

A young boy is shown in silhouette, sitting on the ground and playing a trumpet. He is facing right. In the background, there is a television set placed on a wooden crate. The television screen shows a landscape with rows of crops. The entire scene is set against a bright, hazy sky. The image has a grainy, textured appearance.

minority  
rights  
group  
international

# Annual Review 2001

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Kawangware girls preparing for a dance, Kenya  
*Betty Press/Panos Pictures*

## 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 network of partner organizations which

represent minorities and indigenous peoples. MRG works with over 130 organizations in nearly 60 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 is registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee under English law.

*Cover*  
Young bedouin in Israel  
*Mikkel Østergaard/MIRA*

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[www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)

*Design by Sodergatan*  
*Printed in the UK*

## Director's report

In 2001, MRG's work was needed more than ever as the tragic events of the year produced fresh challenges for minority rights.

In Central Africa and Indonesia, we drew attention to continuing grave abuses of minority rights and analysed the prospects for peace. In South-East Europe, we pushed for international efforts to resolve conflict in Macedonia and to continue community-building in other countries of the former Yugoslavia. In Central and Eastern Europe we worked with Roma-led organizations to support the development of a new generation of Roma activists. Throughout the year, in Geneva, Strasbourg, Durban and New York, we supported minority and indigenous rights leaders from around the world to make their arguments to governments and international policy-makers at the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe and other intergovernmental organizations.

The new international agenda in place at the close of the year brought further concerns: the danger of setting aside human rights standards in pursuit of the 'war against terrorism', the potential wholesale characterization of excluded communities as 'terrorists', and increasing incidences of xenophobia and racism. Yet the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the war in Afghanistan also prompted an international debate about many fundamental minority and indigenous rights issues. These have included: the consequences of excluding communities; and the extremes of inequality within and between states – and the impact this may have in generating and sustaining conflict.

In addressing these new and continuing challenges, MRG has focused on:

- increasing the participation of minorities and indigenous peoples in decisions that affect their lives;
- strengthening and implementing international law protecting the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples;
- promoting the role of minority rights in preventing conflict; and
- ensuring that minorities and indigenous peoples benefit from national and international development policies.

Examples of our work in these areas are described in the following pages. It is work that depends on the very different contributions of a wide range of people around the world: the dedication of human rights defenders, the imagination of policy-makers, the open-mindedness of individuals in government, and the commitment of our donors. Above all, it depends on the initiative and courage of our partners in minority and indigenous peoples' organizations, often working against overwhelming odds.



Mark Lattimer  
Director



Issues discussed in this conference have opened the mind of all parties (government, NGO community) to find ways and solutions to biodiversity, protection of indigenous peoples' knowledge and their rights.

*Participant at the Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge meeting, Malaysia*

I was successful at the NGO forum with the media and the regional institutions such as the Arab League, and in meeting several countries' foreign ministries and delegations.

*Participant with MRG support at the World Conference Against Racism, South Africa*

Most NGOs assume we know about the UN and they put us into the sea of the UN system without equipment to sail on. MRG is doing the best I've ever known.

*Participant at the MRG-run Neelan Tiruchelvam Training, Switzerland*

## Minorities speak out

MRG believes that the people best placed to speak on minority and indigenous issues are minorities and indigenous peoples. In 2001 one of our priorities was to make sure that our partner organizations were able to take part in the formulation of policies that affect them. For example, with partners, we organized national consultations, such as one in Malaysia that focused on 'Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge'. Also with partners, we organized regional meetings such as one on the 'Recognition of Minorities' in seven countries in South-East Europe.

At a global level we brought minorities and indigenous peoples to participate at key bodies of the UN Commission on Human Rights, and at the UN World Conference Against Racism. Whether national, regional or global, these meetings brought minority and indigenous communities together with government representatives, UN officials and other international organizations.

Participants swapped views, experiences and ideas, and discussed different approaches to tackle shared problems. Given how isolated many minority and indigenous peoples' organizations are within their countries, some participants also took strength and inspiration from others facing and tackling similar issues.

We also supported minorities and indigenous peoples to present evidence of abuses of their human rights to international decision-makers, and to try to convince the international community to act. Minority and indigenous peoples' representatives at international events made sure that their communities' issues were raised and discussed.

Minorities and indigenous peoples also provided an independent view, that challenged complacent, defensive or evasive governments.

Partners told us that just by attending inter-governmental meetings, their government took their organization more seriously. For example, one trainee/partner copied an intervention that she made at the UN Working Group on Minorities to embassies in her country. When she attended a meeting of donors, NGOs and the government to agree a common approach to development in her country, she was pleasantly surprised when several of the donors used points she had made in her intervention. One donor even used part of the intervention word for word during the meeting.

