow victory in 2008 over New Patriotic Party (NPP) candidate Nana Akufo-Addo, opposition NDC candidate John Evans Atta Mills was inaugurated president in 2009. There were reports of voter intimidation and election irregularities; however, observers and the Independent Electoral Commission deemed these irregularities too insufficient to have altered the outcome of the election. Incidents of preelection violence occurred. In 2008 NPP and NDC supporters clashed in Gushiegu District, Northern Region, resulting in six deaths and the burning of houses and vehicles. During the same period, an NPP rally in Tamale was disrupted by gunfire, forcing the party's vice presidential candidate to flee. The incident led to attacks on NDC supporters returning from their own rally and the destruction of houses and vehicles. The 2010 by-elections were held with few incidents reported.

Political Parties: Political parties operated without restriction or outside interference. The NDC held 116 seats in the parliament, the NPP 107, minor parties three, and independents four.

Participation of Women and Minorities: There are no laws preventing women from voting or participating in political life on the same basis as men, but women traditionally had less access to leadership positions than men. There were 19 women in the 230-seat parliament, four women in the cabinet, and five women on the Supreme Court. Seven of 38 ministers were women. Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, wife of former president John Jerry Rawlings, sought to become the NDC's presidential candidate for the 2012 general election but lost to incumbent Mills at the party's 2011 convention.

There are no laws or practices that keep members of minorities from equal participation in political life. According to the 2000 census, the country had more than 80 ethnic groups, none of which constituted a majority. The Ashanti, the largest ethnic group, made up 14.8 percent of the population.

Section 4. Official Corruption and Government Transparency

Corruption was present in all branches of government. The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, and some officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices. Police set up barriers to extort money from motorists, and judicial officials accepted bribes to expedite or postpone cases or to “lose” records. The World Bank’s most recent Worldwide Governance Indicators reflected that corruption was a problem.

In September 2010 the Serious Fraud Office was replaced by the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), which had expanded powers to investigate and prosecute corruption in crimes such as money laundering, human trafficking, and cybercrime. The EOCO hired new employees during the year, most to be investigators. The organization continued to grow and had more than 400 staff members at year’s end. The EOCO is the lead agency on any major corruption case.

The CHRAJ investigates human rights abuses, public corruption, and abuse of power and is empowered to recommend punishments for violators. The attorney general, the minister of justice, the EOCO, and the Public Prosecutor’s Office are responsible for combating corruption. The parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is also responsible for auditing government spending. An auditor general reviews public sector accounts.

In the May and August 2010 hearings of the Public Accounts Committee, numerous cases of embezzlement and misuse of funds by government ministries were uncovered in departments, agencies, and district assemblies. The committee ruled that failure to refund monies or reconcile accounts would result in prosecution. The committee forwarded all cases to the attorney general; however, no prosecutions had been reported at year’s end.

On May 13, the Accra Human Rights Court ruled that the EOCO has no legal standing to investigate the Ghana Football Association (GFA), since the GFA was a private entity. The court further declared that the EOCO’s seizure of documents and computers at the offices of the GFA constituted an abuse of power and a violation of the GFA’s rights.

In August the Judicial Council dismissed two circuit court magistrates who were said to have committed acts of corruption and abuse of office. The investigative committee concluded that the two justices took bribes from parties in cases they

presided over. Chief Justice Georgina Wood, sworn into office in 2007 as the first woman to serve in the position, expressed a strong desire to deal with corruption within the justice system.

Security force members were arrested for corruption. For example, in August six officers of the Motor Traffic and Transport Unit of the Ghana Police Service were arrested after allegedly extorting money from motorists at Akoti Junction on the Accra-Cape Coast road.

In September an Accra Circuit Court dismissed a narcotics case after one kilogram of seized cocaine had allegedly been surreptitiously replaced with sodium carbonate. The disappearance of the cocaine prompted an investigation by the BNI and a judicial panel of inquiry. Although finding improper behavior and procedures, the panel cleared the Judicial Service of fault in the cocaine's disappearance. The BNI placed blame on a deputy superintendent of police, whom it held for questioning at year's end.

Officials were subject to financial disclosure, but their responses were not available for public review.

