

NORWAY 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norway is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. The government consists of a prime minister, a cabinet, and a 169-seat parliament (Storting), which is elected every four years and may not be dissolved. The monarch generally appoints the leader of the majority party or majority coalition as prime minister with the approval of parliament. Observers considered the multiparty parliamentary elections on September 13 to be free and fair.

The national police have primary responsibility for internal security. Police may call on the armed forces for assistance in crises. In such circumstances the armed forces operate under police authority. The National Police Directorate, an entity of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, oversees the police force. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces did not commit any abuses.

There were no reports of significant human rights abuses.

The government had mechanisms in place to identify and punish officials who may commit human rights abuses or engage in corruption.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person

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

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

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

Punishment

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, and there were no reports that government officials employed them.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

There were no significant reports regarding prison or detention center conditions that raised human rights concerns.

Physical Conditions: The country has no detention centers for pretrial prisoners. By law authorities must transfer all detainees from police stations to prisons within 48 hours; they usually make the transfer within 24 hours. Prisons generally met international standards, and there were no major concerns regarding physical conditions or inmate abuse.

There were no indications the government addressed any of the problems identified in the report on the 2018 visit by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the last visit by the committee. On that visit the CPT found that, in the Bodo, Ila, and Ullersmo Prisons, remand prisoners subjected to court-ordered full isolation were usually locked in their cells for 22 hours a day, had very limited contact with staff, and were offered one hour of outdoor exercise (alone) and one-hour access to a fitness room (alone). The CPT delegation observed "major problems in the prisons visited in transferring severely mentally ill prisoners to psychiatric hospitals."

Administration: Authorities conducted proper investigations of credible allegations of mistreatment. At the Bodo and Ullersmo Prisons, newly arrived prisoners waited sometimes for several weeks before receiving visits due to delays in obtaining the necessary clearance for their visitors.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted visits, including unannounced visits, by independent human rights observers.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in

court. The government generally observed these requirements.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

The law requires warrants authorized by a prosecutor for arrests. Police may make an arrest without a warrant if any delay would entail risk of injury to police or civilians or damage to property. If police arrest a person without a warrant, a prosecutor must consider as soon as possible whether to uphold the arrest. Detainees must be informed of the charges against them immediately after an arrest, and, if the prosecutor wishes to detain suspects, he or she must arraign them no later than three days after arrest. There were no reports that these rights were not respected. The arraigning judge determines whether the accused should be held in custody or released pending trial. There is a bail system, but it was rarely utilized. Officials routinely released defendants, including nonresident foreigners, accused of minor crimes pending trial. Defendants accused of serious or violent crimes usually remained in custody until trial.

By law authorities should provide detainees access to a lawyer of their choice before interrogation or, if the requested lawyer is unavailable, to an attorney appointed by the government. The government pays the attorney fees in all cases. Criminal detainees benefited from legal aid if the period of police custody was expected to last more than 24 hours (for adults) or 12 hours (for juveniles). Consequently, it was not uncommon for criminal suspects to be subjected to police questioning without a lawyer present.

The law mandates that detainees be transferred from temporary police holding cells to a regular prison cell within 48 hours. There were no reports that these rights were not respected.

The law provides that a court must determine whether and for how long a detainee may be held in solitary confinement during pretrial detention.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence and impartiality.

Trial Procedures

The constitution and the law provide for the right to a fair and public trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right. Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence and the right to be informed promptly of the charges against them. Trials were held without undue delay. Defendants have the rights to be present at their trials, to counsel of their choice at public expense, to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense, to free assistance of an interpreter as necessary from the moment charged through all appeals, to confront and question adverse witnesses, and to present their own evidence and witnesses. Defendants may not be compelled to testify or to confess guilt. They have the right to appeal.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

Individuals or organizations may seek civil remedies for human rights violations through domestic courts. They may appeal cases alleging violations of the European Convention on Human Rights by the government to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) after exhausting all avenues of appeal in domestic courts.

