



Africa

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While enrolment at all education levels has increased in recent years in sub-Saharan Africa, children in the region, depending on where they live, what gender they are, how poor they are, and if they are part of a minority or indigenous group, will have widely varying degrees of access to school. Overall, progress has been made: according to UNESCO's *Global Monitoring Report 2009*, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for the world's highest increase in total primary school enrolment (42 per cent) in the period 1999–2006. And in 2006, more than 23 million children in the region stepped through a classroom door for the very first time. However, millions of children remain out of school – some 35 million children were not enrolled in 2006, around one-third of the school-age population. The reasons for this vary. Over four out of five out-of-school children live in rural areas. Many of these are from minority and indigenous communities. Gender also plays a significant role. In 2006, girls accounted for 54 per cent of children not in school. And children from minority groups, either because they suffer discrimination, live in remote areas and because of their gender, are also much less likely to access education.

Events of 2008 have clearly shown the vulnerability of minority groups to political change and discrimination, and the knock-on effects on children's education. Political upheaval and violence in Kenya, Sudan and Zimbabwe has had a devastating effect on children's access to education, particularly of minority groups such as the pastoralists in Kenya, whose mobile existence makes them especially vulnerable to the volatile situation in the country. Ongoing problems, such as the abduction of children to be child soldiers in Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo, also has a terrible effect on children's ability to take part in school. And the living conditions of certain minorities in African countries – for example the Saharawi refugees in the Western Sahara refugee camps – has a very damaging effect on people's ability to access basic services, including education. Language is another key issue that acts as a barrier for children from minorities to go to school, for example in Mauritania where neither Afro-Mauritanian national languages nor the local Hassaniya Arabic dialect are used as languages of instruction.

Each child's experience of, and access to, education is extremely varied across the region. Most

importantly, and least surprisingly, it is the most vulnerable and marginalized of children who struggle to get to school and reap the many rewards from a comprehensive education.

Women from minority and indigenous communities continue to suffer FGM and rape, often in areas torn by conflict. They face double discrimination in such situations, as the chapter by Kathryn Ramsay discusses. Reporting such incidents, often in a climate of impunity, is extremely difficult for those already marginalized by their minority status and gender.

Algeria

Long-standing rivalries between Arabs and the minority Berber community erupted into violence in May 2008. At least three people were killed and many made homeless after three nights of rioting in the north Saharan town of Berriane. Algerian security forces were deployed to quell the unrest. The Berber group involved, the Mozabites (Berbers from the M'zavb valley), say they have been excluded from state jobs and that they continue to be discriminated against by the Arab majority.

Since the 2007 elections, achieving cultural unity within Algeria has been a priority for the government. Education plays a major role in this aim – the government has permitted the teaching of the Berber language in schools in order to reach out to the Berber community. They have also created an Academy and a Superior Council of the Tamazight language. A *New York Times* report in June 2008 described the efforts by the government to implement changes to the education system and school curriculum to 'wrest momentum from the Islamists'. After French colonial rule ended in 1962, French was banned as the language of education and replaced by Arabic; the study of Islamic law and the Koran became obligatory. An April 2008 report by United Press International claimed that North African al-Qaida were seeking to woo recruits from the Berber community, playing on the unrest revealed in protests on April 20 to honour those killed during anti-government action.

Recently, French has been reintroduced into the curriculum, the most extreme religious teachers have been removed and there have been attempts to revise the religious curriculum. A committee appointed seven years ago to overhaul the school system collapsed under political pressure from conservative and Islamist groups. But in 2008, the

government started to make significant changes, including stopping rote learning (which was linked to memorizing the Koran).

Botswana

The president of Botswana, Seretse Khama Ian Khama, took office in April 2008 with statements about the need to celebrate Botswana's 'unity in diversity'. These were welcome in the context of a country that continues to give the eight Tswana tribes, a numerical minority, the privileges attached to official recognition, while many of Botswana's other 38 tribes continue to suffer from disproportionate poverty and have experienced the loss of both their culture and language, which are not permitted on private or public radio, or in education. However, according to Survival International, the new president dealt the Bushmen a major blow in a speech in December 2008 when he said that 'the notion ... that [the Bushmen wish] to subsist today on the basis of a hunter-gathering lifestyle is an archaic fantasy'.

Some small steps towards recognition were made by the government during 2008. In May, at a workshop on the Botswana Consensus on the Rule of Law and Good Governance, the Attorney General stated the need to 'review the Constitution and enhance the protection of fundamental rights', which gives minority rights groups in Botswana an opportunity to address the current imbalances. In addition, in July, President's Day holidays were marked with cultural competitions in performing arts – again providing an opportunity for minority groups to express their own cultures.

Another major step was the appointment of a Wayeyi chief to the House of Chiefs (Ntlo ya Dikgosi) for the first time. However, the chief has no powers to appoint headman like the Tswana chiefs do. Minority groups are now calling for legislation to be changed to respect all the other minorities similarly.

Non-Tswana, especially the San communities, have long faced barriers to education, as they have been unable to educate their children in their own language. According to a 2007 IRIN report, teaching is mostly done in English or Setswana, which many San children do not speak.

Burundi

The ongoing conflict between the Hutu-majority government in Burundi, led by President Pierre

Nkurunziza, and the last active Hutu rebel group, the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People National Liberation Forces (Palipehutu-FNL), was not entirely resolved in 2008. But on 9 January 2009 the rebels announced changes that meant they could become a legally recognized political party – a potential breakthrough.

Batwa are formally recognized in Burundi, unlike in neighbouring Rwanda, and representation in parliament and the senate for Hutu, Tutsi and Batwa is written into the Constitution. But the Batwa, who number only 30,000–40,000 (0.4–0.5 per cent of the population), have historically suffered a deep level of ongoing discrimination. Batwa communities have difficulty accessing health care; Batwa women and girls report being sexually harassed; and some remain in bonded labour, according to a 2008 MRG report.

There is very little disaggregated data on the Batwa community as the government has not conducted a general census. Anecdotal reports illustrate the needs of the Batwa community, particularly in the field of education. In 2005 an African Commission working group on indigenous peoples found that the Batwa's lack of access to land, and the contempt of other Burundians, 'seem to be the root causes of the high illiteracy rates within the Batwa communities'. This view is supported by Alfred Ahingejeje, a Batwa MP. In March 2008 he described the need for affirmative action:

'Generally speaking everyone in Burundi, the Hutu and Tutsi too, has needs in the area of education. But the Batwa have been forgotten for many years. This is why we ask for particular help ... the government says that there are no funds to lend to the Batwa in the domain of education ... the Batwa are forgotten, we haven't been able to do long studies.'

The government has however made some moves to actively collaborate with other organizations on behalf of the Batwa. In December 2008, according to UNIPROBA, a campaigning organization representing the Batwa, and the Burundian Senate in partnership with the AWEPA (Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa) organized a day of 'reflection' on the living conditions of the Batwa in Burundi. Recommendations included giving Batwa children free schooling and ensuring that they are admitted to secondary schools. The issue

of the Batwa's land rights was also discussed, and it was recommended that Batwa with no land, or very little land, be given fertile land and ownership rights. The recommendations are clearly positive, although, as UNIPROBA make clear, it is essential that they be implemented.

Burundi has ratified the UNESCO Convention on Discrimination in Education, and Batwa communities and activists have reported that discrimination has decreased in schools. Batwa children can now sit with Hutu and Tutsi children in the classroom which was previously not possible.

Central African Republic

Political change came to the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2008 as a new Prime Minister, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, was named on 22 January. On 9 May a 'peace accord' was agreed in Gabon between the government and the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD). A further peace deal was signed with the other rebel group, the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), in June. However, fighting continued in bursts and IRIN reported from Sam Ouandja, a town on the border with Sudan, that the majority of the population (20,000 people) had fled as rebel factions (reportedly of the UFDR group) attacked. This came just ahead of further peace talks that began on 8 December.

The humanitarian consequences of the conflict within CAR and the wider region have been great. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) around 56,000 Central Africans have fled to southern Chad since 2003 and are living in five different camps. Since late 2008, some 100 Central Africans had been arriving monthly.

IRIN reports reveal the particular impact on some minority groups in Chad, such as the cattle-raising communities of the Mbororo group in north-western CAR. Many men fled to Cameroon to avoid being kidnapped by 'bandits' who demanded huge ransoms. Many had to sell their cattle to pay ransoms, leaving them in poverty. Tensions between pastoral populations persisted along the border with southern Sudan over water and grazing rights. In January 2008 UNICEF reported on the worrying living conditions and challenges facing the Aka people.

According to the country's Humanitarian Development Partnership Team, which comprises

Right: Children lining up before the start of their lessons at a school inside a refugee camp run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees near the Chadian-Sudanese border. The camp houses approximately 60,000 Sudanese refugees who have fled the conflict in Darfur. *Teun Voeten/Panos.*

UN agencies and NGOs, CAR has 'one of the world's weakest educational systems'. Only 1.45 per cent of GDP is spent on education, half the African average, and insecurity in the north has meant the formal education system there has vanished. 'Bush schools' have been set up, with parents providing basic tuition to children whose families were forced to flee their villages to live in temporary settlements. Where primary education exists, the pupil to teacher ratio is 92:1 and according to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) figures for 2007/8 the adult literacy rate is 48.6 per cent. Girls are less likely to be schooled than boys – UNICEF figures show that net primary school enrolment for boys is 64 per cent, but only 45 percent for girls.