The constitution provides for public access to government information; however, obtaining such access was difficult in practice.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were generally cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The CHRAJ, which mediated and settled cases brought by individuals against government agencies or private companies, operated with no overt interference from the government; however, some critics questioned its ability to independently investigate high-level corruption. Its biggest obstacle was a lack of adequate resources, which resulted in low salaries, poor working conditions, and the loss of many of its staff to other governmental and nongovernmental agencies. Salaries were often delayed due to a chronic lack of resources and administrative issues. However, public confidence in the CHRAJ

was high, resulting in an increased workload for its staff. In July President Mills swore in the new head of the CHRAJ.

Human rights issues were addressed in parliament by the Committee on the Constitution, Legal Issues and Parliamentary Affairs.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, or social status; however, enforcement was generally inadequate. Limited financial resources and a generally permissive societal attitude toward such discrimination contributed to its perpetuation. Courts were empowered to order specific enforcement of these prohibitions.

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape but not marital rape. Rape was significantly underreported and remained a serious problem. During the year the Ghana Police Service's Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) worked closely with the Department of Social Welfare, the national chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, the Legal Aid Board, and several other human rights NGOs to combat domestic violence. As of September DOVVSU received 157 reports of rape and reported 82 arrests and 40 prosecutions, resulting in five convictions; 126 cases remained uninvestigated at year's end. Convicted rapists may be punished with prison sentences ranging from five to 25 years.

Although the law prohibits domestic violence, it continued to be a problem. The law stipulates that a person in a domestic relationship who engages in misdemeanor domestic violence is liable on summary conviction to a fine, a term of imprisonment of not more than two years, or both. The court also may order the offender to pay compensation directly to the victim. However, inadequate resources and logistical capacity in DOVVSU and other agencies, as well as only partial implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, hindered the full application of the law during the year. Unless specifically called upon by DOVVSU, police seldom intervened in cases of domestic violence, in part due to a lack of counseling skills, shelter facilities, and other resources to assist victims. In many cases victims were discouraged from reporting abuse and from cooperating with prosecutors because they were aware of long delays in bringing such cases to trial. Victims frequently did not complete their formal complaints because they could

not afford the fees that doctors charged to document the abuse in police medical forms. Victims did not report domestic violence (or rape) also because of fear of retaliation. Statistics were not available on prosecutions of domestic violence cases during the year.

Female Genital Mutilation: See section 6, Children.

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: In the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions, where belief in witchcraft remained strong, rural women and men were banished to “witch camps” (villages in the North populated by suspected witches, some of whom were accompanied by their families) by their families or traditional village authorities for suspected witchcraft. (Such camps were distinct from “prayer camps,” to which persons with mental illness were sometimes sent by their families.) Most accused witches were older women, often widows, who were accused by fellow villagers of being the cause of difficulties, such as illness, crop failure, or financial misfortune. Persons suspected of witchcraft also were killed in recent years. NGOs provided food, medical care, and other support to residents of the camps. Government officials and the regional office of the CHRAJ claimed the number of women in witch camps in the Northern Region decreased slightly in recent years.

For example, in November 2010 in Tema, Greater Accra Region, a group of individuals including an evangelist pastor allegedly set fire to a 72-year-old woman after accusing her of being a witch. The woman died the following day from her injuries. Police arrested six persons; two were charged with murder, and four were released on bail. The accused had yet to go to trial at year’s end.

The Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC) monitored witch camps. The CHRAJ has an office in Tamale in the Northern Region, which supports efforts to protect the rights of those accused of being witches and monitors three camps. In 2010, during its most recent survey of the camps, the CHRAJ reported that they contained 175 female and eight male residents; however, media sources reported far higher numbers of men, women, and children in the camps.

NGOs expressed concern about the government’s desire to close witch camps. Accused witches feared they would be killed if camps were dismantled and they were forced to return to their previous homes. According to the CHRAJ, there was some discussion within the MOWAC about closing witch camps and beginning a process of reunification with family and villages as well as an educational campaign about religious tolerance and respect for human rights. The CHRAJ

intended to continue to work with camp officials, the MOWAC, and residents about the future of witch camps. A conference held at the end of the year, attended by the MOWAC, the CHRAJ, DOVVSU, NGOs, and other stakeholders focused on a process by which accused witches could reintegrate with their families.

Sexual Harassment: There were no laws to specifically protect women from sexual harassment; however, some sexual harassment cases were prosecuted under the existing criminal code. Women's advocacy groups reported that sexual harassment remained a widespread problem.