Property Seizure and Restitution

The government and the Jewish community reported that Holocaust-era restitution was not an issue. No litigation or restitution claims regarding real or immovable property were pending before authorities. The Department of State's Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act report to Congress, released publicly in July 2020, can be found on the Department's website:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/just-act-report-to-congress/>.

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

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, and there were no reports that the government failed to respect these prohibitions.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties

a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media

The constitution and law provide for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for members of the media.

Freedom of Expression: The law prohibits “threatening or insulting anyone, or inciting hatred or repression of or contempt for anyone because of his or her: (a) skin color or national or ethnic origin; (b) religion or life stance; (c) sexual orientation or lifestyle; or (d) disability.” A law enacted in November 2020 criminalizes hate speech, including private remarks, based on a person’s sexual orientation. Violators are subject to a fine or imprisonment for not more than three years.

Freedom of Expression for Members of the Press and Other Media, Including Online Media: The prohibitions against hate speech applied also to the print and broadcast media, the publication of books, and online newspapers and journals. The European Federation of Journalists protested a mandatory COVID-19 quarantine for journalists entering the country to work. Restrictions have since been lifted, and the rule was no longer in force.

Internet Freedom

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

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

b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The constitution and law provide for the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The law provides for the right to assemble peacefully, and the government generally respected that right. The Center against Racism criticized police for excessive use of fines and removal of counterdemonstrators at Stop the Islamization of Norway (SIAN) rallies and a counterdemonstration in front of right-wing political party Alliansen's booth in Oslo during the election campaign in August.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

d. Freedom of Movement and the Right to Leave the Country

The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights.

Exile: As of November 22, the government repatriated nine citizens, eight children and one woman, from camps in northeastern Syria.

e. Status and Treatment of Internally Displaced Persons

Not applicable.

f. Protection of Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Access to Asylum: The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees.

The nongovernmental organization (NGO) Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) continued to criticize the country's Internal Flight Alternative, which considers whether a potential asylum seeker first attempted to flee to another part of their country of origin before claiming asylum in Norway.

NOAS remained critical of the perceived lack of openness and transparency in the Immigration Appeals Board, an entity under the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. It noted the board's strict criteria to hear cases and that only 6 percent of asylum seekers were granted a hearing with the appeals board. The applicant cannot appeal a final decision by the appeals board, but the appeals board may make a final decision based on an issue that was not originally in question, which removes the applicant's opportunity to respond to the board's grounds for rejecting the case. The Directorate of Immigration, also an agency of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, reported that 85 percent of asylum applications were granted protection in the initial review.

Refugee groups raised concerns over a lack of consistency across the government's determinations. In July the Oslo District Court ruled invalid a decision by the Immigration Appeals Board to expel a man who arrived in the country as a child with his younger brother because the younger brother received differential treatment, and specifically was permitted to remain in the country, despite the circumstances of their arrival in the country being identical.

The closure of borders in response to COVID-19 and UNHCR's decision to pause its resettlement program also affected the government's ability to meet its commitments. The Directorate of Immigration reported arrivals continued to be significantly reduced compared to what could be expected under normal circumstances. NOAS repeated its concern over the Directorate of Immigration's and the Immigration Appeals Board's use of digital platforms such as Skype to carry out interviews and hearings due to the problems remote hearings presented for the refugees in terms of communication, expressing their case, and translation.

In August the government evacuated an estimated 860 vulnerable Afghans,

including 28 unaccompanied minors, from Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. The government stated publicly that the children were eligible for family reunification.

Safe Country of Origin/Transit: The country is party to the EU's Dublin III regulation, which allows the government to transfer asylum seekers to the European country determined to be responsible for adjudicating the case. Dublin returns remained temporarily halted as a health and safety precaution in response to COVID-19.

