

SWEDEN 2014 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kingdom of Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a freely elected multi-party parliamentary form of government. Legislative authority rests in the unicameral parliament (Riksdag). Observers considered the national elections on September 14 free and fair. On October 3, the king announced a center-left coalition led by Stefan Lofven of the Social Democratic Party had taken office. The king is largely a symbolic head of state. The prime minister is the head of government and exercises executive authority. Authorities maintained effective control over the security forces.

The main human rights abuses reported during the year included societal discrimination and incidents of violence against members of ethnic and religious minorities, and domestic abuse of women and children. While the criminal justice system operated effectively in other respects, authorities subjected a high percentage of pretrial detainees to extended periods in isolation and limited their access to visitors, mail, and exercise.

Other reported problems included societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice; sexual harassment of women; instances of anti-Semitic violence; trafficking of men, women and children; discrimination against persons with disabilities; and wage abuse of mainly foreign seasonal berry pickers.

Authorities generally prosecuted officials who committed abuses in the security services 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, although there were reports police used excessive force.

In 2013 the national prosecutor's office for police cases received 6,200 reports of alleged misconduct by officers and civilian police employees and involved incidents that occurred on and off duty. The majority of the incidents took place while the employee was on duty, usually relating to an arrest or a traffic control. Of the cases, authorities dropped 48 percent, mainly due to lack of evidence. Of the 76 cases that went to trial in 2013, authorities ultimately dropped charges in 19 cases.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison and detention center conditions generally met international standards.

Physical Conditions: According to the Prison and Probation Service, prison and detention centers could hold a maximum of 4,458 prisoners and detainees. In July 3,798 prisoners and detainees were in custody, 216 of whom were women. None of the prisoners were juveniles.

From January 1 through August 5, there was one report of a prisoner who committed suicide.

Prison authorities provided to prisoners adequate food and access to potable water. Sanitation and medical care were also adequate.

Administration: Authorities kept adequate records on prisoners and used alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders, such as intensive supervision with electronic monitoring, conditional sentencing, probation, and community service.

There were no prison ombudsmen, but the justice ombudsman, who worked independently from the government, received and handled prisoner complaints. The justice ombudsman could serve on behalf of prisoners and detainees to consider such matters as alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders to alleviate overcrowding; the status and circumstances of confinement of juvenile

offenders; and recordkeeping procedures during pretrial detention to ensure prisoners did not serve beyond the maximum sentence for the offense with which they were charged. As of August 6, the justice ombudsman conducted three prison inspections.

Restrictive conditions for prisoners held in pretrial custody remained a problem, although the law includes the possibility of appealing a decision to impose specific restrictions to the Court of Appeals and ultimately to the Supreme Court. According to the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, during the year authorities subjected approximately 50 percent of pretrial detainees to extended isolation or to restrictions on mail delivery or exercise. Authorities stated they took this step when detainees' contact with people outside the detention center could risk destroying evidence or changing witnesses' statements, thereby imperiling a continuing investigation.

Prisoners and detainees not under restrictions had reasonable access to visitors, could attend religious observance, and could submit complaints to several judicial authorities without censorship. Authorities investigated credible allegations of inhuman conditions.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted monitoring by certain independent, nongovernmental observers. While the national Red Cross and church associations may visit prisoners, they may not monitor or inspect the prisons.

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 and the national criminal police are responsible for law enforcement and general order within the country. The Security Service is responsible for national security related to terrorism, extremism, and espionage. The Ministry of Justice provides the funding and the letters of instruction for police activities, but it does not control how they are performed. According to the constitution, all branches of the police are independent authorities.

Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the national police and the Security Service, and government authorities have 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 based on evidence and issued by duly authorized officials for arrests, and the government generally respected this requirement. Police must file charges within six hours against persons detained for disturbing the public order or considered dangerous and within 12 hours against those detained on other grounds. Police may hold a person six hours for questioning or up to a maximum of 12 hours, if deemed necessary for the investigation, without a court order. After questioning, an individual must be arrested or released, based on the level of suspicion. If a suspect is arrested, the prosecutor has 24 hours (or three days in exceptional circumstances) to request continued detention. Authorities must arraign an arrested suspect within 48 hours and begin initial prosecution within two weeks unless there are extenuating circumstances. Authorities generally respected these requirements.

