

# Court Victory for Expelled Haitians

By Solange Pierre

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola, in the Caribbean. Haiti is a very poor country and many Haitians seek work in the more prosperous Dominican Republic. An estimated 700,000 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian origin live and work permanently in the Dominican Republic; very few have legal status. Most live in work camps called bateyes on the sugar plantations. There is long-standing anti-Haitian racism in the Dominican Republic and periodically the government expels thousands of Haitians.

The *Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas (Mudha)* is an NGO founded in 1995 with the aim of defending the rights of women of Haitian descent. Its key areas of work are education from a gender perspective, legal advice, community development and challenging racism in the Dominican Republic.

Supported by a number of legal advisers, Mudha took the case of the expulsion of five Dominican-Haitians to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights challenging the Dominican Republic's recent deportation policy as applied to Haitians. Below is Mudha's account of the trial and judgment.

The deportations and mass expulsions of Haitian workers by the Dominican government violate the rights of those subjected to the process. There is no forum where these people can present evidence that the action of deportation gives rise to multiple violations of their human rights and this is, in itself, another violation of those rights.

The absence of the guarantee of due process in the case of mass expulsions is the responsibility of the Dominican state. It has resulted



Chris Chapman

Haitian children in a bateye in the Dominican Republic

in great abuses during these expulsions of Haitian workers.

## The court case

In November 1999, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) asked the Inter-American Court on Human Rights (IACHR) to rule that the Dominican Republic should suspend mass expulsions and deportations as 'they constantly put at risk the life and physical integrity of the deported people, in the way that families are separated, and especially the minors who are abandoned'. Also, deportations should be carried out on an individual basis, not *en masse*.

On 8 August 2000, the public hearing took place. Evidence was heard from the Commission, the witnesses and their legal advisers, who included representatives from the Centre for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), Washington,

DC, the Center of Human Rights of the Faculty of Law at the University of Columbia and from the Center of Human Rights and of the Faculty of Law at the University of Berkeley, California.

Father Pierre Ruquoy and Solange Pierre (Mudha coordinator) spoke of forced repatriations in which people are loaded on to buses without being able to communicate with their families, without warning, without being able to take any of their belongings with them and, above all, without being able to present themselves before any competent authority. The criteria for deportation, according to these witnesses, are 'skin colour and mode of speaking'. They were able to prove that many of those deported have been in the Dominican Republic for 20 or 30 years and have lost their links with Haitian language and customs. They also testified that cases of sexual violations occurred in the context of the expulsions.

Cont. ...

The Dominican state argued that the IACHR had acted precipitately and affirmed that: 'the deportation of foreigners is a non-renunciable and non-negotiable right ... it constitutes one of the attributes of sovereignty'. It was also argued that procedures exist within domestic law which guarantee due process and individual treatment of cases.

### **The decision of the IACHR**

On 18 August 2000 the IACHR made public its decision. It established that the Dominican Republic has been party to the American Convention since 1978, and stated that it is the responsibility of each signatory state to make its own decisions on migration policy where they are 'compatible with the norms of protection of the human rights established in the aforesaid Convention'. The testimonies presented allowed the IACHR to establish a prima facie presumption of cases in which named individuals are subjected to abuse and risk suffering irreparable damage through deportation. It rejected ordering provisional measures for cases of un-named groups of people. The IACHR also ordered the adoption of provisional measures to prevent reprisals against Father Ruquoy and Solange Pierre in the Dominican Republic for giving their testimony.

The IACHR required of the Dominican state:

- that it adopt without delay the measures necessary to protect the life and personal integrity of Benito Tide Méndez, Antonio Sension, Andrea Alezy, Janty Fils-Aime and William Medina Ferreras;
- that it abstain from deporting or expelling Benito Tide Méndez and Antonio Sension;
- that it permit the immediate return to their

territory of Janty Fils-Aime and William Medina Ferreras;