Refoulement: The government temporarily suspended deporting failed asylum seekers to Afghanistan in July due to the deteriorating security situation there.

Freedom of Movement: The law permits detention of migrants to establish their identity or to deport them if authorities deem it likely the persons would evade an order to leave. The detention is limited and subject to judicial review.

Access to Basic Services: The government continued to provide welfare and support for refugees living in the country as part of the government's Integration Goals program administered by the Ministry of Children and Families. Refugees are eligible for programs designed to provide Norwegian language instruction, job training, job placement, access to schools and universities, and basic instruction for living in the country's society. Refugees and asylum applicants have access to welfare benefits for short-term or long-term housing and medical care, and are provided direct access to, or financial support for, necessities such as food, clothing, basic entertainment, and public transportation. Children are eligible to attend public schools and preschools on the same basis as citizens, and there were programs for children who have recently arrived and needed language assistance prior to entering the regular education system.

Amnesty International Norway criticized the lack of access to health care and other fundamental human rights for the approximately 50 paperless and irregular migrants present in the country. Individuals include, for example, those who were not able to return to their home countries because their governments refused to accept them, issue travel documents, or both.

National tests carried out at the fifth grade showed that children with a migration

background lagged considerably in reading and mathematics: 39.8 percent of the children born abroad were in the lowest performance level with regard to reading in 2019 (compared with 20.6 percent among the majority population) and 39.3 percent with regard to mathematics (compared with 21.4 percent among the majority population). At the eighth grade, 25.3 percent were in the lowest performance level with regard to reading (compared with 7.0 percent) and 20.5 percent with regard to mathematics (compared with 7.0 percent). In upper secondary education, the dropout rate of foreign-born migrant children was 24.1 percent in 2018 compared with 12.2 percent among the majority population; among foreign-born boys, this share was 29.9 percent.

Durable Solutions: The government offered resettlement for refugees in cooperation with UNHCR. The government's Directorate of Immigration had several programs to settle refugees permanently in the country. Through the International Organization for Migration, the government assisted the return of unsuccessful asylum seekers to their countries of origin through voluntary programs that offered financial and logistical support for repatriation. Identity documents issued by either the Norwegian or the returnee's government were required to use this program. The government continued routinely to offer migrants cash support in addition to airfare to encourage persons with rejected asylum claims to leave the country voluntarily.

Individuals granted refugee status may apply for citizenship when they meet the legal requirements, which include a minimum length of residence of seven of the previous 10 years, completion of an integration course on Norwegian society, and successfully passing a language test.

Temporary Protection: As of September the government provided temporary humanitarian protection to 36 individuals who may not qualify as refugees. Permits for temporary protection may be renewed and can become permanent. NOAS continued to raise concerns that the temporary protection for these minors expires when they turn 18, even though the circumstances that led to the determination of their need for humanitarian protection remained unchanged.

g. Stateless Persons

According to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, an estimated 1,700 stateless persons lived in the country as of September; they were not counted as refugees.

A joint UNHCR-government 2017-21 strategy on statelessness encouraged the government to improve its statistical data on statelessness. The Directorate of Immigration did not have data on stateless asylum seekers for the year. The birth register does not register the father of stateless persons born in the country on birth certificates.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: Observers considered the parliamentary elections held on September 13 to be free and fair.

Participation of Women and Members of Minority Groups: No laws limit the participation of women or members of minority groups in the political process, and they did participate.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were no reports of government corruption during the year.

Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses 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 often were cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The country has ombudsmen for public administration (the parliamentary ombudsman), children, equality and discrimination (the equality and antidiscrimination ombudsman, or LDO), and health-care patients. Parliament appoints the parliamentary ombudsman, while the government appoints the others. All ombudsmen enjoyed the government's cooperation and operated without government interference. The parliamentary ombudsman and the Antidiscrimination Tribunal hear complaints against actions by government officials.

Although the ombudsmen's recommendations are not legally binding, authorities usually complied with them.

