

Africa

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Algeria

In April 2004 President Abdelaziz was re-elected to a second term as president in a landslide victory. He promised to devote himself to seeking 'true national reconciliation' and to heal the divide between the Berbers and the Algerian state. Berbers had threatened to boycott the elections over their demand that the Tamazight language should have equal status with Arabic.

Berbers

Ethnic Berbers account for between a third and a fifth of Algeria's population of 30 million, and they have campaigned for greater rights since the country won independence from France in 1962. In January 2005 the government announced that agreement had been made with the Berbers on the 'El-Kseur platform' – a reference to a list of Berber demands drawn up after the unrest in 2001. The list included calls for greater investment in the Kabylie region and for official recognition of Berber music, culture and their language, known as Tamazight. Several aspects of the new agreement, such as making Tamazight an official language and cutting the number of security forces in Kabylie, were not agreed in detail.

Angola: Cabindans

Cabindans are concentrated in Cabinda Province, which is separated from the rest of Angola by a strip of land belonging to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A separatist movement for independence for Cabinda has been in existence since 1961, and Front for the Liberation of Cabinda (FLEC) was formed in 1963. Despite huge oil reserves, Cabinda itself is very poor and has little economic development. Cabindans feel exploited by the central government and foreign oil companies. Conflict continues between separatist fighters and the government and large numbers of government troops continue to be stationed in the province.

On 27 February 2005 a rally took place pressing for self-rule. It was attended by several tens of thousands of Cabindans and coincided with the 120th anniversary of the treaty of Simulabuco that brought Cabinda under Portuguese rule in 1885. Though many refugees have returned to Angola following the end of the civil war with Unita, some Cabindan separatist movements have refused to end the armed struggle and many refugees consider the

situation too insecure to return from DRC and Congo (Brazzaville).

Botswana

San

Since 1997 the Botswana government has been resettling San hunter-gatherers from their traditional homelands in what is now the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) to resettlement camps in order to set aside the game reserve for wildlife and tourism development. The resettlement areas are crowded, lack basic sanitation and health care and do not contain sufficient resources to sustain hunter-gatherer livelihoods, and the socio-economic status of those resettled has declined since resettlement. The possibility of diamond reserves in the Kalahari sets up further potential for conflict between the government's economic development policies and San's claim to their homeland.

Legal cases

In June 2004 the San won the right to have a case challenging the resettlement re-opened. The right to live and hunt in the CKGR is the crux of the application by 243 San bushmen to overturn their relocation outside the game sanctuary by the Botswana government. The action began in April 2002, seeking a ruling that the government's termination of basic services to those who refused to leave the CKGR was illegal. The government cut water, food and health services in January 2002, arguing that it was too expensive to reach out to the small communities scattered around the game reserve.

Côte d'Ivoire

The country has been divided between north and south – between rebels and the national-army since conflict broke out in September 2002 with rebel New Forces largely made up of Northern Mandé (Dioulas) and Senoufos, representatives of the two major ethnic groups in the north, accusing successive southern Baoulé-dominated governments of discriminating against northern Muslims and those of foreign origin. The rebels quickly took the Muslim north but French troops prevented them reaching the main city, Abidjan. A power-sharing 'government of unity', outlined in a January 2003 peace agreement brokered by France, never lived up to its name. In March 2004, in protest at the killing of 120 people during a banned opposition march in

Abidjan, the New Forces and Alassane Ouattara's Rally of the Republicans, which draws its support from the mainly Muslim north of Côte d'Ivoire, withdrew from government. A UN report said the security forces had singled out suspected opposition supporters – Muslims and foreigners – to be killed.

In July 2004 a new peace agreement was reached and the boycotters rejoined the government. Under this deal, new laws making it easier for those of foreign origin to get Ivorian citizenship and run for the presidency were to be introduced by the end of September 2004 with disarmament to follow two weeks later. The laws were eventually passed, but the rebels said they had been watered down so much it made no difference, and so they refused to disarm. In November 2004 the army bombed the rebel stronghold of Bouake and also killed nine French peacekeepers. The French retaliated by destroying the Ivorian air force, sparking anti-French riots in Abidjan fomented by the state media, which backed the president.

There are 6,000 French troops and 4,000 UN troops in the country maintaining a 1,200 km long buffer zone between the two sides. A peace deal leading to elections was signed in Pretoria in April 2005, following which some rebel ministers took up their seats again in a power-sharing government. President Laurent Gbagbo agreed to overrule the Constitution, which requires presidential candidates to have two Ivorian parents, and let Mr Ouattara contest elections. This has long been a key rebel demand and a spokesman for Mr Ouattara's RDR party said it 'opens the way for peace'.

