

# NORWAY 2014 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. Observers considered the multiparty parliamentary elections in September 2013 to be free and fair. Authorities maintained effective control over the security forces.

In a country where there were few abuses, the most serious human rights problems included violence against women and children, a continuing societal problem. The government sometimes returned rejected asylum seekers involuntarily to unfamiliar parts of their homelands. Some of these were young persons who lived in the country for many years and were returned to their countries of origin when they reached the age of majority. Hate speech on the internet targeted ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons.

Other problems reported included the use in some cases of police holding cells to keep persons in detention longer than the 48 hours permitted by law; and alleged ethnic bias in stops and searches by police. There were some reports of discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Allegations that authorities placed asylum seekers in remote areas and supported them inadequately, anti-Semitism, discrimination in employment, and incidences of forced and child labor were also reported.

The government investigated officials who committed violations, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the government.

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

#### **a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life**

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

#### **b. Disappearance**

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances, abductions, or kidnappings.

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

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

#### **Prison and Detention Center Conditions**

Prison conditions mostly met international standards.

Physical Conditions: As of August 31, there were 3,707 prisoners in the country, 5.1 percent of whom were women and 0.24 percent of whom were minors. The country had 40 prisons with a combined total prison capacity of 3,803. During the year two small prisons were combined into a single larger one. Three prisons with a capacity of 117 persons held exclusively women. In addition seven other prisons had women's departments with a total capacity of 62 women. A number of other prisons in the country could accommodate women as needed. Most prisons in the country contained separate cells for pretrial detainees.

Research from the Correctional Services Academy indicated there were 11 suicides from January through June, more than twice the number of suicides in all of 2012. Prisoners had access to adequate food and potable water. There were no reports of problems with the physical conditions, sanitation, or medical care in prison facilities.

Administration: Prison recordkeeping was adequate, and authorities used alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders.

An ombudsman, who may visit a prison either at an inmate's request or on the ombudsman's own initiative, investigated prisoners' complaints. The ombudsman may not act on behalf of prisoners and detainees on matters such as alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders; only the courts handle sentencing. The ombudsman may conduct investigations and express a nonbinding legal opinion on whether authorities erred or committed an injustice. The ombudsman also may serve on behalf of juvenile prisoners and detainees concerning the status and circumstances of their confinement but received few complaints regarding this problem. Authorities permitted prisoners and detainees to submit complaints to judicial authorities without censorship and to request investigation of credible allegations of inhuman conditions; there were no such complaints or allegations

during the year. Officials granted prisoners and detainees access to visitors and permitted religious observance for those incarcerated.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted visits by independent human rights observers. Visits occurred throughout the year.

#### **d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention**

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, and the government generally observed these prohibitions.

#### **Role of the Police and Security Apparatus**

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 are under police authority. The National Police Directorate oversees the police force.

Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the national police, and the government has effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse and corruption. There were no reports of impunity involving the security forces during the year.

#### **Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees**

The law requires warrants authorized by a prosecutor for arrests. Police are required to file a justification to hold detained persons in custody within four hours of their arrest and must inform detainees of the charges against them within three days. Authorities must arraign an arrested suspect within 24 hours (not including Saturday and Sunday), at which time the arraigning judge determines whether the accused should be held in custody or released pending trial. There is no bail system. Officials routinely release all defendants pending trial, including nonresident foreigners accused of minor crimes. Defendants accused of serious or violent crimes usually remained in custody until trial. Before interrogation authorities allow arrested persons access to a lawyer of their choice or to an attorney appointed by the government. The government pays the attorney fees regardless of whether the attorney is chosen by the arrested person or appointed. Authorities usually allowed arrested persons access to family members.

The law mandates that detainees be transferred from a temporary police holding cell to a regular prison cell within 48 hours. Authorities did not always observe this time limit.

The law provides that a court must supervise whether and how long a detainee may be held in solitary confinement, but a regulation provides an exemption where necessary because of building or staff conditions. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security did not keep statistics on the use of this exemption. In the first half of the year, the courts ordered 211 prisoners to be held in supervised isolation for an average of 19.5 days. In its June 2 decision, the Oslo district court found the government's use of solitary detention in police cells to be a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. The government appealed the decision.