- that it allow as soon as possible the family reunification of Antonio Sension and Andrea Alezy with their younger children in the Dominican Republic;
- that it collaborate with Antonio Sension in order to obtain information on the whereabouts of his relations in Haiti or the Dominican Republic;
- that, in the framework of cooperation agreements between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it investigate the situation of Janty Fils-Aime and William Medina Ferreras under the supervision of the IACHR in order to speed up the results of the said investigations;
- that it continue the investigations already initiated by its competent authorities with relation to Benito Tide Méndez, Rafaelito Pérez Charles, Antonio Sension, Andrea Alezy and Berson Gelim;
- that it adopt without delay the necessary measures to protect the lives and personal integrity of Father Pedro Ruquoy and Solange Pierre, witnesses at the public hearing of 8 August 2000;
- that it supply to the IACHR bi-monthly reports from the notification of the present resolution, on the provisional measures that have been adopted to comply with this ruling.

The ruling of the IACHR constitutes an important precedent and innovation. The Dominican Republic is obliged to comply exactly with what has been ordered, in accordance with its ratification of the jurisdictional competence of this body, which it accepted in March 1999.

### **Mudha's response to the decision**

Mudha views the measures agreed by this

tribunal as a positive step. When the Dominican government complies it will contribute, in part, to restoring respect for the rights of those who have been deported and expelled. It is also important because, within the Dominican system of justice, there is no forum where the voice of those deported and expelled can be heard. The fact that the Dominican government has to give regular reports on the *bateyes* is a step towards solving the problem.

Daring to take on the commitment of turning to the IACHR has been an important step. This initiative has set a precedent for national organizations to appeal to this court. It is the first time the Dominican Republic has been brought before the IACHR.

It gives us hope to know that mechanisms exist to address violations of the rights of people within the Dominican Republic, and the guarantee that these rights will be recognized within an international legal framework.

The Commission and the non-governmental organizations that represent the victims will monitor the situation closely, to see that the follow-up procedures ordered by this body are carried out.

### **Hopes for the future**

Mudha had hoped that the IACHR would go further and recommend that the Dominican government should suspend deportations and mass expulsions, and be asked to establish mechanisms to guarantee the rights of those persons deported and expelled from the Dominican Republic. The lack of such mechanisms is a weakness which could be overcome through the creation of special tribunals to review the cases of people in the process of being deported or expelled.

Such tribunals would prevent mass expulsions of immigrant Haitian workers, fairly determine who qualifies to stay and who could be deported, reduce violations of human rights and, above all, avoid wrongful expulsions of Dominicans of Haitian origin.

The decision of the IACHR was a moral victory, but the deportations continue and there has been a strong backlash from both nationalists and the Catholic Church.

*Solange Pierre is coordinator of Mudha. Mudha is a partner in MRG's Minority Rights and Development, and World Conference Against Racism programmes. It will be raising the issues of the poverty of the Haitian minority in the Dominican Republic with international development donors, and the anti-Haitian racism in international fora.*

# The World Conference Against Racism and Beyond: Plans and Participation

By Margot Salomon

The United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) and NGO Forum, will be held in Durban, South Africa from 28 August to 7 September 2001.

Racial and ethnic discrimination exists in virtually every country in the world. The WCAR offers an opportunity for indigenous and minority communities to address the issues facing them and to voice their concerns. It should also provide the impetus for long-term initiatives.

MRG is undertaking a programme to contribute to the full participation of minority organizations from developing countries in the WCAR process: community preparation, and an opportunity for representation and sustainable action locally, regionally and internationally before, during and after the World Conference.

### **Raising awareness of ICERD**

One area that MRG will focus on for the WCAR and beyond is raising awareness of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, strengthening its implementation nationally and working towards its active ownership by minority communities.

MRG, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), convened an Expert Meeting on Strengthening ICERD in August 2000 in Geneva. The suggestions in the meeting's report are being disseminated and will be fed into the WCAR process.

### **Roma thematic session**

Also in August 2000, the monitoring body of ICERD, CERD (the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) held its first ever thematic session on discrimination against Roma. Numerous Roma representatives provided testimony and first-hand information to CERD members. MRG, along with other NGOs, advocated for NGO participation and were satisfied when CERD mem-

bers recognized this need. It was also successfully advocated that the outputs of the thematic session would include the adoption of a General Recommendation. Many NGOs would like to see the institutionalization of this thematic approach.