However, a lack of cooperation has delayed preparations for the election, which was to have been held in October 2005 and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirmed on 8 September that presidential elections would not take place on 30 October as originally planned. Both the rebels and opposition parties have rejected the poll, saying it could not be free and fair at that time. New Forces rebels are unhappy with legal reforms on identification, nationality and electoral laws. Numerous militias who support President Gbagbo are still to be dismantled. The rebels and the opposition want a transition government to be formed without President Gbagbo before elections can be held.

Democratic Republic of Congo Ethnic Tutsi/Banyamulenge

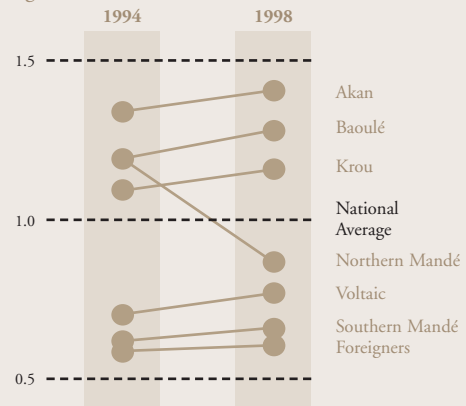
Congolese Tutsi are concentrated in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) provinces of North and South Kivu, and were initially incorporated into the Belgian Congo when part of the historical Rwandan kingdom was divided by the drawing of colonial borders. Questions of land use and ownership, and citizenship underlie many of the conflicts among ethnic communities in eastern DRC – complicated by laws that are poorly written or inconsistently applied.

Disputes between groups of Rwandan (Hutu, Tutsi and Banyamulenge) origin and Congolese of other ethnic groups worsened after the war between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda spilled across the border into DRC (then Zaire) in 1994. The Hutu-led Rwandan government carried out a genocide of

Côte d'Ivoire: Shift in prosperity of different ethnic groups

Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, relative to national average

Source: Langer, UNDP, 2005



Tutsi civilians in 1994 and then was defeated by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which drove soldiers of the former army and members of a genocidal militia, the Interahamwe, into exile in the DRC and other neighbouring countries. The army of the RPF-led government invaded the DRC in 1996 and in 1998 to attack these former soldiers and militia, saying they posed a continuing threat to Rwandan security. The second invasion sparked a war that caused the loss of an estimated 3.8 million people, the great majority in eastern DRC.

Rwanda withdrew its troops in 2002 and the Congolese government promised to disarm the armed Hutu groups, but failed to do so. In 2004 Rwanda intervened or threatened to intervene in the Congo three times, each time aggravating disputes between Congolese with Rwandan origins and Congolese of other ethnic groups.

In May and June 2004 troops loyal to RCD-Goma, led by Congolese Tutsi and Banyamulenge officers, mutinied against their Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) commanders and on 1 June 2004 briefly took control of the important South Kivu town of Bukavu. Some RCD-Goma soldiers committed widespread abuses against the civilian population before leaving the town and the province in the face of opposition by other FARDC troops and pressure from the international community. With this military withdrawal from South Kivu, RCD-Goma lost political and administrative control over the province and became increasingly determined to retain its hold over North Kivu, the last bastion of its power. FARDC troops also committed abuses during the fighting, including summary executions of Banyamulenge civilians. Fearing reprisals and feeling vulnerable after the departure of their RCD-Goma protectors, thousands of Banyamulenge fled to Burundi or Rwanda.

On 13 August 2004 more than 160 refugees, most of them Banyamulenge, were massacred at Gatumba in Burundi by Burundian Hutu rebels, possibly with the assistance or support of others. On 24 September 2004 crowds in the town of Uvira stoned the refugees as they tried to return to DRC and attacked the MONUC (UN Mission in the Congo) troops protecting them.

Minority rights

On 14 May 2005 a new Constitution, with text agreed by former warring factions, was adopted by

the National Assembly. The Constitution limited the powers of the president, who will serve a maximum of two five-year terms, and allows a greater degree of federalism. It also recognizes as citizens all ethnic groups at independence in 1960. This article is a recognition of the citizenship of ethnic Tutsis. Elections were due to be held before the end of June 2005 under the terms of a peace deal, but MPs have backed a six-month delay. Voter registration problems, clashes in the east and government in-fighting prompted the postponement.

Twa

War crimes and crimes against humanity, including persecution, murder, forcible population transfer, torture, rape and extermination, have been committed against the Twa in the eastern DRC. These crimes have taken place since the start of the second war in 1998 and continue up to the present. Twa are believed to be the first inhabitants of the equatorial forests of central Africa and now live in a number of African states. In the DRC the Twa also call themselves Bambuti, particularly in Ituri.

For forest-dwelling communities, hunting game remains a dominant occupation, and also plays a leading role in the construction of Twa identity and cultural life. Throughout the region, the Twa experience extreme marginalization in society. Typically living in villages furthest from the roads (sometimes as much as half a day's walk from the nearest road), they have virtually no access to basic services and utilities and are denied development assistance. At the same time, they have found themselves pushed out of their forests in the name of conservation in the Kahuzi-Biega and Virunga national parks, effectively alienated from their livelihood as well as their cultural and spiritual heritage. Discrimination by other ethnic groups is ingrained.