Arbitrary Arrest: There were no reported cases of arbitrary arrest during the year. In 2012 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance noted unofficial, anecdotal reports that police employed racial profiling to stop and search members of vulnerable groups. Although authorities did not keep records on police stop-and-search activities, the Norwegian Center against Racism, an Oslo-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), reported an increase in incidents of stop-and-search by police that appeared to be driven by racial profiling.

Detention of Rejected Asylum Seekers or Stateless Persons: The law permits detention of aliens to establish identity or to effect their removal from the country if authorities deem it likely the persons would evade an order to leave.

#### **e. Denial of Fair Public Trial**

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

#### **Trial Procedures**

The constitution and the law provide for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right.

Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence and the right to be informed promptly and in detail of the charges against them. They have access to free interpretation, if necessary. Trials are fair and held without delay in public. In criminal cases involving a maximum prison sentence of six or more years, a trial

court sits with a jury of 10 civilian members; there is no right to a jury trial in other instances. Defendants have the right to counsel at public expense, to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense, to have access to government-held evidence, to be present at their trial, to confront and question adverse witnesses, to present their own evidence and witnesses, and to appeal. Defendants may not be compelled to testify or to confess guilt.

### **Political Prisoners and Detainees**

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

### **Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies**

An independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters may adjudicate cases involving human rights violations. Individuals and organizations may appeal cases alleging violations of the European Convention on Human Rights by the government to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) after they have exhausted all avenues of appeal in domestic courts.

### **Regional Human Rights Court Decisions**

The country is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights and subject to the jurisdiction of the ECHR. The government complied promptly with the court's judgments against it.

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

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

## **Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:**

### **a. Freedom of Speech and Press**

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, and the government generally respected these rights. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of speech and press.

Freedom of Speech: 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.” Violators are subject to a fine or imprisonment not to exceed three years. As of October there were no reports of persons charged or convicted for violating the hate speech law. According to the ombudsman for antidiscrimination and equality, hate speech on the internet against ethnic minorities, women, gays, and lesbians was a problem.

Press Freedoms: The independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views without restriction. The prohibitions against hate speech applied to the press as well.

### **Internet Freedom**

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. The internet was available in 95 percent of the country’s households, and 95 percent of the population used it.

### **Academic Freedom and Cultural Events**

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

### **b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association**

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

### **c. Freedom of Religion**

See the Department of State’s *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/](http://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/).

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

The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected 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 refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

### **Protection of Refugees**

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 government announced it would accept 1,000 additional Syrian refugees through the UNHCR during the year.

NGOs criticized the government's policy that often allowed minors seeking asylum to stay in the country until they were 18 years old and after that age to be returned to their countries of origin. They noted there was no consistent policy on handling children's deportation cases and that the appeals board did not permit children to be present during their appeal hearings. By the end of August, 870 children had been in reception centers for longer than three years, a reduction of 17.2 percent compared with August 2013.

Safe Country of Origin/Transit: The country is party to the EU's Dublin III regulation, which allows the government to return refugees and asylum seekers to the first country they entered that is also a party to the regulation. Authorities did not return asylum seekers to Greece.

Refoulement: The government provided protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where their lives or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Through August the government returned 2,591 persons involuntarily, according to the Police Immigration Unit. Authorities did not return Iranian asylum seekers without passports to Iran. Authorities involuntarily returned asylum seekers to Russia, Nigeria, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, and many other countries. A number of NGOs criticized the government for returning some asylum seekers to areas in their home country different from where they originated. The government frequently did this for returnees to Afghanistan. Amnesty International-Norway continued to criticize the government for returning refugees to south and central Somalia, where, the organization believed, the risk of human rights violations and abuses remained real.

Refugee Abuse: The government housed asylum seekers and stateless persons in asylum reception centers throughout the country until they received a decision on their refugee status from the government. The asylum seekers were free to leave and return to these centers with some limitations. For example, they may not be away for more than three days without potentially losing their place at the center and all concomitant financial support from the government. Centers were predominantly located in remote areas of the country, and the time of travel and the lack of money to pay for public transport limited asylum seekers' ability to move freely.