Although there is no system of bail, courts routinely released defendants pending trial unless authorities considered them dangerous or there was a risk the suspect would leave the country. Detainees may retain a lawyer of their choice. In criminal cases the government is obligated to provide an attorney, regardless of the defendant's financial situation. The law affords detainees prompt access to lawyers and to family members. A suspect has a right to legal representation when the prosecutor requests his detention beyond 24 hours (or three days in exceptional circumstances). The type of crime that authorities accused a suspect of committing influenced the suspect's access to family members. Sometimes authorities did not allow a suspect any contact with family members if police believed it could jeopardize an investigation.

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 provides for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right.

Defendants enjoy a presumption of innocence, have a right to be informed promptly and in detail of the charges against them (with free interpretation as necessary), and have a right to a fair, public trial without undue delay. Cases of a sensitive nature, including those involving children, rape, and national security, may be closed to the public. Juries are used only in cases involving freedom of the press or freedom of speech. In other cases judges or court-appointed civilian representatives make determinations of guilt or innocence. Defendants have the right to be present at their trial and to consult an attorney in a timely manner. In criminal cases the government is obligated to provide a defense attorney. Defendants generally have adequate time and facilities to prepare their defense. Defendants can confront or question witnesses against them and present witnesses and evidence on their behalf. Defendants and their attorneys have access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases and cannot be compelled to testify or confess guilt. If convicted, defendants have the right of appeal. The law extends the above rights to all defendants.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

Individuals and organizations may seek civil remedies for human rights violations in the general court system. Citizens can appeal cases involving possible violations of the European Convention on Human Rights by the government to the European Court of Human Rights.

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 provides for freedom of speech and the 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 criminalizes expression considered to be hate speech and prohibits threats or expressions of contempt for a group or member of a group based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation. Penalties for hate speech range from fines to a maximum of four years in prison. In 2013 there were reports of 621 cases of hate speech, equivalent to 11 percent of all hate crimes reported. Authorities initiated judicial action on 66 percent of all hate crimes; of these cases, 60 percent were closed, and 6 percent led to prosecution of an individual offense during the year.

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. According to the Swedish Institute, 95 percent of residents between the ages of nine and 55 used the internet on a daily basis.

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 provides 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/.

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

The constitution and law provide 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.

Safe Country of Origin/Transit: In accordance with EU law, the government denied asylum to persons who had transited other EU countries or countries with which the country maintained reciprocal return agreements. It returned such persons to those countries, except Greece.

Durable Solutions: The government authorized financial repatriation support for asylum seekers denied residence in the country in the amount of 30,000 kronor (\$4,400) per adult and 15,000 kronor (\$2,200) per child, with a maximum of 75,000 kronor (\$11,000) per family. As of June the government provided repatriation support to 193 persons, most of them of Iraqi origin.

Stateless Persons

Citizenship is derived from one's parents. According to the UNHCR, there were 20,450 stateless persons in the country in January. The large number related to the influx of immigrants and the birth to stateless parents of children who remained stateless until either one parent acquires citizenship or a special application for citizenship for stateless children under the age of five. The majority of stateless persons came from the Middle East (the Occupied Territories, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq) and Somalia.

Once stateless persons are granted permanent residence, they can obtain citizenship through the same naturalization process as other permanent residents. Gaining citizenship generally requires four to eight years, depending on the individual's grounds for residency, ability to establish identity, and lack of a criminal record.

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

The constitution provides citizens the ability to change their government through free and fair elections, which they exercised through elections based on universal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: Observers considered the national elections held on September 14 and elections for seats in the European Parliament on May 25 to be free and fair.

Participation of Women and Minorities: During the first half of the year, there were 152 women among the 349 parliamentarians. There were 12 women in the 24-member cabinet.

No official statistics on minority representation in government were available because the law prohibits the government from holding information about the racial or ethnic background of its citizens. Media reports stated the number of immigrant parliamentarians increased in the 2014 elections.

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 isolated reports of government corruption during the year.

Corruption: The responsibilities of the Swedish Prosecution Authority include prosecuting cases of corruption. A special unit in the prosecutor's office worked on cases involving corruption and initiated 12 investigations in 2013, resulting in the prosecution of five persons. The authority is independent of the courts, the police, and all ministries. It had adequate resources and cooperated with civil society.

Financial Disclosure: Public officials and political parties are subject to financial disclosure laws. The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority is mandated to monitor and verify disclosures. The declarations are available to the public and there are criminal and/or administrative sanctions for noncompliance.

Public Access to Information: The constitution and law provide for public access to government information, and the government generally granted such access to citizens and noncitizens, including foreign media.