The Twa in Ituri and the Kivus have never taken up arms during the armed conflicts in the eastern DRC, but they have nonetheless been targeted by armed groups. Both the location of their villages in the forest, and their knowledge of forest paths and hunting skills, have made them vulnerable to being coerced by different armed groups operating in the forest into acting as trail-finders and to hunt game, and have then found themselves subject to revenge attacks by opposing armed groups.

Institutionalized disregard for the rights of the Twa, and the lack of seriousness with which complaints of abuse are treated, have meant that all armed groups in the eastern DRC have been able to prey on Twa villages with impunity, looting and raping at will. Where the Twa have been forcibly displaced from their villages, they have frequently had to live for prolonged periods unprotected in the forest, exposed to wild animals, disease and starvation.

Between October 2002 and January 2003, before they joined the power-sharing interim government in June 2004, rebel groups MLC and RCD-N jointly carried out a premeditated, systematic campaign of attack against the civilian population of Ituri, which they named 'Effacer le tableau' ('Erasing the Board'). The objective of the campaign was to gain control of the territory, including the strategic surrounding forests, and to plunder its resources, using the terror created by grave human rights abuses as a weapon of war. Encompassing the civilian population in general, the fact that the campaign specifically targeted the Twa for mass killing and the severe deprivation of other fundamental rights, by reason of their supposed supernatural powers and knowledge of the forest, indicates the commission of the crimes against humanity of persecution and extermination.

International initiatives

A report by the Minority Rights Group International (MRG), entitled *Erasing the Board*, documents the findings of an international research mission into crimes under international law committed against the Twa by the MRC and RCD-N,

RCD-Goma, ex-Forces armées rwandaises (FAR) and Interahamwe in the eastern DRC.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) based in The Hague has jurisdiction over crimes committed in the DRC since 1 July 2002, following the ratification of the Rome Statute of the Court by the DRC on 11 April 2002. On 19 April 2004 the president of the DRC referred the situation of crimes committed in the DRC to the ICC's Prosecutor. The Prosecutor has subsequently announced that he is preparing indictments against certain militia leaders operating in Ituri.

Egypt: Copts

The Copts are indigenous Egyptian Christians, the vast majority belonging to the Orthodox Church. They live throughout Egypt but are concentrated in Alexandria, Cairo and the urban areas of Upper Egypt (southern Egypt) and represent around 5–10 per cent of the total population. Copts believe themselves to be the descendants of Egypt's ancient Pharaonic people. They were first converted to Christianity with the arrival of St Mark in Egypt in AD 62. The Muslims arrived in AD 640, but did not constitute a majority until about three centuries later, mostly due to the conversion of the Egyptian populace. As Dhimi or 'peoples of the Book', Copts are tolerated under Islamic law.

Copts are predominantly prosperous city dwellers engaging in commerce and the professions, but complain of discrimination in the workplace and restrictions on church construction. Periodic fear of forced conversions to Islam has provoked protest.

Right: Internally displaced people flee ethnic violence in Côte d'Ivoire, June 2005.
Luc Gnago/Reuters



The latest protests took place on 9 December 2004 at the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo. Protesters clashed with police and a number of Copts were detained pending investigation.

On 20 December 2004 Coptic Pope Shenouda III was prompted to go into seclusion at a monastery in protest against the treatment of Copts, declaring he would not resume his duties until those arrested had been released. Copts' primary grievances are their political and cultural marginalization within Egyptian society and the seeming inability of the Egyptian government to protect them from attack by Islamic militants.

Eritrea

There is continuing tension with Ethiopia, with large numbers of troops being deployed by both Ethiopia and Eritrea within 20–40 km of the border.

Compulsory military service has led to the repression of minority religions, particularly members of religions which refuse to participate in national service.

Members of Pentecostal Christian churches have been arrested for possession of Bibles or for communal worship. Jehovah's Witnesses have been especially mistreated. Some have been detained for a decade for refusing to participate in national service, even though the official penalty is incarceration for no more than three years. Amnesty International, in a report released on 19 May 2004, reported that people avoiding conscription, political prisoners and members of minority churches were singled out for detention and torture. In September 2004 the United States designated Eritrea as a country of 'particular concern' for its intolerance and mistreatment of adherents of minority religions. The Eritrean government defended its practices on the grounds that the unrecognized churches had failed to register, but the US State Department report noted that some of the religious groups had applied for registration in 2002 and that the government had issued no registration permits since the registration regime was imposed.

Ethiopia

Political developments

Elections held on 15 May 2005 were widely considered to be a test of the ruling party's willingness to bring democracy to the country. Election results show Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) retained its majority, but opposition parties gained many seats. The final official results are not due to be announced until 23 September 2005. Several days of violence followed the parliamentary elections and around 40 people were killed when police fired on protesters. A European Union report said the 15 May parliamentary elections failed to meet international standards and complaints were not handled well. The two main opposition groups maintain they won, and are threatening to boycott parliament unless a unity government is formed. Land ownership and good governance were important election issues.

