



Against Genocide
Annual Review 2004

**minority
rights
group
international**

Front-cover: Auschwitz museum. Bruno Barbey/Magnum Photos
Far-right: Rwandan child in Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. Mikkel Ostergaard/Panos Pictures



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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.

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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 150 organizations in over 50 countries. Our governing Council, which meets twice a year, has members from 10 different countries.

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Getting our message across

MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). MRG is registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee under English law.

Director's report Against genocide

2004 marked the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda in which up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred in the space of some three months. At a series of commemorative events last year, world leaders reminded us of our duty not to forget the dead and pledged 'Never again'. They are repeating that pledge in 2005 on major anniversaries of the Nazi Holocaust and the Armenian genocide.

Yet the systematic failures that allowed the Rwandan genocide to happen could be repeated. The gaps in minority protection that existed then still exist today. And international action to prevent or halt episodes of mass killing is all too often ineffectual, or just too late.

Minorities and indigenous peoples, through their marginalized position in society, are especially vulnerable to genocide or mass killing. They may inhabit areas rich in natural resources that other groups are seeking to exploit.



To ambitious politicians, they may just present a convenient scapegoat. But in nearly every case, the slide from discrimination to repression to organized violence does not take place in secret, and it can be stopped.

This annual review highlights the work of

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) last year to prevent mass human rights abuses:

- investigating situations where minorities are in grave danger and pressing for international action to save lives and bring the perpetrators of abuse to justice;

- promoting innovations at the United Nations (UN) to ensure that action is taken at an early stage in cases of serious threat;

- advancing understanding of the role of minority rights in preventing violent conflict and in supporting post-conflict reconciliation;

- working with partner organizations throughout the world to counter the prejudice and discrimination that are root causes of violence against minorities and indigenous peoples.

Our work to prevent extreme violence against minorities is only part of the mission of Minority Rights Group International. Much of what we do is focused on the long-term development of minority communities and their organizations, building their own capacity to defend their rights and win a fair chance for their children. But a life of dignity and security is only possible once communities can live free from fear.

Mark Lattimer
Director

Protecting minorities under threat



Right: Bambuti woman, Democratic Republic of Congo. Mark Lattimer/MRG
Top-right: Man in front of destroyed shop, Darfur, Sudan. Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures
Below-right: Woman on Chad/Sudan border fleeing violence in Darfur. Her village was bombed by government planes. Dieter Telemans/Panos Pictures

“Eyewitness testimonies [from the Congo] were rare. But these horrific accounts leave no doubt as to the scale of the problem – and crucially, explain why such atrocities are happening”
The Independent on MRG’s research

MRG has worked with the Batwa and Bambuti Pygmies in Central Africa for over five years. Marginalized in countries across the region, they constitute some of the poorest communities in the world. But in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, during the course of the catastrophic war that began in 1998, the Bambuti have faced far worse.

In early 2004, together with the Congolese *Réseau des Associations Autochtones Pygmées* (RAPY), MRG organized an investigative mission to Ituri and Kivu in the Congo and collected chilling testimony of mass atrocities committed against the Bambuti by

militias supported by neighbouring countries seeking to gain control of mineral-rich land. MRG then submitted the dossier of written and video evidence of mass killings, torture and systematic rape to the Prosecutor at the new International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. A formal investigation into crimes committed in the Congo, announced by the Prosecutor in June, became the ICC’s first case.

A news conference held by MRG and RAPY in Brussels in July ensured that the plight of the Bambuti received global media attention. During the year, MRG developed a new programme in consultation



with partners throughout the region to promote and defend the rights of Batwa and Bambuti in Burundi, the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, and in October brought together international development agencies in Kinshasa and Kigali to discuss how the communities could be better supported.

The news headlines in 2004 were preoccupied, however, by another scene of mass killing in Africa. Following the start of an armed rebellion in 2003, the Fur, Zaghawa and Maasalit peoples of Darfur in western Sudan were the targets of a campaign of ethnic cleansing carried out by local militias with the

support of Sudanese armed forces. MRG brought together human rights experts at an event organized with the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London to discuss possible responses to the developing tragedy. At meetings with the UK Foreign Secretary and officials, MRG argued forcefully for international action against the Sudanese leaders responsible and for the UN Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court; we also brought human rights activists from Darfur to argue their case at the UN Commission on Human Rights in

March–April 2005. The Security Council finally referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC in April 2005 and imposed asset freezes and travel bans on Sudanese leaders.