Employment: Asylum seekers may not work while their cases are under evaluation.

Durable Solutions: The government's Directorate of Immigration (UDI) had several programs to settle refugees permanently in the country. According to the UDI, by August the country accepted 764 refugees for resettlement from other countries. Through the International Organization for Migration, the government had several programs for the voluntary return of refugees to their country of origin, such as the Voluntary Assisted Return program; the Information, Return, and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan Program; and the Information, Return, and Reintegration of Iraqi Nationals to Iraq program. These voluntary programs offered financial and logistical support for repatriation, including assistance with travel arrangements and funding.

Temporary Protection: According to the UDI, as of August the government provided protection to 128 persons who might not qualify as refugees.

### **Stateless Persons**

According to UNHCR statistics, there were 1,975 stateless persons in the country as of January; they were not counted as refugees. According to the UDI, at the end of August, 721 stateless persons lived in receiving centers, an increase of 24.5 percent from the same period in 2013. Of these, 273 persons had permission to stay and 192 would have to leave. The remainder continued in the refugee application process.

Citizenship is derived from one's parents, and children born in the country do not automatically become citizens. The government effectively implemented laws and policies to provide stateless persons the opportunity to gain nationality on a nondiscriminatory basis.

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

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to change their government through free and fair elections, and citizens exercised this ability through elections based on universal suffrage.

#### **Elections and Political Participation**

Recent Elections: Observers considered the parliamentary elections held in September 2013 to be free and fair.

Participation of Women and Minorities: Most major political parties in the country voluntarily applied a gender quota system for purposes of nominations for office and the composition of party governing bodies at all levels. There were 67 women in the 169-seat parliament (nearly 40 percent) and three minority representatives. The prime minister was a woman, there were seven women among the 19 Supreme Court justices, and women headed nine of the 17 government ministries. Women led three of the eight political parties represented in parliament.

### **Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government**

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented these laws effectively. There were no reports of government or police corruption.

Corruption: The Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Finance are responsible for combating corruption.

Financial Disclosure: By law income and asset information from the tax forms of all citizens, including public officials, must be made public each year. Declarations are public, and failure to declare properly may result in up to two years in prison. Each year officials must declare income, assets, liabilities, and holdings in public companies. The Norwegian Tax Administration monitors and verifies the disclosures. During the year the government did not sanction any officials for failing to disclose their financial information properly.

Public Access to Information: The law provides for public access to nearly all government information except for classified national security information, and the

government provided access to both citizens and noncitizens, including foreign media. The government generally provided information in a timely manner.

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

A number 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 parliamentary ombudsmen for public administration, for children, and for equality and antidiscrimination. All ombudsmen enjoyed the government's cooperation and operated without government interference. The ombudsmen hear complaints against actions by government officials. Although the ombudsmen's recommendations are not legally binding, government authorities usually complied with those from the ombudsmen for children and public administration.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs reviews the reports of the parliamentary ombudsmen. The Parliament's Standing Committee on Justice is responsible for matters relating to the judicial system, police, the penal code, and the civil and criminal codes.

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

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status. The government generally enforced this prohibition, although there were reports of violence against women and children, anti-Semitism, and stigmatizing statements against immigrants and Muslims.

#### **Women**

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape, including spousal rape, and the government generally enforced the law. The penalty for rape is two 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. Very few cases resulted in a sentence longer than three years and four months. According to police, 1,131 rapes and 102 attempted rapes were reported in 2013.

According to official statistics for 2013, police investigated 928 rape cases, but authorities only prosecuted 174 (19 percent) of them. Amnesty International-Norway claimed that the law inadequately protected women against violence and that statistics about rape and sexual assault were not regularly updated. NGOs remained concerned the country's narrow definition of rape led to underestimating the magnitude of the problem.

Violence against women, including spousal abuse, was a problem. The law provides higher penalties for domestic violence than for simple assault, one to three years in prison, with an increased term of up to six years in more severe cases and up to 21 years for aggravated rape. The government generally enforced the law, although the Oslo Crisis Center criticized the conviction rate (approximately 9 percent in 2013) as too low. In 2013 police received 2,829 reports of domestic violence, 11 percent more than in 2012.

