

# **SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe is a multiparty constitutional democracy. In 2016 voters elected President Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho as head of state. The legislative elections in 2018 produced a peaceful transfer of power from the Independent Democratic Action to a coalition of other parties. International observers deemed the presidential and legislative elections generally free and fair.

The public security police and judicial police maintain internal security. The army and coast guard are responsible for external security. Both the public security police and the military report to the Ministry of Defense and Internal Affairs. The judicial police report to the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration, and Human Rights. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces did not commit abuses.

Significant human rights issues included serious acts of corruption, and a lack of investigation of and accountability for violence against women.

The government took some steps to identify, investigate, prosecute, and punish officials who committed abuses; however, impunity was a problem.

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

### **a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings**

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. The trial was pending of a government security agent charged with homicide for killing a man in police custody in 2018. He remained under house arrest on full salary.































## SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

inspections. By law workers may remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, but authorities had limited capacity to enforce this right. As the largest employer, the government sets the standards on hours of work, and it effectively enforced OSH standards in the public sector. Approximately one-third of the labor force worked in the informal sector, which laws do not cover.

Working conditions on many of the largely family-owned cocoa farms were unregulated and harsh, with long hours for workers and exposure to the elements and hazardous conditions. Salaries depend heavily on the international price of cocoa. Cooperatives supported farmers during times of low international cocoa prices.

In construction, few workers were outfitted with appropriate personal protective equipment (boots, helmet, or gloves), and in fishing many workers did not have life vests, compasses, or safe boats. There were government programs to sell some of this equipment at greatly reduced costs or to provide it for free.