

Annual Report: Equatorial Guinea 2010

Report
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Arbitrary arrests and detentions

One prisoner of conscience, Bonifacio Nguema Ndong, was released in March having completed a one-year sentence. Five other prisoners of conscience – Cruz Obiang Ebele, Emiliano Esono Michá, Gumersindo Ramírez Faustino, Juan Ecomo Ndong and Gerardo Angüe Mangué – remained in detention.

Political opponents and foreign nationals were arrested following the alleged attack in February on the presidential palace. The authorities said they had captured 15 Nigerians during the attack, but did not provide further details. Between six and eight Nigerians remained in Black Beach prison without charge or trial at the end of the year. According to reports, they were traders who regularly travelled to Malabo by boat and were caught in Equatorial Guinean territorial waters. Six Equatorial Guinean fishermen in Malabo port at the time of the alleged attack were also arrested. They were released without charge about two weeks later.

In February and March in Malabo and Bata, the police arrested without warrant 10 members of the People's Union (Unión Popular) political party, including Beatriz Andeme Ondó, the wife of the party's president, Faustino Ondó Ebang. The authorities accused them of maintaining telephone contact with Faustino Ondó Ebang, a former prisoner of conscience living in Spain. All 10 were prisoners of conscience, detained solely because of their nonviolent political activities. Those arrested in Bata were transferred from Bata police station to Malabo. All 10 were held in Malabo police station for two months, where they were tortured (see below) before being transferred to Black Beach prison. Eight were conditionally released in September pending charges and trial, and required to report to the police station twice a week. Marcelino Nguema and Santiago Asumo Nguema remained in prison. The 10 were charged with "acts of terrorism" in late November. They had not been tried by the end of the year.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Torture continued to be used in police stations. No investigations were carried out and perpetrators were not brought to justice.

Most of the 10 members of the People's Union arrested in February and March were tortured in Bata and Malabo police stations. Santiago Asumo told the investigating magistrate that on one occasion he was placed on the floor on his stomach, his feet tightly bound with cables, and offered money to "confess". On another occasion, the police put paper in his mouth, put him in a sack which was then tied, and suspended and beat him. Although he named those who tortured him, there was no investigation and no one was brought to justice.

- Epifanio Pascual Nguema was arrested without a warrant on 26 February and taken to Bata police station. At about midnight on 2 March, police officers took him from his cell to the cellar and tortured him for four hours. They beat him around the kidneys, belly and genitals. For several days he passed blood in his urine and was unable to walk or stand up straight. He needed hospital treatment. He had been arrested apparently for procuring travel documents for his wife and for criticizing President Obiang. He was released uncharged in late May.

Unlawful killings

There were reports that soldiers unlawfully killed two people in the Malabo neighbourhood of Lampert in the aftermath of the alleged attack on the palace. A Nigerian man died four days after being shot by soldiers who tried to stop him in the street. Instead of stopping, the man ran and the soldiers fired at him, hitting him in the back. In the second incident, an Equatorial Guinean man was stopped by soldiers as he was returning home. They beat him severely and he died a few days later as a result of his injuries. Nobody was brought to justice for the killings.

Prison conditions

The ban on prison visits was lifted in late November. Some prisoners were held in isolation cells, in shackles, and only allowed in the yard for about 30 minutes every two to four weeks.

In police stations in Malabo and Bata, conditions were life-threatening because of overcrowding and poor hygiene and sanitation.