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights expert Y.K.J. Yeung Sik Yuen is preparing a working paper on the human rights problems and protection of Roma. At a briefing organized by MRG, the European Roma Rights Centre, International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, and Save the Children, it was made clear that he would welcome input from Roma and representatives of Roma organizations. Mr Yeung Sik Yuen is circulating a questionnaire and would like as many Roma as possible to fill it in and return it to him.

### **Other MRG activities**

MRG is working towards facilitating the participation of minority and indigenous NGOs in all WCAR events. MRG also plans to conduct training in Dakar, Senegal, on international minority rights standards and mechanisms, with a particular focus on ICERD, immediately prior to the Africa Regional Conference (and NGO Forum) scheduled for January 2001 in Dakar. In early 2001 MRG plans to hold a workshop in South Asia on discrimination on the grounds of descent, in cooperation with partner NGOs.

MRG will be producing several publications in the context of its work around the WCAR, on strengthening the implementation of ICERD and on economic exclusion and racial discrimination. This latter theme will tie into projects in MRG's Minority Rights and Development programme.

MRG would be pleased to develop relationships with new partner organizations from the South and from countries in transition who are working on minority rights issues, in order to discuss their WCAR plans, ideas and participation, including needs for community consultation meetings before the WCAR, and ideas for follow-up initiatives.

### **Access and accreditation to WCAR**

Participation of NGOs in the WCAR and preparatory events has been contentious, first in terms of access and accreditation procedures, and recently in terms of effective consultation and inclusion in some of the Working Groups at the European Regional Conference to the WCAR.

NGOs working towards combating racial discrimination are urged to apply for accreditation from Sandra Aragon at OHCHR. It is necessary to have UN accreditation in order to gain access to most of the official events. NGOs who already have UN ECOSOC consultative status, or indigenous peoples or indigenous peoples' organizations accredited under Resolution 1995/32 to participate in the Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples do not need to apply for accreditation to the WCAR, nor do organizations holding Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

All accredited NGOs must send a letter (not an email) to Catherine Brémont at the OHCHR informing her of the name(s) of those NGO representatives planning to attend each regional event. The UN has made some funding available to facilitate the participation of NGOs in the Regional Conferences, in specially convened NGO meetings (one for each region – no accreditation necessary), and the WCAR.

### **Contact information**

For information on MRG's WCAR initiatives and possibilities for collaboration contact [margot.salomon@mrgmail.org](mailto:margot.salomon@mrgmail.org)

For information on the WCAR, accreditation, funding and procedures see <<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/racism/index.htm>>. Also, contact Laurie Wiseberg, UN NGO Liaison Officer for the WCAR and ask for her most recent briefing note and to be put on her email listserve. Email [lwiseberg.hchr@unog.ch](mailto:lwiseberg.hchr@unog.ch); tel. +41 22 917 9393, fax +41 22 917 9050.

For Mr Yeung Sik Yuen's questionnaire for Roma, contact [lucy.mulvagh@mrgmail.org](mailto:lucy.mulvagh@mrgmail.org).



Mudha workers at a community centre in a bateye

# Draft Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

By Lucy Mulvagh

The Draft Charter of Fundamental Rights ('Draft Charter') of the European Union (EU) was conceived by European Heads of State/Government at the Cologne European Council in June 1999. An ad hoc drafting body ('the Convention') has drawn up a document of over 50 Articles, covering a wide range of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The Convention is composed of 62 members, while rules governing its working methods established the principle that its hearings should be public and documents submitted at the hearings should be public.\* The draft Charter will be considered for adoption by the Nice European Council in December 2000.

The Draft Charter is based in part on the principles and rights contained within the EU Treaties, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and the EU and Council of Europe's Social Charters. Although there are a number of new rights protected, such as control over personal data, and rights in the fields of medicine and biology, at the heart of the debate surrounding the Draft Charter is the question of whether the EU needs such a 'bill of rights' at all. While some actors, such as the European Parliament, have voiced their wish for a binding legal document to be incorporated into the EU Treaties, several European governments have stated categorically that the Charter is to be a political declaration of the existing rights enjoyed by EU citizens and not a legal treaty.

