

CHAD 2015 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chad is a centralized republic in which the executive branch dominates the legislature and judiciary. In 2011 President Idriss Deby Itno, leader of the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), was elected to a fourth term with 83.6 percent of valid votes. Major opposition figures boycotted the presidential election, which had a low voter turnout. In 2011 legislative elections, the ruling MPS party won 118 of the National Assembly's 188 seats. International observers deemed both elections legitimate and credible. Civilian authorities did not always maintain effective control of the security forces.

The most significant human rights problems were security force abuse, harsh prison conditions, and discrimination and violence against women and children.

Other human rights abuses included: arbitrary killings by security forces and use of torture; arbitrary arrest and detention, incommunicado detention, and lengthy pretrial detention; denial of fair public trial; and executive influence on the judiciary. The government restricted the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and movement. The MPS party dominated the political process, and government corruption remained a problem. Societal abuse of refugees was a problem. Child abuse, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) occurred, as did early and forced marriage and the sexual exploitation of children. Trafficking in persons, particularly children, was a problem. Interethnic discrimination occurred, as did discrimination against persons with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals; and persons with HIV/AIDS. Forced labor, particularly forced child labor, occurred.

The government seldom took steps to prosecute or punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government, and impunity was a problem.

Members of Boko Haram, the Nigerian militant terrorist group, killed numerous persons in the country, often using suicide bombers (see section 1.a.).

There were reports that Chadian troops operating with multinational forces in the Central African Republic (CAR) sexually abused boys in an IDP camp in 2013 and 2014.

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

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary and unlawful killings, including by torture. Human rights groups credibly accused the security forces of killing and torturing with impunity, according to Freedom House.

On August 18, gendarmes at the Radina substation in the 5th district of N'Djamena detained Abakar Mahamat Nour and his friend during a routine search. The two were taken to a substation, where they were beaten and subsequently died. According to their parents, the two had refused to flee when a military vehicle approached, stating they had done nothing wrong. According to *Le Progres* newspaper, the hospital medical certificate attributed the death of one of the victims to “chest trauma caused by beating causing thoracic hemorrhage;” the certificate attributed the death of the second victim to “injuries caused by torture.” Authorities arrested the gendarmes responsible for the beatings, and an investigation was reportedly underway at year’s end.

Security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrators, which resulted in deaths. For example, in November 2014 widespread demonstrations in N'Djamena, Moundou, and Sarh occurred to protest commodity shortages, increased fuel prices, and nonpayment of public workers’ salaries. Protesters attacked state-owned vehicles and private gas stations and marched toward government buildings before being dispersed with live fire from police. According to Freedom House, between three and five persons were killed. Authorities arrested and briefly detained dozens of demonstrators.

Attacks by Boko Haram terrorists from Nigeria resulted in numerous civilian casualties during the year. In response government authorities executed at least 10 Boko Haram members after expedited trials (see section 1.e.).

On October 10, five suicide bombers--believed to be members of Boko Haram--killed 36 persons and injured approximately 50 others in the western village of Baga Sola in what appeared to be coordinated attacks on the market and the Kousseri camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to government spokesperson Hassan Sylla Bakari, the five suicide bombers--including two women, two children, and a man--also were killed in the attacks.

In March 2014 Chadian troops operating as part of the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in the CAR fired into a civilian crowd at a Bangui market, killing at least 28 persons and injuring numerous others. According to Amnesty International (AI), Chadian troops were involved in other incidents, including the killings of civilians in February 2014 in Bangui and the towns of Boali and Damra. In April 2014 the government announced the withdrawal of its forces from MISCA.

Interethnic violence resulted in deaths (see section 6).

b. Disappearance

While there were no reports of politically motivated disappearances, abductions, or kidnappings, there were allegations the government held detainees incommunicado.

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

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, but there were reports government officials employed them (see section 1.a.). In its *Annual Report 2013*, AI noted that “cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishments, including beatings, continued to be widely practiced by security forces and prison guards with almost total impunity.”

Security forces used excessive force against demonstrators (see section 2.b.).

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Conditions in the country’s 45 prisons remained harsh and potentially life threatening due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, physical abuse, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care.

Physical Conditions: The government had incomplete statistics on the number of prisoners and detainees; no information from other sources was available. Authorities did not separate boys from adult male prisoners and sometimes held children with their inmate mothers. Authorities did not always separate male and female prisoners, and pretrial detainees were held with convicted prisoners.

Local NGOs reported that prisons were seriously overcrowded and that food, potable water, sanitation, and health services were inadequate. Prison guards were not regularly paid and sometimes released prisoners if bribed. Provisions for ventilation and temperature control, lighting, and access to potable water were inadequate or nonexistent. The law stipulates that a doctor must visit each prison three times a week, but this provision was not respected. Forced labor in prisons occurred.

No estimates of deaths in prisons were available.

Harsh conditions frequently resulted in prison escapes and revolts, according to AI. In November 2014, for example, a revolt erupted in Amsinene Prison after prison authorities prohibited some prisoners from staying in the prison courtyard and restricted them to their cells. In solidarity with the inmates, other prisoners protested in the main courtyard. Gendarmes guarding the prison fired on prisoners, resulting in at least one death and several injuries.