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

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were often cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The country has seven national ombudsmen: four justice ombudsmen; the chancellor of justice; the children's ombudsman; and the discrimination ombudsman, with responsibility for ethnicity, gender, transsexual identity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disabilities. There are normally ombudsmen at the municipal level as well. The ombudsmen enjoyed the government's cooperation and operated without government or party interference. They had adequate resources, and observers considered them generally effective.

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

While the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, social status, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, the government did not always effectively enforce these prohibitions.

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape, including spousal rape, and domestic violence are illegal, and the government enforced the law effectively. The law stipulates more severe penalties for repeated crimes and for cases in which the perpetrator had a close relationship with the victim. Penalties range from two to 10 years in prison. The National Council for Crime Prevention (NCCP) reported 6,020 rapes in 2013, the latest year for which data was available, compared with 6,320 rapes in 2012.

The NCCP reported approximately 29,300 cases of assault on women in 2013. Authorities apprehended and prosecuted abusers in most cases.

The law provides for protection of victims from contact with their abusers. When necessary, authorities helped victims protect their identities or obtain new identities and homes. According to official statistics, approximately 12,200 persons, mostly women, were in these programs as of August. Both national and local governments helped fund volunteer groups that provided shelter and other assistance for abused women, and both private and public organizations ran shelters and operated hotlines.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law prohibits FGM/C. There were no official reports of FGM/C on women.

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: Honor-related violence exclusively involved immigrants from the Middle East or South Asia. Police concentrated on educating police officers and prosecutors to increase their awareness of the problem and to improve its detection and prevention. Police suspected some cases of honor-related violence but filed no actual cases.

Sexual Harassment: The law prohibits sexual harassment, and the government generally enforced this law. Criminal penalties range from a fine to up to two years in prison. The NCCP reported 8,900 cases of sexual harassment in 2013.

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

Discrimination: Women have the same legal status and rights as men in the judicial system, including under family law, labor law, property law, and inheritance law. Gender disparities existed in salaries. Women were also underrepresented in high-ranking positions in both the public and the private sectors. The law requires equal pay for equal work. Women's salaries averaged approximately 87 percent of men's.

The discrimination ombudsman investigated complaints of gender discrimination in the labor market. In 2013 the ombudsman received 643 complaints related to the labor market; 51 percent came from women who alleged gender discrimination. Complaints could be filed also with the courts or with the employer. Labor unions generally mediated in cases filed with the employer (see section 7.d.).

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship is derived from one's parents. Children born in the country, regardless of their parents' citizenship and status in the country, are registered in the tax authority's population register.

Child Abuse: Child abuse was a problem. The NCCP reported 17,700 cases of abuse of children under the age of 17 in 2013. It also reported 2,670 cases of rape of children under the age of 18 in 2013 compared with 2,880 reported cases in 2012.

The law prohibits parents or other caretakers from abusing children mentally or physically. Parents, teachers, and other adults are subject to prosecution if they physically punish a child, including by slapping or spanking. Children have the right to report such abuses to police. The usual sentence for such an offense is a fine combined with counseling and monitoring by social workers. Authorities may remove abused children from their homes and place them in foster care.

The children's ombudsman published a number of reports and publications for children and those working to protect children's rights.

Early and Forced Marriage: The minimum age of marriage is 18 years. The law does not recognize any marriage with an underage person unless county councils approve particular circumstances. In 2013 the county councils received 15 applications for underage persons to marry and denied all of them.

In 2012 the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs reported that at least 70,000 young persons living in the country believed their parents, religion, and culture restricted them in their choice of marriage partner. There was a connection between young persons' being the victim of honor-based violence and domination, and being forced into marriage. Some informal and ceremonial marriages were not recorded and did not give any legal rights, but families considered them real. There were also reports of couples entering into marriages by proxy, where at least one of the parties was not present in person at the marriage service but was instead represented by someone else.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law prohibits FGM/C. Sentences for perpetrators of genital mutilation, even if the procedure is performed in another country, can range from four to 10 years in prison. The actual extent of FGM/C was unknown.

To combat FGM/C, the government instructed the county council in Ostragotaland to examine how government agencies can work to prevent FGM/C, as well as how to support girls who have already undergone FGM/C. Norrkoping Municipality was part of the pilot project, and the efforts led school health services to become increasingly alert to girls frequently visiting the bathroom and experiencing such symptoms as stomachaches and headaches. As a result, the national health services implemented new routines on where to refer subjected girls and how to report to social services.