There has been some suggestion that the Draft Charter may be introduced in two phases, starting as a non-binding document but leading to incorporation into the EU Treaties. Whether the Charter becomes legally binding and whether it will apply to third-country nationals as well as EU citizens is still open to debate. An enforcement mechanism will have to be adopted, or an existing one adapted, if the Charter is binding and confers directly justiciable rights on individuals.

MRG has lobbied and worked with the European media to ensure that potentially problematic areas of the Draft Charter are addressed while it is still being debated.

MRG is mainly concerned that there is no reference in the Draft Charter to the collective rights of minorities. MRG welcomes draft Article 22 which guarantees respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, however this provision does not necessarily lead to the effective legal protection of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. To this end, the Convention can look to the provisions contained within the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), which has been widely ratified by EU states, and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

There are numerous examples of how the Draft Charter is inadequate in its protection of rights and does not encompass those areas currently covered in other regional and international human rights norms. Draft Articles 10 and 11, which guarantee freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression and information contain no limitations or restrictions in the interests of democratic society, unlike the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the ECHR. Draft Charter Article 14 protects the right to education, including 'the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions'. The omission of the right of parents to educate their children in their own language constitutes a regressive step compared to the provisions found in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and Article 14 of the FCNM, which requires states to make education available in regional or minority languages.

At present most rights outlined in the EU Treaties apply only to EU citizens; however MRG would wish the Draft Charter to apply to third-country nationals as well. While MRG welcomes the inclusion of a non-discrimination provision in draft Article 21, it is concerned that there is no reference to discrimination on grounds of nationality for non-EU citizens, thereby failing to address those areas of unlawful discrimination in the EU that affect third-country nationals. MRG believes that the draft Charter should ensure that fundamental rights are enjoyed by all human beings within EU territory.

While MRG welcomes any progressive developments guaranteeing the protection and promotion of human rights, and supports the EU's endeavours, we would encourage those involved in the adoption of such measures to approach standards relating to minority rights with the same forward-thinking attitude.

\* The Convention is composed of 15 representatives of the Heads of State/Government of Member States; one representative of the Commission; 16 members of the European Parliament; and 30 members of national Parliaments.

Lucy Mulvagh is Communications Assistant at MRG.

Margot Salomon, author of the article on the WCAR on p. 3, is International officer at MRG.

## NEW TRAINING GUIDE

### *The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination: A Training Manual for NGOs*

This manual aims to explain and analyse the work of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to enable access by NGOs and other activists who want to campaign and advocate around issues of discrimination. It explains the main provisions of the Convention in order to throw light on the working procedure of CERD. It suggests what roles NGOs can play, including in the work of CERD, and how they can use ICERD as an effective tool in their work against discrimination and racism. This manual will be of use to all who work against discrimination and racism in any part of the world.

£4.95/US\$8.95 plus P&P.

# The FRY and its Minorities: At the Crossroads

By Tibor Meszmann

The democratic change that took place in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in October 2000 created the chance to establish a state based on democratic order and values. This should include a new approach by state officials towards minorities and their rights. Real change is expected only after the elections in the Republic of Serbia, which will be held on 23 December 2000.

The FRY is expected to become a signatory to international conventions, to join the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Signing conventions, however, means little if they are not properly implemented.

The former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) signed international treaties, but never allowed any monitoring of its policies on human rights, including the rights of national minorities. Different policies were practised in relation to different ethnic groups. It is to be hoped that the new government will recognize and guarantee equal treatment of all minorities.

The principle of equality before the law existed even in the deepest crisis. During the Kosovo/a war, however, ethnic Albanians were brought to trial or charged with terrorism on the basis of just being Albanian, undermining even this basic principle. Worse, grounds for this kind of process can be found in Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. Both the Constitution of the FRY and the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia should therefore be re-written so as to define national minorities and their rights in the Constitution, and include articles on the representation of minorities in governmental agencies as well as articles forbidding discrimination.