In response to such incidents and the absence of regular monitoring, from January 19 to February 6, a commission organized by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights conducted an inspection of judicial and prison administration as well as prison facilities. At the Amsinene Prison, designed to hold 300 inmates, the inspection team found 1,300 detainees. The commission discovered detainee cases that had been pending for years as well as cases in which persons were incarcerated without commitment orders. In its final report, the commission recommended the adoption of a number of measures, including: holding special hearings to reduce time-in-trial detention; releasing of prisoners whose remand time exceeded the penalty; and constructing a separate facility for juvenile detainees along with a social reintegration center. On September 21, following the publication of the commission's report, the minister of justice visited Amsinene Prison and ordered the release of 10 detainees whose pretrial detention period exceeded the legally prescribed 48 hours.

Regional prisons were crumbling, overcrowded, and without adequate protection for women and youths. They reportedly received insufficient funding to feed inmates.

Administration: Due to inadequate recordkeeping and management, some individuals remained in prison after completing their sentences or after courts ordered their release. Authorities did not use alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders. There was no prison ombudsman, and there were only

limited mechanisms by which prisoners could submit complaints about prison conditions to judicial authorities.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit prisons under the control of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, and the ICRC conducted such visits during the year. On October 26, the government granted prison access to a local human rights organization, Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, but the government did not always observe these prohibitions. In its *Annual Report 2013*, AI stated, “People continued to be arrested and detained without charge.” Police and gendarmes also detained individuals for civil matters, contrary to law. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that detainees were held in police cells or in secret detention facilities.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The military (ANT), gendarmerie, national police, the Chadian National Nomadic Guard (GNNT), and the National Security Agency (ANS) are responsible for internal security. A specialized gendarmerie unit, the Detachment for the Protection of Humanitarian Workers and Refugees (DPHR), is responsible for security in refugee camps. The ANT reports to the Ministry of Defense. The national police, GNNT, and DPHR are part of the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration. The ANS reports to the national security advisor. The National Antipoaching and Environmental Protection Mobile Brigade is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Customs Mobile Brigade is part of the Ministry of Finance and Budget.

Security forces were corrupt and involved in extortion. According to media reports, police also were involved in violence and arms trafficking. Impunity was a problem. Members of the Judicial Police, an office within the national police with arrest authority, did not always enforce domestic court orders against military personnel or members of their own ethnic groups. There were isolated reports of former soldiers posing as active-duty soldiers and committing crimes with government-issued weapons.

Two gendarmerie entities, the National Judiciary Investigations Section and the Special Intervention Squad of the Gendarmerie, investigate all gendarmerie, GNNT, and army killings to determine whether they occurred in the line of duty or were otherwise justifiable. The Judicial Police investigate police killings.

The government continued efforts to reform police forces and, in partnership with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), trained police and gendarmes on child rights.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

Although the law requires a judge to sign and issue arrest warrants before arrests may take place, this did not always occur. By law detainees must be charged within 48 hours or released, unless the district attorney authorizes an extension of detention for investigative purposes. Nevertheless, authorities often did not make judicial determinations promptly. The law provides for bail and access to counsel, but there were cases in which authorities provided neither. In some cases authorities denied detainees visits from doctors. While the law provides for legal counsel for indigent defendants and prompt access to family members, this often did not occur. Authorities occasionally held detainees incommunicado.

Arbitrary Arrest: Security forces arbitrarily arrested journalists, demonstrators, critics of the government, and other individuals (see sections 1.a. and 2.a.).

Pretrial Detention: Lengthy pretrial detention remained a problem, despite government efforts to address it. Authorities sometimes held pretrial detainees without charge for years, particularly for felonies allegedly committed in the provinces. The length of detention sometimes equaled or exceeded the sentence for conviction of the alleged crime. Lengthy pretrial detention resulted from a weak judiciary.

On September 21, the justice minister ordered the release of 10 pretrial detainees in Amsinene Prison due to arbitrary and lengthy pretrial detention (see section 1.c.).

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Although the constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, the judiciary was underfunded, overburdened, and subject to executive interference and corruption. Members of the judiciary sometimes received death threats or were demoted for not acquiescing to pressure from officials. Government officials, particularly members of the military, often were able to avoid prosecution. Courts

generally were weak and in some areas nonexistent. Judicial authorities did not always respect court orders.

A judicial oversight commission has the power to investigate judicial decisions and address suspected miscarriages of justice. The president appointed its members, increasing executive control of the judiciary.

The legal system is based on French civil law, but the constitution recognizes traditional law in locales where it is long established, provided local law does not interfere with public order or constitutional provisions for equality of citizens. Courts tended to blend the formal French-derived legal code with traditional practices. Customary law often superseded Napoleonic law. Residents of rural areas and refugee/internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps often lacked access to formal judicial institutions, and legal reference texts were not available outside the capital or in Arabic. In minor civil cases, the population often relied on traditional courts presided over by village chiefs, canton chiefs, or sultans. Penalties in traditional courts sometimes depended on the clan affiliations of the victim and perpetrator. Decisions of traditional courts may be appealed to a formal court.