The project in Norrkoping identified and initiated assistance for 60 girls who have undergone FGM/C, mainly abroad.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law criminalizes “contact with children under 15 for sexual purposes,” including internet contact intended to lead to sexual assault. Penalties range from fines to one year in prison. The minimum age for consensual sex is 15 years. The law prohibits child pornography; penalties range from fines to six years in prison.

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 report at travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/english/country/sweden.html.

Anti-Semitism

Leaders of the Jewish community estimated there were 20,000 Jews in the country. The Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities estimated there were approximately 9,000 practicing members. In 2013 the NCCP registered 190 anti-Semitic crimes during the year, compared with 221 in 2012. Anti-Semitic incidents included threats, verbal abuse, vandalism, graffiti, and harassment in schools.

In early August the government announced it would give two million kronor (\$294,000) to the Swedish Jewish Council for increasing security for Jewish congregations in light of religious tensions.

The NCCP saw a declining trend in anti-Semitic hate crimes in the country at large but considered the decrease to be within the normal year-to-year fluctuation. The city of Malmo continued to be an exception where anti-Semitic hate crimes were more common than in the other large cities. During the first six months of the

year, the NCCP counted 28 anti-Semitic hate crimes in Malmo, compared with 35 such crimes during the first half of 2013. Academic experts noted ethnic and political factors seemed highly intertwined in reported anti-Semitic acts in Malmo. These incidents often were associated with events in the Middle East and actions of the Israeli government, and Swedish Jews were at times blamed for Israeli policies.

The most common types of anti-Semitic crimes related to hate speech (48 percent) and unlawful threats and harassment (32 percent). Among the perpetrators, 61 percent were not known previously by the victim, and crimes were committed mainly in public places and on the internet.

In August unknown men attacked a Malmo rabbi. The attackers drove up beside him, screamed an anti-Jewish epithet at him, and threw a bottle towards him. The incident occurred when the rabbi was on his way home at night from the synagogue. A few hours earlier someone else, also in a passing car, threw a lighter towards the rabbi when he was on his way to the synagogue. The police classified the attacks as suspected hate crimes and assaults.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center left in place its travel warning first issued in 2010 for Jews traveling in southern Sweden, because Jews in Malmo could be “subject to anti-Semitic taunts and harassment.”

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency cooperated with religious communities on a national level to promote dialogue and to prevent conflicts leading to anti-Semitic incidents. Representatives from the national unit trained police officers to detect hate crimes and visited high schools to raise awareness of such crimes and encourage more victims to report abuses. The government made available information in several languages for victims of hate crimes and provided interpreters to facilitate reporting. Police hate-crime units existed throughout the country. Several prominent politicians participated in kippa (or yarmulke) walks organized by the Jewish communities in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmo.

Several prominent politicians condemned anti-Semitic violence and reacted to neo-Nazi activity. Following a neo-Nazi May Day march, the prime minister, while supporting freedom of speech, said, “...It is now important that those who have used violence will be held accountable. We must clearly mark against anyone who uses or advocates violence and hatred as the basis for political influence. We all have a responsibility not to bring hatred in to Swedish politics....”

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 employers from discriminating against persons with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities in hiring decisions (see section 7.d.) and prohibits universities from discriminating against students with disabilities in making admission decisions. No other specific law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. The discrimination ombudsman is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The law does not cover accessibility. Regulations for new buildings require full accessibility, and similar requirements exist for some, but not all, public facilities. Many buildings and some means of public transportation remained inaccessible.

In 2013 the number of reports of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of government services decreased to 403, compared with 485 in 2012. Observers reported cases of insufficient access to privately owned buildings used by the public, such as apartments, restaurants, and bars. Those involved handled many complaints through mediation procedures rather than formal court hearings.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The law recognizes Sami (formerly known as Lapps), Swedish Finns, Tornedalers, Roma, and Jews as national minorities. The law permits and the government supported minority languages. The discrimination ombudsman received 755 complaints regarding ethnic discrimination in 2013, compared with 514 in 2012. Of the complaints, 295 related to the labor market (see section 7.d.).

Societal discrimination and violence against immigrants and Roma continued to be a problem during the year.