However, representatives from minority and indigenous peoples' organizations don't always have the knowledge or skills to speak out in international bodies that follow legal conventions and diplomatic rules of procedure.

MRG provided training for our partners on international law, on how different intergovernmental systems work, and on how to influence people. Sometimes this training is linked to a particular event (e.g. UN Working Group on Minorities) or process (e.g. implementation of the Framework Convention on National Minorities). At other times, the training focuses on a particular group of people (e.g. Pastoralists in Eastern Africa or minority and inter-ethnic NGOs in South-East Europe).

MRG believes that it is very important that information from international representation and training events is passed on to participants' communities.



Page 4 Paul Divakar, Convenor of the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights in India, and MRG Council member, addresses the UN  
*MRG archive*

Page 5 MRG is supporting Roma NGOs to encourage a new level of activism  
*Clive Shirley/Panos Pictures*

In 2001 we supported follow-up projects after most events to further participants' work, so that they can apply what they have learnt. Over 40 follow-up projects were underway in 2001. Just three examples give a flavour of their variety and impact: an advocacy campaign for first-language education for the Turkish minority in Macedonia; a three-day training workshop in Rwanda to increase knowledge of minority rights in NGOs based in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda; and

four one-day workshops attended by 325 people in Colombia on minority rights, first-language education and ways in which different communities can live peacefully together.

We also worked with our partners to strengthen their organizations. This support ranged from providing consultancy and advice to partners when problems or opportunities arose, to grants to buy computers, to programmes of mentoring training for Roma NGO staff in eight countries.

I learnt that I do not need to be confrontational but persuasive and strong, i.e. stand my ground when communicating to leaders/government about the rights of the minority and marginalized.

*Participant at the Pastoralists Advocacy and Rights Training, Kenya*

I would like to appreciate all the assistance that you have been able to accord us to date, without which, a lot that has been achieved this end may never have been achieved. It is the undertaking of CEMIRIDE that we shall always endeavour to ensure that we make use of this relationship for a better life of our peoples.

*CEMIRIDE (Kenya)*



Minorities and indigenous peoples  
get their view across  
*Paul Weinberg/Panos Pictures*

## Putting laws into practice

Although the law needs to be strengthened, international laws or standards that could protect minorities and indigenous peoples do exist. Some governments refuse to ratify them, and others sign up but then do nothing to implement them. In 2001 MRG helped partners to monitor how far states were implementing international standards and to point out where states are in breach of them.

The Framework Convention on National Minorities is a binding agreement that has been ratified by most European states. By ratifying the Convention, a state agrees to have its treatment of

minorities and its compliance with the Convention regularly reviewed. States have to submit reports to an independent expert committee. Our partners worked in six countries, with MRG support, to submit alternative reports to challenge the official record, which they felt was giving a partial or incomplete picture, or to raise awareness of the Convention and its usefulness for minorities in countries that have already ratified it.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, five organizations working on minority issues formed a coalition and contacted government officials who were responsible for

drafting the report on how the state had implemented the rights for minorities set out in the Convention. The coalition offered to have an input into the state's report and is consulting with communities and gathering evidence which it will either feed into the official state report or submit independently to the expert committee.

MRG also lobbied hard during 2001 (especially during the World Conference Against Racism) to get more states to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. An MRG Report, launched in Geneva, Switzerland, summarized the information that different governments have submitted under the Convention on their record of eliminating racial discrimination.

MRG believes that the implementation of human rights depends on the right information getting to the UN committees that monitor compliance with international conventions. We published and disseminated a training manual designed to help NGOs have an input into the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, explaining how to send in information when their state's record on discrimination is being reviewed. We began work with partners to translate this manual into Albanian, Bulgarian, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, and Telegu.

MRG also intervened directly to point out where abuses of minority rights law were taking place (for example by making statements at the UN as simmering conflicts flared up in Indonesia and Macedonia). MRG's Reports also document where states are failing to live up to minority rights standards;

one example of this in 2001 was our Report on Religious Minorities and China, which sets out how the Chinese state persecutes certain religious groups and prevents many groups from exercising their right to practise their religious beliefs.

MRG's support for implementing human rights and the rule of law includes defending our partners when they are in danger. Saad Eddin Ibrahim headed the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies in Cairo when he and other defendants faced political charges in an Egyptian security court and were imprisoned in 2001. Throughout the year, MRG lobbied the European Union, governments and international organizations to put pressure on the Egyptian authorities to release Saad.