Reproductive Rights: Couples and individuals have the right to freely decide on the number, spacing, and timing of pregnancies. According to the 2008 Demographic and Health Survey, the most recent completed, 98 percent of all women surveyed were able to cite having used at least one birth control method. According to a foreign aid agency, 17 percent of married women of reproductive age used a modern contraceptive method. More than 75 percent of pregnant women had four or more prenatal visits. Approximately 60 percent of women delivered with a skilled attendant. Maternal mortality was estimated in a recent study at 451 per 100,000 live births, with the most common causes of death being hemorrhage and infection. More than two-thirds of women reported receiving medical care within two days of delivery. Women were more likely than men to accept HIV testing, particularly since it was offered as a standard component of prenatal care. An estimated 10 percent of the population knew their HIV status; approximately 30 percent of HIV-positive pregnant mothers received antiretroviral medications to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

Discrimination: The constitution provides for all persons to be treated equally under the law; however, women continued to experience discrimination in access to employment. Women in urban centers and those with skills and training encountered little overt bias, but resistance persisted to women entering nontraditional fields. Women, especially in rural areas, remained subject to burdensome labor conditions, performing physically difficult manual labor such as farming, transporting goods, and manual household chores, while often carrying a child on their backs. Women also were subjected to traditional male dominance. Traditional practices and social norms often denied women their statutory entitlements to inheritance and property, a legally registered marriage with the associated legal rights, and the maintenance and custody of children. Female entrepreneurs found it difficult to start or expand a business due to poor access to credit. Although microcredit programs were available, lack of access to credit remained a serious barrier.

Women's rights groups were active in educational campaigns and in programs to provide vocational training, legal aid, and other support to women. The government was involved in educational programs, and many officials were advocates of women's rights.

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived by birth within the country or parentage, but not all births were registered with the government. Some children were reportedly denied education because their births were not registered, although a birth certificate is not a legal precondition to attend school.

Education: The constitution provides for "free, compulsory and universal basic education" for all children from kindergarten through junior high school; however, parents were required to purchase uniforms and writing materials. During the year the government continued a program to provide uniforms to 1.3 million children in "deprived" areas, although contracting delays prevented most of the targeted children from receiving their uniforms. The government also operated a school feeding program for more than 1,138,000 children, which covered incidental costs as well as meals, and a nationwide capitation grant program that covered other school fees for all children attending public schools. According to the Ministry of Education, girls attending primary school during the 2010-11 school year constituted 48.6 percent of all students; at the junior high school level, the proportion was 46.5 percent. During the year the Ghana Education Service (GES) actively campaigned to expand education for girls by providing scholarships at the junior and senior high school levels and by offering financial incentives and free housing to female teachers to work in deprived areas. The GES placed girls' education officers at regional and district levels, and there were community participation coordinators in every district office to mobilize communities to increase enrollment of girls.

Child Abuse: The law prohibits defilement (defined as sex with a child younger than 16 years with or without their consent), incest, and sexual abuse of minors, but such abuses remained serious problems. As of September DOVVSU received 446 cases of suspected child defilement and 15 cases of attempted defilement; the true number of cases was thought to be much higher. There were frequent press reports that male teachers sexually assaulted and harassed female students. Girls often were reluctant to report these incidents to their parents, and social pressure often prevented parents from going to authorities. There were press reports during

the year of teachers, coaches, and headmasters/headmistresses being arrested for sexual harassment of female students or dismissed for ignoring reported problems. There were also a few reports of male teachers arrested for sexually assaulting male students.

Child Marriage: Forced child marriage, which was illegal, remained a problem, and no improvements were noted during the year, according to the CHRAJ and NGOs.

Harmful Traditional Practices: The law prohibits FGM, but it remained a serious problem in the Upper West Region of the country, and to a lesser extent in the Upper East and Northern regions. Type II FGM--defined by the World Health Organization as the excision of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora--was more commonly perpetrated than any other type. A girl was typically excised between four and 14 years of age. According to a 2008 study conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service with support from UNICEF, the most recent study available, approximately 49 percent of girls and women under 50 years in the Upper West Region, 20 percent in the Upper East Region, and 5 percent in the Northern Region had experienced some form of FGM.