Oromo

Although some international observers have acknowledged that Ethiopia has made progress on the road to democracy, concerns have been raised over alleged human rights abuses. A report by the New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) released on 10 May 2005 said that regional authorities and security forces continue to suppress political dissent in the southern Oromia state. Oromia is home to the Oromo ethnic group and, along with Addis Ababa, has been the centre of dissent against the EPRDF. HRW declared that the pervasive pattern of repression and abuse in Oromia, home to 32 per cent of Ethiopians and the biggest region, would ensure that elections would be a 'hollow exercise'. With the continued insurgency in the south, even Oromo unaffiliated with militant and violent organizations are still targeted and subject to governmental abuse and detention.

Anuak

Ethiopia's Gambella People's National Regional State (Gambella) lies on the Sudanese border in the south-west of the country. Nuer and the Anuak are the two largest groups in the region, the third-largest population group consists of people the indigenous groups refer to as 'highlanders,' or 'habasha,' terms which group together all migrants from other parts of Ethiopia and their descendants.

The region has attracted government interest, largely because of its natural resources. Gambella is the best-watered region of Ethiopia and has large tracts of uncultivated land, along with deposits of gold and oil. Petronas, Malaysia's state-owned oil corporation, has acquired exploration rights in

Gambella, and China's Zhongyuan Petroleum Exploration Bureau (ZPEB) has begun seismic exploration activities in Gambella under a subcontract from Petronas.

Forced resettlement by the Derg (the military ruling council) in the 1980s generated a massive influx of some 60,000 highlanders to the region. All of the resettlement villages were located on land that the Anuak claimed as their own. At the same time, Nuer refugees from the Sudanese civil war began fleeing into Gambella, with many Nuer refugees then claiming Ethiopian citizenship and settling permanently in Gambella. The result has been that the Anuak are now a minority and greatly outnumbered by Gambella's Nuer population. There are persistent ethnic tensions – some traditionally Anuak lands are now inhabited almost exclusively by Nuer – and the most frequent outbreaks of ethnic violence in Gambella have pitted the Anuak against the Nuer. Many Anuak also bitterly resented the arrival of the highlanders and a number of ambushes attributed to armed Anuak have left scores of highlander civilians dead.

Gambella's long and porous border with Sudan is a source of perennial concern to federal authorities. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) managed to infiltrate fighters into Ethiopia through Gambella in 2002, reportedly with the help of the Eritrean government; forces led by a former Derg official have succeeded in destabilizing some areas along the Sudanese border; and the Anuak-led Gambella People's Liberation Front (GPLF) has launched raids into Gambella from bases in southern Sudan.

A report, *Targeting the Anuak*, published by Human Rights Watch in March 2005, alleges that the Ethiopian army has been killing, raping and torturing people in Gambella since the end of 2003. The federal government assumed de facto control over the regional government, and has stationed several thousand more Ethiopian National Defence Force troops in Gambella since December 2003. Almost all of those soldiers are highlanders and identify themselves as such in the context of highlander–Anuak ethnic conflict. The primary reason for the large military presence in Gambella appears to be an effort to eliminate armed Anuak groups in the region and assure the security of areas under exploration for oil. The Ethiopian military has undertaken operations aimed at rooting out armed Anuak and Nuer groups operating in

Gambella, some of which are based in southern Sudan. Gambella currently has no regional president and no Anuak representative in the House of People's Representatives, as both sought asylum abroad in early 2004.

Great Lakes region: Twa

Twa are the indigenous forest dwellers of central African countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, DRC, Gabon and Cameroon. Numbering some 500,000 in all, Twa number roughly 60,000 in Burundi and 25,000 in Rwanda, comprising 15 per cent of the population in each country.

A central element of recent Twa history is the deeply entrenched discrimination and marginalization they experience from neighbouring ethnic groups. This has increased as the Twa have become alienated from their forests and have been forced to live on the margins of the dominant society. The Great Lakes region has witnessed civil conflicts and wars, famines and population movements over several centuries, and, as documented in a Minority Rights Group International (MRG) report entitled *Twa Women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, these have contributed to the fragmentation of Twa populations and their social systems. The intense political conflicts between the dominant Hutu and Tutsi groups in Rwanda over the last 50 years, culminating in the killing of 800,000 Tutsis, moderate Hutus and Twa during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and the ongoing violence in Burundi and DRC between many armed factions, have increased the vulnerability of the Twa and other so-called 'Pygmy' groups.