In June 2008, UNICEF reported good news from the northern regions of the country as schools began to reopen. In 2007 UNICEF had worked with Italian NGO COOPI to help re-open 104 schools in northern CAR, allowing 32,000 children to return to school. Sixty per cent of these schools were in the bush, serving families too afraid to return home. In addition, UNICEF has supported the training of 300 parent-teachers in the region as most teachers fled during the fighting in 2003 and 2004. Parents are now teaching their children the national curriculum, which will help to reintegrate the children back into school when they return.

Chad

The situation in Chad remained highly volatile during 2008 as the conflict with Sudan escalated. The African Union attempted to make peace between the two countries, without success. In early August, the Libyan government helped to broker an agreement between the two governments, and in October 2008 representatives from Chad and Sudan met in Tripoli to formally restore diplomatic ties between their nations. In November, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for the number of international troops deployed in eastern Chad to be doubled. UN peacekeepers are expected to replace the EU force



in March 2009 – with 6,000 troops replacing the 3,700 currently there. The Chadian government has said that it does not need any more troops however.

The humanitarian impact of the conflict is severe. Human Rights Watch estimates that there are more than 400,000 civilians living in refugee and IDP (internally displaced people) camps along Chad's eastern border. Refugees from Sudan are mostly Zaghawa and other small ethnic groups, who are escaping attack in Darfur. There have also been thousands of house demolitions in Chad's capital, N'Djamena. IRIN reported in January 2009 that 10,000–15,000 homes have been destroyed, with the government claiming it was because they were built on government-owned land. Observers suggested that it was an attempt to wipe out rebel households in the city.

Many of the barriers facing children in accessing education are associated with, or created by, the conflict. Human Rights Watch reported that 'the use and recruitment of child soldiers by government forces and allied para-military groups is ongoing'. UNICEF also reported on the thousands of Sudanese refugee children living in 12 camps in eastern Chad who are struggling to access education. According to October 2008 reports, UNICEF's work in the camps allowed 75,000 children to attend school in the first half of 2008, but many

more are still missing out, especially at the post-primary level due to insufficient funding and teachers.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Minorities in the DRC, particularly the Batwa, Bambuti and Babendille groups, have been hugely affected by the ongoing instability of the country. Of particular concern were the Bambuti living in forest communities.

A local NGO, Programme d'Intégration et de Développement du Peuple Pygmée au Kivu (PIDP), which promotes and protects the rights of indigenous Batwa in North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema provinces, said that the sexual violence, displacement and insecurity caused by the ongoing conflict in the DRC has particularly affected the Batwa/Bambuti community. PIDP described how the fighting between August and October 2008 in the capital city of the Rutshuru territory and in Kiwandja uprooted more than 120 Batwa/Bambuti families, and 20 of these families are still missing. NGOs working with the Batwa community have also been affected. In October 2008, the international NGO Care International was forced to suspend two major programmes in the DRC, including one in the Rutshuru territory in North Kivu that focused on marginalized populations including the Batwa.

'If a child pays their school fees, they can't be chased out of the class'

Adolphine Byayuwa Muley, director of l'Union pour l'Emancipation de la Femme Autochtone (UEFA), tells *Fay Warrilow* about the plight of Batwa in the DRC

'For the Batwa the problem is discrimination. It is made worse by poverty. Everyone poor has to deal with the attitude of other people, but Batwa are poorer, because they used to live only through hunting and gathering. Now this kind of life doesn't provide remuneration and they can't advance from a socio-economic point of view.

'There is a problem with access to education because parents have to pay school fees. At the start, we had problems sensitizing parents to send their children to school: parents wanted their children to accompany them hunting, and for the girls to accompany them in other kinds of work. But now almost all have a sense of the value of schooling. Yet they still have a problem finding the means to do it.

'When it comes to girls, they are doubly marginalized, because if these families are able to afford an education for just one child in

the family they will not choose a girl, they will choose a boy. The girls will accompany their mothers to go and work or find food. That is a general problem [for poor communities]. Specifically for the Batwa, where there is conflict, children are not schooled because their families have been displaced. The school year passes and there is no way of taking them to school.

'Also there are Batwa girls who have been raped. This makes them ashamed to go to school in case people say: "Her there, she has been raped." Even the parents, they know that their child has been raped and that holds them back a bit.

'Lack of shelter is another problem. There are Batwa who were dispossessed of their territory by the government, after the time of Mobutu and during the creation of the national parks. The forest where they made a living has become a conservation area, and all the Batwa who lived in the forest no longer have land or their nomadic lifestyle. But to practise agriculture you need a field. Because they have been dispossessed of their land they have to work for other communities and they are not paid a fair price. This also makes it difficult to put together the school fees for children. Even to stay temporarily they have to ask the head of a village to accept them. But there are conditions and if it happens that the Batwa don't respect the conditions put on them the village head may chase them away. So there is a problem of instability.

'Yet in the east discrimination against Batwa is reducing because there are lots of organizations working now for the benefit of the Batwa. If a Mutwa child pays their school fees they can't be chased out of the class.' ■

failure to demarcate their lands and territories, extractive industries, such as coltan, gold, timber and iron ore companies, have entered indigenous peoples' territories and caused many to abandon their land and traditional way of life, forcing them into poverty. The report also expresses concern over the World Bank and DRC government forestry reform programme that so far has failed to recognize or protect indigenous peoples' rights. On a more positive note, the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPAAC) reported their support in 2008 for a project in eastern DRC in which local Batwa and Bambuti people were attempting to negotiate their rights with the Kahuzi Biega National Park, which covers some 600,000 hectares and is classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (making it a potentially important contributor DRC's economy). The park employed minority group members as trackers in conservation or anti-poaching units, but often failed to remunerate them properly or recognize their skills.

All children in the DRC lack access to education. A 2008 MRG report cites Department for International Development (DfID) statistics that fewer than 64 per cent of children overall are enrolled in primary school and the literacy rate is 62 per cent. While the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) does not identify the Batwa as needing special support, the World Bank recognizes that the Batwa are among the most vulnerable groups when it comes to education. However there is as yet no government policy on education, let alone a specific policy for Batwa children.

UNICEF reported in November 2008 that thousands of schools in North Kivu province had been closed due to fighting; many of these schools were now occupied by displaced people. 'Rutshuru territory, in particular, has been a zone of conflict and we know that 85 per cent of schools in that territory have been closed for the last three weeks,' UNICEF Communications Specialist Jaya Murthy reported. 'That has halted the education for approximately 150,000 students.'

Egypt

The year began badly in Egypt for the minority Coptic Christians who make up about 10 per cent of the population. An attack on a monastery in January was followed by another assault in May when monks were kidnapped, whipped and beaten according to

the *New York Times* (2 August 2008). In response, Egypt's security officials said that this was a 'singular incident' and not to do with wider inter-faith hostility in the country. But according to both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, discrimination against Egyptian Christians and official intolerance of Baha'is and some Muslim sects continues.

IRIN reported on the dire circumstances of the 30,000 Bedouin in the Sinai peninsula. They are no longer able to earn an income from their livestock and are forced to work on the rubbish tips of Sharm Al-Sheikh to survive.

Border issues also continued. Egypt refused to allow officials of the UNHCR access to a group of 91 Eritreans, Sudanese, and Somalis, whom Israel returned in August 2008, and to a prior group of 48 whom Israel returned in August 2007. In April 2008 Egypt forcibly returned 49 Sudanese men and boys, including 11 refugees and asylum seekers, to southern Sudan, where authorities detained them for four months. In June Egypt forcibly returned at least 740 Eritreans, including women and children, without allowing UNHCR access to them. They are allegedly detained at a military jail and are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Egypt has a good track record in education compared to many African countries, with net primary school enrolment exceeding 94 per cent, according to UNICEF. However, not all regions are equal – the poorer parts of the country, such as Upper Egypt, lag behind the rest of the country's progress.

Eritrea

Eritrea remains under the totalitarian grip of President Isayas Afewerki. According to Human Rights Watch, in 2008 the president said that elections would not be held for decades because they would polarize society. He also said he would remain in full control of the country until the country is secure. On 31 July, the UN Security Council terminated the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea; observers were hopeful that neither side would return to conflict, despite the unresolved border issue. However, in June, International Crisis Group warned in a report that the border problem meant there was a risk of a new war, and suggested that the immediate priorities were for Ethiopia to withdraw its troops from all land that the border commission had awarded Eritrea, and for Eritrea to pull its army back from the Transitional Security Zone.

Education Focus: Gabon

For the Baka discrimination is at the heart of the problem, reports
Pascale Paulin

The Baka in the north of Gabon are a community of around 350 people living in eight villages around the city of Minvoul. Previously nomadic hunter-gatherers, they have been subject to a settling process imposed on them by government. But they still mainly get their livelihood from the forest and have always had close contact with neighbouring populations, for the purpose of trade. Today, they live in close connection with Gabon's largest community, the Fang, and are bilingual, speaking Baka and Fang from an early age.