Intervention programs were somewhat successful in reducing the prevalence of FGM, particularly in the northern regions. Officials at all levels, including traditional chiefs, continued to speak out against the practice, and local NGOs continued educational campaigns to encourage abandonment of FGM and to train practitioners in new skills so they could seek alternate sources of income.

According to a 2009 survey of girls and women between 15 and 49 years old in the Upper West Region, 85 percent stated that the practice should be discontinued, 10 percent were unsure, and only 5 percent supported its continuation. Lower prevalence of FGM among women in the Upper East Region was highly correlated with increased education. There were no prosecutions of practitioners during the year.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The migration of children to urban areas increased due to economic hardship in rural areas. Children were often forced to support themselves to survive, increasing both the occurrence of child labor and the school dropout rate. Girls under 18 were among the most vulnerable child laborers, as many also engaged in prostitution or were sexually exploited in exchange for protection while living on the streets.

The minimum age of consensual sex is 16 years. Defilement is punishable by imprisonment for seven to 25 years. There is no legislation specific to child pornography; however, it can be prosecuted as an “offense against public morals” and is punishable by imprisonment for a period not to exceed three years and/or a fine ranging from 120 to 600 cedis (\$80-\$400) in a country where the average annual income was estimated to be 1,950 cedis (\$1,300).

Local and international NGOs worked with the government to promote children’s rights and were somewhat successful in sensitizing communities about protecting the welfare of children.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Anti-Semitism

The Jewish community had a few hundred members. There were no reports of anti-Semitic acts.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip.

Persons with Disabilities

The law provides for the rights of persons with disabilities, including protection against exploitation and discrimination in employment, health care, and other domains. The National Council on Disability, mandated by law, was inaugurated in 2009. The government did not systematically or overtly discriminate against persons with disabilities, but such persons often experienced societal discrimination. The law provides persons with disabilities access to public buildings “as far as is practical.” Activists supporting the rights of persons with disabilities complained of the slow implementation of the Persons with Disability Act, especially the lack of legislative instruments to implement the new law. Despite the legal protection provided in the law, discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment and the inaccessibility of public buildings continued to be problems.

Persons with both mental and physical disabilities were frequently subjected to abuse and intolerance. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of persons with disabilities being killed for ritual purposes.

Some religious groups believed that persons with mental disabilities were afflicted by demons that should be exorcised. The abuse of children with disabilities was common. In previous years there were reports that children with disabilities were tied to trees or under market stalls and caned regularly and of family members killing children with disabilities.

Human rights activists expressed concerns about prayer camps in which individuals believed to be possessed by evil spirits were chained up for weeks, physically assaulted, and denied food and water. Camp supervisors would sometimes diagnose mental illness as a “demonic affliction” and prevent patients from consuming food or water, often for seven consecutive days, to cleanse victims of their evil spirits. Some victims were thought to be as young as six years old. Families sent victims to be exorcised of evil spirits or cured of their physical or mental illnesses. Victims were held at the camps until they were considered healed. Reports indicated that these practices occurred in the Greater Accra, Eastern, Central, Western, Ashanti, and Brong-Ahafo regions. In 2009 the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) released a report on prayer camps based on interviews with current and former inmates. The report noted that some families caring for mentally ill members had insufficient financial resources and viewed prayer camps as an available option. The CHRI urged regulation of prayer camps; however, no regulations were implemented by year’s end.

Several government agencies and NGOs were involved in addressing discrimination against persons with disabilities, including the Ministry of Health, the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW), the Ministry of Education, and the Center for Democratic Development.

Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

According to the criminal code, “unnatural carnal knowledge” is defined as “sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal.” It states that individuals who have unnatural carnal knowledge “of any person of sixteen years or over with his consent” is guilty of a misdemeanor. There has been

considerable debate over whether this legislation could be used to prosecute consenting gay adults, and there were no reports that it had ever been used.

The former and current commissioners of the CHRAJ spoke out against discrimination and advocated the need to protect the human rights of every citizen as provided for in the constitution. In November media accounts reported British Prime Minister Cameron was considering suspending direct aid to countries with poor records on LGBT rights. In response President Mills commented that Ghana was committed to upholding human rights as provided by the constitution, but he would not initiate a change to the law.

LGBT persons faced widespread discrimination, as well as police harassment and extortion attempts. Gay men in prison were often subjected to sexual and other physical abuse.