A 2011 law provides that crimes committed by military members be tried by a military court, although as of year's end the government had not established military courts. In the absence of permanent military courts, military trials occurred on an ad hoc basis. Members of the military were generally tried in civilian courts.

Trial Procedures

The law provides for a presumption of innocence. Defendants have the right to be informed promptly and in detail of the charges against them and are provided free interpretation if needed. Trials are public. Only criminal trials used juries, but not in politically sensitive cases. While defendants have the right to consult an attorney in a timely manner, this did not always occur. By law indigent persons have the right to legal counsel at public expense in all cases, although this seldom occurred. Human rights groups sometimes provided free counsel to indigent clients. Defendants have the right to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense. Defendants and their attorneys have the right to question witnesses and present witnesses and evidence. Defendants and their attorneys may obtain government-held evidence if their cases are not politically sensitive, but administrative delays were common, in part because documents often were handwritten. Defendants have the right not to be compelled to testify or confess

guilt, but the government did not always respect this right. Defendants have the right to appeal court decisions. The law extends these rights to all citizens.

Boko Haram suicide bombings in N'Djamena on June 15 and July 12 resulted in 67 deaths and numerous injuries. On August 26, in an extraordinary session called by the president of the Appellate Court specifically to hear the case, the Supreme Court began the trial of 10 Boko Haram members suspected of planning and facilitating the bombings. On August 28, the trial was moved to an undisclosed location and closed to media and the public due to concerns that Boko Haram might attack the trial venue or attempt to free the defendants. The defendants, who were represented by government-appointed lawyers, were found guilty the same day under Articles 4, 5, 87, and 89 of the penal code. On August 29, the 10 were executed by firing squad.

Local leaders may apply the Islamic concept of “*dia*,” which involves a payment to the family of a crime victim. The practice was common in Muslim areas. Non-Muslim groups challenged the practice, asserting that it was unconstitutional.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

Lawsuits for human rights violations may be brought before a penal court, but compensation is addressed by a civil court. Administrative and judicial remedies, such as mediation, are available. The judiciary was not always independent or impartial in civil matters.

Property Restitution

On September 19, the government signed an agreement regarding compensation with lawyers representing the victims of the government’s 2013 urban renewal project, in which hundreds of families were left homeless after authorities appropriated private property and demolished homes. Critics alleged the government failed to give proper notification or follow the proper legal requirements to compensate evictees.

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

Although the constitution provides for the right to privacy and inviolability of the home, the government did not always respect these rights. Authorities entered homes without judicial authorization and seized private property without due process. Security forces routinely stopped citizens to extort money or confiscate goods.

A government decree prohibits the possession and use of satellite telephones.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution provides for freedom of opinion, expression, and press, but the government severely restricted these rights, according to Freedom House. Authorities used threats and legal prosecutions to curb critical reporting.

Freedom of Speech and Expression: The law prohibits “inciting racial, ethnic, or religious hatred,” which is punishable by up to two years in prison and a fine of one to three million Central African (CFA) francs (\$1,730 to \$5,200). Despite a 2010 media law that abolished prison sentences for defamation or insult, authorities arrested and detained persons for defamation.

On June 7, a local radio station in Moundou broadcast an interview with Djeralar Miankeol, who criticized corrupt practices in the judiciary. On June 15, security forces arrested Moundou for “contempt of court.” He was subsequently sentenced to a two-year prison term and a fine of 100,000 CFA francs (\$173). On July 28, the Appellate Court of Moundou overturned the earlier verdict and dropped all charges against Miankeol.

Press and Media Freedoms: The government subsidized the only daily newspaper and owned a biweekly newspaper. Government and opposition newspapers had limited readership outside the capital due to low literacy rates and lack of distribution in rural areas.

Radio remained the most important medium of mass communication. The government-owned Radiodiffusion Nationale Tchadienne had several stations. There were numerous private radio stations that broadcast throughout the country that paid an initial licensing fee of CFA 250,000 (\$417). Many of them were owned by religious and community organizations. Radio call-in programs broadcast the views of callers that included open criticism of the government.

The country had three television stations.

Violence and Harassment: Authorities arrested and beat journalists. For example, on October 2, security forces arrested without warrant Stephane Mbairabe Ouaye, publisher of *Haut Parleur*, an independent newspaper published twice a month. While held in a detention center attached to the N'Djamena police headquarters, Mbairabe was handcuffed, blindfolded, and beaten by plainclothes police to make him reveal his sources for an article entitled "Salay Deby, national thief"; the article criticized the president and his brother, Director General of Customs Salay Deby. Mbairabe, who was released, was awaiting trial on libel charges at year's end. In a separate case in July, after publication of an article entitled "Itno Brothers Maintain the Dictatorship," Mbairabe received a court summons "in order to find him guilty of the charges against him and order him to pay Salay Deby such amount as will be fixed at the bar." Commenting on the July case, Reporters without Borders (RSF) stated, "It is a strange summons to a hearing that predicts the defendant's guilt in advance."

