

Executive Summary

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2014 – Freedom from Hate

From anti-Roma demonstrations in Hungary to armed attacks on indigenous activists in Brazil, displacement of Rohingya communities in Burma to religious violence in Central African Republic, hatred towards marginalized communities takes a variety of forms and in many countries is a daily reality, not an isolated event. Hate crime, while often presented as an abnormal occurrence, is generally a reflection of the broader context in which it occurs. Economic deprivation, political division, weak rule of law and other factors can contribute – but an underlying element is the ongoing discrimination and marginalization that minorities and indigenous peoples face.

Very often, targeted violence has a purpose. Anti-migrant rhetoric in Greece or sectarian violence in India, for example, can serve to consolidate the power base of right-wing organizations. Pejorative representations of indigenous groups in Guatemala or Uganda may provide justification for further exclusion or eviction from ancestral lands. It may even, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), drive the continuation of civil conflicts that benefit or enrich particular groups. This is why protection for vulnerable communities must also involve a broader societal transformation to address the underlying drivers of insecurity.

Hate crimes are typically communicative, sending a message not only to the individuals targeted but also to their communities. This is especially evident in gender-based violence against minority and indigenous women, with rape and sexual assault employed as a weapon of war or an instrument of oppression to fragment and humiliate entire civilian populations. While this is particularly the case during armed conflict, it may also occur as a means of enforcing and maintaining traditional hierarchies. In South Asia, for example, Dalit women are regularly subjected to sexual violence as a result of their secondary status – and this may often be in response to their demands for basic rights. In July 2013, a Dalit woman in Nepal who reported her attempted rape by an upper-caste man was covered in soot and garlanded with shoes by a mob of 60 people, with the assault videotaped and uploaded onto YouTube.

Hostility towards minorities and indigenous peoples can range from intimidation or denigration to murder and indiscriminate attacks. A continuum exists between discrimination and hate speech and more violent extremes, including mass killing. This is why the prevalence of demeaning or inflammatory language in political discourse, sermons, the media and online are critical issues with very real implications for marginalized communities. From India to Egypt, Russia to Pakistan, there were many instances during the year where rumours and incitement led to violence and loss of life.

Nevertheless, the more high-profile incidents of hate crime and hate speech represent only a fraction of the everyday violence, abuse and harassment confronting minorities and indigenous peoples. A key aspect of hate crime and hate speech is the fact that it is under-reported, especially when governments or societies are able to overlook or tolerate entrenched patterns of discrimination against particular communities. In many countries, in fact, hate crime and hate speech are not legally recognized. Even when reporting mechanisms are in place, typically only a small portion of victims are willing to seek justice, often because of their vulnerable position and their lack of faith in authorities to support them.

One of the main aims of the 2014 edition of the *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, focusing on 'Freedom from hate', is to bring greater attention to the sometimes unseen or overlooked effects of hate crime and hate speech. As the report documents, these are often intimately connected with inequality and discrimination in other areas, including basic rights and services such as health and education. The consequences may extend far beyond the immediate impacts, undermining political participation, economic livelihoods and even entire cultures.

Developing a clear recognition of what constitutes hate crime and hate speech is critical, particularly in regions where at present no legal definitions exist. Nevertheless, even within countries that do have legislation on these issues, the scope and definitions of these

acts vary widely. Furthermore, these laws can prove detrimental to vulnerable groups or simply may not be applied in practice. What is also needed is a stronger public awareness of the many forms of hatred minorities and indigenous peoples experience, the depth and severity of their impacts and the ways that these can be countered at every level of society – not only within the law, political discourse and the media, but also in every area of everyday life.

While the *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2014* documents disheartening levels of violence, harassment and verbal abuse across the world, it also includes many examples of how hatred is being countered by legislators, politicians, journalists and communities by addressing the root causes. In Burma, for example, where hate speech has proliferated in recent years, activists are now actively promoting 'flower language' to encourage a more positive understanding of the country's diversity. Elsewhere, in Lebanon some online users have responded to sectarian hate speech on social media by organizing themselves into informal 'anti-confessional police'. In Rwanda, where radio was used during the 1994 genocide to incite violence, the organization Radio la Benevolencija has rolled out popular radio soap operas raising awareness about the dangers of inflammatory language. While the media and online platforms have expanded the opportunities for vilification and incitement, these same tools can also be used to counter hate speech and improve representations of minorities and indigenous peoples.

