



minority
rights
group
international

Annual review 2005
A fair chance for all



Front cover: Grandfather, born on Diego Garcia, with his grand-daughter, born in Mauritius after the inhabitants of the Chagos Islands were deported to make way for an American military base in the 1960s. Tim Dirven/Panos Pictures

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

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

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Director's report

A fair chance for all

Threats to the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples around the world remained undiminished in 2005. Grave human rights violations continue. Entrenched discrimination means that, in many parts of the world, minorities remain the poorest of the poor and yet are denied access to justice or to development opportunities to enable them to challenge their discrimination and break out of long-term cycles of poverty. And, as the global security agenda retains its focus on the 'war against terror', many governments are taking the opportunity to clamp down on the rights and freedoms of their minority communities.

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) is a unique global voice for the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. In the face of these challenges we need to think carefully how our limited resources can be deployed to the greatest effect. Following extensive consultation and research, we agreed a new four-year strategy, starting from 2005, concentrating efforts on where our contribution can make the most difference.

Achieving lasting improvements in the lives of minorities and indigenous

peoples on the ground is our priority. Our campaigning will be driven by specific goals, including education reform, protecting land rights and countering discrimination against minority women. In order to help protect minorities and indigenous peoples from human rights violations, a greater focus will be placed on action at the level of national governments, including by using international law. Improving our ability to monitor changes in the situation of minorities around the world and to respond to crises, MRG will seek to raise the profile of minority rights among international policy-makers and in the key national and international media.

MRG is committed to working with our partner organizations to counter the prejudice faced by their communities, and to promote social justice and appropriate development. We believe that promoting cooperation between communities contributes to the creation of more stable societies that are more able to negotiate tensions between groups without resorting to violence. And we will increase our work to promote the recognition of minority rights as a key tool in the prevention of conflict.

The coming period is also a time of opportunity. Whether it is in the development of new regional institutions for Africa, the accession process of the European Union, the readiness of major development donors to implement a human rights approach, the establishment of institutions of international justice, or an agenda for positive United Nations reform, there are major opportunities to influence international change in a way that will bring improvements to the lives of minorities and indigenous peoples on the ground.

This annual review highlights the key themes in our work in 2005 and for the next three years. We believe that more people should have the chance to live free from racism, on equal terms with their neighbours, without fear of violence, and without their education or future being blighted by discrimination. We believe in a fair chance for all.

Mark Lattimer
Director



...education is a starting point for breaking the poverty cycle for Roma. Education is closely linked to welfare status, and the living conditions faced by many Roma in Central and Southeast Europe are dire
World Bank

Education is so central to the life chances of minority communities that it is almost impossible to determine whether it is poverty that leads to lack of education or lack of education that leads to poverty. In practice, minority communities are often caught in a vicious circle where they are denied access to the skills they need to pull themselves out of poverty. Conversely, the benefits of quality education are revealed not just in improved literacy rates, they also have the effect of improving opportunities and increasing access to economic and social justice.

MRG's new strategy includes tackling current barriers preventing minority and indigenous children from attending or completing primary school. As well as discrimination in the classroom, access problems include physical exclusion, poor provision of teachers and resources in minority regions, and denial of the right to be taught in your own language. Education is, after all, a right – recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international treaties – and the achievement of universal primary education is one of the Millennium Development Goals.

In September we published an important report on current failures in national

strategies to address Roma poverty in South-East Europe. In Serbia, for example, less than 20 per cent of Roma children aged 12 have reached grade 5 at school, compared with 80 per cent of the majority population. The unemployment rate for Roma in Serbia is over double that for the majority population, and reaches as high as 82 per cent for Roma women of school-leaving age. Under our Roma Advocacy Programme, educational projects were designed and implemented by young Roma advocates, including a campaign for university scholarships for Roma youth in Bulgaria.

MRG's new programme on religious minorities in Asia promotes the revision of educational curricula to be more inclusive and to increase religious diversity and pluralism in textbooks. The project will collect and design alternative curricula and materials in several countries, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Indonesia. This will help to promote the right of children from religious minorities to education on an equal footing with other children. New programmes we designed in 2005 with the Batwa in central Africa and with minorities in Turkey also focus on practical methods of securing the right to education.