MRG's publications are very valuable and will be used when possible in the work that I do with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

*Jaap Doek, Chairperson,  
UN Committee on  
the Rights of the Child*

You have been early and tireless campaigners during our long ordeal and we cannot thank you enough for all that you have done.

*Democracy campaigner  
Saad Eddin Ibrahim of the  
Ibn Khaldoun Center, Egypt,  
on his release from prison in  
February 2002*

Muslims in Kashgar, Xinjiang,  
a contested region in China  
*Ian Teh/Panos Pictures*

Ethnic Albanians fleeing attacks,  
close to the Kosovan border  
*Andrew Testa/Panos Pictures*

Conflicts are most frequent in poor countries ... where there are sharp inequalities between ethnic or religious groups.

*UN Secretary-General's  
Millennium Report*

Public Participation and Minorities [MRG Report] provides a wide analysis of the institutional arrangements meant to enhance minority participation in public life, as well as an overview of the mechanisms used for avoiding turbulence, secession or bloodshed in multiethnic societies when re-negotiating the contract after the crisis or during a process of transition.

*Ethnic Conflict  
Research Digest*

Clear, concise and comprehensive, it disentangles the complex web of ethnic, religious, geographical and historical elements which make [Afghanistan's] problems so intractable.

*Journal of the World  
Disarmament Campaign on a  
MRG Report on Afghanistan,  
published November 2001*

## From conflict to cooperation

Abuses of human rights often contribute to hostility and conflict between communities within countries. MRG worked in 2001 to draw attention to minorities affected by conflicts, to prevent conflicts emerging or escalating, and to help communities rebuild relationships after conflict. One way that we did this was to hold workshops where communities that have been involved in past conflict can come together and talk about how to move forward. This has been a major part of our work in South-East Europe: in 2001 we held workshops in Sarajevo and Mostar on issues that need to be resolved after the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia so that communities can move on.

Partners often stress to us that in a tense and hostile atmosphere, it is very difficult to find balanced information about ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Publishing this information, that our partners can use to inform debate locally and internationally, is therefore very important. At a time of renewed conflict in Indonesia, we published a Report documenting and analysing the conflicts there. This Report reached a minority-based NGO in Indonesia who wrote to make contact with MRG because they were impressed with the Report. They told us that they planned to use it in a project they are undertaking on impunity and believe that the Report makes an important contribution to the

analysis of the problems facing their minority community in Indonesia today. Similarly, in November 2001, as the country was engulfed by war, we published a Report on the human rights crisis in Afghanistan.

Clearly, MRG's Reports published in English are useful for many audiences but if the information is to reach minority and indigenous communities, NGOs and government officials in most countries, it needs to be translated. In 2001 MRG partners published translations of our Report on the Batwa in Central Africa into Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili; and our Report on Adivasis in India into Hindi. By 2001 our partners in South-East Europe had translated 10 different publications into one or more of Albanian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek, Hungarian, Macedonian, and Serbian.

Minority and indigenous communities say that their exclusion from national politics is a source of many of their problems. MRG published a new Report in 2001 on participation, by the distinguished constitutional lawyer Yash Ghai, that sets out methods to ensure that minorities are involved in government. These can range from granting autonomy to particular regions of a country, which then have greater control over their own affairs, to systems that promote or guarantee representation for people of different backgrounds in national governments.







Hazara girls in war-torn Kabul, Afghanistan  
*Martin Adler/Panos Pictures*

## Halving minority and indigenous poverty by 2015

In the Millennium Development Goals, the international community has set itself the goal of halving world poverty by the year 2015. MRG is working to make sure that minority communities and indigenous peoples are included in and benefit from aid policies and development projects.

If aid doesn't benefit whole sections of society, conflict can result, which often destroys years of investments and development, and increases poverty.

MRG (in partnership with the UN) organized a meeting attended by international, minority- and indigenous-based NGOs, donor governments, and UN staff and experts, to discuss how to tackle poverty and discrimination, and how best to include minorities and indigenous peoples in aid policies and projects. The UN Independent Expert on the Right to Development attended this meeting and has since asked MRG to work with him on a study on 'Minority Rights and the Right to Development'.

As part of an ongoing programme of publications that document minority and indigenous peoples'

experiences of development, we published a Macro Study on *Economic Development, Democracy and Ethnic Conflict in the Fiji Islands*. It traces the history of conflict, including recent events, and the conflict's roots in patterns of economic exclusion of certain groups.

During 2001, MRG and partners also undertook research in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, India, Macedonia, Nigeria and the Philippines to investigate how minority and indigenous communities are affected by development.