Foreign correspondents also were harassed and abused. Laurent Correau--a correspondent with Radio France International who was in the country to report on the trial of former president Hissene Habre--claimed police "brutalized" him before taking him to the airport in N'Djamena, from where he was deported on June 23. Correau was preparing a series of reports on the Habre trial.

Censorship or Content Restrictions: The government penalized those who published items counter to government guidelines, sometimes by closing media outlets. Some journalists and publishers practiced self-censorship.

On July 10, an N'Djamena judge ordered the closure of the weekly *Abba Garde* at the request of the High Council for Communication (HCC), which acted in response to a complaint by the President's Office, according to RSF. A separate court order issued the same day demanded the seizure of all copies of issue No. 109. Both orders, according to RSF, appeared to be in response to an article entitled "Idriss Deby, the Hitler of Modern Times," which was published in issue No. 108. Commenting on the closure, RSF noted, "Regardless of what the journalist wrote, the decision to close the newspaper contravenes Chad's 2010 press law, article 44 of which states that such a decision can only be taken by a court after a hearing in which the affected party is able to defend itself." RSF also noted that the seizure was clearly arbitrary, since it was the preceding issue that had the offending article. According to *Moussaye Avenir de la Tchire*, the

publisher of *Abba Garde*, harassment of the newspaper began on July 5, when ANS members tried to arrest him in the southeastern town of Bongor. De la Tchire, who fled the country for one month and then returned, had been arrested and detained for four months in 2013.

The HCC occasionally warned journalists to practice “responsible” journalism or face fines. For example, on September 19, HCC president Moustafa Ali Alifei warned members of the Chadian Press Agency that the HCC would sanction any media organ “that does not respect ethics and professional conduct or calls for revolt.”

Internet Freedom

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

According to multiple sources, internet penetration was between 17 and 20 percent.

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

Although the constitution provides for freedom of assembly, the government did not always respect this right. The law requires organizers to notify the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration five days in advance of demonstrations, although groups that provided advance notice did not always receive permission. After the June and July Boko Haram attacks, the ministry often denied permission for large gatherings, including social events such as weddings and funerals.

In September police twice blocked scheduled press conferences by Nadjo Kaina, president of the National Union of Chadian Students. According to organizers, police provided no reason for the actions. There were violent student protests earlier in the year.

Security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrators. For example, on May 9, in N’Djamena, members of the Mobile Police Intervention Group (GMIP) violently dispersed students demonstrating against a law requiring persons riding motorbikes to wear helmets. On May 13, the court began trying 14 GMIP officers charged with “illegitimate violence and intentional injury.” On May 20, the court sentenced eight of the 14 officers to six-month prison terms and fines of 50,000 CFA (\$87) each for “illegitimate violence and intentional injury;” the six other officers were released. No charges were filed against the GMIP commander who ordered the use of excessive force against the demonstrators, prompting a walkout by attorneys representing the students. Adoum Moussa, attorney for the GMIP, also complained that the GMIP commander was not charged, noting that the indicted officers claimed they were acting under his orders.

Freedom of Association

The constitution and law provide for freedom of association, and the government generally respected this right. While an ordinance requires the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration to provide prior authorization before an association, including a labor union, may be formed, there were no reports the ordinance was enforced. The ordinance also allows for the immediate administrative dissolution of an association and permits authorities to monitor association funds.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State’s *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

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

Although the constitution and law provide for freedom of movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, the government imposed limits on these rights.

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, and other persons of concern.

In-country Movement: Lack of security in the east, primarily due to armed banditry, occasionally hindered the ability of humanitarian organizations to

provide services to refugees. Unlike in previous years, however, there were no reports of carjacking and armed robberies.

Emigration and Repatriation: Beginning in 2013 approximately 100,000 persons with claims to Chadian nationality fled violence in the CAR and returned to the country. Most had not resided in the country and had no clear ties to their families' areas of origin. Approximately 45,000 returnees remained in camps at year's end and were assisted by humanitarian organizations and the government.

Protection of Refugees

Access to Asylum: The law does not provide for asylum or refugee status. The government, however, has established a system for the protection of refugees.

In 2013 the government adopted the National Birth Registry Code, which provides for birth certificates for children born to refugees and requires the registration of all births and deaths of foreign persons in the country (see section 6). After a 12-month suspension due to administrative problems, the government in September resumed issuing birth certificates.

Approximately 300,000 Sudanese refugees from Darfur remained in the country, including a small number of refugees fleeing fighting during the year; most were located in 13 camps along the eastern border with Sudan. An estimated 66,000 refugees from the CAR lived primarily in five camps in the south.

Refugee Abuse: There were reports of rape, attempted rape, and sexual and gender-based violence in refugee camps. The perpetrators were either fellow refugees or unknown individuals living near the camps. Authorities only occasionally prosecuted perpetrators of sexual violence. The judicial system did not provide consistent and predictable recourse or legal protection, and traditional legal systems were subject to ethnic variations. To fill the void, UNHCR enlisted the support of a local NGO to support the cases of refugees throughout the judicial process. The DPHR was unable to consistently provide humanitarian escorts due to lack of resources but was generally effective in providing protection for refugee camps.

