

State of the World's Minorities 2007

Events of 2006

minority
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2007

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Minority Rights Group International

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities. Our activities are focused on international advocacy, training, publishing and outreach. We are guided by the needs expressed by our worldwide partner network of organizations which represent minority and indigenous peoples.

MRG works with over 150 organizations in nearly 50 countries. Our governing Council, which meets twice a year, has members from 10 different countries. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and observer status with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. MRG is registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee under English law. Registered charity no. 282305, limited company no. 1544957.

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A Tamil child living with her family in the damaged remains of Jaffna railway station, Sri Lanka, having been displaced by the civil war. Howard Davies/Exile Images

Inside cover photo

Dalit children collect wood in Uttar Pradesh, India. Ami Vitale/Panos Pictures

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Getting involved

MRG relies on the generous support of institutions and individuals to further our work. All donations received contribute directly to our projects with minorities and indigenous peoples.

One valuable way to support us is to subscribe to our report series. Subscribers receive regular MRG reports and our annual review. We also have over 100 titles which can be purchased from our publications catalogue. In addition, MRG publications are available to minority and indigenous peoples' organizations through our library scheme.

MRG's unique publications provide well-researched, accurate and impartial information on minority and indigenous peoples' rights worldwide. We offer critical analysis and new perspectives on international issues. Our specialist training materials include essential guides for NGOs and others on international human rights instruments, and on accessing international bodies. Many MRG publications have been translated into several languages.

If you would like to know more about MRG, how to support us and how to work with us, please visit our website www.minorityrights.org, or contact our London office.

Select MRG publications:

- *Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's minority communities since 2003*
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With a preface by Gay J McDougall,
UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues

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In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. Sadly, for many minorities and indigenous peoples around the world, this inspirational text – with its emphasis on equality and non-discrimination – remains a dream, not a reality.

Ethnic or sectarian tensions are evident in many parts of our globe. In places, they have boiled over into bitter violence. The Middle East situation continues to deteriorate – with some minority communities fearing for their very survival. In Africa, the crisis in Darfur is deepening, as government-sponsored militia continue to carry out massive human rights abuses against traditional farming communities. In Europe, the spotlight has fallen on Muslim minorities – with rows flaring over the Danish cartoons and the wearing of the veil and *burqa*.

Now more than ever, world leaders must insist that the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples be respected. The participation of minorities is essential if conflict is to be prevented and lasting peace to be built. This second annual edition of the *State of the World's Minorities* looks at the key developments over 2006 affecting the human rights and security of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. It includes:

- a preface by the UN's Independent Expert on Minority Issues
- a unique statistical analysis of Peoples under Threat 2007
- a special focus on the participation of minorities, with analysis from leading academics on electoral representation and the European system
- an eye-witness report from Sri Lanka, on the impact on minorities of the resurgence of conflict
- comprehensive, regional sections, outlining the main areas of concern as well as any notable progress.

The *State of the World's Minorities* is an invaluable reference for policy-makers, academics, journalists and everyone who is interested in the conditions facing minorities and indigenous peoples around the world.

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