Hunter-gatherers are rejected and discriminated against in Gabon. They are excluded from general social services such as health, education, citizenship and legal rights.

The Baka have no education and are often hired as an underpaid workforce. They are seen by their neighbours as subhuman. Their Bantu neighbours generally think Baka belong to them, like land or property. In an interview with the Dynamique du Langage laboratory (DDL) in Lyon, France in November 2004, a member of the Bantu community said: 'They are my grandma's pygmies, they belong to her. Anyway, they aren't really human, they are like animals.' Although it is wrong to claim that hunter-gatherers are not free, they are increasingly dependent on a bondage system for survival.

Gabon's national education policy advocates an education for all children, but there is no specific

mention of hunter-gatherers as an excluded group. Their particular needs must be taken into account in policies, in order to ensure that education for Baka children respects and supports a semi-nomadic way of life.

Seven out of eight of the villages are far from the town centre, where schools are situated. It is difficult, sometimes impossible, for most Baka children to access schools. In 2002, a complaint was referred to the government by the inhabitants of the village of Doumassi, who expressed their wish that the state provide them with schooling services. But, like the other remote villages, they still do not have access to educational services.

Some children from Bitouga started going to school, but mockery from their Fang schoolmates discouraged them. Out of 20 children from this village, only one young boy is attending school, but this is in Libreville where he has been living in an urban environment. Such a move has a profound impact on the identity of the person, and thus for the survival of the Baka way of life.

Of the 130 to 150 Baka children living in this area, only about 10 – all from the village of Mfefelam (which is the closest to the city and where Baka are permanently in contact with the Fang from the village of Esseng) – actually attend the school. But they often miss school during hunting periods or for other reasons.

And school itself is not free from discrimination. The language of instruction is French, which clearly excludes Baka. There have been initiatives to take national languages into account in education, such as the 'Rapidolangue' programme of the Raponda Walker Foundation. Baka is not included in that programme, however, which is all the more serious as Baka is an Ubangui language and is very different from the country's other Bantu-like languages.

A pre-education project, which was put in place by the local NGO Association pour l'autopromotion des populations de l'Est du Cameroun (AAPPEC) among the Baka from Cameroon, is based on the 'Observe, Reflect and Act' (ORA) method. This encourages children to draw on their daily lives during learning, and use Baka and French. However, the school schedule does not coincide with Baka's seasonal movements and, as children have to go with their parents, they cannot attend school. The learning method is also exclusionary for Baka as it is based on explicit didactics rather than on imitation, which is a practice of Baka communication. According to a joint OHCHR, ILO and UNICEF report, almost 50 per cent of children did not complete their 2007–8 school year.

The practices of Baka and other hunter-gatherer communities must be taken into account when education policy and delivery strategy are formed. The Baka calendar of life, their daily agendas, and their traditions of learning should all be considered. Decisions related to curriculum development should be more decentralized. It would be an advantage to train one teacher, and hire Baka teachers so as to avoid any possible tensions linked to differences of social status.

Communities should be put at the heart of any education or social project, and serve as the main decision makers. At a national level, communities of hunter-gatherers or their elected representatives must participate in decision making processes for education and other services. The educational programme and content should be reviewed according to a set of objectives and methods that correspond to their specific value system rather than set national criteria. ■

usually spoken need to be translated into written form. According to UNICEF, half of school-age children, mostly girls, do not attend school. The government has partnered with UNICEF to ensure that 100,000 girls complete primary school in three target regions. The scheme, Complementary Elementary Education (CEE, see p. 41), was set up in 2005 and provides out-of-school children with basic competences. It is currently bringing education to over 5,000 girls and boys in more than 70 centres in remote villages.

Kenya

Kenya continued to be rocked in early 2008 by the violence triggered by the presidential election in December 2007. Politicians from both the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the incumbent Party of National Unity (PNU) allegedly organized violence in the Rift Valley and western Kenya in January and February 2008. According to the Waki Commission, at least 1,133 people were killed and a further 300,000 (some estimates claim up to half a million) people displaced. An estimated 10,000 people fled the country as refugees into neighbouring Uganda.

The Kikuyu, the dominant group in Kenya since the country's independence in 1963 and backbone of the PNU, bore the brunt of the violence. In the Northern Rift Valley town of Eldoret, Kalenjins forced Kikuyu to flee their homes and burned them down. Attacks were also reported in the Southern Rift, Western Kenya and in the minority Ogiek hunter-gatherer community close to Nakuru.

A power-sharing deal was struck on 28 February 2008 between Mwai Kibaki (PNU) and Raila Odinga (ODA) and this heralded the formation of the Grand Coalition between the two parties. The delicate brokering process, led by Kofi Annan, has brought peace back to Kenya, but it is fragile.

Large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) are living in camps and displacement has continued over the year due to ethnic conflicts over water resources and a government operation against the Sabaot Land Defence Force in the Mount Elgon region of Western Kenya. In May 2008 the government launched an IDP return programme, Operation Rudi Nyumbani (return home) and, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, pressured people to leave by cutting off essential services.

Pastoralist groups in Eritrea were at grave risk during 2008 because of inadequate rains. UNICEF stated that the ongoing border stalemate with Ethiopia, crop failure and high food prices would all have a negative impact on the already challenging humanitarian situation. There are 22,300 internally

displaced people, and an estimated 85,500 malnourished children in the country.

Religious persecution remained a live issue: Amnesty International calculated that there were 'at least' 2,000 religious prisoners of conscience, mostly from evangelical churches.

Eritrea has around nine ethno-linguistic groups and the country has a policy that primary school instruction should be available in the mother tongue. In reality, there are not enough qualified and experienced teachers to prepare the curriculum, and challenges arise when languages that are

The violence and instability has particularly affected minority and indigenous peoples, who have received the least assistance from the government and have not been involved in the political negotiations and deals. The coalition government has pledged to tackle the 'scourge of ethnicity' in Kenya; it is unclear whether this means a more hostile approach to minority rights or an attempt to depoliticize ethnicity, which would be welcome.

Ogiek community members who were caught up in the post-election violence have so far received no assistance from the government; they see this as evidence of state discrimination rooted in the government's refusal to recognize their existence as a distinct group. The state officially recognizes 42 ethnic groups in Kenya but there are over 70 distinct communities. According to a 2008 MRG report, several minorities believe they are in danger of being wiped out, either through the destruction of their traditional livelihoods or through assimilation.

The new government has created a Ministry for Northern Kenya and Arid Lands, which seems to offer assistance to marginalized communities in northern and western Kenya. The pastoralist communities of northern Kenya have long had poor access to resources and a very limited voice in government. The promise of the new ministry has been offset by complaints that it is under-resourced and was created for political reasons, rather than to improve the lot of the poorest communities in the country.

The smaller indigenous communities still lack representation in parliament. Recently there have been attempts by groups such as the Ilchamus, a pastoralist community located around Lake Baringo, to challenge the lack of representation in the Kenyan Constitutional Court.

The constitutional review process currently under way offers opportunities for minorities to fight for recognition. The review covers the issue of regional autonomy, which is popular among minority groups in Kenya. However, the tight timetable limits the time for wide-ranging consultation with minorities. The newly formed Minority Reform Consortium, a body representing around 50 minority and indigenous groups, advocated that at least one of the members of the Committee of Experts should be from a minority community. The process of establishing a National Ethnic and Race Relations Commission to investigate complaints of ethnic dis-

crimination divided MPs and it seems unlikely that the commission will ever be established.

Land distribution was historically skewed in favour of some of the major ethnic communities, for example the Kikuyus, and this was a factor in the post-election violence. Indigenous groups have particularly suffered in terms of violations of their land rights. According to an MRG report, many pastoralists have had land seized and resources stolen in recent years. A particular source of concern is the Endorois community, who were evicted from their lands around Lake Bogoria in the Rift Valley to make way for tourist game reserves. The community have not been compensated and now live on a strip of semi-arid land, with no way of sustaining their former work of cattle-rearing and bee-keeping. They live in severe poverty and struggle to access basic services. Many can't afford to send their children to school; the few children who do have to walk up to 40 km to get there. The community await the result of a case, outlining the rights violations, that it took to the African Commission on Human People's Rights in 2003. The result is expected in 2009.

The draft national Land Policy (led by the Lands Ministry) includes special sections to protect minorities and, significantly, recognizes pastoralism as a legitimate land use. But the policy has met fierce resistance from the Kenya Landowners Association.

Education in Kenya was affected by the post-election violence in early 2008. UNICEF reported on the thousands of children not returning to school in January, and provided 'tent schools' to those who had been displaced. Children from pastoralist communities commonly face exclusion from the school system, through a range of factors, although some NGOs are addressing this. Oxfam supports the Coalition of Pastoralist Children's Education (CPCE) to lobby for the establishment of a National Commission for Pastoralist Education. Oxfam also supports alternative forms of education, better suited to pastoralist communities, such as mobile and boarding schools.