A new Constitution was passed in Burundi on 1 March 2005 by an overwhelming majority, which includes a formula for power-sharing between the Hutu and Tutsi and is intended to end 12 years of bloody conflict. Twa leaders claimed that Twa are marginalized by both groups. They have been displaced from their natural forest environment without compensation and they face poverty, persistent starvation, a lack of education and health care, social isolation and exclusion from decision making. Their right to forest land where they have lived for four centuries is not recognized, and their vulnerable minority status makes it difficult to press their governments for lands or to acquire land under customary title or legal title.

In March 2005 some 600 Twa fled from Burundi to Rwanda to escape persecution and hunger. They experienced intimidation by ethnic Hutu, who accused the Twa of voting against the new power-sharing Constitution and of being allied to Tutsi. Most fled from drought-hit north-eastern Kirundo Province.

Kenya

The Kenyan government has reneged on previous promises and removed all references to marginalized groups, minorities, pastoralists and hunter-gatherers from the proposed new Kenyan constitution document to be voted on in November 2005. A statement from MRG on 6 August 2005 revealed that important gains for Kenya's poorest and most vulnerable peoples achieved during a three-year constitutional review process have now been stripped from the document, leaving them furious and betrayed. Representatives of minority and marginalized groups called for the reinstatement of important provisions and warned that they would refuse to be governed by the present constitution if enacted.

In July 2005 unrest flared in Nairobi when parliament amended the draft document to ensure that extensive executive powers remained in the hands of President Mwai Kibaki. Kenyan human rights groups see this as undermining the pursuit of equality, social justice and participatory democracy. References to minority and indigenous groups have been removed from provisions that had previously satisfied their demands for recognition of their identity and rights in chapters on values and principles of nationhood, a bill of rights, representation of the people, and devolution of power. The Centre for Minority Rights and Development (CEMIRIDE) had previously welcomed provisions that, if implemented, would have promoted their rights, including through affirmative action programmes. Land rights protection and clear anti-discrimination provisions allowing full participation in public, economic and social affairs have all been removed, despite previous guarantees.

A joint statement signed by representatives of Kenya's minorities and marginalized groups stated:

'While a good constitution should be a bastion for the marginalized, vulnerable and the weak, this proposed new constitution ensures that the lot of the poor remains unrecognized and further exposed to the whims and machinations of the mighty.'

Risks and threats

A 2005 report by MRG and CEMIRIDE, Kenya, *Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Diversity*, demonstrated growing inequalities between communities and the intolerable situation faced by some communities, including the Turkana, the Endorois and the Ogiek. The total development budget for famine-hit Turkana in 2004–5 was 94.6 million Kenyan Shillings, less than one-sixth of the budget for the relatively prosperous and famine-free Nyeri district (689.69 million Kenyan Shillings), the home district of the Kenyan president. In Turkana district, 159 children per 1,000 die in infancy compared to a national average of under 100 per 1,000, and there is only one medical doctor for a community of over 180,000 people. Muslims have been labelled as 'terrorists' and face restrictions on their religious freedoms and other rights. Several Muslim NGOs have been banned and many live in the most famine-affected provinces where they face poverty and insecurity.

Land ownership issues in the Rift Valley have remained unresolved since colonial times, when pastoral groups such as the Maasai and Kalenjin were ousted to make way for British settlers. The Maasai are seeking to regain land given to settlers in 1904 and 1911, a move which has met with an aggressive response from the government. In August 2004 Kenyan riot police used tear gas to disperse more than 100 Maasai protesters in the capital, Nairobi. The Kenyan police said they used force because the protest was illegal. The Maasai are demanding the return of farmland leased to British settlers 100 years ago. The original lease expired on 15 August 2004 on 1 million hectares of land, but the government refuses to recognize the colonial-era agreement.

Legal cases

A case brought before the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) by the Endorois people of Kenya over their eviction from their ancestral lands was declared admissible in May 2005. The Commission will now make a judgment on the merits of the case. The Endorois were removed from their lands to create the Lake Bogoria National Park without consultation or compensation, and are now battling for their rights and to save their environment from the effects of recent mining activities. The recent success of the

Endorois marks the first time that the Commission has considered the merits of an indigenous land rights case.

Morocco Western Sahara

Western Sahara has a population of about 250,000 and another 160,000 Saharawis live in refugee camps in southern Algeria, where they have been for up to 26 years as Morocco continues to claim it has the right to administer Western Sahara. That claim is not formally recognized by any country and the UN classifies Western Sahara as a 'non-self governing territory'.

The country's oil reserves have become a factor in the struggle. The US and other major consumers are looking for alternative sources to the Middle East and West Africa is seen as both relatively stable and having a straight route to refineries on the US eastern seaboard. The Rabat authorities have granted exploration and exploitation licences in the Western Sahara region under its administration to US, French and British companies.