Other initiatives have tackled hatred in specific settings. In Pakistan, the National Commission for Justice and Peace carefully reviews the context of school textbooks to reduce the prevalence of discriminatory material in the classroom. In Brazil, to tackle racism in football, organizers have taken steps to present the 2014 World Cup as 'the Cup against Racism'. In the Dominican Republic, with support from MRG, the organization Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano Haitiana (MUDHA) has been challenging commonly held racist stereotypes through street theatre. Though there is still a long way to go before

minorities and indigenous peoples across the world are able to enjoy freedom from hate, these and other initiatives highlighted in the report show some of the ways forward.

Recommendations

Governments should:

- Provide a clear legal framework for the suppression of hate crimes, including hate speech which passes the criminal threshold. This should include appropriate penalties for perpetrators, to address the climate of impunity, and be accompanied by adequately resourced and trained law enforcement mechanisms, including specialized police officers and prosecutors.
- Address the widespread problem of under-reporting of hate crime by instituting comprehensive data collection, covering a broad range of bias motivations and crimes. The data should be analyzed and published on a regular basis.
- Provide non-discriminatory justice mechanisms that are readily accessible to minorities and indigenous peoples. This will involve tackling local patterns of inequality or stigmatization to support victims through every stage of the process, especially minority and indigenous women, who may face even greater barriers to accessing justice.
- Recognize that hatred against minorities and indigenous peoples operates on a continuum, from hate speech to mass killing, requiring a particular focus on curbing inflammatory rhetoric in fragile contexts, or where it is promoted by public officials. Conflict prevention and resolution efforts should always be informed by consultation with vulnerable minorities and include wider measures to address discrimination and inadequate protection.
- Develop effective mechanisms to monitor and counteract incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence in media, religious institutions, schools and other public platforms, including social media, while also engaging these channels to counter misinformation and provide

positive presentations of minorities and indigenous peoples. However, these mechanisms should not be applied to violate freedom of expression or used to target minorities and indigenous peoples.

- Identify and address the drivers of hatred towards minorities and indigenous peoples, including the perpetuation of hierarchies and unequal power relations, particularly with regard to minority and indigenous women. To tackle this wider context, authorities should commit to expanding meaningful political participation, service access and livelihood opportunities for marginalized groups.
- Implement a holistic strategy that reflects the social as well as legal dimensions of hate speech and hate crime, incorporating measures such as media campaigns, awareness raising, reviews of school curriculums and community reconciliation processes. This should involve a wide range of actors, including religious leaders, politicians, government officials, journalists, civil society and local communities, to tackle the root causes of discrimination.

Regional overviews – hatred against minorities and indigenous peoples during 2013

In **East Africa**, ongoing insecurity across the region during 2013 impacted particularly on minorities and indigenous peoples. In South Sudan, the outbreak of civil conflict in December meant that by January 2014 335,000 civilians were internally displaced, with another 78,000 having fled the country. However, inter-ethnic violence and hate speech occurred throughout 2013. These tensions provided an enabling context for the subsequent outbreak of violence in civil conflict in December. Elsewhere in the region, minority groups have been targeted as part of government security crackdowns. In Kenya, following an attack by al-Shabab militants on a shopping mall in Nairobi, the Kenyan-Somali community reported increasing incidents of hate speech from other Kenyans and increased harassment from authorities. Elsewhere in the country,

encouraged in part by hate speech and rumours, Pokomo and Orma communities engaged in bloody revenge attacks at the start of the year.

In **Southern Africa**, derogatory stereotypes and denigrating language have reinforced the marginalization of communities such as the San in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In South Africa, foreign migrants have also been subject to hate speech as well as physical violence, including a number of apparently targeted killings of Somalis during 2013. One positive step was the government's announcement in September of plans to draft a policy framework on hate crimes – a step that could help increase protection for vulnerable minority groups. However, as elsewhere, legislation alone may have limited effectiveness without broader measures.