Due to the absence of rebel activity and the implementation of education campaigns in camps, there were no reports of recruitment in refugee camps, including by Central African militias.

There were reports that Chadian troops operating with multinational forces in the CAR sexually abused boys in an IDP camp in 2013 and 2014 (see section 6).

Access to Basic Services: Although local communities hosted tens of thousands of newly arrived refugees, antirefugee sentiment existed due to competition for local resources, such as wood, water, and grazing land. Refugees also received goods and services not available to the local population, and refugee children at times had better access to education and health services than those in the surrounding local populations. Many humanitarian organizations included host communities in their programming to mitigate this tension.

Durable Solutions: The government pledged to extend citizenship to tens of thousands of returnees, most of whom had resided in the CAR since birth, although only 3 percent of Chadian returnees from the CAR held Chadian nationality documents by year's end. The government allowed referral for resettlement in foreign countries of refugees from the CAR and Sudan.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provide citizens with the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections based on universal and equal suffrage, but the government at times limited this right. The executive branch dominated the other branches of government.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: International observers, including the EU, African Union, Organization Internationale de la Francophonie, and government and opposition-affiliated civil society actors, deemed the 2011 legislative elections legitimate and credible. There was no election-related violence or evidence of a systematic effort to deny voters their right to choose freely. Security and government officials generally maintained a neutral posture during the election campaign. The presidential vote in 2011 occurred without violence or incident. Local groups, however, criticized the lack of participation by the three opposition candidates and low voter turnout.

In May the Coalition for the Defense of the Constitution, the main opposition coalition, joined the National Framework for Political Dialogue, responsible for overseeing preparations for the 2015 parliamentary and 2016 presidential elections. The government agreed to implement a biometric voter registration system in

advance of the next election cycle and provided 500 million CFA francs (\$947,000) in financing.

Following an August 12 pilot census, authorities on August 24 began registering Chadians abroad. For the biometric census of citizens living in the country, the Independent National Electoral Commission had 2,220 biometric enrollment kits to cover 8,000 census centers.

Political Parties and Political Participation: There were 139 registered political parties, of which more than 100 were associated with the dominant MPS party.

Opposition leaders accused the government of denying them funds and equal broadcast time on state-run media.

Participation of Women and Minorities: The law prohibits the government from discriminating on the basis of ethnicity, but ethnicity influenced government appointments and political alliances. Political parties and groups generally had readily identifiable regional or ethnic bases. Northerners, particularly members of the Zaghawa ethnic group, were overrepresented in key institutions, including the military officer corps, elite military units, and the presidential staff.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but authorities did not implement the law effectively, and corruption was pervasive at all levels of government. Based on the World Bank's most recent Worldwide Governance Indicators, corruption remained a severe problem.

Corruption: In February the National Assembly convened an extraordinary session to review a request to impeach Atteib Doutoum, the former minister of finance and budget, and Baiwong Djibergui Rosine, the former minister of social action and current minister of agriculture and environment. The two ministers, who were under investigation by the Ministry of Good Governance, were suspected of corruption and embezzlement during their former tenures. The National Assembly created two ad hoc committees to investigate further, and both ministers were ultimately acquitted on recommendation of the committees.

Local human rights organizations reported police extorted and verbally abused motorists. Security forces arbitrarily arrested travelers on pretexts of minor traffic violations.

Judicial corruption was a problem and hindered effective law enforcement.

Financial Disclosure: Public officials are subject to financial disclosure laws, but the laws do not specify sanctions for noncompliance.

Public Access to Information: The law does not provide for public access to government information, although the government provided such access to government-employed journalists. Independent journalists stated they were not provided sufficient access to government information. The government's budget was publicly available in printed form upon request from the Ministry of Finance and Budget and included revenue and expenditure data. In 2014 the government also launched a website providing revenue and expenditure data.

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

A number of domestic and international human rights groups operated in the country, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were sometimes cooperative and responsive to their views.

The United Nations or Other International Bodies: According to AI in June 2014 security forces arrested two members of the UN Panel of Experts on the CAR at a border post in the CAR. The UN panel reported that its experts, who were conducting investigations, identified themselves and explained their mandate, privileges, and immunities but that they were forcibly driven from the border post to the town of Gore, where they were detained for four hours before being escorted back to the border and released.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights coordinated efforts by local and international NGOs to protect human rights. Local NGOs reported the ministry functioned independently but was underfunded and had limited effectiveness.

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

Although the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on place of origin, race, gender, religion, political opinion, or social status, the government did not effectively enforce these provisions.

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape is prohibited and punishable by imprisonment. Nevertheless rape--including rape of female refugees--was a problem (see section 2.d.). No reliable data on the extent of rape were available. The law does not specifically address spousal rape. Police often detained alleged perpetrators, but rape cases usually were not tried. Authorities fined and released most suspects. Communities sometimes compelled rape victims to marry their attackers.