Mali

Relations between the Malian government and Tuareg minority remained strained through 2008. The Tuareg continued to push for more self-determination, particularly in places where their traditional territory coincides with rich deposits of gold and uranium. Their desire for independence

Below: Muslim girls from Mauritania doing exercises before school. Bounessa is a village of only 61 families, once nomadic but now settled due to the construction of a new dam. *Ami Vitale/Panos.*

has a long history and has been intensified by years of marginalization by the government. The Tuareg report that they have been deprived of equal education opportunities and suffered discrimination, hindering their ability to get identity documents or register to vote. In 2008, the Tuareg-based human rights group Temedt, along with Anti-Slavery International, reported that 'several thousand' members of the Tuareg Bella caste remain enslaved in the Gao Region. They complain that while laws provide redress, cases are rarely resolved by Malian courts. The Tuareg in Mali have now formalized into a political movement in the form of the Alliance for Democracy and Change.

Clashes in early June 2008 in the north-west desert region of Kidal in Mali killed at least 20 Tuaregs. These followed a series of abductions by the Tuareg over the previous year. In July, a cease-fire agreement was brokered by Algeria. Further peace talks took place in August, but ex-rebel fighters continued to stir unrest in the north and the government tried to carry out a crackdown on mili-

tia groups in the area. In September, IRIN reported that Mali officials had arrested dozens of suspects in the Ganda Izo militia, or 'children of the earth', including its leader Amadou Diallo, who had fled to neighbouring Niger and was arrested there.

In November, the rebels, part of the Alliance for Democracy and Change, met two government ministers in the north-eastern Kidal region, in a bid to restart a peace process. However, in December Reuters reported that the Tuaregs killed at least 14 Malian soldiers in an attack on an army post close to Mali's border with Mauritania.

Mauritania

Minorities in Mauritania continued to face discrimination by the government. The unreliable issuing of national identification cards, which were required for voting, effectively disenfranchised numerous members of southern minority groups. Racial and cultural tension and discrimination also arose from the geographic and cultural divides between Moors and Afro-Mauritanians. According to the US State Department: 'the Black Moors (also called Haratins) remain politically and economically weaker than White Moors. Afro-Mauritanian ethnic groups, comprising the Halpulaar (the largest non-Moor group), Wolof, and Soninke, meanwhile remained



'People who are slaves or former slaves like me, bear witness'

Biram dah Abeid, who works as an adviser to human rights group SOS Esclaves Mauritania, talks to *Fay Warrilow* about his life and work

'The Haratin identity developed in the historic practice of slavery and a caste system that confined them to manual labour under the sun and keeping them out of the education system.

'There are large shantytowns or ghettos populated by impoverished people surrounding the major cities of Mauritania, as well as *adwaba* in rural areas, which are the villages of former slaves who have broken with their masters. This section of society is marginalized and there is reluctance to abolish discrimination in the administration of education in the Haratin ghettos and villages. If the ghettos have schools, they suffer from a shortage of equipment. More importantly the teachers, who are mainly from the dominant community, often refuse to teach in Haratin areas or the *adwaba*. Also, children work for their families during school

hours, or in domestic work, or in gardens and tending livestock.

'I am the son of a slave. My grandmother was a slave but my father fled and went to the town. He left for Senegal where there are lots of former slaves. Then he returned, married my mother and we were born. I was the only member of my family who went to school – of my family four children died and we are six now.

'It was difficult at school because when I was there because the teachers lived with 'les blancs' [the majority Arab-Berber population]. When we went to school it was at a time when if you weren't a "blanc" you didn't normally go to school.

'The teachers were friends with the [Arab-Berber] children and after, when I went to lycée, there were [Arab-Berber] students with nice clothes but we had nothing. When I did my Baccalaureat I had to take the bus each day. In the end I had to leave because I couldn't pay the fare, and I didn't go back for ten years.

'It was difficult for my father to find work. A former slave finds it difficult to find work. The former master or his family may come to look for him and offer work, but one doesn't want to do that – my father said no.

'For 10 years I worked in a little interpreting office because I knew the national languages. Finally I had enough means to go to Senegal and do a superior diploma in sociology. At the moment I work in the movement SOS Esclaves and write about the situation of slaves in Mauritania. People who are slaves or former slaves like me bear witness to their plight.' ■

Ethnic tensions between the black population (Afro-Mauritanians) and White and Black Moor (Arab-Berber) communities escalated during the year. The black refugees who fled to Senegal to escape the ethnic conflict have been particularly affected. They have been returning to their homeland throughout 2008. In February 2009 IRIN reported that more than 7,000 people have returned. Returning families have been given 400 square metres of land and support from UNHCR to help them resettle. Despite the 2007 law that criminalized the practice of slavery, there are still many issues associated with slaves and ex-slaves in Mauritania. There are said to be around 600,000 slaves in the country (20 per cent of the total population). The National Human Rights Commission has said that the law has led to the liberation of 43 people, with hundreds of cases still in the courts. Ex-slaves have difficulty constructing lives after having left bonded labour (see Box, p. 104).

A new human rights commissioner, Lemine Dadde, was installed after the coup. He has been recorded as saying that the ruling military council has budgeted more than US \$5 million to help victims of slavery. Forty-six villages in extreme poverty with high concentrations of black Africans – who make up the majority of the slave population – were earmarked to receive emergency cash assistance from February 2009.

Minorities face difficulties in the education system as neither Afro-Mauritanian national languages nor the local Hassaniya Arabic dialect are used as languages of instruction. The Constitution designates Arabic as the official national language and encourages French and Arabic bilingualism within the school system.

Namibia

Namibia faces a presidential and parliamentary election in November 2009. Its indigenous groups, in particular the San, still face exploitation. While the law says that all indigenous groups should participate equally in decisions affecting their lands, cultures, traditions and allocations of natural resources, the San and other indigenous groups have been unable to exercise these rights fully as a result of minimal access to education, limited economic opportunities and relative isolation. According to the US State Department's 2008 Human Rights Report, the Namibian government, under President Hifikepunye

Pohamba, took measures to end discrimination against the San. According to a report from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in July 2008, this included the San Development Programme, which: 'aimed specifically to accelerate San people in education, literacy and resettlement programmes'. It also included seeking their advice about proposed legislation on communal lands and increasing their access to education. Indigenous lands were effectively demarcated, but 'poorly managed' and the group remained excluded in many cases.

A major issue for minority groups in Namibia is achieving political recognition. The government has the authority to withhold recognition from traditional leaders, even in opposition to local preference. For example, in February 2008, Katjamba Tjambiru, a female chief of the Ovahimba community, claimed that the government rejected her application for official recognition as a traditional authority because she did not support the ruling party. The government subsequently recognized her nephew Vemui Tjambiru, a SWAPO (the governing party) supporter.

Many children of indigenous and rural families do not attend school. Children from poorer families are also less likely to be educated, and more likely to be involved in child labour.

The government has introduced programmes to support children to stay in school. Overall, primary school enrolment has risen to about 76 per cent for boys and 81 per cent for girls. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Social Services targeted orphans, providing grants and scholarships to keep them in school. Additionally, the government collaborated with the Namibia Agricultural Union and the Namibia Farm Workers Union to eliminate child labour through awareness campaigns.

Nigeria

The government of President Umaru Yar'Adua is now in its second year and, according to Human Rights Watch, has 'done little to address deeply-entrenched human rights problems' in the country. Since the end of military rule in 1999 more than 12,000 Nigerians have died in ethnic, religious and political violence (some estimates put the figure far higher). In November 2008, around 400 people were killed in Plateau State when Christians and Muslims clashed over the result of a local election.

Other clashes in Ebonyi, Enugu and Benue states left at least 42 dead and many more displaced.

The long-running dispute between local communities and Shell in the Niger Delta ended on 4 June 2008, when the Nigerian government took a decision to replace Shell as operator of oil concessions in Ogoni areas. Initial enthusiasm was dampened when the government announced that the concession would be taken over by the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), the upstream subsidiary of the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). International Crisis Group reported that, as Ogoni leaders sought clarification, it was first revealed that Addax Petroleum of Canada would run the operation, and then that Russian-owned Gazprom, one of the world's largest gas companies, had signed a preliminary agreement to do so. Further details are not yet clear. The Ogoni saw this development as yet another denial of their rights as local stakeholders. They are increasingly insistent in their demands for agreements that grant them rights in the exploitation of oil and gas reserves on their land.

Guerrilla activity by MEND, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, stepped up in September 2008 when the group released a statement saying that their militants had launched an 'oil war' throughout the Niger Delta against pipelines and oil production facilities, and the Nigerian soldiers that protect them. Both MEND and the Nigerian government claim to have inflicted heavy casualties on one another.

On social issues, both the new government and its predecessor have tried to make progress. Official figures indicate that primary school intake has more than doubled in Nigeria since the government introduced free primary education in 2001. However, there is still a significant gender discrepancy, particularly in the northern states. According to UNICEF, just over a quarter of girls in northern Nigeria make it to secondary school, and more than half are married before the age of 15. Overall in the north, 40 per cent of school-aged children are not in school. According to the UN, this is because of 'the low value accorded by parents to girls' education, early marriages, poverty, and low quality learning environments'.