The Bambuti in the Congo and the Darfurians in Sudan remain under threat.

“The situation of women victims of the Darfur conflict is especially precarious... Of the 135,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad, 40% are children under five and about 75% of the adult refugees are women” MRG speaking at the UN, April 2004

Strengthening UN action

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994, in which most of the victims were killed with weapons as simple as knives and machetes, has come to be known as the 'preventable genocide'. UN human rights officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had warned explicitly of the dangers a year earlier but, even once the genocide was under way, the UN and its member states on the Security Council failed to take action until it was too late.

Yet, unbelievably, most of the factors that contributed to this failure remain in place, including a systematic weakness in UN follow-up action on grave human rights concerns; a serious lack of coordination

between the political and security mechanisms of the UN, based in New York, and the human rights monitors, organized from Geneva; an insufficient focus on prevention; and delays before the Security Council is seized with an issue.

Over the last two years, MRG intensified its campaign for the creation of a new UN watchdog on minorities and the prevention of genocide to remedy some of these problems. We spoke to both UN officials and governments, published briefings, pushed for appropriate resolutions at intergovernmental meetings and submitted recommendations to a High-Level Panel on security challenges and UN reform.

“We must protect the rights of minorities, since they are genocide’s most frequent targets”
UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, April 2004

In April, the UN Secretary-General announced the creation of a Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, with a direct line of reporting to the Security Council, and appointed Juan Méndez, a former Argentinian political prisoner, to the post. MRG welcomed the report of the UN High-Level Panel in December, which reflected some of our submissions on the need for a better framework for minority protection. Finally, in April 2005, the UN Commission on Human Rights established an Independent Expert on Minority Issues.

These changes represent a major step forward but by themselves they are not enough. MRG is now planning to establish with partner NGOs a new early warning office in New York to support the work of the new mechanisms. As the UN seeks to implement major reforms this year, MRG will continue to push to ensure that minority protection and the prevention of genocide are treated as central tasks for collective security.

“MRG contributed to bringing about a breakthrough for Afro-Latin Americans, the Dalits and the Roma in terms of their international profile, [bringing] tangible benefits to each community” Independent evaluation of MRG’s work at the UN against racism



Top-left: Women mourning at the grave of Srebrenica massacre victim. Andrew Testa/Panos Pictures
Left: Genocide survivor visiting memorial to victims in Nyamata, Rwanda. Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures
Far-left: Remains of genocide victims, Nyamata, Rwanda. Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures



Preventing violent conflict

It is estimated that some 70 per cent of the world's conflicts have an ethnic or religious dimension. Nationalist politicians often use ethnicity or religion as a mobilizing factor, sometimes with devastating consequences. Most genocides or episodes of mass killing take place during armed conflicts.

But the value of minority rights for preventing conflict is still not fully appreciated. As the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict put it almost a decade ago: 'attempts at suppression [of ethnic, cultural or religious differences] have too often led to bloodshed, and in

case after case, the accommodation of diversity within appropriate constitutional forms has helped prevent bloodshed'. The Panel on UN Peace Operations urged in 2000 that 'long-term preventive strategies ... must therefore work to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to

institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented'.

MRG and some 20 NGOs from South-East Europe have been working together on a joint programme to promote minority rights and inter-ethnic dialogue, contributing to the process of reconciliation in the

region. This is a precondition for democratic consolidation and long-term sustainable development. Activities in the year included four advocacy and rights training seminars, taking place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, as well as the publication of briefings and promotional materials, all linked to domestic advocacy.

Our programme on religious minorities in Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan, seeks to improve protection for religious minorities and enhance understanding and cooperation between communities in a region where inter-religious conflict has already claimed many lives. In a region-wide consultation in Colombo in June, partners identified as a priority for future MRG work the need to reform education curricula and textbooks in target countries to promote inter-community understanding and counter anti-minority content which encourages

discrimination and exclusion. MRG strongly believes in the need to eliminate prejudice from education systems so that the talents of all people in society are able to flourish.