MRG has always believed in the value of education and training as a vital tool for developing communities and promoting social justice. Over the last seven years we have provided intensive training on human rights law and implementation to over 1,000 directors and other senior representatives of minority and indigenous organizations from over 70 countries. The graduates of MRG's programmes now constitute many of the most effective advocates for minority rights in the world today. Many have gone on to train others, with our support, and have published reports and educational materials in 42 different languages.



Left: Roma children in Novosel, Albania.

Kaspar Jansen

Right: Boy at a government school in Uttar Pradesh, India.

Ami Vitale/Panos Pictures

Education and opportunity

The Endorois people have lived for centuries in the Lake Bogoria region of Kenya. In the 1970s, the Kenyan government forced the community off their traditional lands to create a game reserve. The Endorois now live in semi-arid areas on the edge of the reserve, divided and displaced, not just from their grazing lands and livelihood, but also from their cultural and spiritual heritage. The community has not even received adequate compensation, as required by both national and international law.

MRG is working closely with a Kenyan NGO, the Centre for Minority Rights Development, and the community itself, in order to obtain justice for the Endorois. The legal case was declared admissible by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in May 2005, meaning that it will become the first case to be heard by the Commission on the rights of an indigenous people to their ancestral lands. The Endorois have already regained discretionary access to the game reserve and intimidation against them has decreased.

Although indigenous communities have often occupied their lands for centuries, their practice of collective ownership and lack of written records of ownership was held by former colonial powers, and now often by current governments or corporations, to mean that they have no rights. Once the land is wanted for economic development (for example, for the construction of



dams, mining, oil or tourism) they are all too easily forced off their land and driven to live in poverty. Displaced minorities too often lack written evidence of ownership, whether in parts of Africa, the Balkans, Turkey or South Asia. Through legal action or advocacy

with governments, MRG is working to ensure that communities that have been expelled from their land or property recover it or receive compensation; and communities that are under threat of loss of land or property have their rights protected.

Protecting land rights

Challenging discrimination against women

While most people agree that women suffer discrimination, women who are members of a minority or indigenous community are often particularly marginalized. They face multiple discrimination on account of their ethnicity or religion and because they are women. This can come from both outside and inside the community. For example, minority women may lack positions of influence or be at particular risk of sexual violence in society as a whole, but they may also experience domestic violence or be marginalized by customary practices in their own community.

In January, MRG launched a groundbreaking report on *Gender, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples* at the United Nations (UN) in New York. We sought to persuade UN human rights monitors to address multiple discrimination systematically in their work. Later in the year, in Ethiopia and Tanzania, we ran three training events to encourage representation and electoral participation by women from Pastoralist communities.

MRG also worked in 2005 on ensuring that gender issues are

To every human rights violation, there is a gender element
UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

mainstreamed within all our activities and in developing a new programme on women's rights. The programme is planned to promote education reform and combat violence against women for three minority communities, each of which is one of the most disadvantaged in its continent: the Dalits in India and Nepal, the Roma in Central and South-East Europe and the Batwa in Central Africa. The programme will develop the skills of minority and women's NGOs in these regions to promote their rights.



Above: Dalit woman in Nepal. Tomas van Houtryve/Panos Pictures

Left: Woman in the Niger Delta village of Pepe-ama, Nigeria. Tim A. Hetherington/Panos Pictures

In the majority of less-developed countries, minorities and indigenous peoples are among the poorest of the poor, yet they are often denied access to development assistance. This is partly because the same prejudice that afflicts minorities in society at a national level also operates to exclude them from development plans. But it is also because the international system for organizing development cooperation has failed to take account of the links between poverty, minority status and the denial of human rights. Poverty reduction strategies have consequently not been as successful for minorities and indigenous peoples as for other groups.

Building on the success of our programme on minority rights and development, MRG is now working to ensure that the main tools used in planning development are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of minorities and indigenous peoples. We promote the inclusion of minorities in the process and outcome of poverty reduction strategies, the key national vehicles for planning development. We support data on minorities being monitored in progress reports for the Millennium Development Goals, the worldwide targets agreed for reducing poverty. And we provide

technical assistance and training to development agencies in drafting and implementing policies on minorities.