## Discrimination

There is little data on the ethnicity of state officials and employees. What there is shows a grave disproportion. In seven counties in north Vojvodina, where Hungarians constitute 57 per cent of the population and Serbs and Montenegrins 18 per cent, all police commanders and superintendents are Serbs and

Montenegrins, and there are no Hungarian presidents of county courts.

There are proportionally many more unemployed members of ethnic minorities than Serbs and Montenegrins, and there is glaring discrimination in other social processes. To address this problem, it is important to promote human rights in general, as well as minority-specific rights, in order to make the mechanisms for preventing any kind of discrimination more effective.

## Representation of minorities in decision-making processes

In the federal, republic, provincial and county parliaments currently there are no special measures for decision-making processes regarding issues which are of importance for minorities. This needs to change.

During the 1990s crisis in the Balkans, although members of recognized minorities took part in almost all decision-making, many of them were selected by the regime, especially those in the Ministry for Minorities. The state authorities did not accept the legitimate representatives of national minorities as equal partners in dialogue and their proposals were ignored.

There is reason to doubt whether the new FRY government will negotiate openly with minority representatives over questions of autonomy and self-determination.

## Distribution of humanitarian aid: the role of international organizations

Monitoring of human and minority rights in Yugoslavia by the international community is vital and should be a condition for economic aid. Distribution of humanitarian aid should also be monitored by international organizations to prevent abuse or discrimination. During the Balkan crisis, some humanitarian aid fell into the hands of profiteers, probably with the assistance or at least the silent consent of state officials. There was significant discrimination against the Roma and, in many places, humanitarian aid was distrib-

uted on the very day of elections, thereby attempting to buy votes from economically marginalized people – mostly Roma.

## Recommendations

The change of context in the FRY smooths the way towards the patient path of seeking negotiated solutions. As a state that has accepted all the European conventions, the FRY could and should be obliged to pay far more attention to its minorities. Minorities could play a role in reintegrating the FRY into the family of European states. Minorities that have strong links with neighbouring countries could contribute to stabilizing the situation, both internally and in the wider region. International organizations should support local and regional media in paying greater attention to cultural awareness and universal principles of human rights, and support NGOs, especially those working on human and minority rights.

A multicultural society can only develop if the rule of law is truly respected, so special attention should be paid to creating new democratic structures and to developing education projects.

Tibor Meszmann is the editor of the Newsletter of the Centre for Multiculturality, an NGO located in Novi Sad, FRY, which was founded in 1988. The focus of its work is educational programmes, publishing projects, sociological research and monitoring of minority rights.



People gather in front of Yugoslav Parliament building, 6 October 2000

## Dr Ibrahim case: civil society in Egypt

Dr Saad Eddin Ibrahim is a prominent sociologist, a professor at the American University in Cairo and the founder and chair of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development. He was a Council member of MRG for six years.

On the night of 30 June 2000, he and a number of associates from the Ibn Khaldoun Center were arrested by state security. They were accused of obtaining funds from foreign parties without government permission, forging voting cards, conspiracy to bribe, damaging Egypt's reputation and spying for the USA.

Media comment was divided. Some well-known politicians and writers, and various international organizations, supported Dr Ibrahim. Opponents took the opportunity to launch attacks on him. A third group, while criticizing Dr Ibrahim's ideology, denounced his detention.

Some argued that the real reasons for his arrest were his intention to monitor the parliamentary elections, his focus on the Coptic issue, and his raising the issue of the succession in Egypt.

Dr Ibrahim and his colleagues were held for about 40 days. After his release, Dr Ibrahim made statements to newspapers, and held press conferences. He also gave a lecture at the American University in Cairo where he confirmed his intention to activate the Independent Committee for Election Review. This was considered an overt challenge to the government and re-opened the affair.



Dr Ibrahim



Alan Phillips and Mark Lattimer

The Attorney General announced that Dr Ibrahim and 27 others would be tried by the High State Security Court in November, later changed to 20 January 2001. Dr Ibrahim's lawyer withdrew from the defence team, blaming Dr Ibrahim for causing the case to be re-opened. The defence team was refused permission to call as witnesses some current ministers and other public figures. The Court also refused to consider the case as a political, rather than a criminal one. The media will be able to follow the trial, however, and this will be a good opportunity for Dr Ibrahim to present his case.