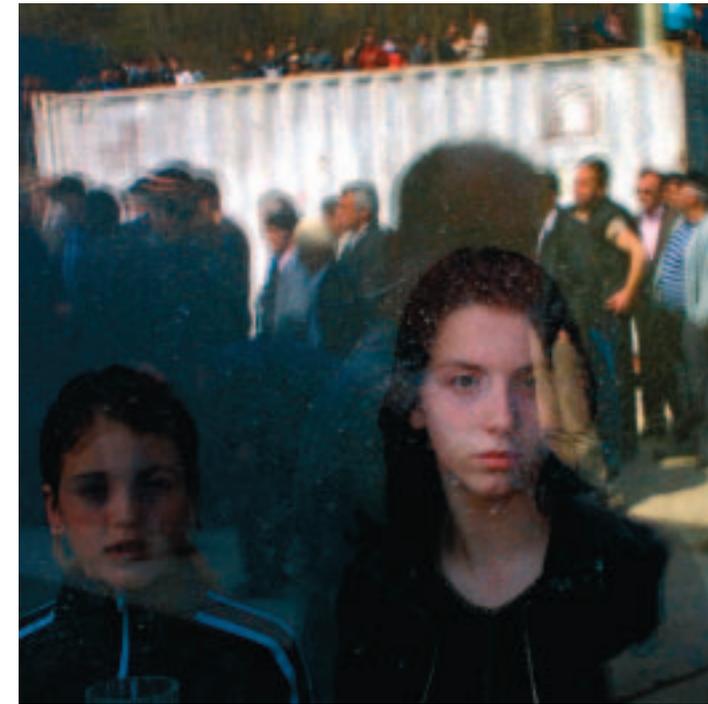
By the end of the year, MRG had secured a major grant from the Ford Foundation for a new two-

Below-left: Muslim family celebrating Eid in Mumbai, India.
Carlos Reyes-Manzo/Andes Press Agency

Below: Albanian girls watch the funeral procession for a victim of ethnic violence.
Andrew Testa/Panos Pictures



"... in case after case, the accommodation of diversity within appropriate constitutional forms has helped to prevent bloodshed"
Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict



"The MRG Pastoralist rights project has so far been very important for the pastoral development advocacy campaign in Ethiopia, and the community is now being attentively listened to by the government as well as by donor agencies"
MRG partner in Ethiopia

year programme to document and promote best practice in conflict prevention in situations involving minorities. This includes case studies in India, Iraq, Nicaragua and Sudan, and major reports on minorities and conflict prevention, and on international action to prevent genocide.

Breaking the cycle of discrimination

For communities that live under threat of being attacked, violence is an extreme expression of the daily discrimination that they suffer. Over time, routine discrimination has a dehumanizing effect, and it makes it more likely that a minority will become the target for violence. Breaking the cycle of discrimination, and ensuring that minorities can enjoy the same human rights as others in society, is thus central to the work of MRG.

In Europe alone, Bosnian Muslims, Jews and the Roma have all suffered from genocide. Yet the rising phenomenon of Islamophobia, the



resurgence of anti-Semitism, and continuing hatred aimed at the Roma all give cause for concern. Promoting cooperation between communities is essential to prevent even more serious problems developing.

In Central and Eastern Europe, MRG has worked to build the skills and capacity



of Roma activists and NGOs for over eight years. Our Roma advocacy programme uses a combination of training, mentoring and supporting small projects to enable a new generation of Roma leaders to advocate domestically and internationally for change to benefit their communities. Our partner, the Minority Rights Centre in Belgrade, assisted hundreds of Roma in illegal settlements and without papers to get personal documents and hence access to health care, social welfare services and prospects for legal employment and residence in Belgrade. In September it prevented the eviction of 98 Roma



families who would have faced destitution.

In November, the first of a series of regional training events on using the UN human rights treaties took place in Cambodia. Led by MRG's long-standing partner the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, based in Sri Lanka, the participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia and the Philippines were trained in how to access the UN bodies that monitor the treaties, as well as in fact-finding and advocacy strategies.

The value of MRG's training and capacity-building programmes was evidenced by what others said about

“When the programme started, I was a waiter in a restaurant. After the programme I managed to become a national television journalist”
Roma participant in MRG's mentoring programme

their impact last year. An independent evaluation of MRG's programme of training and related advocacy on the implementation of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on National Minorities concluded in April 2004:

‘MRG has ensured local participation and ownership as the knowledge and skills transferred have been put to effective use by local groups struggling for better protection of minority rights. It has opened channels for real dialogue with governments to implement the FCNM and to pass new legislation and carry out policies.’