Police registered reports of xenophobic crimes, some of which related to neo-Nazi or white-power ideology. Police investigated, and the district attorney's office prosecuted race-related crimes. Official estimates placed the number of active neo-Nazis and white supremacists at 1,500. Neo-Nazi groups operated legally, but courts have held that it is illegal to wear xenophobic symbols or racist

paraphernalia or to display signs and banners with inflammatory symbols at rallies, since the law prohibits incitement of hatred against ethnic groups.

In December 2013 approximately 200 persons with a permit of assembly gathered in Karrtorp, a suburb south of Stockholm, to demonstrate against racism and neo-Nazism. A group of approximately 30 neo-Nazis carrying flares and clubs entered the square, leading to a riot. The attack severely injured four persons, including two police officers. Police arrested approximately 28 persons. In March the courts convicted eight individuals: one man for attempted manslaughter, sentencing him to six-and-a-half years in prison; and three men for violent rioting, sentencing them to six to eight months in prison. The courts also sentenced four juvenile offenders to social youth service. The weekend after the original riot, 16,000 persons in Karrtorp peacefully protested against racism and neo-Nazism.

The government estimated the Romani population at 50,000. A majority of the Roma lived as outcasts. The unemployment rate among Roma was high, due in part to poor education and prejudices. A Rom's life expectancy was significantly lower than the country's average. In 2013 authorities identified 233 hate crimes directed against Roma. Perpetrators of hate crimes usually worked in the service sector (34 percent) or were a neighbor of the victim (16 percent). In recent years the number of Roma, mainly from Romania, engaged in street begging increased. As EU citizens, they are allowed to stay without permission for up to three months, and begging is legal in Sweden.

In September 2013 the media reported the Skane County police had compiled a dedicated database of approximately 4,700 Roma in the country. The ethnocentric database tracked family ties between individuals. In April the chancellor of justice ruled all registered Roma were entitled to compensation on the ground that the registration was illegal on several points, including that authorities had registered 1,320 children. In May the government decided to pay 5,000 kronor (\$735) compensation to each Rom in the database. The justice ombudsman's investigation of overall responsibility continued at year's end. The Security and Integrity Agency reviewed the Skane police during the last half of the year.

The government continued its 20-year strategy to equalize the opportunities available to young Roma and non-Roma by 2032. The strategy included a series of proposed measures to improve the condition of Roma in six focus areas: education, work, housing, health and social care, culture and language, and civil society. During the year the government commissioned the Agency for Youth and Civil Matters to distribute grants to organizations within civil society who want to

implement health promotion initiatives targeting Roma. The agency will also conduct a project to facilitate exchange of experience between Romani and non-Romani organizations.

In January Gothenburg's City Museum opened the exhibition "We are Roma-- Meet the People Behind the Myth," which was scheduled to continue until March 2015. The exhibition raised the question of why Roma were not accepted into today's society. The museum collaborated closely with representatives from Romani groups and held a smaller version of the exhibition in Stockholm.

Indigenous People

The approximately 20,000 Sami in the country are full citizens with the right to vote in elections and participate in the government, including as members of the country's parliament. They are not, however, represented as a group in parliament. Sami are also represented by a 31-member elected administrative authority called the Sami parliament ("Sametinget"). The Sami parliament acted as an advisory body to the government and has limited decision-making powers in matters related to preserving the Sami culture, language, and schooling. The national parliament and government regulations govern the Sami parliament's operations.

Longstanding tensions between Sami and the government over land and natural resources persisted, as did tensions between Sami and private landowners over reindeer grazing rights. Certain Sami have grazing and fishing rights, depending on their tribal history. Sami continued to press the government for exclusive access to grazing and fishing.

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

During the year there were isolated incidents of societal violence and discrimination against persons perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). The NCCP reported 630 hate crimes in 2013 based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Antidiscrimination laws exist, are enforced, and apply to LGBT individuals.

In January the government presented its first comprehensive strategy for LGBT rights. Its purpose was to strengthen the LGBT situation in Sweden. In addition the year's budget included an increase in the government's annual grants to

organizations for LGBT persons from 6.3 million kronor (\$930,000) to 7.3 million kronor (\$1.07 million) annually.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

The NCCP hate crime report for 2013 counted 330 anti-Islamic hate crimes compared with 310 such crimes in 2012. Anti-Islamic behavior targeted immigrants. The NCCP stated crimes against persons and damage of property, including graffiti, were the most common offenses related to religion. An increasing number of these anti-Islamic hate crimes occurred on the internet.