IRIN reported from Kano in December 2008 that a community-run project to create 'girl-friendly' primary schools is 'helping to correct long-time gender inequalities in education'. Kano is

Education opportunities for the indigenous population of the Republic of Congo

By *Victor Mboundou*

The situation

In the Republic of Congo, the indigenous population is estimated to be 300,000 people (representing one-tenth of the total Congolese population). They mainly live in Lekoumou, Likouala, Plateaux and Sangha, and are extremely vulnerable to social marginalization and discrimination. Their basic rights are not recognized as they have no access to basic social services, land and resources, and they suffer from illiteracy, economic exploitation, poverty and lack of empowerment to claim their rights.

Data collected from a survey supported by UNICEF on the situation of children's education reveals that:

- more than 50 per cent of indigenous children do not have a birth certificate, compared with 19 per cent for the population as a whole;
- 65 per cent of indigenous teenagers aged 12–15 years have not had access to education, as against 39 per cent for the general population;
- 50 per cent of indigenous youth have had their first sexual experience at the age of 13 years, compared to 31 per cent of the

general population, and there is high rate of sexual violence against indigenous girls and women;

- teenagers do not have access to information, nor to life skills education opportunities, which makes them particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Efforts to address the issues

UNICEF – in partnership with the government – has supported a process of advocacy and the implementation of a programme to improve access to basic social services, strengthening the communities' ability to participate in society and setting up a legal framework for the protection of the rights of indigenous populations. As a result, the National Network for Congo's Indigenous people (RENAPAC) was established. A national consultation workshop in November 2007 led to the development of a national strategy on the issue of the indigenous people, a process that involved the government, NGOs, international agencies, the media, and other stakeholders from the sub-region.

The aim is to ensure that by 2013, 50 per cent of indigenous children have access to and achieve quality basic education, and that children and youth previously excluded from any education are provided with literacy courses for them to be fully integrated into society.

The ORA (Observation, Reflection and Action) method was introduced in 18 pilot schools. It is a teaching approach that aims to help children to manage their first language and learn French, using concepts and items they are familiar with in their everyday lives.

Achievements

- In 2008, with the support of the major partners:
- 2,461 indigenous pupils gained access to basic education, of whom 1,600 now attend ORA schools (Likouala 14, Sangha 4); 120 attend the Béné school (Gamboma); and 741 go to Lékoumou;
 - 1,720 indigenous pupils benefited from receiving basic education materials;

- 25 people were trained in the ORA method;
- 456 indigenous teenagers received literacy programmes in the pilot area of Likouala.

The overall engagement was increased and the partnership enlarged to include: UNICEF, IPHD, the World Bank, RENAPAC, the Association of Congo's Spirituals (ASPC) and the Association of Retired Teachers without Borders (GREF)

Implementing the plans quickly and effectively relies on:

- raising awareness among parents on the issue and importance of a basic education for their children;
- identifying children who are out of school and, through local organizations, associations and religious groups, organizing recruitment campaigns;
- building the capacities of RENAPAC, NGOs and indigenous peoples' associations on the issue of education;
- rehabilitating schools and infrastructure, providing learning materials and equipment;
- ensuring a stronger influence on national and local government with regard to the action plans and their implementation and working towards scale;
- supporting the implementation of the national education strategy for indigenous people through the key priorities of: school legislation, harmonization of the school calendar, training of teachers, non-formal education, mobilization of partners and resources, and literacy training;
- coordination of the actions of partners, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of the activities of the decentralized action plans.

Challenges

There are still serious challenges related to the implementation of the programme. In particular, partners need to work towards influencing national policy more strongly, and mobilizing resources more effectively towards the theme at national and international levels. ■

the region's most populous state in the north. Boys continue to outnumber girls in school, but education officials say the margin has narrowed. The government has also partnered with UNICEF and others to launch a Girls' Education Project in northern Nigeria. The UK committed \$50 million to the project, which so far has distributed free learning materials to more than 700 schools in the region.

Republic of Congo

The indigenous groups in the Republic of Congo, who constitute about 10 per cent of the country's population of about 3.6 million, have borne the brunt of ethnic division in the country. Civil society organizations say that their access to education and health is especially limited. In August 2008, IRIN reported on the discrimination against indigenous communities in the north of the country. A local leader of an indigenous group, the Sangha people, living near Ouessou, the main town in the region, said that the dominant group, the Bantus, disparaged the 'Pygmies' for their way of life. He also said that in school, 'indigenous children are often ridiculed by their peers'.

Toutou Ngamiye, president of the Association for the Socio-Cultural Promotion of Congo Pygmies (APSPC), said it was necessary to promote literacy and the education of indigenous children to help the people out of extreme poverty and dependence, (see Box, p. 106). According to Ngamiye: 'Over 40 years have passed since the country's independence and unfortunately there are fewer than 10 Pygmy graduates and very few have completed secondary school.'

As part of the process of recognizing their rights, Congo organized the first International Forum of Autochthonous Peoples of the Forests of Central Africa (FIPAC) in 2007, bringing together delegates from all over the region. A law to protect the rights of indigenous people is also being considered.

Rwanda

Government attempts to end genocide trials continued in Rwanda. Nearly fifteen years after the genocide that killed three-quarters of the Tutsi population, the government is concentrating on the economic development of the country. During 2008, most of the serious genocide cases were shifted from conventional courts to community-based *gacaca* courts. Rwandan troops re-engaged in ethnic

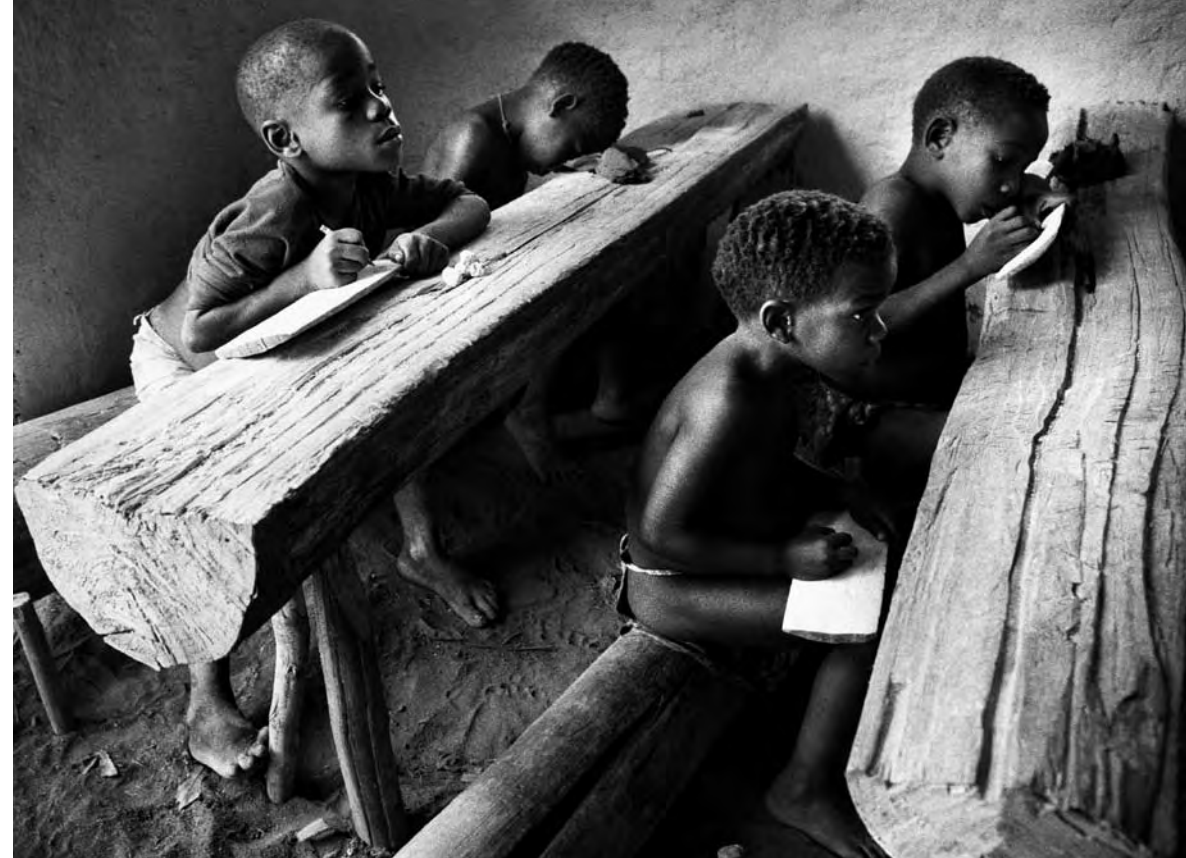
Right: Bambuti children sit on wooden logs in a classroom using pencils and wooden boards to make notes. Ituri province, DRC. *Sven Torfinn/Panos.*

conflict in January 2009, when hundreds of troops entered Democratic Republic of Congo to back a DRC operation against Rwandan Hutu rebels in the east of the country. According to IRIN reports, a government spokesman, Lambert Mende, said that the operation's aim was to 'disarm the Interahamwe' and repatriate them 'voluntarily or by force'.