The government had programs to prevent rape and domestic violence and to counsel victims. Respective action plans require each of the country's 27 police districts to have a domestic violence coordinator to assist victims. According to the NGO Legal Aid for Women, 26 of 27 police districts had a full-time domestic violence coordinator.

Public and private organizations operated 45 government-funded shelters, down from 51 in 2012, and managed five 24-hour crisis hotlines. NGOs criticized the government for shifting funding responsibility from the central government to the municipalities, which resulted in less funding and the closing and consolidation of some shelters. The Oslo Crisis Center noted consolidating shelters meant that many women were less likely or unable to seek help, since they would have to travel long distances to do so. The shelters provided support and counseling for victims and helped them gain access to social services, doctors, lawyers, and housing authorities. 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.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law prohibits FGM/C, and there were no reports the practice occurred in the country.

Sexual Harassment: The law provides that "employees shall not be subjected to harassment or other unseemly behavior," and the government effectively enforced

this provision. Employers who violate this law are subject to fines or prison sentences of up to two years, depending on the seriousness of the offense.

Reproductive Rights: Couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children, to attain the highest standard of reproductive health, and to have the information and means to do so free from discrimination, coercion, and violence.

Discrimination: Women have the same legal status as men and enjoy identical rights under family, labor, inheritance, and property laws. For the most part, the Ombudsman for Equality and Antidiscrimination (LDO) effectively processed and investigated complaints of gender discrimination. In 2013 the LDO received 33 complaints about discrimination against women. Of all complaints received by the LDO in 2013, 23 percent concerned discrimination based on gender.

The law provides that women and men engaged in the same activity shall receive equal wages for work of equal value. Women earned on average 14.2 percent less than men on a monthly basis in 2013 according to the Statistics Bureau. The government attributed this to differences in the professions chosen by women and men and the predominance of women in part-time or public-sector work. The LDO expressed concern many women were in part-time positions involuntarily because of a tendency in certain industries, such as health and services, to divide work into a large number of part-time slices with no meaningful full-time alternative. According to the Statistics Bureau, in the third quarter of the year 37 percent of women and 13 percent of men worked part time.

The law mandates that 40 percent of the boards of directors of publicly listed companies be women, and virtually all public companies complied with the law.

## **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, which included names, birth certificates, and social security numbers, including those of the parents.

Child Abuse: In 2013 the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs initiated 41,493 investigations of alleged abuse. It completed 38,046 investigations in 2013 and took action in 14,500 cases while providing counseling in 21,167 cases. An independent children's ombudsman office within the Ministry

of Children, Equality, and Social Inclusion is responsible under the law for the protection of children. The directorate provided assistance and support services. With five regional offices and 26 professional teams, the directorate is the government's principal agency for the welfare and protection of children and families. If criminal proceedings are initiated, the victim is entitled to free assistance from a victim's advocate.

Early and Forced Marriage: The minimum legal age for marriage in the country is 18 for both women and men, although a 16-year-old child may marry with the consent of parents or guardians and permission from the county governor. The county governor may give permission only when there are "special reasons for contracting a marriage."

The Red Cross, which operated a government-funded forced marriage helpline, received 400 inquiries in 2013. Of these, 110 directly dealt with forced marriage, either actual forced marriages (39 cases) or threatened forced marriages (71 cases). Of these cases, four involved minors. The Red Cross also expressed concern about the rising rates of "informal marriages" in which parents promised underage children for marriage, with the formal, legal process taking place once all parties turned 18.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law prohibits FGM/C, and as of August there was no documented case of the practice. There were 14 reports by girls or women whose families or ethnic communities threatened to subject them to FGM/C. There was concern the excessive focus on the topic stigmatized women and girls from particular minority groups.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Commercial sexual exploitation of children under age 18 is illegal both in the country and when committed abroad by a citizen of the country. In both cases, the punishment is either a fine or a prison sentence of up to two years. The age of consent is 16. Child pornography is also illegal and punishable by fine or a prison sentence of up to three years. The government generally enforced the laws. Through August there were 12 reports of prostitution involving children under 18.