In the early morning of December 29, unknown persons vandalized the mosque in the town of Eslov in Skane and set it afire. The building suffered slight damage, and there were no injuries. Vandals had targeted the mosque before: On All-Saints Day (November 1), unknown persons broke the mosque's windows and threw bottles of alcohol on the floor, and a few weeks later unknown persons spray-painted the exterior walls of the building. At the end of the year, authorities were investigating the crime.

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 respected these rights. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination, and a worker cannot be fired because of union activity.

The law provides for collective bargaining. Foreign companies may be exempt from collective bargaining provided they meet minimum working conditions and pay. Public-sector employees enjoy the right to strike, subject to limitations in the collective agreements protecting the public's immediate health and security. The government mediation service may also intervene to postpone a strike for up to 14 days for mediation. The International Trade Union Confederation claimed the law restricts the rights of the country's trade unions to take industrial action on behalf of foreign workers in foreign companies operating in the country. The law allows unions to conduct their activities largely without interference. The law provides fines for violations that the labor court determines. Information regarding the sufficiency of such fines to deter violations was not available. Administrative and judicial procedures were not subject to lengthy delays and appeals.

Workers and employers exercised all these rights, and the government protected them. There were few reports of antiunion discrimination and violence toward union members.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, including by children, and the government enforced these laws. Forced labor involving trafficked men and women occurred in agriculture, construction, hospitality, domestic work, and forced begging and theft. There were reports of forced labor involving trafficked children (see section 7.c.). In some cases, employers or contractors providing labor seized the passports of workers and withheld their pay. Resources and inspections were adequate. Penalties ranged from two to 10 years in prison and were comparable with other serious violations.

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 law permits full-time employment from the age of 16 under the supervision of local authorities. Employees under the age of 18 may work only during the daytime and under supervision. Children as young as 13 may work part-time or perform light work with parental permission. The government effectively implemented these laws and regulations. There were no reported cases of child labor. Abusing a child in the labor market is a civil matter. According to law, forcing a child into work is coercion, deprivation of liberty, or child abuse, and carries a wide range of penalties, including fines and imprisonment. Resources for enforcement were adequate.

Children trafficked from outside the country were subjected to forced begging and petty theft. There were five trafficking cases concerning forced child labor and four for forced begging. Police and social services acted promptly on these cases.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment or Occupation

With respect to employment and occupation, labor laws and regulations prohibit discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation,

gender identity, communicable diseases, and social status. The government generally enforced these laws effectively.

Discrimination in employment or occupation occurred with respect to minorities, gender, disability, and sexual orientation, and gender identity (see section 6).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

There is no national minimum wage law. Annual collective bargaining agreements set wages. By regulation, employers, whether foreign or domestic, must offer conditions of employment on par with the country's collective agreements. Nonunion establishments generally observed these contracts as well. A foreign company providing berry pickers to Swedish companies must have a branch registered in the country to guarantee the conditions of employment. The foreign labor broker must also show how it expects to pay workers in case of limited work, such as, for example, a bad berry harvest.

The legal standard workweek is 40 hours or less. The labor law and collective bargaining agreements regulate overtime and rest periods. The maximum overtime per year allowed by law is 200 hours. Collective agreements determined compensation for overtime, which could take the form of money or time off. The law requires a minimum period of 36 consecutive hours of rest, preferably on weekends, during a period of seven days. The law also provides employees with a minimum of five weeks' paid annual leave.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority, a government agency, effectively enforced these standards. In 2013 the authority conducted 31,000 labor inspections. It employed approximately 250 inspectors around the country. During the year the country had 0.6 inspectors per 10,000 employees. This decrease in labor inspectors coincided with a 17-percent increase in work accidents among younger workers and a 2 percent increase among all workers. Penalties for violations amounted to fines. Information regarding their sufficiency to deter violation was not available.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority issued occupational health and safety regulations, and trained union stewards and safety ombudsmen whom government inspectors monitored. Safety ombudsmen have the authority to stop unsafe activity immediately and call in an inspector. The authority effectively enforced these rules. Workers can remove themselves from situations that endanger health and

safety without jeopardizing their employment and authorities effectively protected employees in this situation.

Many foreign seasonal workers, including berry pickers from Asia and Bulgaria, faced harsh conditions of work, including the seizure of passports, withholding of pay, and poor living and working conditions. In 2013 the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions reported that, in a survey of foreign seasonal workers in the country, 7 percent of respondents stated they received undeclared pay, and 1 percent stated they received all their pay in cash.

Through April there were 13 workplace fatalities.