Parliament's Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs reviews the reports of the parliamentary ombudsman, while the Standing Committee on Justice and Public Security is responsible for matters relating to the judicial system, police, and the penal, civil, and criminal codes.

The National Human Rights Institution (NIM) is an independent body funded by the parliament. It submits an annual report to parliament on human rights in the country. By advising the government, disseminating public information, promoting education and research on human rights, and facilitating cooperation with relevant public bodies, the NIM makes recommendations to help ensure that the country's international human rights obligations are fulfilled. The NIM also engaged in several topics of structural and institutional discrimination and encouraged the government to become increasingly involved in issues such as the treatment of children from minority groups by the child-welfare services and allegations of racial profiling by police.

The Freedom of Expression Commission was established in 2017 to examine the

social, technological, legal, and economic frameworks for free speech and was scheduled to present its conclusions in 2022.

Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape of men and women, including spousal rape, and the government generally enforced the law. The penalty for rape is up to 21 years in prison, depending on the severity of the assault, the age of the victim, and the circumstances in which the crime occurred. Most cases resulted in sentences of three years and four months in prison.

The law provides penalties of up to six years in prison for domestic violence and up to 21 years for aggravated rape. Gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, was a problem. In 2020 the government reported that during the previous three years, partner killings accounted for one in four killings in the country. The government generally enforced the law, although Amnesty International Norway criticized police for not allocating sufficient resources to investigations and asserted that the indictment and conviction rates for rapes were too low.

The government had programs to prevent rape and domestic violence, and offices within the police districts offered counseling and support to victims. All police districts had a domestic violence coordinator. The government continued to implement its three-year *Action Plan against Rape* that focuses on prevention, improvements of care and services to victims, and improvements to the judicial system. The National Police Directorate oversees the implementation of the national action plan and submits annual reports on the trends in the prosecution of rapes and sexual violence. In August the government launched a four-year action plan against domestic violence, *Freedom from Violence*. The plan is an interministerial product which includes measures such as prevention, victim assistance, protection and prosecution, and international cooperation. The plan also contains a separate chapter on preventing and combating domestic violence in the Sami community.

Public and private organizations operated 47 government-funded shelters and managed five 24-hour crisis hotlines. Victims of domestic violence have a right to consult a lawyer free of charge before deciding whether to make a formal complaint. If the government initiates criminal proceedings, the victim is entitled to free assistance from a victim's advocate. Victims may also qualify for a one-time payment from a government-sponsored fund.

Sexual Harassment: The law provides that “employees shall not be subjected to harassment or other unseemly behavior,” and the government effectively enforced this provision. The law applies to employers with as few as 20 employees and requires most companies to include in their annual reports information on their work environment and gender equality. Employers who violate the law are subject to fines or prison sentences of up to two years, depending on the seriousness of the offense. The Antidiscrimination Tribunal has the authority to impose penalties in sexual harassment cases more in line with other cases of discrimination and harassment and puts an onus on public authorities to work actively for gender equality and the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. The costs and resources needed to bring such cases to court have been barriers to victims seeking redress in all but the most egregious cases.

Reproductive Rights: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

The government provides access to sexual and reproductive health services for sexual violence survivors.

Discrimination: Under the law public and private authorities must advance gender equality in all areas of society. The law mandates that 40 percent of the members of boards of directors of publicly listed companies be women; this applies to employers with as few as 20 employees. Companies largely complied with the law.

Although women have the same legal status as men, they experienced discrimination in terms of gaining employment as well as discrimination in the workplace itself (see section 7.d.). As of September the LDO received 61 complaints of gender discrimination as well as 13 complaints related to parental

leave.

Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination

Racial profiling is against the law, but authorities did not keep records relating to the stop and search of members of vulnerable groups. NGOs such as the Center against Racism and Black History Month Norway continued to report complaints of police profiling of members of ethnic and racial minority groups, particularly young men. To end the practice of stigmatizing minority youth in particular, the Oslo city government applied for permission from the national government to introduce a pilot program for a system in which anyone checked and cleared by police would receive a receipt stating why the person was stopped and that the person had been cleared. A goal of the system was to raise awareness among police regarding unconscious bias. The pilot program had support from Black History Month Norway and the LDO. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the local police were less enthusiastic, stating that “ethnic [and racial] profiling is not a method of approach within the Norwegian Police.” As of September, the Antidiscrimination Tribunal received 64 reports of ethnic discrimination.

Discrimination against immigrants, including asylum seekers and irregular migrants, and ethnic minorities remained a problem. Ethnic discrimination occurred in employment and housing.

According to NGOs and research institutes, including the Center against Racism, hate speech on the internet against ethnic minorities, remained a problem. The government continued to implement the national strategy against hate speech released in 2016 and implemented a new three-year *Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination on the Basis of Ethnicity and Religion*.

In addition to the Sami, five ethnically non-Norwegian groups with a long-standing attachment to the country have a special protected status under the law: Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Jews, Forest Finns, Roma, and Romani/Tater people (a distinct group of travelers who emigrated to Norway and Sweden in the 1500s).

Romani groups noted concerns of a disproportionate number of Romani children taken into custody by the Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), an independent

human rights monitoring body of the Council of Europe, noted that, according to civil society, Romani children were also among the victims of bullying.

During its 2020 visit to the country, ECRI's delegation received complaints from both parents with a migration background and Roma and Romani people/Tater representatives, about Child Welfare Services (CWS). The ECRI report stated that approximately 40 children belonging to the Romani and Tater minorities were in foster care with very limited access to the Romani culture. In ECRI's opinion, the CWS's practices of removing a higher percentage of children from these backgrounds from the home, placing them in foster care, and restricting parental visitation had led to fear and distrust in those communities. In certain instances ECRI found that the CWS had limited parental visits to once a year for a couple of hours, as well as deprivation of parents' custody, and adoption against the will of the parents. Parents reported feeling it was not possible to challenge their decisions successfully. In one case cited in the report, five children were taken from a Romanian-Norwegian family and placed in three separate foster homes around the country. However, the law provides for nationwide implementation of a mediation process involving direct communication between the CWS and parents that reduced court cases by two-thirds in the five pilot counties.

Indigenous Peoples

There is no official registry of Sami in the country. As of 2018 government statistics showed that 55,544 persons lived in the areas defined as "Sami" in the northern part of the country. In addition to participating freely in the national political process, the Sami elect their own parliament, the Samediggi, which exercises certain administrative and financial powers according to the law. In 2021 a total of 20,005 persons registered for the Sami parliamentary elections. Members of the Sami parliament also represent their constituents in international fora and organizations such as the Arctic Council and the United Nations. Elections for the Sami parliament follow the national election schedule and last took place on September 13.

The constitution provides a right for the Sami to safeguard and develop their language, culture, and community. NGOs and Sami officials continued to express concern over Sami children's lack of access to Sami language education due to a

lack of qualified teachers.

In response to concerns about high levels of domestic violence within Sami communities, the government devoted a separate chapter in its new action plan against domestic violence, *Freedom from Violence*, to the subject.

The Sami have a right under the law to consultation on the use of unpopulated lands traditionally used for reindeer husbandry. Under the law three of the six members of the council to determine the proper usage of the land must be Sami. As the government moved to develop greater wind-power capabilities, the Sami raised concerns about the use of their land. Reindeer avoid the wind turbines, which leads to limited grazing areas and increased density in remaining areas. The government stated it takes the reindeer industry and the Sami parliament into account when considering proposals for new wind-power projects. In October the Supreme Court ruled that the government violated the rights of the Sami people by permitting the construction of wind farms on Sami land.