On 24 May 2005, the first North African heads of state summit for over 10 years was abandoned when Morocco objected to Algeria's reiteration of its support for Polisario (the movement fighting for independence of Western Sahara). Also in May 2005, Polisario's chief negotiator told Reuters News Agency that it was considering resuming the armed struggle if there was no breakthrough in the UN led peace talks within six months. The current deal on the table provides for the Western Sahara to be given self-rule for a period of four to five years. After that, its long-term residents and the refugees in Algerian camps would vote in a referendum to choose whether the territory is to be fully integrated with Morocco, continue to have autonomy within the Moroccan state or become independent.

This plan has been accepted by Polisario but rejected by Morocco. The Polisario Front accused the Moroccan government of ferocious repression following disturbances in May 2005. Trouble broke out in the main city of the disputed territory, Laayoune. Moroccan authorities say the Polisario instigated politically motivated riots; the independence movement counters that the demonstrations were peaceful protests against Morocco's intransigence in the long-running dispute. Arrests followed in what an official for the

UN mission in Western Sahara, MINURSO, which has spent more than US\$6 million trying to settle the dispute since the cease-fire, said were the most serious disturbances in six years. In July 2005 a Moroccan court jailed 12 Western Saharan separatists, following the violent protests.

Berbers

Dispossession of natural resources has also sparked protests by Morocco's Berber population. After Mohamed VI ascended the throne, Morocco changed the Hydrocarbon Code, raising the interest of foreign companies. At the beginning of 2000, Shell signed five licences for marine exploitation over an area of 9,000 square km in the Moroccan Atlantic. During the same period, the US Company Lone Star Energy signed three exploitation licences for the Talsint region over an area of 6,000 square km, and another three reconnaissance licences – two of which were opposite Larache city.

Lone Star is extracting oil from the large oil fields, thought to contain 20 billion barrels of crude, near the town of Talsint, in south-eastern Morocco. The oil field lies about 160 km from the Algerian border. The oil well is heavily guarded and a military escort is required to reach the site. Berbers, who comprise 60 per cent of the Moroccan population, say any revenue collected should benefit them. During French colonization, a decree enabled the government to appropriate communal Berber lands. Independence has not changed this and the impetus towards dispossession continues.

Namibia Caprivians

The Namibian government has faced allegations of human rights violations and unlawful arrest in the trial of 12 alleged Caprivi separatists charged with treason. At the start of the trial in September 2005, the state had to prove whether the court had the right to prosecute 11 of the accused, who claim to have been unlawfully arrested.

The 12 are the second group of alleged secessionists facing charges of high treason after disturbances in eastern Caprivi in 1998–9, which the government alleges were attempts to secede the barren, semi-arid region.

The first group of 120 Caprivians is currently appearing before the High Court in Grootfontein, 430 km north of Windhoek, in a case that began in

October 2003. They allegedly belonged to the Caprivi Liberation Army, which attacked government installations in a raid on the regional capital, Katima Mulilo, leaving 12 people dead in August 1999.

Ten of the second group of 12 claim they had been bona fide refugees in the Dukwe refugee camp in central Botswana until they were 'forcibly and unlawfully arrested' and handed over to the Namibian police. The accused claim that they crossed into Botswana illegally between 1998 and 2001 to escape from 'persistent harassment' by members of the Namibian police and defence force. They were arrested between September 2002 and December 2003 by Botswana authorities and handed over to the Namibian police.

In affidavits the 10 claim that 'the apprehension and abduction from Botswana, the transportation to Namibia and the subsequent arrest and detention in Namibia is in breach of international law, and wrongful and unlawful'. The authorities argue that the suspects were deported from Botswana after violating their asylum conditions and the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees by returning to Namibia.

San

San are the earliest inhabitants of what is now Namibia. The Namibian government has been accused by the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) of systematically ignoring the deteriorating situation of the San minority over the past 15 years. On 31 August 2005 the country's former social services minister and new Deputy Prime Minister Dr Libertine Amathila said she was 'shocked to discover' that the San communities were living under virtual slavery conditions. Further, in an attempt to 'refute' criticism that it had taken the government 15 years to realize that San peoples are grossly marginalized, Dr Amathila, in a nationally televised report on 27 September 2005, maintained that 'The Opposition parties are actually the ones responsible for this situation. The South Africans, they were fighting with, are the ones who destroyed the San communities, in the first place.'

The NSHR has called upon the Namibian government to make reparations to the San peoples, including a public apology; guaranteed protection of San human rights in the future; restoration, rehabilitation and compensation in the form of free

and adequate health care; free and adequate pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education; free and adequate housing; immediate access to social services, such as pensions for senior citizens and persons with disabilities; immediate recognition of all San traditional authorities and their right to profess and enjoy their traditions; and immediate and full recognition of all San human rights.

Nigeria Niger Delta

The Niger Delta is the main oil-producing region of Nigeria, which is the largest oil producer in Africa, and the fifth-largest oil producer within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). However, little of this wealth is distributed within the Niger Delta, or to the Nigerian people as a whole. Economic and social rights, such as the right to health and the right to an adequate standard of living, remain unfulfilled for many Nigerians.