Although the law prohibits violence against women, domestic violence, including spousal abuse, was widely reported. Police rarely intervened, and women had limited legal recourse, although they could report cases of violence and abuse to local human rights organizations. The government did not provide psychosocial services for victims, although family or traditional authorities often provided assistance.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: The law prohibits FGM/C for girls and women, but the practice remained widespread, particularly in rural areas. According to 2015 UNICEF statistics, 44 percent of girls and women had undergone excision, with rates as high as 90 to 100 percent in some regions. Practitioners performed all three types of FGM/C--clitoridectomy, excision, and infibulation. Infibulation--the least common but most severe and dangerous type--was confined largely to the Eastern Region, which borders Sudan. FGM/C was performed prior to puberty, usually around age six, as a rite of passage.

By law FGM/C may be prosecuted as a form of assault and charges may be brought against the parents of victims, medical practitioners, or others involved. Nevertheless, the lack of specific penalties hindered prosecution, and authorities prosecuted no cases during the year.

The Ministry of Women, Early Childhood Protection and National Solidarity is responsible for coordinating activities to combat FGM/C. The government, with assistance from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), conducted public awareness campaigns to discourage FGM/C and highlight its dangers. The campaign encouraged the public to speak out against FGM/C and other abuse of women and girls.

Sexual Harassment: The law does not prohibit sexual harassment, which occurred.

Reproductive Rights: The law provides for the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children, manage their reproductive health, and have access to the information and means to do so, free from discrimination, coercion, or violence. Many persons, however, lacked access to reproductive information or care, particularly in rural areas. The UNFPA estimated only 3 percent of women used any form of contraception; according to 2014 statistics from the National Institute of Statistics, 5 percent of married women used modern contraceptive methods. According to UN estimates, skilled personnel attended only 17 percent of births, although the institute reported 22 percent of births occurred in a health center. The maternal mortality rate was 860 deaths per 100,000 live births. Factors contributing to maternal mortality included adolescent pregnancies, multiple closely spaced births, and lack of access to medical care. The country had a severe shortage of health-care providers (fewer than 400 physicians) and a significant shortage of nurses, midwives, hospital staff, and specialists, such as obstetricians. Prenatal care remained limited, particularly in rural areas. Low immunization rates and poor postnatal education were problems.

Discrimination: Although property and inheritance laws provide the same legal status and rights for women as for men, family law discriminates against women, and discrimination against and exploitation of women were widespread. Local leaders settled most inheritance disputes in favor of men, according to traditional practice. Women did not have equal opportunities for education and training, making it difficult for them to compete for formal sector jobs. Women suffered discrimination in access to employment, housing, credit, and pay equity for substantially similar work and in owning or managing businesses (see section 7.d.). The law does not address polygyny; men may opt at any time to marry additional wives under Islamic law. In such cases the first wife has the right to request that her marriage be dissolved but must repay her bride price.

On February 25, the government staffed the House of the Chadian Woman, established in 2014 for women to have a venue to discuss women's rights issues and participate in the national decision-making process. In August the Ministry of Women, Social Action, and National Solidarity was renamed the Ministry of Women, Early Childhood Protection, and National Solidarity. The ministry established a Directorate of Gender Issues to oversee the House of the Chadian Woman; the directorate also provided public outreach on gender issues.

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived from birth within the country's territory and from one's parents. The government did not register all births immediately; children without birth certificates were allowed to enroll in schools.

The government began to implement the 2013 National Registry Code, which requires all children, including refugees, to have a birth certificate issued in their place of birth (see section 2.d.). Prior to passage of the law, children born to refugees from the CAR were not considered citizens, although they were provided birth certificates. Children born to refugees from elsewhere were not considered citizens and generally were not provided birth certificates.

Education: Although primary education is tuition-free, universal, and compulsory between ages six and 11, parent-teacher associations often hired and paid community teachers, and parents also were required to pay for textbooks, except in some rural areas. Parents often were required to pay tuition for public secondary education. According to the most recent World Bank Development Indicators database, six girls attended primary school for every 10 boys. Most children did not attend secondary school.

Human rights organizations cited the problem of the "mouhadjirin," migrant children who attended certain Islamic schools and whose teachers forced them to beg for food and money. There was no reliable estimate of the number of mouhadjirin.

Child Abuse: Child abuse remained a problem, but no data were available on its extent. The Ministry of Women, Early Childhood Protection, and National Solidarity is responsible for the protection of children.

Early and Forced Marriage: On June 30, the National Assembly ratified a law that sets the minimum age for marriage at 18. The law precludes invoking the consent of the minor spouse to justify child marriage and prescribes sentences of five to 10 years' imprisonment and fines of 500,000 to 5,000,000 CFA (\$867 to \$8,670) for persons convicted of perpetrating child marriage. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Women, Early Childhood Protection and National Solidarity in the regions of Mandou, Ouaddai, and Tandjile, 68 percent of girls were married before age 18; 29 percent were married before age 15.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: See information for girls under age 18 in the women's section above.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law prohibits the prostitution of children, with punishments of five to 10 years' imprisonment and fines up to 970,000 CFA francs (\$1,680) for conviction. The law prohibits sexual relations with girls under age 14, even if married, but authorities rarely enforced the ban. The law criminalizes the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production of pornography.