In June 2010 more than 1,000 protesters in Takoradi, Western Region, participated in a peaceful rally against reports of gay and lesbian activities in their city. This was reportedly the first such protest in the country.

In May 2010 an HIV/AIDS training workshop was held in Takoradi for health-care workers. After the workshop, *The Daily Graphic* announced that 8,000 gay persons had been “registered” in the Western and Central Regions. However, experts in the field denied that there had been any such “registration.” After the workshop there was significant negative reporting in the media about homosexuality.

In a June 2010 interview with *The Daily Graphic*, the Western Region minister called on the government to take steps to combat homosexuality. He included the possibility of police raids on locales frequented by gay men and lesbians, efforts by community leaders to “wean young people” away from homosexuality, and a public condemnation by the government. However, no arrests of persons were made in connection with his comments by year’s end, and he did not repeat his call.

It was reported that four men who worked within the community of gay men were arrested in May 2010 in connection with an alleged sexual assault and were later charged with sodomy. The case was first brought to the Takoradi Circuit Court on August 24; however, it had not been heard by year’s end.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

Discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS was a problem. Fear of being stigmatized continued to discourage persons from being tested for HIV infection, and those who tested positive from seeking timely care. There were no indications that this situation improved during the year. Instances where HIV-positive people were forced to leave their jobs or houses were common. The government and NGOs subsidized many centers that provided free HIV testing to citizens, although the high patient volume and the physical layout of many clinics make it difficult for the centers to respect confidentiality at all times.

Ritual killings occurred during the year. For example, in February a six-year-old was killed for ritual purposes in Koforidua; three men were arrested in connection with the case. Skin, private parts, and her tongue were removed from her body.

In May the headless body of a 12-year-old was found in bushes in the Bompa community of the Brong Ahafo Region, and was believed to indicate a ritual killing. Three people, including one with the deceased boy's head in his possession, were arrested.

In December 2010 in Assin Gangan, Central Region, a man allegedly beheaded his three-year-old son for ritual purposes. A buyer in Kumasi reportedly offered the man 35,000 cedis (\$23,750) to produce a human head that he could use for rituals. The father was arrested and an investigation continued at year's end.

Chieftaincy disputes, which frequently resulted from a lack of clear succession, competing claims over lands and other natural resources, and internal rivalries and feuds, continued to result in deaths, injuries, and destruction of property.

For example, in January one person was killed and two others seriously injured over a land dispute between Abiriw and Dawu residents, in Kuapem, North District.

In March two police officers were shot in a chieftaincy riot at Akwamufie, Akosombo District. One of the officers died from his injuries.

In March 2010 in Tuobodom, Brong-Ahafo Region, three persons were killed and more than 500 displaced as a result of fighting between ethnic factions after the kidnapping of a rival chief. Eight persons were arrested in connection with the incident. An investigation by the police Criminal Investigations Division continued at year's end.

In September residents of Agogo in the Ashanti Region organized a protest march to bring attention to alleged criminal activity by Fulani herdsmen such as the destruction of crops, rape, and highway robberies. By November, 12 people allegedly had been murdered within 18 months by Fulani herdsmen in various parts of the Eastern Region. In addition police recorded many rape and defilement incidents victimizing women and children perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen. On December 7, 13 Fulanis, including one woman and two children, were killed during a shooting incident in Zamashegu, Northern District. The parliament formed a committee to investigate allegations of criminal activities by herdsmen believed to be of Fulani descent.

Mob violence during the year resulted in injuries and property damage. For example, in September 2010 in Tema, Greater Accra Region, approximately 200 fishermen and fishmongers attacked construction workers attempting to clear land for a construction project. The fishermen used the land to dry and smoke fish. The mob burned vehicles and buildings, threw stones, and fired at police officers. Police and military personnel were called in to restore order, and 32 persons were arrested, of whom 28 were granted bail. An investigation continued.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law allows workers, except for the armed forces, police, the prison service, and some other security and intelligence agency personnel, to form and join unions of their choice without previous authorization or excessive requirements. The law requires that trade unions or employers' organizations must register, be authorized by the chief labor officer, and obtain a certificate of registration.