International Child Abductions: The country is a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. For country-specific information, see the Department of State's website at [travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/english/country/Norway.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/english/country/Norway.html).

## Anti-Semitism

There were approximately 1,500-2,000 Jews in the country, including those not registered in a congregation, 788 of whom were members in Jewish congregations. Jewish community leaders reported the public generally supported the community.

Anti-Semitism was bundled with other hate crimes in the country's statistics. The police stated the number of anti-Semitism cases was too low to warrant a separate reporting mechanism. In April unknown persons sprayed numerous swastikas and racist slogans on a school and sports facility. In September vandals carved a swastika into the glass doors of the Trondelag Theater the day after the premiere of a Jewish puppet-theater performance.

The Norwegian Jewish Community, an NGO, complained about what it viewed as tolerance for anti-Semitic expression. It pointed to an online article by a U.S.-based correspondent of NRK, the government-owned media conglomerate, that claimed Jews were over represented in and controlled the media in the United States. The NGO With Israel for Peace raised the issue with NRK, which declined to remove the article or reprimand the reporter.

In June parliament adopted the Act on Ritual Circumcision for Boys to provide that a licensed doctor supervise the procedure.

The government supported organizations working to combat racism, discrimination, and anti-Semitism, including the White Buses Foundation, which took students from the country to the Auschwitz extermination camp in Poland and other Nazi concentration camps to educate them about the Holocaust. The Ministry of Justice funded security infrastructure at Jewish buildings, and the Ministry of Government Administration and Church Affairs provided the Jewish community in Oslo and Trondheim with funding for guards.

## Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt>.

## Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care,

and the provision of other governmental services, and the government effectively enforced these provisions. The law applies to all persons with disabilities without enumerating specific types of disabilities. It mandates access to public buildings, information, and communications for persons with disabilities. All educational institutions, from primary schools through universities, are required to have an appointed contact person for students with disabilities as well as a plan of action to include students with disabilities in all school activities.

### **National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities**

Discrimination towards immigrants and ethnic minorities remained a problem.

Equally qualified immigrants sometimes had more difficulty finding employment than ethnic Norwegians (see section 7.d.). As of August the unemployment rate among immigrants was 7.1 percent, compared with 1.8 percent among nonimmigrants, according to government statistics. African immigrants had the highest unemployment rate at 13.5 percent, followed by Asians at 8.3 percent, immigrants from eastern EU countries at 7.7 percent, and Central Americans at 6.9 percent.

The Romani population has mainly settled in Oslo and Trondheim. Some Roma reported feeling harassed by police and civilians.

### **Indigenous People**

Approximately 55,652 Sami lived in the country as of January 1. In addition to participating freely in the national political process, the country's Sami elect their own parliament, the Samediggi. The law establishing the Sami parliament stipulates that the 39-seat consultative group meet regularly to deal with "all matters, which in [its] opinion are of special importance to the Sami people."

Sami officials reported outright discrimination was not common in the country, but institutional discrimination persisted due to a lack of officials who speak Sami. For example, law enforcement officers are infrequently able to speak Sami, which inhibits their ability to interview Sami crime victims. This can disproportionately affect the elderly and children, who often speak only Sami.

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

The law covers crimes and prohibits discrimination against LGBT individuals.

Transgender persons may change their name fairly easily, but long-standing governmental practice requires that, to change one's gender officially, a multidisciplinary specialized unit on transsexualism of the Oslo University Hospital must first diagnose the person as having "transsexual gender identity disorder." Approximately 120 persons were referred to the unit annually, of whom approximately half were diagnosed as transsexual. For a "real sex conversion" to take place, the person must undergo a sex-change operation. The entire process could last as long as 10 years.

The National Criminal Investigation Service maintained an online tip service for hate crimes, including those motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2013 it received 34 reports of hate crimes motivated by the victims' sexual orientation or gender identity. The NGO Norwegian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organization estimated as many as 90 percent of crimes against LGBT individuals were not reported to police. The NGO ran an online reporting mechanism funded by the government and received approximately 25 reports during the year.

