**Half of top 10 countries in 2015 Peoples under Threat global ranking are in Africa, says MRG**

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Half of the top ten countries in the 2015 release of the *Peoples under Threat* global ranking are in Africa, says Minority Rights Group International (MRG).

Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo continue to feature among the top ten countries where communities are facing the greatest risk of genocide, mass killing and systematic violent repression, and this year they are joined by South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Amongst the list of other major risers in the *Peoples under Threat* ranking are Libya and Egypt.

‘Over 20 years after the Rwanda genocide, Central Africa remains one of the deadliest places in the world,’ says Mark Lattimer, MRG’s Executive Director. ‘The risk of both ethnic and religious killing is acute.’

**Egypt** rose another three places in the index this year. Ongoing fighting and toughening security measures have affected the lives of Sinai Bedouin, who have long suffered political and economic marginalization. Human rights activists also continued to criticize the government for doing too little to provide security for Coptic and other Christian communities, especially in Upper Egypt, where individuals, their homes and places of worship regularly came under attack.

**Libya** re-entered the index in 2010, a year before the war that removed President Gaddafi from power, and this year rose a further eight places to occupy position 17 in the ranking. The country held its first democratic elections in 2012 and many international actors hailed a new era of democracy for the country. However, the revolution had seen the expulsion from their homes of up to one million migrant workers and black Libyans in the context of street lynching of sub-Saharan Africans and the rise to power of unaccountable, and at times openly racist, armed militias.

In the **Central African Republic**, which has risen four places this year to occupy number ten in the ranking, reprisal killings continue between the largely Muslim former Séléka rebels and anti-Balaka militias comprised mainly of Christians. Upwards of 850,000 people – nearly one-fifth of the country’s population – were refugees or internally displaced at the end of 2014, and many tens of thousands more fled their homes in 2015.

Ongoing armed conflict involving the extremist group al-Shabaab continues to secure the place of **Somalia** in the top three of the *Peoples under Threat* table. Severe political instability continues to exacerbate the vulnerability of minorities including Bantu and Benadiri.

MRG says that the international community continues to fail **Sudan,** a perennial member of the top five in the rankings since its inception. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed since 2003, and the re-election of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2015 signalled a policy of no change.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, which occupies position number six, a series of rapidly-mutating conflicts involving local Mayi-Mayi militias, Ugandan and Rwandan rebels, and Katangan separatists, continued to claim hundreds of lives, even as limited progress was made in the demobilization of fighters of the former M23 rebellion.

In **South Sudan**, up three places from last year to now figure in the top ten countries in the table, a dispute between the President and his deputy triggered a spate of mass ethnic killing. Neither the threat of famine nor the imposition of US sanctions in 2014 brought reconciliation between the warring forces.

‘It is indicative of the scale of the problem in South Sudan that accurate figures do not even exist for how many thousands have been killed,’ says Mark Lattimer. ‘The new state became independent fewer than four years ago with broad international support, but now many communities feel abandoned.’

2015 marks the 10th anniversary the *Peoples under Threat index* has been compiled to provide early warning of potential future mass atrocities in countries around the world.

**Notes to Editors**

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* Visit MRG's online map which visualizes data from the Peoples under Threat index at [www.peoplesunderthreat.org](http://www.peoplesunderthreat.org/). View the map by year or by country, and find links to reports, press releases and further information on the communities under threat.
* Download the full Peoples under Threat survey on [MRG’s website](http://www.minorityrights.org) on 20 May, with a description of how it is compiled.
* Minority Rights Group International is the leading international human rights organization working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. We work with more than 150 partners in over 50 countries.

**For more information, receive an embargoed copy of *Peoples under Threat* 2015 or to arrange interviews contact:**

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