The law recognizes the right to strike but restricts that right for workers who provide "essential services." The minister of employment and social welfare designated a list of essential services, which included many sectors falling outside the International Labor Organization's (ILO) essential services definition. The list included services carried out by utility companies (water, electricity, etc.), ports and harbors, medical centers, and the Bank of Ghana. In these sectors, the parties to any labor disputes are required to resolve their differences within 72 hours; the deadline was meant to put pressure on employers and employees to operate efficiently with limited interruptions. The right to strike can also be restricted for workers in private enterprises whose services were deemed essential to the survival

of the enterprise by a union and an employer. A union may call a legal strike only if the parties fail to agree to refer the dispute to voluntary arbitration or if the dispute remains unresolved at the end of arbitration proceedings. In addition the Emergency Powers Act of 1994 grants authorities power to suspend any law and prohibit public meetings and processions, but it was unclear if the law applies to labor disputes.

The law provides a framework for collective bargaining. However, only unions that represented the majority of workers in a given company can obtain a Collective Bargaining Certificate, which is required to engage in collective bargaining. The armed forces, police, prison service, security and intelligence personnel, and workers with policymaking and managerial functions do not have the right to bargain collectively.

The law allows unions to conduct their activities without interference and provides reinstatement for workers dismissed under any unfair pretenses. The labor law also prohibits antiunion discrimination by employers and provides for reinstatement for workers fired for union activity. The Labor Act protects trade union members and their officers against discrimination if they organize within the free zones.

The government generally protected the right to form and join independent unions and conduct legal strikes and bargain collectively, and workers exercised these rights in practice. Worker organizations were independent of the government and political parties, and there were no instances of government interference in union activities during the year. There were no reports on violence, threats, or other abuses targeting union leaders and members by government or employers. While there were no instances of employers who refused to bargain, bargained with unions not chosen by workers, or hired workers without bargaining rights, some instances of employer interference in union activities were subtle. Since many unions also did not fully understand the labor laws, they normally did not follow approved processes for dealing with disputes. Due to lack of awareness about the National Labor Commission's (NLC) role, the NLC faced challenges in enforcing the necessary sanctions against both the unions and employers.

In October 2010 the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) filed a case against a local beverage company over union recognition. The beverage company filed several cases against the Ghana Federation of Labor and FAWU to delay the recognition of its workers union. At year's end the substantive case was still

pending in court, while a contempt action brought against the beverage company's management by the Labor Department was discontinued.

Trade unions engaged in collective bargaining for wages and benefits with both private and state-owned enterprises without government interference. No union had ever gone through the complete dispute resolution process involving arbitration, and there were numerous unsanctioned strikes during the year. Some employers continued to fire employees for union activity.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits most forms of forced or compulsory labor. Provisions of various laws prescribe imprisonment and an obligation to perform prison labor as punishment for violations. The law provides for employers found guilty of using forced labor to be fined no more than 250 penalty units (each unit was assigned a monetary value adjusted for the fluctuating exchange rate).

During the year children were forced to work (see section 7.c.). Some victims were forced to work on boats as children and were sometimes unable to leave their employers and continued to work without pay as adults.

The government did not commit sufficient resources to enforce legislation prohibiting forced labor. No fines were levied during the year, and no legal cases were brought that resulted in imprisonment. During the year the ILO continued to urge the government to revise various legal provisions that permit imprisonment with an obligation to perform labor.

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The law sets the minimum employment age at 15 years, or 13 years for light work that was not likely to be harmful to the child and does not affect the child's attendance at or capacity to benefit from school. The law prohibits night work and certain types of hazardous labor for those under 18 and provides for fines and imprisonment for violators. The law allows for children age 15 and above to have an apprenticeship under which craftsmen and employers have the obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment along with training and tools. On

June 6, Ghana ratified ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.

Child labor laws were not enforced effectively or consistently, and law enforcement officials, including judges, police, and labor officials, were sometimes unfamiliar with the provisions of the law that protected children.

Inspectors from the MESW were responsible for enforcement of child labor regulations, and district labor officers and the social services subcommittees of district assemblies were charged with seeing that the relevant provisions of the law were observed by annually visiting workplaces and making spot checks whenever they received allegations of violations. Inspectors were required to provide employers with information about child labor violations and effective means to comply with provisions of the law. However, the government did not provide sufficient resources to law enforcement and judicial authorities to carry out these efforts.