On July 22, three persons of Somali descent attacked a foreign citizen vacationing in Oslo due to his sexual orientation. Media widely reported the incident, which authorities classified as a hate crime. The trial took place in mid-October. The three defendants received sentences of six, seven, and 10 months in jail, respectively. They were ordered to pay the victim 1,000 kroner (\$133) as restitution and 25,000 kroner (\$3,330) as a fine.

The government funded a training program for police on engaging with the LGBT community.

## **Section 7. Worker Rights**

### **a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining**

The law provides for the right of workers to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The government generally respected these rights. 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 all industrial sectors if it is determined that a strike threatens the quality of health care or endangers public safety under the law. Trade unions criticized the government for intervening too quickly in labor disputes, although the law generally allows unions to conduct their activities without government interference.

The government effectively enforced applicable laws. Resources and remediation efforts were adequate. Penalties for violations in the form of fines are set by the labor court and vary according to the magnitude of damage, the injuring party's guilt and financial sustainability, the injured party's circumstances and the conditions in general. Administrative and judicial procedures were not subject to lengthy delays or appeals.

The government respected freedom of association. Employers participated with unions in collective bargaining, and there were no reports of antiunion discrimination during the year. Worker organizations were free to function without government or political party interference.

When an employer violates labor statutes or regulations, the Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority (NLIA), which is part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, may order the employer to correct the situation within a specified time limit. The order is in writing, and the employer may file an appeal. If the employer fails to comply, the NLIA may impose fines or shut down the employer's enterprise. The penalties were sufficient to deter violations.

#### **b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

While the law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, there were reports forced labor occurred during the year.

The government effectively enforced laws against forced or compulsory labor. When the NLIA believes an employer has violated these laws, it refers the case to the police. As of August the police received 21 reports of forced labor from the NLIA. Information on the adequacy of government resources and inspections during the year was not available. A maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment for violations of the law was sufficiently stringent to deter violations.

Traffickers subjected men and women, mostly migrants, to forced labor in the domestic service, nursing, and construction sectors. Children were subjected to forced labor (see section 7.c.).

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

### **c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment**

Children between ages 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. Between ages 15 and 18, children not in school may work up to 40 hours per week and a maximum eight hours per day. For children who remain in school, the law limits work to only those hours "not affecting schooling," without specific limits, but less than 40 hours per week. Neither group of children may work at night between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Working more than nine hours a week qualifies a child for health benefits. The government enforced these laws effectively.

While minimum age rules generally were observed, there were reports 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 (see section 6, Children). There were also reports of children forced to work as unpaid domestic help.

NLIA resources were adequate to enforce these laws effectively. The NLIA had 500 employees, 300 of whom were labor inspectors. Penalties include an unspecified fine, imprisonment of up to two years, or both. The penalties were sufficient to deter violations.

### **d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment or Occupation**

Labor laws and regulations prohibit discrimination in employment and occupation regarding race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status. The government effectively enforced these laws and regulations.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to gender and ethnicity. Discrimination against Roma and migrant workers occurred (see section 6).

### **e. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

The law does not mandate an official minimum wage. Minimum wages established in collective bargaining agreements were generally well above this threshold.

The law limits the normal workweek to 37.5 hours and provides for 25 working days of paid leave per year (31 days for workers over age 60). The law mandates a 28-hour rest period on weekends and holidays. 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 law provides the same benefits for citizens and foreign or migrant workers with residency permits but forbids employment of foreign or migrant workers who do not have residency permits. The law provides for safe and physically acceptable working conditions for all employed persons. The NLIA, in consultation with nongovernment experts, sets specific occupational safety and health standards. 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.

The NLIA effectively enforced these laws and standards in the formal sector. The NLIA has 500 employees, 300 of whom are labor inspectors. The NLIA may shut down an enterprise immediately if the life or health of employees is in imminent danger and may report enterprises to the police for serious breaches of the law. A serious violation may result in fines or, in the worst case, imprisonment. The penalties were sufficient to deter violations.

Some employers in the cleaning, hotel, domestic service, construction, and transport industries underpaid foreign workers and subjected them to working hours beyond legally permissible limits.

Statistics on workplace fatalities were not available as of November. Workers may remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. Authorities effectively protected employees in this situation.