The Nigerian Federal Government is the prime beneficiary of the revenue earned from selling the crude oil abroad. As the international oil price goes up, the state's share of the total oil revenue increases under a formula with companies. In spite of this injection of revenue and resources, the Nigerian Federal Government has invested little of these resources in the Niger Delta, where the oil-producing communities reside. Poverty in this area is widespread. Roads are in a constant state of disrepair; power outages are frequent; the water available is of poor quality and is often contaminated; schools are almost non-existent; and state-run hospitals and clinics are under-equipped or short-staffed, or both. In 40 years of operation, oil companies have left large areas of the Niger Delta unusable for farming, due to frequent oil spills, leakages, and the effect of gas flaring or other accidents.

Many of the traditional responsibilities of the state are fulfilled in parts of the Niger Delta by transnational oil corporations operating there, such as providing basic services or building infrastructure. For the communities, oil companies appear as external players who are taking the wealth from the region, sharing it with the federal government and providing little in return. Further, the companies are seen as operating on the traditional lands of the communities without consulting them, or consulting them inadequately. When communities object to specific projects, or ask for more

compensation, the companies create divisions within the communities by supporting one faction, usually the chief and groups/gangs associated with the chief, who then forcibly secure the compliance of other community factions who may be opposed to the project. In many instances, the grievances turned into outright antagonism leading to frequent instances of abduction of company officials, sabotage of company property, and violence targeting companies. The companies have turned to the state security forces, which in some cases have used force, often arbitrarily and disproportionately, against individuals. The easy availability of small arms in the region has made the situation more serious. Calculations by Amnesty International based on local and international media reports, show that the number of people killed in the Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa States in 2004 up to and including incidents late August, could be in the region of 670.

Between February and April 2005 thousands of Ogoni and members of other minority communities were evicted from their homes in a Port Harcourt shantytown. The Rivers State government and the Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) have been accused by the communities of demolishing their waterfront homes to facilitate planned company expansion and relocation from Lagos to Port Harcourt waterside, without notice or compensation. Some residents suffered a second displacement since they were living in the shantytown following earlier destruction of their village homes due to military activities in Ogoni territories.

The demolition was completed in April 2005 despite strong opposition from residents' groups and human rights organizations including the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). They stated that the shantytown, known as Agip waterside or 'Ogoni Village', had been demolished with inadequate notice and no compensation for residents, many of whom had lived in the shantytown for over 10 years. According to MOSOP, residents have been left to fend for themselves by the Rivers State government, and have been forced to move to other shantytowns or return to villages where their future is uncertain. On 9 April one resident was reportedly killed in an attack by youths, while a number of others were left with machete wounds. Reports have indicated police involvement in the harassment and the arbitrary

arrest of residents. Agip has denied any involvement in the demolition and clearing of the land, which borders its existing premises.

International initiatives

MRG supported the attendance of a representative of the evicted communities at the UN Working Group on Minorities in Geneva on 30 May 2005 and joined Nigerian human and minority rights groups in calling on the Rivers State government for a full investigation into the demolitions and evictions and the actions of government authorities, the police and the Agip Oil Company.

Rwanda

When the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took control of the country in 1994, ending the genocide, the economy and infrastructure were in ruins. An estimated 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis, had been slaughtered. Three million Hutu refugees fled to neighbouring countries, among them the perpetrators of the genocide, who turned themselves into a rebel force menacing Rwanda's borders. While up to 20,000 Hutu rebels remain in DRC, 4,000, including their leader, have now voluntarily disarmed. Most refugees have come home and access to education and health services has rapidly increased.

Despite multi-party elections in 2004, the ruling RPF so far remains the only political force. For the RPF, Rwanda's violent recent history means democracy must be balanced with certain controls if further conflict is to be avoided. The second-largest party after the RPF was banned in 2004 – accused of trying to promote ethnic divisions. But critics say the RPF-led government is using the past to justify a de facto one-party state.

The government has made significant efforts to promote unity among Tutsis and Hutus. However, ethnicity is still a potentially divisive issue. As a rebel movement fighting the previous regime, the RPF had its base among Tutsi exiles in neighbouring Uganda. And perceptions remain that the RPF-led government is Tutsi dominated. Tutsis occupy the most important positions in the army and in the civil administration, and are the greatest beneficiaries of the important posts in the economy. There are fears that a sense of political and economic exclusion will lead to growing resentment among Hutus.

Rwanda has more people per square kilometre than any other African country, and its increasing rural population is farming progressively smaller parcels of land. Some analysts fear a potentially explosive mix – between this growing rural poverty and urban resentment at lack of political freedoms. Unless there is some way for voices of dissent to be legitimately expressed, the tendency to resort to violence will increase. Analysts suggest that the way in which the RPF government responds to demands for greater political freedom, and more equitably shared economic opportunities, will determine how far Rwanda's current stability is maintained in the long term.