The ILO, government representatives, the Trade Union Congress, media, international organizations, and NGOs continued to build upon the national action plan by increasing institutional capacity to combat child labor. In October 2010 the MESW relaunched the National Steering Community on Child Labor, consisting of more than 40 representatives from government, the ILO, labor unions, and development partners. In November 2010 the MESW unveiled an integrated child labor monitoring system; as of July the database and manual for the Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System had been completed and training had begun. Education and sensitization workshops were conducted with police, labor inspectors, local governments, and communities.

In September 2010 the minister of employment and social welfare signed an agreement with representatives of the government of Cote d'Ivoire, another government, and the cocoa industry to reaffirm and further extend implementation of a protocol requiring the participating governments to prohibit the worst forms of child labor and take immediate action towards eliminating it.

On June 13, to commemorate World Day Against Child Labor, the government launched the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The government worked closely with NGOs, labor unions, and the cocoa industry to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the industry. Through these partnerships, the government had created several community projects, which promoted sensitization, monitoring, and livelihood improvement.

According to government labor officials, ILO, and the Ghana Employers Association, child labor problems were infrequent in the formal labor sector. During the year several ministries conducted seminars on child labor to educate the media, police, civil servants, and the general public. However, local custom and poverty encouraged children to work to help support their families and eroded societal observance of child labor laws, particularly in the informal sector, where child labor remained a serious problem.

Children as young as seven worked in agriculture and as domestic laborers, porters, hawkers, miners, quarry workers, and fare collectors. Children also engaged in herding livestock, fetching firewood, and bricklaying. In the fishing industry in the Lake Volta region child laborers engaged in potentially hazardous work, such as diving into deep waters to untangle fishing nets caught on submerged tree roots. Girls in the region also engaged in work as domestic servants, cooks, servers, and porters.

Children were also forced to work, and in some cases parents reportedly sold, leased, or gave away their children to work in fishing villages, shops, or homes. It was difficult to determine the extent to which forced and bonded labor by children was practiced. There were indications of compulsory labor affecting both children and adults in the fishing sector and in illegal mining. Victims were forced to work on boats as children and were sometimes unable to leave their employers and continued to work without pay as adults. In the illegal mining industry (consisting of independent, artisanal miners known as *galamseys*, whose operations sometimes conflict with larger, concessionary miners), NGOs cited debt bondage as a problem. There were newspaper reports of children being sold into involuntary servitude for either sexual exploitation or labor, such as 10- to 12-year-old boys working for fishermen in exchange for a yearly remittance to their families. The practice often involved parental consent. The media regularly published stories about children being used in involuntary servitude, particularly as street hawkers and porters.

Child laborers were often poorly paid and physically abused; they received little or no health care and generally did not attend school.

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/tda.htm.

d. Acceptable Conditions of Work

A National Tripartite Committee composed of representatives of the government, labor, and employers set a daily minimum wage, which was 3.73 cedis (\$2.49) during the year. There was no official minimum wage for the growing informal labor force. The law sets the maximum workweek at 40 hours, with a break of at least 48 consecutive hours every seven days. Workers were entitled to at least 15 working days of leave with full pay in a calendar year of continuous service or after having worked at least 200 days in a particular year. However, such provisions do not apply to task workers or domestic workers in private homes, nor elsewhere in the informal sector. The law does not prescribe overtime rates and does not prohibit excessive compulsory overtime.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations are set by the government. The Factories Department within the MESW was responsible for imposing sanctions on violators of the OSH standards. Employers who failed to comply were liable to a fine not exceeding 1,000 penalty units, imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or both. The law requires that employers report occupational accidents and diseases no later than seven days from the date of occurrence. Only workers in the formal sector, which employed less than 20 percent of the labor force, are covered by this legislation.

The MESW was unable to effectively enforce the wage law. There was widespread violation of the minimum wage law in the formal economy across all sectors. The minimum wage law was not enforced in the informal sector. Legislation governing working hours was largely followed in the formal sector but widely flouted and not enforced in the informal sector.

Safety inspectors were few and poorly trained, and they lacked the resources to effectively respond to violations. Inspectors did not impose sanctions or otherwise respond to violations during the year. Specific information regarding the number of labor inspectors and adequacy of penalties was not available. There were no reports of specific government action taken during the year to prevent violations and improve wages and working conditions.

A 2008 CHRAJ report found evidence of widespread violations of human rights in mining areas. The report documented abuses by the security services in mining areas, particularly among galamseys.