The Sami Council, with delegates from nine member organizations in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia, held a hearing in February on a possible new railway to the Arctic Ocean via Oulu and Rovaniemi in Finland to Kirkenes. During the hearing Sami reindeer herders from Finland and Norway said they would veto such a railway project. Aili Keskitalo, then president of the Norwegian Sami parliament, pointed to areas in northern Sweden and Norway where trains kill hundreds of reindeer annually.

ECRI reported that more than half of the persons with a strong and visible Sami identity experienced discrimination, most often during their schooling, and such discrimination negatively affected their health.

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived from one's parents; children born in the country do not automatically become citizens. All birth clinics in the country reported births to a central birth register and provided the parents with a birth certificate. The birth register does not register on birth certificates the father of nonresidents born in the country. The birth certificate does not confer citizenship.

Child Abuse: The law criminalizes child abuse, and the government generally enforced the law. In 2020 the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Affairs initiated 45,464 investigations of alleged child abuse and completed 45,578 investigations. By the end of 2020, the CWS assisted 22,621 children, of whom 20,655 received in-home assistance, while 1,966 were removed from their family home.

Between January and October, the ECHR found against the government twice for separating children from their parents. The ECHR had 20 pending cases against the CWS.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: The minimum legal age for marriage in the country is 18 for both women and men.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Commercial sexual exploitation of children younger than 18 is illegal, both in the country and abroad when committed by a citizen of the country. In both cases the punishment is either a fine or a prison sentence of up to two years. Child pornography is also illegal and punishable by a fine or a prison sentence of up to three years. The government generally enforced the law. In 2020 the government reported 3,308 sexual offenses involving children. In August the government launched a national strategy against online abuse of children containing 30 measures to prevent and combat abuse in digital forums. The minimum age for consensual sex is 16.

International Child Abductions: The country is a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. See the Department of State's *Annual Report on International Parental Child Abduction* at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/International-Parental-Child-Abduction/for-providers/legal-reports-and-data/reported-cases.html>.

Anti-Semitism

At least 1,500 Jews lived in the country, 761 of whom belonged to Jewish congregations, according to Statistics Norway. The government does not keep statistics that require citizens to report their religion.

Jewish community leaders reported the public and government generally supported

the community, although they acknowledged incidents of anti-Semitism. ECRI noted that, according to civil society, Jewish children were also among the victims of bullying. According to NGOs and research institutes, including the University of Oslo, the Institute for Social Research, and the Jewish community, hate speech on the internet against ethnic minorities and religious groups continued to be a problem. The government continued to implement measures from its *Action Plan against Anti-Semitism 2016-2020* and provided funding through the government budget. The action plan provided programmatic support and coordination towards integrating anti-Semitism education into all schools, supporting Jewish museums and cultural institutions, funding research on anti-Semitism and Jewish life, and public advocacy programs to combat anti-Semitism.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities can access education, health services, public buildings, and transportation on an equal basis with others. The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities and the government provided information and communications in accessible formats. The government effectively enforced and implemented these provisions. The law mandates access to public buildings, information, and communications for persons with disabilities. All children up to the age of 15 have the right to attend the school closest to their home. The government provides a right to education supports upon the completion of a needs assessment. Two out of three children with disabilities who need additional educational supports receive additional instruction outside their classroom.

According to the Antidiscrimination Tribunal, as of September it received 86 complaints of discrimination based on disability.

The government continued to implement its 10-year strategy to reduce discrimination and increase access and opportunities to housing, transportation,

employment, and health care as well as participation in cultural and social activities for persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, citizenship law, and access to government services such as health care. While violence motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards transgender persons is not considered a hate crime, crimes based on discriminatory attitudes towards sexual orientation can be treated as aggravating circumstances.

According to NGOs and research institutes, including the Institute for Social Research, and the Organization for Sexual and Gender Diversity, hate speech on the internet against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons (LGBTQI+) continued to be a problem. ECRI noted a survey among LGBTQI+ pupils, in which 37 percent of the respondents stated they had been bullied by other pupils and 24 percent by teachers. Youths who were harassed with anti-LGBTQI+ bullying had higher rates of depression.