MRG seeks to ensure that development bodies such as the World Bank and the UN Development Programme receive the facts on minorities and development, and our Reports include information on the economic position of minority and indigenous communities. For example, a 2001 Report, *Uganda: The Marginalization of Minorities*, included chapters on minorities' access to appropriate education and health services.



Indo-Fijian worker, Fiji  
Penny Tweedie/Panos Pictures

Surveys in Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Peru indicate that the average years of schooling for Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples are half that for white people, while monthly mean earnings are similarly half of those made by white people. In Bulgaria 84 per cent of Roma live in poverty, in contrast with a 36 per cent national rate ... In India, 50 per cent of Dalits live below the poverty line, compared to 30 per cent of the overall population.

*MRG Briefing on development*

There remain many unresolved issues with the minority community in Fiji and this Macro Study on Minority Rights and Development is timely. It addresses many of the other issues that I have not highlighted and makes some sound recommendations to government that will help correct the current imbalance.

Fijian MP Mick Beddoes  
at the launch of the Fiji Study

The report is an invaluable addition to our information resources and should help us in our enduring efforts to improve our programmes.

*UN Development Programme, Uganda*

# Financial report 2001

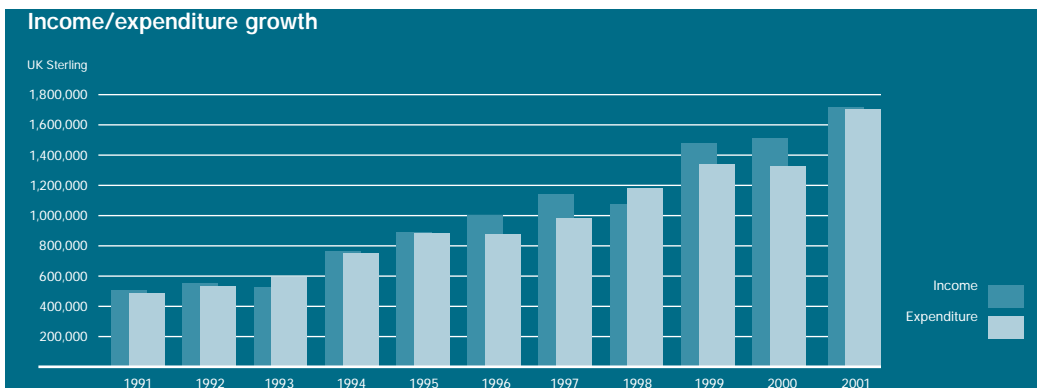
These accounts are a summary of information extracted from our audited accounts. The full report and accounts were approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee for recommendation to the Council. The full accounts can be obtained from MRG at 379 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE, and from [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)

## Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2001

Figures in UK Sterling	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2001 funds	Total 2000 funds
Resources arising				
<i>Statutory contribution</i>	422,386	491,517	913,903	964,589
<i>Non-statutory contribution</i>	25,620	665,292	690,912	491,228
<i>Income from sales of publications</i>	33,156	–	33,156	47,073
<i>Copyright and literary fees</i>	34	–	34	44
<i>Consultancy</i>	31,604	–	31,604	–
<i>Interest and dividends received</i>	17,084	–	17,084	18,394
	<b>529,884</b>	<b>1,156,809</b>	<b>1,686,693</b>	<b>1,521,328</b>
Direct charitable expenditure				
<i>Projects</i>	289,812	1,225,699	1,515,511	1,061,866
<i>Advocacy</i>	115,911	–	115,911	175,335
<i>Cost of sales of publications</i>	4,795	–	4,795	3,889
<i>Cost of consultancy</i>	9,323	–	9,323	–
	<b>419,841</b>	<b>1,225,699</b>	<b>1,645,540</b>	<b>1,241,090</b>
Other expenditure				
<i>Fundraising</i>	63,079	–	63,079	81,268
<i>Administration</i>	21,341	–	21,341	4,940
	<b>84,420</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>84,420</b>	<b>86,208</b>
Resources used in year	504,261	1,225,699	1,729,960	1,327,298
<b>Change in resources before transfer and valuations</b>	<b>25,623</b>	<b>(68,890)</b>	<b>(43,267)</b>	<b>194,030</b>
Realised gains (losses)				
<i>Realised gains on tangible fixed assets disposals</i>	–	–	–	–
Other recognised gains and losses				
<i>Gains (losses) on investments unrealised</i>	(10,027)	–	(10,027)	3,340
Resources retained for further use	15,596	(68,890)	(53,294)	197,370
Brought forward 1 January	309,629	580,879	890,508	693,138
<b>Carried forward 31 December</b>	<b>325,225</b>	<b>511,989</b>	<b>837,214</b>	<b>890,508</b>