The Batwa in Rwanda still struggle for any kind of formal recognition. Given the country's past, the Rwandan government does not recognize ethnic groupings. According to a 2008 MRG report, recent historical evidence has suggested that the Hutu/Tutsi ethnic differentiation was the product of a colonial perspective. The Batwa maintain that their case is different, arguing that Batwa identity cannot be conflated with Hutu and Tutsi identity, and that their distinct history and culture sets them apart. As in Burundi, there is a lack of formal census data but rough estimates put the Batwa population at around 33,000 in Rwanda. A director of the Girubuntu programme, which runs infant and primary schools in Rwanda, explains: 'We don't count them. We can do it if there is a need, but there has not been any need to count who is Batwa, who is what, because we are trying to counter discrimination.'

In 2007, the principal organization representing the Batwa in Rwanda had to change its name from CAURWA (Community of Indigenous People of Rwanda) to COPORWA (Community of Rwandese Potters) to adhere to the government's rule on not allowing formal recognition of distinct ethnic or indigenous groups. This was a setback for activists, and in the last year they have reported continuing discrimination. COPORWA particularly noted discrimination in rural schools, which lack the policy of non-discrimination and tolerance found in some Kigali schools.

According to the Ministry of Education, Rwanda has one of the highest primary net enrolment ratios in the region (92 per cent in 2004). But there is no mention of the Batwa in the government's education strategies. The Ministry for Local Government's (MINALOC) Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs programme has a system to identify vulnerable members of the community and through this could



support Batwa in light of their economic, rather than ethnic status. Similarly, educational support is provided for Batwa children through a scheme aimed at helping poorer children through school. This scheme uses lists compiled by Batwa welfare organizations, although there are no statistics available on exactly how many Batwa children have been assisted. Some Batwa community members would like to see a dedicated grant system, based on the model used to support genocide survivors, so that school leavers can go on to university.

Somalia

The situation in Somalia deteriorated further during 2008. The conflict between Somalia's weak Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and a fragmented insurgency continued, killing more than 6,000 civilians. It is estimated that more than 870,000 civilians have fled the capital, Mogadishu, since the beginning of 2007. A political process to stabilize the country continued; the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) reached the Djibouti Agreement on 9 June and began to implement its terms. On 30 January 2009,

Somalia's parliament, in Djibouti, met to elect a new president, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. In an interview with IRIN, President Ahmed said that 'rebuilding the unity of our people and nation will be one of our biggest challenges'. He maintained that he was open to 'dialogue and negotiations'. However, according to the US State Department, minority groups (who make up 22 per cent of the country's population) were generally excluded from 'effective participation in governing institutions and were subject to discrimination in employment, judicial proceedings, and access to public services'. Data on minority groups is sorely lacking, given that they make up nearly a quarter of Somalia's population.

Intermarriage between minority groups (including the Bantu – the largest minority group – the Benadiri, Brawanese, Faqayaqub, Hawrarsame, Madhiban, Muse Dheryo, Rer Hamar, Swahili, Tumul, Yaxar and Yibir) and the majority clans remained restricted. And minorities, who did not have their own militias, suffered disproportionately from the violence, including the looting of their land and property by militias and majority clan members.

Minorities in Somalia suffered in other ways too.

The Somali press reported on the Eyle community, a marginalized hunter-gatherer group, living in the drought-stricken Middle Shabelle Region. An estimated population of around 10,000 were lacking food and water due to droughts and high food prices. Those representing minorities come under attack. In an interview with Amnesty International in 2009 Zam Zam Abdullahi, a human rights activist working for the Coalition for Grassroots Women Organizations, described how she received threats and her office was targeted.

Women in Somalia continued to experience widespread discrimination – the laws prohibiting rape in the country remain largely unenforced and, according to the US State Department: ‘NGOs documented patterns of rape perpetrated with impunity, particularly of women displaced from their homes due to civil conflict or who were members of minority clans.’ Women remain ‘systematically subordinated’. Female genital mutilation (FGM) remains a major problem in Somalia. According to UNICEF, it has a prevalence of about 95 per cent in the country, primarily being performed on girls between the ages of 4 and 11.

Education is a major problem in Somalia – statistics are unreliable because of the conflict, but the latest data (from 2003–4) suggests that there is a 19.9 per cent enrolment ratio, one of the lowest in the world. UNICEF says that ‘education and formal classroom learning opportunities are limited and unavailable for a majority of children in Somalia’, and only a third of those who are educated are girls. There is also a lack of female teachers – only about 13 per cent of teachers in Somalia are women. Most existing schools are in urban areas, while more remote areas lack any facilities.

In November 2008 IRIN reported on the issue of children from minority groups in Somalia, and particularly Somaliland, missing out on school. The Ubah Social Welfare Organization said that the low economic status and ‘social exclusion’ of minority groups such as the Gaboye, Tumul and Yibir, were the main obstacles stopping children going to school. In collaboration with UNICEF, the organization has built an education centre for minority children in Daami and enrolled almost 300 pupils. Parents from minority groups said that discrimination prevented them from sending their children to public schools. Minority groups used to have a representative in the lower house of Somaliland’s

parliament but the seat was lost in the last election. However, two officials from minority communities – the Deputy Minister of Health and Labour, Mahdi Osman Buri, and Jirde Sa’id Mohamoud, a member of the standing committee of the upper house of parliament – remain in government.

Sudan

Four years after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended two decades of conflict between North and South Sudan, fears have grown that progress is stalling. A January 2009 report by the Royal Institute for International Affairs highlights the flaws in the CPA, saying that the parties involved (the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement [SPLM], and the National Congress Party) have used the country’s oil wealth to build armies and that there are still major issues around border demarcation. These problems will be heightened with the presidential and parliamentary elections due to take place by July 2009; however, delays in preparations for these elections have created challenges of their own.

A long-delayed census, necessary for the elections to take place, was eventually carried out in April 2008, although it is yet to be made public (the date of release has been repeatedly postponed). The highly politicized process was beset by logistical and security problems. Many in South Sudan objected that the census would be inaccurate due to the estimated 2 million internally displaced Southerners still living in the North. In a massive blow for minorities the government decided not to break down census data by religion or ethnicity. Officials said that such information could open old wounds and increase tensions. In Darfur, rebel leaders and victims of the violence wanted the census postponed until there was increased stability and camp-dwellers were able to return home. As it is, many camps were deemed ‘no-go’ areas for the census-takers, despite attempts by UN negotiators to persuade camp leaders to embrace the process.

According to the US State Department’s Human Rights report for 2008, the Muslim majority and the government continued to discriminate against ethnic minorities in almost every aspect of society in the north of the country. There were also reports of discrimination against Arabs and Muslims by individuals in the Christian-dominated south. Non-Arab Muslims and Muslims from tribes and

‘There is no future ... they don’t think about education’

Amna Abdallah Osman Wadi tells *Preti Taneja* about the lost youth of Darfur

Amna, 33, is a graduate from a university in Sudan with a Master’s in Peace Development Diplomacy. She is also a member of the Zaghawa. Since 2003, the Zaghawa have been caught up in the conflict in Darfur, and Amna is deeply concerned about the long-term impact of the conflict on the children who are growing up in a culture of war.

In 2008 it was estimated that in a five-year span about 300,000 people have died as a result of the war, famine and disease. An estimated 2.3 million people have been internally displaced in the region. Among those struggling to survive in vast IDP camps, about 1 million are children. The deprivations of camp life, including the ongoing lack of access to education, point to a bleak future for the generations to come.

‘[Our] community is 40 per cent of the population of Darfur and the conflict has affected access to education. There is no transport, no communication and most young children live in camps,’ Amna says. Things have got worse and worse, she adds, saying, ‘We had 2,500 children not enrolled in school in 2007. Since then there has been conflict and displacement, therefore now [there are] more [displaced].’

With restricted access to education and social activities, it is difficult for children to imagine any future. Amna says, ‘There is no future, they are lost [in] between. All they think is about how to get food for tomorrow. They don’t think about education.’ She says the situation is the same even for those who do not live in camps.

Where opportunities are present, institutional discrimination poses a barrier for the children from Amna’s people. She says, ‘Forms for enrolment ask for tribe; if you say you are from a targeted minority, you can’t get a place. Scientific education like medicine or engineering is blocked for minorities.’

Girls, according to Amna, face multiple discrimination, within their own tribes as well as from external threats. She says they are viewed as being, ‘born for marriage and taking care of men’, and that their rights are further violated in the form of early marriage and forced circumcision. Finally, they are highly vulnerable to sexual abuse both within and outside camps.

Peace and security are a long way off for the people of Darfur. Amna says, ‘There is the Darfur Peace Agreement with the intervention of the international community since 2005/6, but no change on the ground.’

In the meantime, it is essential that any possible future for the children is not ignored. That is why Amna and her people are struggling to bring attention to issues such as education and welfare. ‘We are trying to raise our voices to UN and NGOs, so they can try and see,’ she says. While the world is preoccupied by larger political battles, it is vital, as Amna says, to ‘try and see’ that the children of Darfur deserve the chance an education might give them, for a life beyond the conflict. ■

Additional reporting by Madeeha Ansari

sects not affiliated with the ruling party, such as in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, said that they were treated as second-class citizens, and experienced discrimination when applying for government jobs and contracts in the North and government-controlled southern areas.