It appears that there are some sensitive areas that civil society organizations must not approach – such as monitoring the elections – and that there is a limit to democracy in Egypt, which affects the country's prospects for development.

## Goodbye to Alan Phillips ... hello to Mark Lattimer

Alan Phillips joined MRG as Director in 1989 when there was a staff of four and an income of £160,000. Today the organization's income has multiplied ten-fold and the staff five-fold. Alan has played a major role in extending the breadth of MRG's activities in terms of advocacy and training, and augmenting the strength of the existing publishing activities. MRG continues to publish high quality, well-researched and accurate Reports, which are used practically to promote rights, and are widely cited and used by governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. At a local level, MRG's programmes have led to major initiatives and new dialogues across communities in South Asia, in South-East Europe and with new networks of Batwa and pastoralists in Central and Eastern Africa. MRG's global programmes

have been innovative, participatory and empowering.

Under Alan's guidance, MRG facilitated the development of new international standards on minority rights and new international implementation procedures such as the UN Working Group on Minorities. The publication of the influential *World Directory of Minorities* was another major milestone for MRG under Alan's directorship.

Apart from having a well-earned rest, taking some time for reflection and tending to his two organic allotments, in the future Alan will continue in his role as Vice Chair to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In addition he will work as a consultant for MRG's South-East Europe project. No doubt he will take on other projects in the future.

Mark Lattimer will take over as MRG's Director on 1 February 2001. Mark is currently Communications Director at Amnesty International, UK. Prior to this he was Head of Policy at the National Lottery Charities Board and from 1989 to 1995 he worked for the Directory of Social Change. Mark was MRG Council's unanimous choice for the post.

All the staff at MRG wish Alan well in the future and look forward to working with Mark.

## MRG training programme in Geneva

In May 2000, MRG invited 18 representatives of minority groups from around the world to participate in its fifth training programme on minority protection and advocacy techniques, based around the yearly meeting of the UN Working Group on Minorities in Geneva.

The programme dealt with international standards and mechanisms for minority protection, and strategies for minority groups to advocate their concerns. The participants went on to participate in the Working Group session itself.

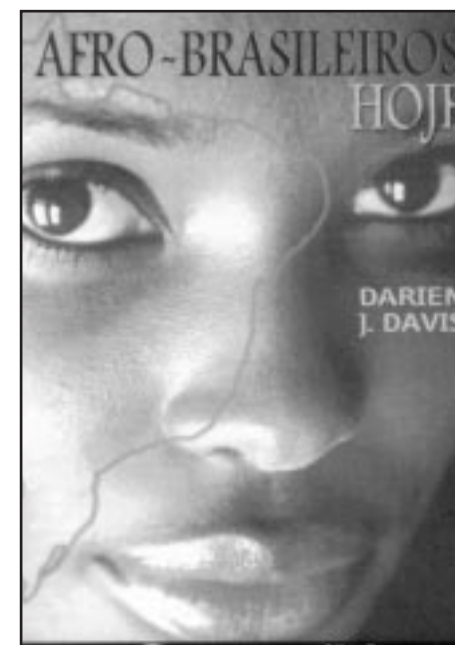
Most of the participants at the training programme spoke about the situation in their countries during the five-day session of the Working Group, and MRG staff and UN officials appreciated the high quality of their interventions. In their evaluations, participants said that the MRG training programme had been very useful to them in preparing their interventions, as well as enabling them to carry out more effective advocacy work in their own countries. Themes dealt with at the Working Group included the relationship between minority rights and indigenous rights, self-determination, state recognition of minorities, and the causes of ethnic conflict.

MRG reacted to a wish frequently voiced by participants this year, incorporating a new session which underlined the importance of economic, social and cultural rights and how they can be made use of by minority groups. Another addition which was well-received was a session on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Working Group on Minorities is a subsidiary body of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Its mandate is to monitor UN mechanisms for the protection of minority rights, recommend measures for the promotion and protection of those rights, and foster mutual understanding between governments and minorities.