In **Central Africa**, ethnic and religion divisions continued to drive conflict during 2013. In Central African Republic, hate speech and targeted attacks during the year were responsible for creating religious violence that by the end of the year had internally displaced 935,000 civilians and driven 75,000 others from the country. In DRC, where more than 40 armed groups operate, ethnic violence in the eastern part of the country – including high levels of sexual violence – has persisted. In **West Africa**, the French military intervention against Islamist militants in Mali at the beginning of the year was successful in pushing back insurgents, but national security forces have been accused of engaging in violent reprisals against Arab, Tuareg and Peuhl. Guinea also experienced ethnic violence during the year. In Nigeria, the Islamist group Boko Haram escalated its attacks on government and civilian targets, including schools. In both Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, legal cases were brought against security personnel and officials for their involvement in previous human rights abuses – an important step in addressing the climate of impunity for perpetrators, despite some concerns about the proceedings.

In **North America**, although the context varies widely, historical patterns of colonialism and segregation continue to be felt. In Mexico, a number of indigenous activists were abducted and murdered during the year – a reflection of

their wider exclusion and limited rights. Migrants from here and other countries in Central and South America to the United States have also been vulnerable to targeted attacks, though hate crimes against Latinos in the country have reportedly declined as attitudes towards migrants have improved. Nevertheless, migrants, African Americans and other minorities are still subject to vilification, particularly with the apparent rise of hate groups in recent years, in part due to anxieties over the country's changing demographic. Jews also continue to be subject to verbal attacks. Nevertheless, the majority of bias-motivated incidents are perpetrated not by members of organized groups but by individuals, including a number reported in universities across the United States during 2013.

In **Central America**, a recent history of violence against indigenous peoples in particular continues to impact on these groups today. In Guatemala, attacks on indigenous activists continued during the year. In May, former President José Efraín Ríos Montt was convicted of genocide for his role in the killing and displacement of thousands of indigenous people between March 1982 and August 1983. This decision represented an important step in strengthening justice and protection for the country's indigenous population. However, the decision was overturned by the Constitutional Court ten days later and a retrial scheduled for 2015. As in Guatemala, indigenous groups in Honduras have also been targeted, often in relation to their opposition to development projects on their ancestral lands. In July, an indigenous leader was shot dead and his son injured for taking part in a peaceful demonstration against a hydroelectric dam.

In **South America**, too, indigenous peoples are regularly targeted with violence, often as a result of land and resource conflicts with developers, farmers or illegal loggers. According to data released by the Indigenous Missionary Council in June, 452 killings of indigenous people occurred between 2002 and 2010, compared to 167 between 1995 and 2002. Afro-Brazilians are also vulnerable, despite the country's self-image as a 'racial democracy'. The

Disque Racismo hotline, set up after the beating of an Afro-Brazilian girl in March in Brasilia for being black, received hundreds of phone calls in its first fortnight. In Colombia, similarly, Afro-Colombians and indigenous activists were attacked or displaced as a result of increased militarization and land conflicts, reinforcing their vulnerability. During the year, rights groups reported to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that 65 out of the country's 102 indigenous communities were at risk of cultural or physical destruction.

In **Central Asia**, tensions between different countries in the region – such as ongoing clashes between Uzbek and Kyrgyzstani forces in the border region of the Ferghana Valley during the year – have sometimes contributed to hostility towards domestic ethnic minorities as well. A repressive stance towards human rights, combined with a tendency to disregard the role of ethnically or religiously motivated bias when hate crimes occur, has also created a hostile environment for minority groups. In Kazakhstan, in the context of a government crackdown on religious minorities such as Baptists, the vandalization of the Protestant New Life church after members of the congregation had reportedly received threatening texts was described as 'hooliganism' by authorities – but without acknowledging the incident as a hate crime. In Kyrgyzstan a prominent ethnic Uzbek human rights activist, Ulugbek Azimov, was beaten along with members of his family by several ethnic Kyrgyz. Despite one of the attackers reportedly making reference to Uzbeks 'beating Kyrgyz', the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs denied the attack was linked to Azimov's ethnicity. In Tajikistan, Uzbek minority activist Salim Shamsiddinov disappeared in May after he encouraged the Uzbek community to vote for an opposition candidate in the 2013 elections.