Soldiers participating in the multinational force in the CAR were reported to have sexually exploited children. In April abuses committed between December 2013 and June 2014 by members of the French, Chadian, and Equatorial Guinean multinational forces were made public, implicating them in allegations of sexual abuse of boys in the IDP camp near the M'Poko airport in Bangui. Although the government of France reportedly opened an investigation, neither the governments of Chad nor Equatorial Guinea--both of which had committed to investigating those allegations--had issued progress reports, findings, or conclusions by year's end, and no soldiers had been held accountable. Djibrine Dopalto Oumar, the commander of the Chadian contingent in the CAR, formally denied the charges against his soldiers, saying, "So far it is only suspicion and this is not the first time that the Chadian army was falsely accused in this country."

Child Soldiers: In July 2014 the United Nations removed the country from the Secretary-General's *Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict*, its list of countries with children in armed conflict. The delisting, which concerned both recruitment and use of children, followed joint government-UNICEF verification visits in 2013 to all eight ANT military zones and was based on the government's progress in implementing the 2011 *Child Soldiers Action Plan* signed with the United Nations.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. For information see the Department of State's report on compliance at travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/english/legal/compliance.html.

Anti-Semitism

There was no known Jewish community, and 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/rls/tiprpt/.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities, although it does not specify the type of disability or whether the prohibition against discrimination extends to employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. The government did not effectively enforce the law. There are no laws that provide for access to public buildings for persons with disabilities. The government operated education, employment, and therapy programs for persons with disabilities.

Children with physical disabilities may attend primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. The government supported schools for children with vision or mental disabilities.

In conjunction with NGOs, such as the Support Group for the Disabled in Chad, the government annually sponsored a day of activities to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Women, Early Childhood Protection, and National Solidarity is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

There were approximately 200 ethnic groups speaking more than 120 languages and dialects. Most ethnic groups were affiliated with one of two regional and cultural traditions: Arabs and Muslims in the north, center, and east; and Christian or traditional religious groups in the south. Internal migration resulted in the integration of these groups in some areas.

Interethnic violence occurred and often involved contesting scarce arable land. For example, on October 16, at Peni in the region of Mandoul, 17 persons were killed and six injured in a land dispute between farmers and herders.

Most ethnic groups practiced societal discrimination, which was evident in patterns of employment.

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

The law prohibits but does not define “unnatural acts.” In September 2014 the Council of Ministers approved a draft revision of the penal code for debate in the National Assembly. One of the proposed amendments criminalized homosexual acts with 15-20 years’ imprisonment and a fine of between 50,000 and 500,000 CFA francs (\$87-\$870) as punishment for violations. The government subsequently withdrew the draft penal code from National Assembly consideration for further review, but the revisions remained pending at year’s end.

Unlike in the previous year there were no reports of violence toward the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community.

There were no LGBTI organizations in the country.

HIV and AIDS Social Stigma

The law provides individuals with HIV/AIDS the same rights as other persons and requires the government to provide information, education, and access to tests and treatment for HIV/AIDS. Persons with HIV/AIDS reported discrimination, and government officials did not always provide information on their rights and treatment options. According to the Chadian Women Lawyers’ Association, women sometimes were accused of passing HIV to their husbands and were threatened by family members with judicial action or banishment. The first lady spoke openly on the issue of HIV/AIDS and criticized discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law allows all employees except members of the armed forces to form unions of their choice, if authorized by the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration, which may order the dissolution of a union. The law allows unions to organize and bargain collectively. The law recognizes the right to strike but restricts the right of civil servants and employees of state enterprises to do so. The law requires a 72-hour notification before a strike. Civil servants and employees of state enterprises, including civil servants and teachers, must complete a mediation process before initiating a strike. Employees of several public entities deemed essential must continue to provide a certain level of services during a strike. The law permits imprisonment with hard labor as punishment for participation in an illegal strike.

While there are no restrictions on collective bargaining, the law authorizes the government to intervene under certain circumstances. The labor code prohibits antiunion discrimination and explicitly covers all workers, including foreign and irregular workers. Union members reported these protections were not always respected.

More than 90 percent of employees in the formal sector belonged to unions. The majority of workers were self-employed and nonunionized, working as cultivators or herders. State-owned enterprises dominated many sectors of the formal economy, and the government remained the largest employer. Unions were officially independent of both the government and political parties, although some unions were unofficially linked through members' affiliation with political parties.

The government effectively protected freedom of association and collective bargaining, although both were subject to delays, primarily due to administrative difficulties in convening key officials for negotiations. There were no reports of restrictions on collective bargaining or punishment of workers for participating in illegal strikes. The government protected the rights of Chadian employees of the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation, demanding the reinstatement of employees and union leaders terminated for striking.

There were no NGOs specifically dedicated to labor issues, but local human rights organizations often addressed labor concerns, particularly in lobbying against child labor.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The constitution provides for protection against all forms of slavery. The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children. The minimum age for military recruitment is 18; the minimum age for conscription is 20. The law prohibits the use of child soldiers.

Article 5 of the labor code prohibits forced labor and servitude. Penalties, which range from six days' to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 147,000 to 294,000 CFA francs (\$255 to \$510), or up to 882,000 CFA francs (\$1, 530) for repeat offenders, were not sufficient to deter violations.