The programme has now been renamed the Neelan Tiruchelvam Training Seminar on International Minority Rights, in honour of the prominent Tamil politician and MRG's International Council Chair, who was tragically murdered in a suicide bomb attack in Sri Lanka in July 1999.

MRG has already begun sending out invitations for next year's Neelan Tiruchelvam training, which will take place in May 2001. Civil society organizations active in advocacy work on minority rights that are interested in receiving an application form for next year's training should contact Chris Chapman or Lucy Mulvagh at MRG.



## Launch of Portuguese-language Brazilian edition of MRG Report Afro-Brazilians

On 22 August 2000 MRG's Brazilian partner Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra launched its Portuguese-language edition of the MRG Report *Afro-Brazilians: Time for Recognition* under the title *Afro-Brasileiros Hoje* (Afro-Brazilians Today). Held in the auditorium of Bank Boston in central São Paulo, the well-attended event featured a panel including author Darién J. Davis, Geledés President Maria Aparecida (Cidinha) da Silva, and representatives of publishers Selo Negro Edições, the British Embassy in Brasília, and MRG. Following a presentation by the author, a lively discussion followed about ethnicity, discrimination and the African heritage in Brazil today. The author was interviewed by several Brazilian magazines. Geledés and Selo Negro Edições hope that the book will be the first of a new series of co-publications.

## Recent MRG publications around the World Conference Against Racism

MRG Report: *Combating Racial Discrimination: The UN and its Member States*, by Michael Banton.

A joint MRG/IMADR training manual: *The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: A Guide for NGOs*, by Atsuko Tanaka with Yoshinobu Nagamine, and a paper *Strengthening the Implementation of the International Convention*

on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Report of the Expert Satellite Meeting to the World Conference Against Racism. Held by MRG in cooperation with the OHCHR.

## Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme

In February 2000 Dr Balamuralikrishna – maestro of Carnatic classical music – performed a special concert of peace and reconciliation in Colombo as part of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme.

The Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust has brought out a live concert CD of this performance, in memory of Neelan. The proceeds from the sale of this CD are intended to support the work of the Trust which has been established to carry on Neelan's commitment to protect and promote human rights, and to foster peace and justice.

Neelan Tiruchelvam was killed in a bomb attack in July 1999. He was Chair of MRG and Director of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Sri Lanka.

To order the CD contact Mr Thambiraja, The Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme Committee, International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), 2 Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka.

email: ices\_cmb@sri.lanka.net

## The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

MRG, in cooperation with Council of Europe's Directorate of Human Rights conducted the third training on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) from 29 November to 2 December 2000 at the Council of Europe headquarters.

Twenty-four minority rights activists from across Europe participated. This is part of MRG's work to raise awareness of the Convention and to support NGOs in contributing to the Monitoring process. A Guide to the Framework Convention for NGOs is available from MRG in several languages and, on request, MRG also provides advice on producing alternative reports/additional information to be submitted to the Advisory Committee on the FCNM.

# New Publications from MRG



## Minority Rights Group International

MRG is an international non-governmental organization working to secure rights and justice for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities worldwide, and to promote cooperation between communities.

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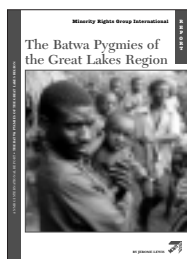


### NEW REPORT **ETHIOPIA: A NEW START?**

By Kjetil Tronvoll

Ethiopia is home to more than 80 different ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. Following successive oppressive regimes, repeated bouts of drought and continual violent conflicts, in 1991 the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power, creating a progressive Constitution, guaranteeing ethnic groups a wide range of rights. Yet human rights organizations, opposition parties and many ordinary Ethiopians are sceptical, questioning the government's commitment to its own Constitution and pointing out human rights violations.

April 2000. ISBN 1 897693 33 8. 36pp. £5.95/US\$10.95 plus P&P.

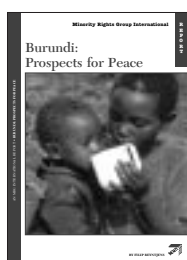


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This issue of *Outsider* was edited by Sophie Richmond

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ISBN 1 897693 03 6