Left: MRG treaty body training in Costa Rica. MRG
Below-right: Roma child in Sarulesti, Romania.
Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures
Below: Impoverished Roma neighbourhood in Kosice, Slovakia.
Julia Denesha/Panos Pictures



“It has opened channels for real dialogue with governments to implement [minority rights] and pass new legislation” Independent evaluation of MRG's work on implementing the CoE Framework Convention on National Minorities

Financial report

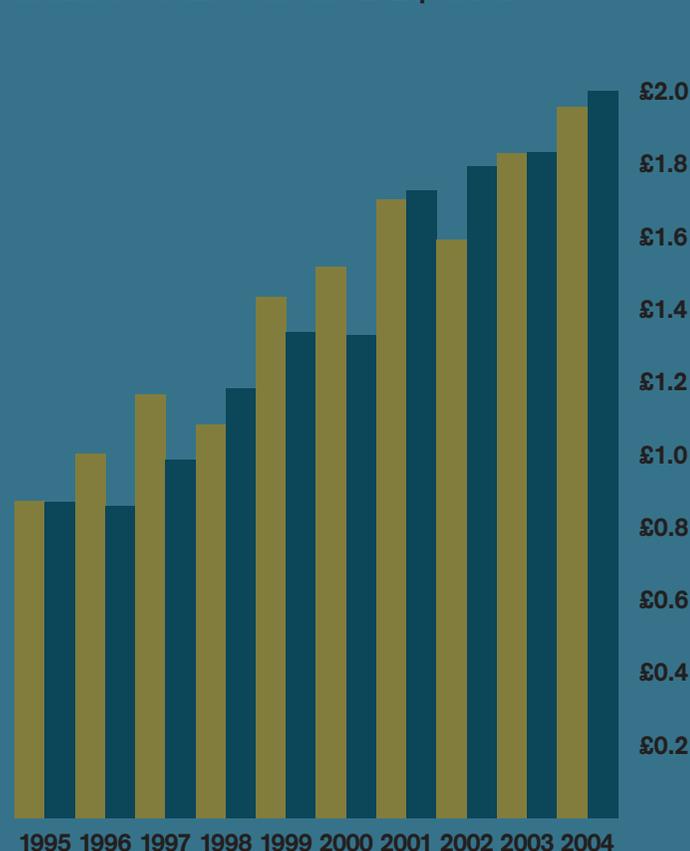
2004

These summarized financial statements contain information from both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2004, but are not the full statutory report and accounts. The full financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 28 May 2005, and subsequently submitted to the Charity Commission and to Companies House. They received an unqualified audit report and copies may be obtained from MRG's London office.

Minority Rights Group (Limited by guarantee) Balance sheet

31 December 2004	2004 £	2003 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	58,643	20,328
Investments	158,857	138,292
	217,500	158,620
Current assets		
Stock	9,417	12,139
Debtors	400,257	342,523
Cash at bank and in hand	204,733	220,845
	614,407	575,507
Creditors: amounts due within 1 year	238,196	97,337
Net current assets	376,211	478,170
Net assets	593,711	636,790
Funds		
Restricted funds	330,499	334,851
Unrestricted funds		
Designated funds	–	8,819
General funds	263,212	293,120
Total funds	593,711	636,790

Income/expenditure growth in millions of GBP



Minority Rights Group Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 December 2004

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2004 Total £	2003 Total £
Incoming resources				
Donations, legacies and similar incoming resources	–	447,162	447,162	543,277
<i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects:</i>				
Advocacy and projects	1,409,433	–	1,409,433	1,293,103
Publications	–	11,684	11,684	23,696
Consultancy	–	3,393	3,393	600
Cost recovery	–	55,197	55,197	644
<i>Activities to generate funds:</i>				
Copyrights and Literary Fees	–	1,186	1,186	1,312
Investment income	–	9,506	9,506	8,401
Total incoming resources	1,409,433	528,128	1,937,561	1,871,033
Resources expended				
<i>Costs of generating funds:</i>				
Fundraising	–	87,726	87,726	80,324
	–	87,726	87,726	80,324
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>				
Advocacy & Projects	1,416,228	227,978	1,644,206	1,445,531
Advocacy Support	–	23,825	23,825	106,575
Project support	–	34,215	34,215	–
Publications	–	90,483	90,483	135,754
Support costs – other	–	101,147	101,147	90,018
Management and administration	–	19,603	19,603	23,347
Total resources expended	1,416,228	584,977	2,001,205	1,881,549
Net outgoing resources before gains & transfers	(6,795)	(56,849)	(63,644)	(10,516)
Unrealised investment gains	–	20,565	20,565	24,424
Transfers between funds	2,443	(2,443)	–	–
Net movement in funds	(4,352)	(38,727)	(43,079)	13,908
Funds at the start of the year	334,851	301,939	636,790	622,882
Funds at the end of the year	330,499	263,212	593,711	636,790

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognized gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 13 to the financial statements.