In **South Asia**, sectarian tensions were exacerbated in a number of countries by upcoming elections. In India, in particular, inflammatory language increased ahead of the scheduled 2014 elections. The role of inter-religious division in the country's political landscape – 26 sitting legislators have past

charges of hate speech – has contributed to a number of outbreaks of communal violence. This included, in September, the outbreak of riots against Muslim residents by the Hindu majority in Uttar Pradesh. Research undertaken by the Centre for Equity Studies and Aman Biradari for MRG highlighted the key role that political parties had played in encouraging the violence and the lasting effects it had had on the cohesion of local communities in the area. In Bangladesh, on the other hand, where the International Crimes Tribunal is trying those accused of atrocities during the 1971 war of independence, the Hindu minority were targeted during the first half of the year. In Pakistan too, despite the first democratic transfer of power between two elected governments in the country's history, hundreds of Shi'a were killed in targeted attacks and other minorities such as Ahmadis also targeted. Allegations that a Pakistani Christian had insulted the Prophet Muhammad led to the looting of Lahore's Christian Joseph colony in March. However, hate speech and incitement against minorities by militants and hardline clerics continued throughout the year with impunity. In the troubled post-conflict context of Sri Lanka, by contrast, Muslims have been increasingly subjected to hate speech from Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists, such as the Bodu Bala Sena 'Buddhist power force'. A report by MRG released in October also highlighted the ongoing threat of sexual violence facing minority women, including Tamils, in the north and east of the country in the troubled post-conflict context.

In many countries in **South East Asia**, hate speech and targeted violence against minorities during the year were driven by political divisions. This included the use of anti-Vietnamese slogans by the opposition party in Cambodia and unfounded rumours linking Cambodians with violence against 'yellow shirt' protesters in Thailand. In Malaysia, too, following a narrow electoral victory, Prime Minister Najib Razak blamed a 'Chinese tsunami' for the results. Rights groups accused both leading coalitions of failing to protect minorities, notably the Indian population. But

it was in Burma, where a slow process of reform has opened up some degree of free expression, that the situation for minorities was arguably most acute. In addition to reports of ongoing military abuses against ethnic minorities, a large number of Muslim Rohingya were murdered or displaced during the year by Buddhist vigilantes, including the 969 movement spearheaded by extremist monk Ashin Wirathu.

Elsewhere in the region, conflicts with armed separatists in the Philippines and Thailand continued during the year. In the south of Thailand, in addition to reported abuses by government forces against civilians, atrocities by insurgents have further reinforced discriminatory attitudes towards the local Muslim population. In Indonesia, the government was also criticized for failing to take meaningful action to halt deadly militant attacks against Christians and Muslim minorities such as Sufis and Ahmadis.

In **East Asia**, international tensions within the region drove rising xenophobia in countries such as Mongolia, where foreign involvement in natural resource exploitation has led to increasing anti-Chinese sentiment. In Japan, right-wing activists launched a campaign of vilification against the ethnic Korean population, including online hate speech and street protests against the minority's perceived 'privileges'. Meanwhile, reaction to China's repressive policies included violent incidents in Xinjiang and continued self-immolations by Tibetans in protest at their restricted cultural and religious freedoms.

In **Oceania**, Tahiti's first mosque was closed shortly after its opening in October following protests from hundreds of French Polynesians. In Australia, hostile rhetoric against refugees and asylum seekers in the media and among politicians has driven increasingly negative popular attitudes towards these groups and harsher policies of containment, including offshore processing centres. There were also two high-profile incidents of racial slurs used by sports presenters during the year, which highlighted the ongoing issue of racism against indigenous people in sport. Following the 2013 elections, the newly appointed Attorney

General proposed to restrict Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act on vilification. If implemented, these proposals could reduce the current protections minorities have against verbal abuse and denigration.