The State Department report also refers to the ‘hundreds of politically and ethnically-motivated disappearances, particularly of Zaghawas living in

Khartoum and Omdurman’. The government was held responsible for these. Thousands of the estimated 15,000 Dinka women and children abducted between 1983 and 1999 remain unaccounted for. UNICEF estimates that 4,000 Dinka abductees remain in South Darfur – far from their ancestral villages in South Sudan.

Displacement has drastically affected the education of children in Sudan. In October 2008,

UNICEF reported from the contested area of oil-rich Abyei, where 50,000 people have been displaced since May 2008. Many have arrived in Agok, and UNICEF has attempted to provide emergency schooling to children; however a local headmaster, Peter Majok Deng, expressed concern over overcrowding and lack of resources.

In more positive developments, UNHCR reported in February 2009 that over 300,000 refugees had returned to South Sudan. A tripartite commission comprising representatives of UNHCR and the governments of Sudan and Kenya met in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, to discuss the further repatriation of refugees, and the development of educational facilities in the area.

The situation for women in Sudan remains dire, with rape continuing to be a systematic problem. Rapes go unreported because victims fear being arrested – unless a victim can provide proof of her rape, she is liable to be charged with the capital offence of adultery. The law also remains deficient in not specifically prohibiting sexual discrimination or domestic violence.

Darfur

Over the course of 2008, the nature of the conflict in Darfur has changed, with further splintering of the parties involved and an increased number of confrontations. Aerial bombardments and ground attacks were launched by the government in West Darfur in February 2008 and in mid-May the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched an assault on Khartoum which left at least 200 dead. This was the first assault on the capital in 30 years. The hybrid UN/AU peacekeeping force (UNAMID) began deploying on 31 December 2007 and faced difficulties in its first months, including staff shortages and attacks on peacekeepers (one in July 2008 killed several members of the force).

The ethnic dimension of the conflict is complex. According to the International Crisis Group: 'Inter-Arab dissension has added new volatility to the situation on the ground.'

The recent resumption of conflict in the South Darfur town of Muhajiriya has had a particularly damaging impact on civilians. Fighting between government forces, the Sudanese Liberation Army/Mini Minnawi faction and JEM has claimed at least 30 lives and forced 30,000 people from their homes.

One of the reasons for the escalation of violence, according to Sudan expert Alex de Waal, was the impending decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges related to war crimes in Darfur against President Omar al-Bashir.

UNICEF has reported progress, however, thanks to the presence of humanitarian agencies. In education, primary school enrolment has increased from 516,000 in 2006 to more than 976,000 in 2008 according to UNICEF and Ministry of Education data. Whether this progress can be sustained is another matter.

Women in Darfur remain highly vulnerable to sexual violence. A Human Rights Watch 2008 report stated that women and girls are 'now as likely to be assaulted in periods of calm as during attacks on their villages and towns'. Women in IDP camps in the region are particularly targeted, and rapes and attacks are carried out by government forces, militias and rebel soldiers alike. For those in the camps, education remains particularly inaccessible (see Box, p. 111).

Tanzania

The indigenous communities of Tanzania include the Maasai and the Barbaig, both pastoralist groups, and the Hadzabe who are forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers. They are all extremely vulnerable, as their access to their traditional lands is not currently recognized under Tanzanian land laws. For example, a report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (published in May 2008 by Community Research and Development Services, CORDS) described how the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority prioritized conservation and tourism interests over the welfare of indigenous peoples. The Authority has the power to prohibit, restrict, or control residence or settlement in the area; it has used this to restrict the movements of the local indigenous Maasai population and banned them from cultivating certain areas. This has made the practice of pastoralism impossible and denied the Maasai pastoralists their right to livelihood.

On 10 February 2008, more than 5,000 residents of Irkeepusi village within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area threatened to demonstrate against the regulations imposed by the authority. This protest was not able to change the rules, however. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority still reserves the right to decide where the

Maasai pastoralists may graze their cattle and the right to evict or relocate families who they deem not to be 'original' inhabitants of the area. More than 40 families have been issued with letters by the Authority warning them of relocation to the Soit Sambu village in Loliondo division, approximately 300 km from their homes. Maasai in Soit Sambu village in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area have also been threatened. MRG has made a submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on their behalf. CERD has responded to the state party, although details are yet to be made public.

Both the Barbaig and the Hadzabe have also suffered discrimination at the hands of the authorities. Attempts to evict the Barbaig from their land have met with fierce resistance, for example their response to the leasing of Barbaig grazing land in the Babati District in Northern Tanzania to a foreign investor to set up a tourist camp. Police arrested 14 villagers, alleged 'ringleaders' undermining the district authorities who were encouraging the foreign investment. The villagers were released without charge but the situation was not resolved and at least 45 families are still under threat of eviction.

The Hadzabe, who live in the Mbulu district in northern Tanzania are both the smallest in number and probably the most marginalized group in Tanzania. In 2007, it was reported that the Mbulu District Council was giving away some of their land to the United Arab Emirates royal family for hunting. This was supposedly in return for investment in a secondary school, health clinics and roads in the area – but the Hadzabe were never consulted. PINGOs FORUM, an umbrella NGO that advocates for the rights of the indigenous peoples, made an intervention to help the Hadzabe secure their lands. Some activists were arrested on charges of breaching the peace after they voiced their opposition at a meeting.

Other reports of evictions emerged during the course of 2008. A report from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) published in June 2008 revealed how, from May 2006 to May 2007, large numbers of Sukuma agro-pastoralists and IIParakuiyo, Taturu and Barbaig pastoralists and their livestock had been evicted from the Usangu Plains in Mbarali district. The IWGIA estimates that more than 400 families and 300,000 livestock were moved, and that a large number of

livestock had died or been lost in the process: 'The eviction ... was implemented by a heavily armed ... regular police, anti-poaching unit and game wardens ... [at] short notice and [in] great haste and caused a lot of suffering for the pastoralists.'

The report described a range of human rights abuses committed during the eviction: 'theft of livestock; imposition of unjustified fines for environmental degradation; extortion of bribes; subjection of individuals to torture; the forced separation of families; children, women and elderly left without protection and food; disruption of social networks and safety nets, denial of access to education to children; death of large numbers of livestock, and widespread hunger.' A Commission of Enquiry presented its findings to the president in June 2007, but the affected families have neither been compensated nor helped in their move to southern Tanzania. Many are now completely destitute.

Another victimized group in Tanzania are the Albinos who are targeted on cultural (witchcraft) or superstitious grounds. There have been local reports of murders of Albino children. The issue has attracted international attention, and condemnation from the UN and the US government.

Access to education is problematic for indigenous communities, in many cases through sheer lack of facilities. In Ngorongoro, for example, efforts to build secondary schools have been blocked by bureaucratic procedures on the pretext that such areas are ecologically sensitive, though hotels and resorts are being built in places where schools have been prohibited. The president of Tanzania is clearly conscious of the country's need to progress in terms of education, but in March 2008 he pinpointed 'mobility among pastoralists as having the potential of causing failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as far as primary school enrolment is concerned'. According to CORDS, this attitude reflects a fundamental 'lack of appreciation on the part of the Tanzanian government of the special plight of the indigenous peoples'.

Uganda

Although the Ugandan Government of President Yoweri Museveni and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) concluded peace talks to end the long-running war in northern Uganda, the final accord was not signed by LRA leader Joseph Kony. Now flushed out of their bases in north-eastern



Left: Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) provides Karamojong children with schooling close to their homes, and of a sort that would not alienate them from everyday life in a herding community. *Crispin Hughes/Panos.*

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and split into smaller groups, the LRA are accused of mass murder, rape and pillage in both the DRC and Southern Sudan. They have been particularly violent since December 2008 when the Ugandan government, with the support of the DRC and Southern Sudan armies, launched an offensive against them. Hopes for a peaceful end to the conflict rose on 30 January 2009, however, when IRIN reported that a senior LRA commander, Okot Odhiambo, had defected. Some opposition leaders expressed doubt as to whether these reports were true.

The political instability and conflict in Uganda has badly affected the minority Batwa community – for example, on the country's western border with the DRC, which is close to the home districts of many Batwa communities. However, there is a lack of official data on the communities and the government does not officially recognize the Batwa as indigenous. According to the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), an NGO representing the Batwa throughout the Great Lakes Region, there are approximately 6,700 Batwa living within the state boundaries of Uganda. According to an MRG report in 2008, the Ugandan Equal Opportunities

Committee has conducted a survey of ethnic groups in Uganda, but it has not been published and the Batwa are not acknowledged to be a priority.

In a September 2008 report, the FPP described recent evictions and exclusions of the Ugandan Batwa from their forests, and their endemic marginalization within Ugandan society. The FPP calculates that almost half of the Batwa squat on other people's land, while working in bonded labour (essentially slavery) for non-Batwa masters. Those who live on land donated by charities still experience poorer levels of health care, education and employment than their non-Batwa neighbours.