In 2005 MRG worked with a partner organization in Nigeria to push for participation of the Ogoni in community development projects run in the Niger delta. MRG supported participants from indigenous communities in Nepal and India to take part in discussions at the UN on eradicating hunger and poverty and promoting primary education. A range of in-country events was subsequently organized in Nepal to promote the results. At the end of the



year, we published a major study of how the 'good governance' policies of international development agencies were failing the indigenous peoples of Asia.

In Croatia, our partner organization was supported to look at how to overcome practical problems in housing and employment faced by refugees returning to urban centres. The sustainable return of refugees and their participation in their country's future development are essential requirements for achieving justice and reconciliation in Croatia and other countries in the former Yugoslavia. Throughout South-East Europe, MRG aims to support minorities to document the real impact of development programmes on their communities, to improve their ability to advocate for their economic and social rights, and to participate fairly in national plans for development.

Following the publication of MRG's report *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, we have now planned a project with partners in five countries to pilot best practices in the design and implementation of poverty reduction programmes with minorities and indigenous peoples.

Reducing the poverty of the poorest

Above: Tharu children, Nepal.
Carlos Reyes-Manzo/
Andes Press Agency
Right: Turkana cattle herders, Kenya.
Crispin Hughes/
Panos Pictures

MRG is found to have been a pioneer in seeking to enhance minority rights in development... It has been able to exploit new windows of opportunity due to flexibility and an innovative perspective... policy analysis and advice have been outstanding
Independent evaluation of MRG's programme on minority rights and development





The promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace, and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of society
UN World Summit in New York, September 2005

The war in Iraq and continuing inter-group violence dominated the headlines in 2005. But over 20 further major armed conflicts were ongoing in other parts of the world last year, as well as a larger number of low-intensity conflicts. In three-quarters of these wars, including in Iraq, violence was targeted at specific ethnic or religious groups

Yet many of these conflicts could have been prevented if minority and indigenous rights had been respected. If minorities are able to live without fear of persecution, practise their cultures and have some say in government, they will feel a sense of belonging in a state, just as much as majorities do. MRG promotes international action to protect minority rights, believing that it will help prevent wider conflicts. We seek to learn general lessons on what should be done to prevent ethnic and religious conflict, and apply these to warn about dangerous situations and promote preventive action.

Our continuing work in Iraq aims to encourage cooperation between communities and stability in the long term through the promotion of constitutional arrangements that ensure the participation of all Iraq's communities. During 2005 MRG published educational materials on best practice in constitution-drafting,

based on international standards and comparative law. These were provided to key decision-makers in Iraq, including members of the constitution-drafting committee of the National Assembly, and MRG provided expert advice at relevant training events. The Iraqi Constitution adopted in October incorporated some positive provisions protecting minority communities, but also contained major deficiencies which we highlighted in an advocacy brief published in December, calling for amendments to strengthen inter-community cooperation and provide better protection for the smaller minority communities and for women.

At a crucial stage in the peace negotiations for Aceh in Indonesia, which were partly spurred by the impact of the *tsunami*, MRG published a report criticizing the role of army-run businesses in Aceh and showing how the army's profiteering contributed to the conflict and to the impoverishment of local communities. The peace deal concluded in August in Helsinki provides for far-reaching autonomy for the province and, although imperfect, represents its best hope for peace for a decade. MRG was also part of a worldwide lobbying movement that led to the appalling situation in Darfur in Sudan being referred in May to the International Criminal Court by the UN Security Council.

Although MRG has an important role in specific country situations, the bulk of our work on conflict prevention has focused on persuading international bodies such as the UN of the need to approach minority rights and conflict issues in a systematic way:

- Following a three-year MRG campaign, a new role of UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues was established in April, following the creation of the post of Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide last year;
- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted in August a set of indicators for monitoring genocide risk, based on the work of MRG;
- The UN World Summit in September confirmed the importance of minority rights for peace and stability and agreed a 'responsibility to protect' populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

As the UN human rights institutions face major reform in 2006, MRG will continue to work for effective protection for minorities and indigenous peoples living under threat.