ECRI stated civil society believed that implementation of *Safety, Diversity, Openness*, the latest national action plan on LGBTQI+ issues, which launched in 2016, was slow and that there have been only a few concrete initiatives with little funding.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

In 2020 the number of hate crimes decreased to 744 from 761 in 2019, according to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Media and the Norwegian Center against Racism reported continued anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment in society. Stop the Islamization of Norway (SIAN) held multiple protests that were faced by larger groups of counterdemonstrators. The Center against Racism, other NGOs, and politicians urged individuals not to give SIAN the attention it was seeking.

In his annual circular to the police districts, the director of public prosecutions listed hate crimes as a priority area for investigation and prosecution in 2021. The

director noted hate crimes towards politicians, public intellectuals, and representatives from minority communities were a particularly worrying and increasing societal problem. Anonymous online racist attacks against former deputy mayor of Oslo Lan Marie Berg, who is of Vietnamese heritage and a newly elected leader member of parliament, drew renewed media attention.

According to NGOs and research institutes, including the Center against Racism, hate speech on the internet against religious groups continued to be a problem. ECRI reported that the Police Security Service (PST) specifically mentioned the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM), which has become more organized and more publicly visible. The NRM was anti-Semitic and homophobic and aimed to fight for what it calls the “pure Nordic race.”

The government continued its implementation of measures in the *Action Plan against Discrimination of and Hate against Muslims*, launched in September 2020. The plan contained 18 measures focusing on research and education, dialogue across religious communities and police initiatives such as registration of hate crimes towards Muslims as a separate category in the crime statistics.

As a result of a severe increase in reported hate crimes between 2016 and 2019, Bergen Municipality, the country’s third-largest city, launched its own action plan against hate and hate against Muslims in September. Hate crime statistics from 2019 showed that all religiously motivated hate crimes reported in Bergen targeted the Muslim population. The chair of the board of the Bergen Mosque told broadcaster NRK that the mosque regularly received letters containing hateful messages, including statements such as “Islamic fascism is just as merciless as Nazism” and “Islam is right-wing extremism at its worst.” The chairman said female members of the mosque had also been spat on, pushed, and had their hijabs forcibly removed. ECRI noted that, according to civil society, Muslim children were also among the victims of bullying.

The Agder Appellate Court overturned a 2019 hate crime conviction made by the Kristiansand District Court against three members of the NRM due to a lack of a specifically targeted minority population group. In 2018 the three NRM members hung the NRM flag and banners decorated with the swastika and the text “We’re Back!” at several locations in Kristiansand, including a peace and human rights

center. The appellate court agreed with the district court that the banners were offensive but held that they did not qualify as hate crimes because the banners were not directed at a specific group or persons.

In September the government announced that the controversial nonprofit organization Human Rights Service (HRS) will not receive funding from the 2022 national budget. Although the HRS describes itself as merely critical of Islam, its publications and statements have been perceived as anti-Islamic. The HRS has received funding from the national budget since 2002.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law provides for the right of workers, including migrant workers (those who have a work permit in the country), to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination and requires reinstatement of workers fired for union activity.

The right to strike excludes members of the military and senior civil servants. With the approval of parliament, the government may compel arbitration in any industrial sector if it determines that a strike threatens public safety.

The government effectively enforced applicable laws. The penalties were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, and the government effectively enforced laws against it. Penalties were commensurate with those for other analogous crimes, such as kidnapping. A maximum sentence of up to six years' imprisonment for offenses involving adult victims and up to 10 years' imprisonment for offenses involving child victims were commensurate with analogous crimes.