In the **Middle East and North Africa** (MENA), the legacy of the 2011 Arab Spring has had mixed implications for ethnic and religious minorities in the region. In Egypt, for example, a revised January 2014 Constitution was passed that contained new legal guarantees for minorities. Nevertheless, 2013 was marked by a series of violent attacks against religious minorities. In April, a number of Copts were killed after an outbreak of violence in Al-Khosous, followed soon after by another clash at the funeral of the victims outside St Mark's Cathedral in Cairo. In June, encouraged by inflammatory rhetoric from Salafist speakers, four Shi'a were killed by a mob in the town of Abu Mussalam. Following the removal by the military of President Mohamed Morsi in July, pro-Morsi supporters engaged in a wave of attacks against Copts in retaliation for their alleged involvement in the coup.

In other countries, most notably Syria, civil conflict took on an increasingly sectarian character during the year. In July, the United Nations estimated that more than 100,000 people had died in the violence and by the end of the year the number of internally displaced people had almost tripled to 6.5 million, while the refugee population grew from 0.5 million to 2.3 million between January and December. The involvement of foreign militias, including Shi'a Hezbollah fighters and Sunni militants from militant organizations affiliated with al-Qaeda, has had the effect of deepening sectarian tensions elsewhere in the region. In Lebanon, for example, heightened sectarian tensions between Alawites and Sunnis in the country resulted in armed clashes and bombings in Tripoli as well as violence in Beirut. In Iraq, while civilians throughout the country remained vulnerable to targeted attacks – 2013 saw the country's highest death toll in five years – smaller minorities such as Sabian Mandaeans, Christians, Yezidis, Turkmen and Shabak continued to be targeted for abductions and killings.

In **Europe**, the legacy of the 2008 financial crisis and the impact of austerity measures in many countries has played a major role in the rise of right-wing organizations with a strong anti-minority agenda. Muslims, migrants and Roma in particular attracted vilification from media and political leaders during the year, reflected at times in official crackdowns and violent attacks by vigilante groups. In Russia, official repression of and discrimination against migrants from Central Asia and elsewhere have occurred alongside vigilante attacks and intimidation by extremists. In Hungary, Jobbik's rhetoric against the country's Roma and Jewish minorities has accompanied the party's rise in mainstream politics, with its share of the national vote increasing to more than 20 per cent in the April 2014 elections. In Bulgaria the arrival of thousands of refugees displaced by the conflict in Syria has provided right-wing groups with a new target. In Greece, the apparent increase in hate incidents against migrants, asylum seekers and other minority groups has been fuelled by the activities of the right-wing Golden Dawn. However, two high-profile racist murders in Athens during the year attracted widespread condemnation. Nevertheless, one of the troubling aspects of the rise of extremist organizations across Europe is that discriminatory language and stereotypes have become increasingly visible in mass media and in mainstream political rhetoric. As recent surveys in countries such as France and Russia suggest, there appear to be rising levels of popular animosity towards minorities – and an increasing acceptance of discriminatory language against them.

Many countries in Europe have relatively well-developed legislation on hate crime and hate speech, particularly within the EU, where all member states have been required to translate the Race Equality Directive into national law. Yet even when there is a clear legal definition of hate crime and hate speech, the application of this legislation is uneven. One of the challenges is under-reporting by victims due to fear, embarrassment or lack of faith in the police – all factors particularly relevant for marginalized minorities. In Russia, as recent

research commissioned by MRG for this year's *State of the World's Minorities* shows, the uncertain legal status of migrants makes them especially vulnerable to exploitation and attacks. Some positive advances during the year in the identification and prosecution of hate crime were undermined by wider inconsistencies. For example, since 2008 Greek legislation has recognized racist motivation as an aggravating factor, yet the provision had reportedly never been used until November 2013, when two men were convicted for fire-bombing a Tanzanian immigrant's store. In Hungary, while the perpetrators of a series of murders against Roma in 2008 and 2009 were finally convicted in a court, Roma remain highly vulnerable to further attacks and still have limited protection from authorities. Here and in other countries such as Ukraine, hate crime legislation has frequently been applied to prosecute minorities, rather than protect them.