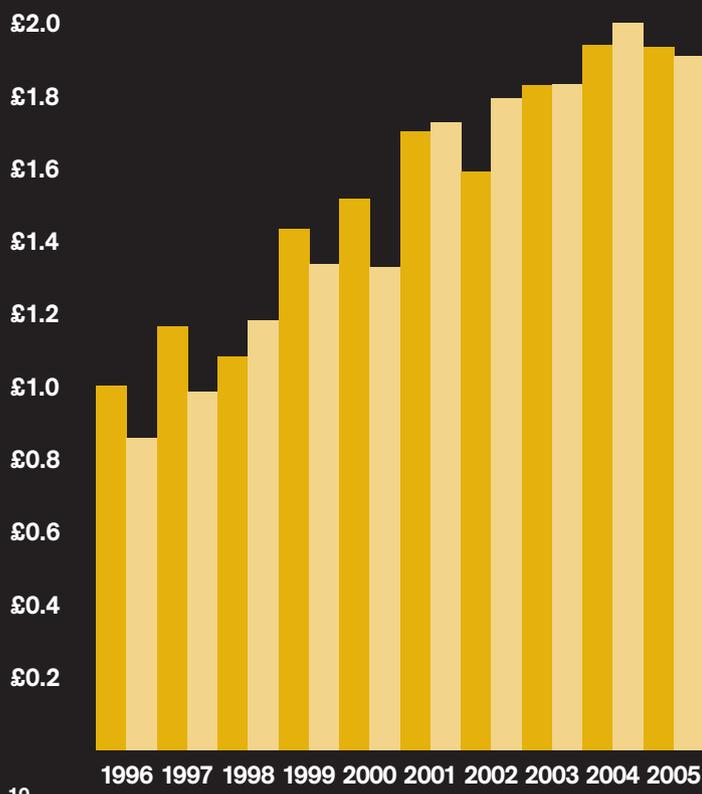
Left: Yezidi women, Iraq. Fatih Pinar/
Anzenberger/Eyevine

Preventing conflict, protecting communities

Financial report 2005

These summarized financial statements contain information from both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2005, but are not the full statutory report and accounts. The full financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 22 April 2006, 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.

Income/expenditure growth
in millions of GBP ■ Income ■ Expenditure



Minority Rights Group (limited by guarantee)
Balance sheet

31 December 2005	2005 £	2004 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	40,980	58,643
Investments	182,574	158,857
	223,554	217,500
Current assets		
Stock	14,683	9,417
Debtors	428,704	400,257
Cash at bank and in hand	146,593	204,733
	589,980	614,407
Creditors: amounts due within 1 year	183,581	238,196
Net current assets	406,399	376,211
Net assets	629,953	593,711
Funds		
Restricted funds	339,172	330,499
Unrestricted funds		
General funds	290,781	263,212
Total funds	629,953	593,711

Minority Rights Group

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

For the year ended 31 December 2005

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2005 Total £	2004 Total £
Incoming resources				
Donations, legacies and similar incoming resources	–	459,291	459,291	447,162
<i>Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects:</i>				
Advocacy and projects	1,384,415	–	1,384,415	1,409,433
Publications	–	19,780	19,780	11,684
Consultancy	–	6,654	6,654	3,393
Cost recovery	–	44,329	44,329	55,197
<i>Activities to generate funds:</i>				
Copyrights and literary fees	–	457	457	1,186
Investment income	–	4,773	4,773	9,506
Total incoming resources	1,384,415	535,284	1,919,699	1,937,561
Resources expended				
<i>Costs of generating funds:</i>				
Fundraising	–	87,960	87,960	87,726
	–	87,960	87,960	87,726
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>				
Advocacy and projects	1,387,535	228,183	1,615,718	1,644,206
Advocacy support	–	28,389	28,389	23,825
Project support	–	15,610	15,610	34,215
Publications	–	32,954	32,954	90,483
Support costs – other	–	101,415	101,415	101,147
Consultancy	–	5,884	5,884	–
Management and administration	–	19,244	19,244	19,603
Total resources expended	1,387,535	519,639	1,907,174	2,001,205
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before gains and transfers	(3,120)	15,645	12,525	(63,644)
Unrealized investment gains	–	23,717	23,717	20,565
Transfers between funds	11,793	(11,793)	–	–
Net movement in funds	8,673	27,569	36,242	(43,079)
Funds at the start of the year	330,499	263,212	593,711	636,790
Funds at the end of the year	339,172	290,781	629,953	593,711

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.