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at

<https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits all worst forms of child labor. Children between the ages of 13 and 15 may be employed up to 12 hours per week in light work that does not adversely affect their health, development, or schooling. Examples of light work include assistant work in offices or stores. Children younger than 15 need parental permission to work, and those older than 15 can work as part of vocational training, if they are supervised. Between ages 15 and 18, children not in school may work up to 40 hours per week and a maximum eight hours per day. The law limits work by children who remain in school to only those hours “not affecting schooling” without specific limits, but less than 40 hours per week. Child welfare laws explicitly protect children from exploitive labor practices. The government effectively enforced these laws, and both civil and criminal penalties were commensurate with those for other analogous serious crimes, such as kidnapping.

While employers generally observed minimum age rules, there were reports that children were trafficked for forced labor. Children were subjected to forced begging and criminal activity, particularly drug smuggling and theft. Commercial sexual exploitation of children also occurred. There were also reports of children forced to work as unpaid domestic help.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The law prohibits discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, based on race, religion, national origin, color, sex (including pregnancy), ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. HIV or AIDS status, and refugee or stateless status are not covered by the law. The government effectively enforced the law and invoked penalties when violations were discovered. Penalties were commensurate with laws related to civil rights, such as election interference.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to gender and ethnicity. The law provides that women and men engaged in the same activity shall receive equal wages for work of equal value. In 2020 women earned on average 12.5 percent less than men monthly, according to Statistics Norway, which

also reported that part-time work increased to 46 percent of women and 24 percent of men in 2020, partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no prohibition against gender-based discrimination in access to credit. Equally qualified immigrants sometimes had more difficulty finding employment than nonimmigrants. As of January the unemployment rate among immigrants was 9.2 percent, compared with 2.7 percent among nonimmigrants, according to Statistics Norway. African immigrants had the highest unemployment rate at 13.7 percent, followed by Asians at 10.3 percent, South and Central Americans at 9.6 percent, and immigrants from eastern EU countries at 9.4 percent.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Wage and Hour Laws: The law does not mandate an official minimum wage. Instead, minimum wages were set in collective bargaining agreements. Statistics Norway used 60 percent of the median household income after tax for the relative poverty limit. In 2017, the most recent year for which data were available, 11.2 percent of the population had an income below the poverty limit.

The law provides for premium pay of 40 percent of salary for overtime and prohibits compulsory overtime in excess of 10 hours per week. The government effectively enforced the laws, and penalties were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud. The law provides the same benefits for citizens and foreign workers with residency permits but forbids the employment of foreign workers who do not have residency permits.

The Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority (NLIA) is responsible for enforcing wage and hour laws and effectively enforced laws and standards in the formal sector. The number of labor inspectors was sufficient to enforce compliance. Inspectors could conduct unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. In 2020 police received 412 reports of violations of the labor law and other related laws, and no reports of forced labor from the NLIA.

Occupational Safety and Health: The law provides for safe and physically acceptable working conditions for all employed persons. The NLIA, in consultation with nongovernment experts, sets occupational safety and health standards. These standards are appropriate across all sectors of the industry in the

country. The law requires enterprises with 50 or more workers to establish environment committees composed of management, workers, and health-care personnel. Enterprises with 10 or more workers must have safety delegates elected by their employees. Workers may remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment; authorities effectively protected employees in this situation.

The NLIA is also responsible for occupational safety and health laws. The NLIA may close an enterprise immediately if the life or health of employees is in imminent danger and may report enterprises to police for serious breaches of the law. A serious violation may result in fines or, in the worst case, imprisonment. The government effectively enforced occupational safety and health laws and penalties for violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as negligence.

In June parliament passed the Transparency Act compelling companies to respect fundamental human rights and decent working conditions in connection with the production of goods and services, and to ensure the public has access to information on how companies handle negative consequences on fundamental human rights and decent working conditions. Companies covered by the new law must perform due diligence assessments to obtain an overview of the consequences their businesses, supply chains, and business partners have on fundamental human rights and labor conditions.