Council Members*

Chaloka Beyani
Maja Daruwala (Chair)
Paul Divakar
Lekha Klouda
Miriam Hooker
Wim Jacobs (Treasurer)
Asma Jahangir
Edward Mortimer
Klara Orgovanova
John Packer
Martin Pick

Committee Members*

Ade Adeniji
Steven Burkeman
Mahendra Raj
Philip Rudge

Staff*

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Clive Baldwin
Henrik Boejen
Chris Chapman
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Graham Fox
Fiona Godfrey
Zoë Gray
Adrian Harper
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Galina Kostadinova
Corinne Lennox
Mark Lattimer
Gloria Mark
Andrew Mesfin
Cynthia Morel
Anna Oryema
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Katrina Payne
Marusca Perazzi
Ester Perez
Kathryn Ramsay
Magdalena Syposz
Tadesse Tafesse
Shelina Thawer
Claire Thomas

Regional Officers*

Hungary
Monika Raffael
Snjezana Bókulic
Philippines
Minnie Degawan
Uganda
Juliet Nakato
Muwanga

Staff leaving in 2004

Hanny Abuzaid
Anna-Maria Biró
Saskia Chilcott
Angela Haynes
Marcia Hansen
Margot Salomon
Angela Warren
Zaya Yeebo

**Volunteers and interns
1 January – 31 December
2004**

Visar Ademi
Sabine Benzing-Balzer
Olivia Conde
Jayshree Mangubhai
Donna McDuffus
Jian Hasan
Jonathan Ensor
Sido Mayingi Ngoye
Alex Rozychi
Hanna Nilsson Sahlin
Victor O Onikepe
Stefania Tripodi
Claire Welling

*** As at 31 March 2005**

MRG would particularly like to thank all those individuals who contributed to MRG's work during 2004 in response to our letters or to the BBC Radio 4 appeal presented by George Alagiah.

MRG's donors in 2004

A & B Sainsbury Fund
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CAFOD
CIDA
Christian Aid
Cordaid
Council of Europe
Danchurch Aid
Danida
Development Cooperation Ireland
European Commission
Eva Reckitt Trust
ICCO
International Commission of Jurists, Kenya
Lee Foundation
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
Misereor
Netherlands Foreign Ministry
NOVIB
Nuffield Foundation
Open Society Institute
Development Foundation
Pilkington General Charitable Trust
Rowan Charitable Trust
Royal Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs
SCIAF
SIDA
Sigrid Rausing Trust
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Swiss Ministry for Foreign Affairs
TBH Brunner Charitable Trust
Trocaire
UK DFID
UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Kristina Hedlund Thulin

Early in 2005 MRG learnt that our colleague Kristina Hedlund

Thulin had been lost in the Asian tsunami. Her husband and two children, who were with her, survived.

At the time of her death, Kristina was the Adviser on Democracy and Human Rights in South-East Asia for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Previously she had held senior positions in the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Swedish Red Cross and had been the Human Rights Adviser to the EU representative in Afghanistan.

Kristina's contribution was central to MRG's work over the last eight years. Until 2004 a member of MRG's Council and Chair of its Programmes and Publications Committee, she had a combination of vision and practical sense that enabled us to develop projects that could make a real difference to people's lives.

Her early death has robbed us of a dear friend and a great humanitarian.

Getting our message across

MRG communicates with minorities and indigenous peoples, governments and policy-makers, students and academics, the media, intergovernmental organizations, and development and human rights groups. Our work was featured in extensive national and international media coverage during the year, including by the BBC, Reuters, US National Public Radio, Voice of America, Radio France, International and national newspapers in Africa, Europe and the Americas, including *The Times* and *The Independent*.

MRG publishes research reports, training manuals, studies and advocacy briefings. These are available on subscription or through our library scheme. All new MRG publications can be accessed online. Our website had over a quarter of a million visits in 2004 and 65,000 copies of our publications were downloaded. Our monthly e-bulletin keeps 4,500 subscribers up to date with the latest news, developments and opinion in the field of minority and indigenous rights.

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



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Above: Tuareg girl with a radio, Mali.
Clive Shirley/Panos Pictures



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Women brickworkers' hands,
Bangladesh.
Trygve Bolstad/Panos Pictures