Batwa children have historically faced extreme exclusion in accessing and staying in school. Discrimination against children from ethnic minorities, and the quality of education they receive, were identified as major issues for dialogue between the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Uganda. Uganda's Equal Opportunities Commission Act 2007 established a committee to monitor and evaluate state bodies, NGOs and businesses to ensure that they comply with equal opportunities and affirmative action policies. Education is identified as a policy priority area. The Act could significantly help the situation of the Batwa in Uganda, and stand as an example to other governments in the region.

Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), first formulated in 1997, provides the framework for education policy and planning towards the attainment of the MDGs. In the most recent January 2008 version, areas identified for intervention include shifting public expenditure allocation in favour of broader access and quality to basic education and improving retention. However the Ugandan government is now dropping the PEAP in favour of a National Development Plan, which is more focused on economic poverty than the basic social dimensions of poverty affecting the Batwa. The civil society consultation process which is under way as the PEAP is replaced by the National Development Plan may allow Batwa organizations and other civil society bodies the

opportunity to press their case to the Uganda government and donors.

The Karamojong people in Uganda has experienced similar difficulties to the Batwa in accessing education – fuelled in part by a long-held suspicion of the formal education system. According to the UNICEF Uganda country report 2008, in Karamoja, where communities are largely pastoralist or agro-pastoralist, complex armed conflicts stemming largely from inter-communal large-scale violent cattle raiding and exacerbated by climate change, have resulted in enrolment and completion rates as low as 6–8 per cent in four of five districts. Girls' enrolment been particularly affected. Severe poverty is another barrier to access; MRG has reported that often the Karamoja cannot afford to pay for school materials, or lose children's labour during school hours.

Education is a key tool for peace building in such an environment. Non-formal education schemes such as Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) for northern Uganda and Alternative Basic Education for Karamojong (ABEK) were included in the Education Act (2008). They seek to make education more relevant by including topics such as animal husbandry, and health and sanitation, which are not offered by the national curriculum, and offer a more flexible schedule. These innovations can help to soften parental resistance to sending their children to school.

UNICEF has reported that such programmes have sparked a debate on whether they are indeed beneficial or if the emphasis should be placed on formal schooling. Difficulty moving from non-formal education programmes into more formal schooling has impacted negatively on student retention in ABEK, as well as similar interventions offering mobile schooling or boarding schools.

In 2007 and 2008, the Go-to-School, Back-to-School, Stay in School (GBS) campaign, created after national-level consultation between government, civil society partners and UN agencies, increased enrolment in both northern and north-eastern Uganda. In Kamwenge District, for example, comparison of pre- and post-campaign data indicates an increase of 14 per cent (15 per cent for boys; 14 per cent for girls) over a six-month period. Girls' Education Movement (GEM) statistics indicate that 299 children (141 girls) enrolled in school as a result of GEM mobilization. In Kitgum and Pader districts, 1,416 learners (64 per cent girls)

were mainstreamed into formal primary schools through the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). Another 1,891 learners (91 per cent girls) are accessing primary education in the ALP centres under the tutelage of all-female community instructors. In north-east region (Karamoja), there are an additional 35,643 learners (59 per cent girls) enrolled in ABEK centres.

Smaller minority groups in Uganda, such as the Acholi, and other minorities such as the Alur, Kakwa, Lugbara and Madi in north-west Uganda, continue to be disproportionately disadvantaged. Many Acholi children have been abducted to serve as child soldiers and have missed out on education entirely. The Acholi used to enjoy among the highest per capita representation in Uganda's higher education. Now, however, Acholi children lag behind the rest of the nation in all educational areas.

Western Sahara

Talks between Morocco and the Polisario Front (the independence movement of Western Sahara) resumed in March 2008 in New York, with Mauritania and Algeria also attending. However, they quickly stalled. Representatives from the government of Morocco and the Polisario Front have now met four times since August 2007 to negotiate the status of Western Sahara, but there has been no progress since the UN envoy to the territory stated in April 2008 that independence is unrealistic.

The exiled government of the self-proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is based at the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, which it controls. It also claims to control the part of Western Sahara to the east of the Moroccan Wall, known as the Free Zone. The area has a very small population, estimated to be approximately 30,000. The Moroccan government, however, views this area as a no-man's land patrolled by UN troops. The SADR government whose troops also patrol the area regard it as the liberated territories and have proclaimed a village in the area, Bir Lehlou as SADR's provisional capital.

The conflict in Western Sahara has resulted in many serious human rights abuses, including the displacement of tens of thousands of Saharawi civilians from the country and the expulsion of tens of thousands of Moroccan civilians by the Algerian government from Algeria.

Former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

attempted to break the impasse between the two sides during a visit to North Africa in September 2008 (while still in office), but the pursuit of al-Qaeda networks in Morocco and Algeria instead dominated her visit. A Human Rights Watch report released in December 2008 claimed that Morocco was violating 'the rights to expression, association and assembly in Western Sahara'. The report also said that human rights had improved in the Saharawi refugee camps managed by the Polisario Front in Algeria, although it claimed that the Polisario marginalizes those who oppose its leadership. The population of the camps is vulnerable because of the camps' isolation, the lack of any regular independent human rights monitoring and reporting, and Algeria's claim that the Polisario, rather than Algeria itself, is responsible for protecting the human rights of the camps' residents. The UNHCR's plans for voluntary repatriation of Saharawi refugees have had to be repeatedly put on hold, due to the continuing political deadlock.

The status of education in the refugee camps has improved in recent years. Although teaching materials remain scarce, literacy has received welcome attention and the Polisario Front claim that nearly 90 per cent of refugees are literate, compared to less than 10 per cent in 1975. Thousands have also received university education in foreign countries as part of aid packages (mainly in Algeria, Cuba and Spain).

The Moroccan government has also invested in the social and economic development of Western Sahara. El-Aaiun in particular has been targeted, and has grown quickly. Several thousand Saharawis study in Moroccan universities and literacy rates are estimated at some 50 per cent of the population.

Zimbabwe

In the March 2008 parliamentary election, Zanu-PF, the party led by Robert Mugabe, lost its majority in parliament for the first time in 28 years. After months of turmoil, his party won the run-off election in June, after opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (of the Movement for Democratic Change), the only challenger, pulled out on the grounds that a free and fair election was not possible because of violent attacks on his supporters. Under a power-sharing deal signed with the opposition in September 2008, President Mugabe remained head of state, head of the cabinet and head of the armed services. Further talks were put off until

January 2009, when Tsvangirai declared his party's willingness to join the power-sharing government. Tsvangirai was sworn in as prime minister in February 2009.

In a speech after his inauguration, Tsvangirai called for an end to human rights abuses and political violence. However reports in the *Zimbabwe Times* said that Tsvangirai had come under fire for not achieving an adequate 'tribal balance' in his selections for nominations to the cabinet. The Ndebele community was particularly outraged as only one Ndebele representative was included. The selections were instead mostly dominated by Shona Karangas, the biggest tribal group in Zimbabwe. After Mugabe's predominantly Shona government, the Ndebele thought they would achieve greater recognition from Tsvangirai. The group, who make up 20 per cent of Zimbabwe's population, say they have borne the brunt of the country's economic crisis. Members of the community called Tsvangirai's selections 'a betrayal' of the community; however others suggested he had simply chosen the best people for the jobs and had not been considering tribal issues in his selections.

European communities in Zimbabwe faced further hardship during 2008. By June 2008, it was reported that only 280 white farmers remained and all of their farms were invaded. On 28 June, the day of Mugabe's inauguration as president, several white farmers who had protested at the seizure of their land were beaten and burned by Robert Mugabe's supporters. A British-born farmer, Ben Freeth and his in-laws, Mike and Angela Campbell, were abducted and found badly beaten. Mr Campbell, speaking from hospital in Harare, vowed to continue with his legal fight for his farm. Then, on 28 November 2008, a Southern African Development Community (SADC) tribunal ruled that the government had racially discriminated against Mike Campbell, denied him legal redress and prevented him from defending his farm. The tribunal also found that the Campbells were entitled to compensation for the expropriation of their lands.

The situation of Zimbabwe's people, and in particular the country's children, is horrifying. One in five Zimbabwean children (an estimated 1.3 million) are orphans; many are out of school because their guardians or parents cannot afford school fees and uniforms; others have been affected by the death of one or both parents. UNICEF has made the rising

levels of child abuse a major advocacy issue.

In February 2009, UNICEF released data regarding the crisis in education in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas. In a country which used to have the best education system in Africa, 94 per cent of schools in rural Zimbabwe remain closed and 66 of 70 schools visited were abandoned. UNICEF reported that: 'in the only fully operational school found during visits, a third of pupils were reporting for classes'. Many of the abandoned schools have been vandalized.

The year 2008 saw a massive decrease in numbers of teachers in schools, a plummeting school attendance rate from over 80 per cent to 20 per cent, and postponement of national exams. In 2009, schools were opened two weeks late, exam results have not been released and learning only resumed in some urban areas for the few who could afford to subsidize teachers' salaries and pay exorbitant tuition fees in US dollars. UNICEF has invested \$17 million over the last two years in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture – to help 100,000 children with school fees and to provide books and learning materials as well as constructing classrooms and toilets. However the lack of teachers is still critical. ■