Forced labor, particularly forced child labor, occurred in the informal sector. Children and adults in rural areas were involved in forced agricultural labor and, in urban areas, forced domestic servitude.

There are no penalties for forced prison labor, which was common, according to human rights NGOs.

Resources, inspections, and remediation with regard to forced labor were inadequate.

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

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The labor code stipulates that the minimum age for employment is 14. The law provides exceptions for light work in agriculture and domestic service at age 12. The legal minimum age for employment, a lack of schooling opportunities in some areas, and tribal initiation practices contributed to a general acceptance of child labor for children who were 14 or older.

The Ministry of Labor deployed inspectors throughout the country. Labor inspectors may refer cases to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights for prosecution. The ministry provided training to these inspectors on children's issues. Inadequate budget and staffing, lack of worker knowledge of their rights, and corruption impeded effective enforcement.

The Office of Labor Inspection is responsible for enforcement of child labor laws and policies, but authorities did not prosecute any cases during the year. Police sometimes took extrajudicial action against traffickers and child labor offenders. Traditional leaders also sometimes meted out traditional punishments, such as ostracism.

Labor laws only apply to work in formal enterprises; they do not protect children working in informal activities, such as domestic service. Penalties for breaking child labor laws were not sufficient to deter violations. Penalties range from six days' to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 147,000 to 294,000 CFA francs (\$255 to \$510), or up to 882,000 CFA francs (\$1, 530) for repeat offenders. By law penalties are not incurred "if the breach was the result of an error as to a child's age, if the error was not the employer's fault."

While the government did not have a comprehensive plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor it worked with UNICEF and NGOs to increase public

awareness of child labor. In addition, efforts continued to educate parents and civil society on the dangers of child labor, particularly for child herders.

Child laborers were subjected to domestic servitude, forced begging, and forced labor in cattle herding, agriculture, fishing, and street vending. Chadian children were also found in forced cattle herding in Cameroon, the CAR, and Nigeria. Child herders often lived in substandard conditions without access to school or proper nutrition. Their parents and herders generally agreed on an informal contract for the child's labor that included a small monthly salary and a goat after six months or a cow at the end of a year. Local NGOs reported, however, that compensation often was not paid. According to the Chadian Women Lawyers' Association, girls sold or forced into child marriages were forced by their husbands into domestic servitude and agricultural labor.

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/findings/.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment or Occupation

The law and labor regulations prohibit employment or wage discrimination based on race, religion, gender, age, nationality, or membership in a union. There are no laws preventing employment discrimination based on disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV-positive status or having other communicable diseases, or social status. Discrimination occurred based on the above categories with respect to employment or occupation.

Women generally were not permitted to work at night, more than 12 hours a day, or in jobs that could present moral or physical danger. Persons with disabilities frequently were victims of employment discrimination.

Workers may file discrimination complaints with the Office of the Labor Inspector, which conducts an investigation and subsequently may mediate between the worker and employer. If mediation fails, the case is forwarded to the labor court for a public hearing. The final decision and amount of any fine depend on the gravity of the case--147,000 to 294,000 CFA francs (\$255 to \$510) for an initial offense, and fines of 288,000 to 882,000 CFA francs (\$500 to \$1,530) or six to 10 days in prison for a subsequent offense. The penalties were not always sufficient to deter violations.

The government did not effectively enforce these laws and regulations. Although the law prohibits discrimination based on nationality, foreign nationals often had difficulty obtaining work permits, earned lower wages, and had poor working conditions.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The minimum wage was 60,000 CFA francs (\$104) a month, but it was not effectively enforced. The law limits most employment to 39 hours per week, with overtime paid for additional hours. Agricultural work is limited to 2,400 hours per year, an average of 46 hours per week. All workers are entitled to uninterrupted rest periods of between 24 and 48 hours per week. The labor code mandates occupational health and safety standards and gives inspectors the authority to enforce them. The labor code explicitly covers all workers, including foreign and illegal workers.

Violations of safety and health standards may lead to penalties ranging from approximately 75,000 to 300,000 CFA francs (\$130 to \$520). Penalties for second offenses may include fines of more than 500,000 CFA francs (\$867) and between one and 10 days' imprisonment. The Office of the General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labor has responsibility for the enforcement of the minimum wage, work hour, and occupational health and safety standards.

Nearly all private sector and state-owned firms paid at least the minimum wage, but it was largely ignored in the informal sector. Salary arrears remained a problem for some private sector employees.

Workers did not always avail themselves of their rights concerning work hour limits, largely because they preferred the additional pay. The 20 labor inspectors in the Ministry of Public Works were insufficient to enforce the law.

Multinational companies generally met the government's acceptable occupational health safety standards. Workers have the right to remove themselves from dangerous working conditions, but they generally did not do so.

Public sector employees sometimes filed complaints of wage-related violations, such as arrears of salaries and bonuses or complaints of low wages.

The government did not effectively enforce the law, and authorities did not always respect legal protections for foreign and irregular workers. The civil service and

local private companies occasionally disregarded occupational health and safety standards. Local private companies and public offices often had substandard conditions, including a lack of ventilation, fire protection, and health and safety protection.