Staff and donor list

Council Members at 31 March 2006

Chaloka Beyani
Kevin Boyle
Steven Burkeman
Paul Divakar
Lekha Klouda
Miriam Hooker
Wim Jacobs
Treasurer
Edward Mortimer
Chair
Klara Orgovanova
John Packer

Committee Members at 31 March 2006

Ade Adeniji
Philip Rudge

Staff at 31 March 2006

Richie Andrew
Clive Baldwin
Henrik Boejen
Snježana Bokulić
Chris Chapman
Neil Clarke
Fiona Godfrey
Zoe Gray
Fiona Harrison
Nurcan Kaya
Aleksandra
Kecojevic
Samia Liaquat
Ali Khan
Galina
Kostadinova
Mark Lattimer
Corinne Lennox
Gloria Mark
Andrew Mesfin
Anna Oryema
Marusca Perazzi
Ester Perez
Kathryn Ramsay
Ilana Rapaport
Cynthia Morel
Katrina Naomi
Charles Osei
Tadesse Tafesse
Shelina Thawer
Claire Thomas

Regional Offices at 31 March 2006

Hungary
Tibor Meszmann
Monika Rafael
Uganda
Juliet Nakato
Muwanga

Staff leaving in 2005/6

Adrian Harper
Magda Syposz
Diane Church
Heidrun Ferrari
Graham Fox
Minnie Degawan

Volunteers and interns 1 Jan–31 Dec 2005

Bjorn Asgard
**Sabine Benzing-
Balzer**
Lia Booth
Raphaelle Guillon
Victoria Legborsi
Donna McDuffus
Jaqueline Msipha
Jayshree
Mangubhai
Dhiraj umar
Mondal
Thais Narciso
Maria Svenn
Xia Tran
Paul-Andre Wilton
Madina
Zhanuzakova

MRG's donors in 2005

**A & B Sainsbury
Fund**
ACT Netherlands
**Barrow Cadbury
Trust**
CAFOD
**Canadian
International
Development
Agency (CIDA)**
**Charles Stewart
Mott Foundation**
Christian Aid
Cordaid
DanChurchAid
**Danida (Danish
International
Development
Assistance)**
**Development
Cooperation
Ireland**
**European
Commission**
**European Roma
Rights Centre**
Ford Foundation
ICCO
Lee Foundation
**Ministry for
Foreign Affairs
of Finland**
**Netherlands
Foreign Ministry**
NOVIB
**Open Society
Institute (OSI)**

**Royal Norwegian
Ministry of
Foreign Affairs**
SCIAF
**Swedish
International
Development
Cooperation
Agency (SIDA)**
**Sigrid Rausing
Trust**
**Swedish
Ombudsman
against Ethnic
Discrimination**
**Swiss Agency for
Development &
Cooperation**
**TBH Brunner
Charitable Trust**
**The Augustine
Courtauld Trust**
**The Eva
Reckitt Trust**
**The Pilkington
General
Charitable Trust**
Trocaire
**UK Department
for International
Development**
**UK Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office**
**United States
Institute of
Peace**

MRG provides research, information and comment on minority and indigenous issues worldwide, and new perspectives on international events and their impact on minorities. Last year, media coverage of our work appeared in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, and we reached global audiences through the BBC, CNN and Radio France International, among other media.

MRG publishes the *State of the World's Minorities*, a major new annual publication detailing key developments over the last year affecting the human rights and security of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. The *State of the World's Minorities 2006* highlights in particular the situation of peoples under threat, and has rapidly established itself as an essential reference work for those working in development, human rights or foreign affairs.

MRG publishes further 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 a quarter of a million visits in 2005 and 91,032 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 head office in London.

Above: *State of the World's Minorities*, MRG's new annual publication analysing current trends and threats in minority rights.
Richie Andrew/MRG



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Muslim schoolgirls, Sri Lanka.
Tim A. Hetherington/Panos Pictures