## Balance sheet as at 31 December 2001

Figures in UK Sterling	General funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2001 funds	Total 2000 funds
Fixed assets	10,459	–	1,363	11,822	22,531
Investments	134,549	–	–	134,549	144,576
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand	113,939	8,819	310,903	433,661	505,878
Stocks	21,886	–	–	21,886	23,591
Debtors	61,227	–	226,705	287,932	246,768
	<b>342,060</b>	<b>8,819</b>	<b>538,971</b>	<b>889,850</b>	<b>943,344</b>
Creditors: Amounts due within one year					
Bank overdrafts	–	–	–	–	–
Other creditors	(25,654)	–	(26,982)	(52,636)	(52,836)
<b>Net assets/liabilities</b>	<b>316,406</b>	<b>8,819</b>	<b>511,989</b>	<b>837,214</b>	<b>890,508</b>
<b>Reserves</b>					
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	316,406	–	–	316,406	299,629
Designated funds	–	8,819	–	8,819	10,000
Restricted funds	–	–	511,989	511,989	580,879
	<b>316,406</b>	<b>8,819</b>	<b>511,989</b>	<b>837,214</b>	<b>890,508</b>



# MRG's donors in 2001

ACT – Netherlands	DANIDA	Norwegian Foreign Ministry
Alan & Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	Department for International Development (UK)	Novib
Baring Foundation	Ericson Trust	Open Society Institute
Bromley Trust	European Union	Oxfam
Bryan Guinness Trust	Eva Reckitt Trust	Philanthropist Trust
CAFOD	Finnish Foreign Ministry	Ruben & Elizabeth Rausing Trust
C A Rodewald Charitable Settlement	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)	SCIAF
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	ICCO	SIDA
Christian Aid	Ireland Aid	Staples Trust
Church World Service	Mercers Company	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
Community Fund	Misereor	T B H Brunner's Charitable Trust
Cordaid	Miss K M Harbinson's Charitable Trust	Trócaire
Council of Europe	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	UIA Charitable Foundation
Danchurch Aid		

## Council and staff

### Council members\*

Gudmundur Alfredsson, Kalina Bozeva, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Maja Daruwala, Paul Divakar, Yash Ghai, Kristina Hedlund Thulin, Wim Jacobs, Alice Mogwe, Edward Mortimer, Benedict Ole Nangoro, Klara Orgovanova, Martin Pick, Patrick Thornberry (*Chair*)

### Committee members\*

Sarah Archer, Phil Baker, Steven Burkeman, Lekha Klouda, Kate Phillips, Phillip Rudge, Hans Smulders

### MRG staff\*

Trevor Brown, Chris Chapman, Graham Fox, Marcia Hansen, Adrian Harper, Angela Haynes, Mark Lattimer, Corinne Lennox, David Lundqvist, Krishna Maharaj, Gloria Mark, Veena Meetoo, Andrew Mesfin, Lucy Mulvagh, Anna Oryema, Charles Osei, Katrina Payne, Marusca Perazzi, Nic Pursey, Margot Salomon, Samantha Sharples, Magdalena Syposz, Tadesse Tafesse, Shelina Thawer, Claire Thomas, Angela Warren, Zaya Yeebo

### Regional officers\*

**Budapest** Anna Maria Biró, Monika Raffael, Ildikó Rigó **Delhi** Seema Kazi  
**Kampala** Juliet Muwanga

### Interns and volunteers\*

Sabine Deiringer, Vivienne Lamaro, Said Shehata

### Staff leaving in 2001

Jane Aubrey (Delhi), Lesley Carver, Krishnadas (Delhi), Lucy Hodgson, Miles Litvinoff, Dennis Rudd, Nicky Torode

\* As at April 2002



Dalit with a heavy load, India  
Chris Stowers/Panos Pictures

## Getting involved

MRG communicates with minorities and indigenous peoples, governments and policy-makers, students and academics, the media, international inter-governmental organizations, and development and human rights groups.

We provide research and information which is an important resource for those who need to know about current issues on the international agenda, and their impact on minorities and indigenous peoples. Global media – including the BBC and CNN – quoted MRG in 2001. We received front page coverage in Ethiopia, and our issues were

picked up by many national newspapers – including *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Our work in Asia and Eastern Europe was reported by the media in those regions.

MRG publishes Reports, Training Manuals, Workshop Reports, Macro and Micro Studies, and Issues Papers, and our newsletter *Outsider*. These are available on subscription and through our library scheme. 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](http://www.minorityrights.org) or contact our London office.



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Afro-Colombian coffee worker  
*Jeremy Howard/Panos Pictures*