South Africa: Zulu

On 10 September 2005 thousands of Zulu girls gathered in Nongoma in northern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province, to participate in 'Umhlanga', the annual reed dance ceremony celebrating virginity. The traditional gathering took place in the wake of controversy surrounding the soon-to-be-outlawed testing of virgins: the Children's Bill was approved by parliament in July 2005 and, if passed by the National Council of Provinces, the legislation will impose an outright ban on the custom.

Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini lashed out at the government, saying he was opposed to the ban, while traditionalists and other groups vowed to defy the law. Traditionally, although young girls were often tested privately in their own homes, the focus was not on the inspection – there was a high spiritual value placed on virginity, instilled through instruction by older women. After falling into disuse, the practice made a comeback around 10 years ago when the HIV/AIDS pandemic began to take hold. According to Dr Jerome Singh, head of the Bioethics and Health Law Programme at the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the move to prohibit the inspections has exposed the ideological clash between culture and human rights. Critics have argued that the practice violates children's rights: their right to privacy, bodily integrity and dignity.

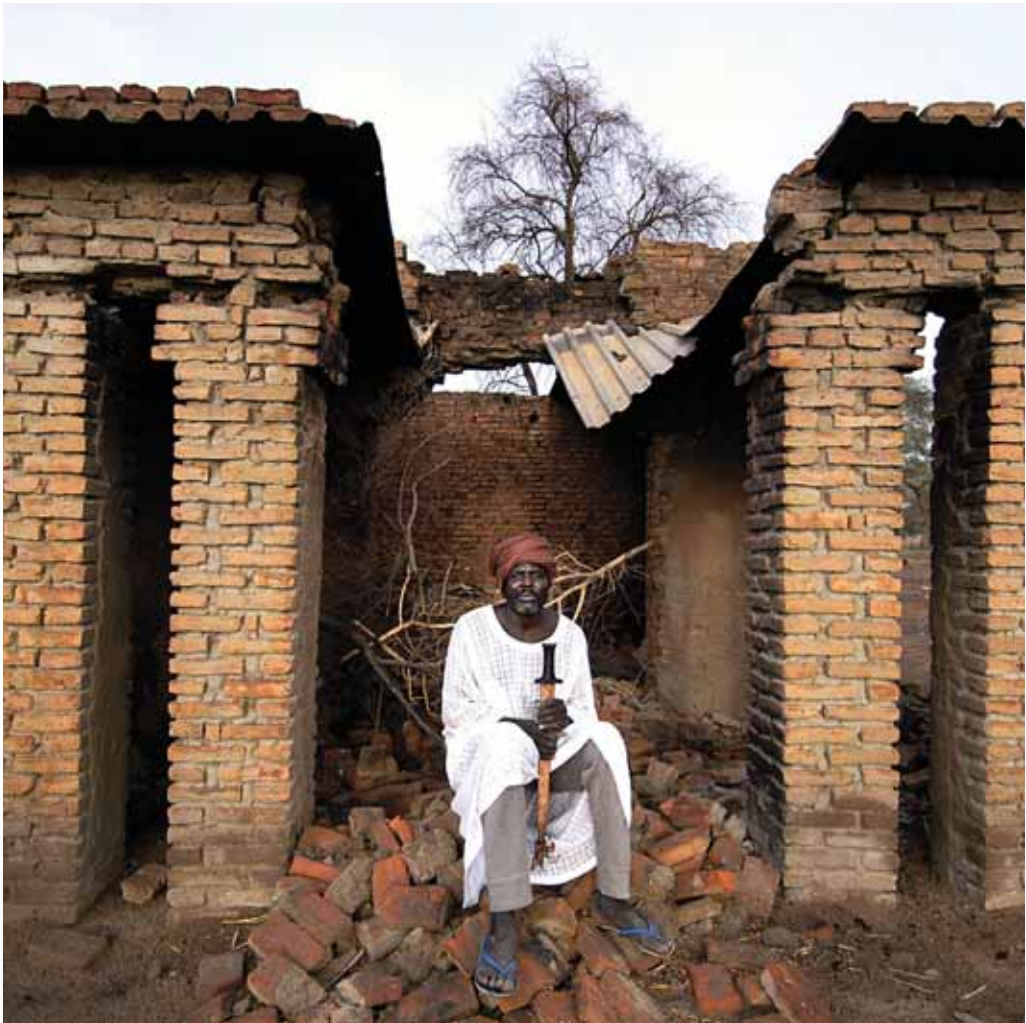
The Commission on Gender Equality, which has been at the forefront of advocacy efforts to halt the practice, described the test as 'discriminatory, invasive of privacy, unfair, impinging on the dignity of young girls and unconstitutional'. The debate has

become politicized. Zulus see this as an elaborate conspiracy to undermine Zulu culture. While in office, former deputy-president Jacob Zuma was reported as having encouraged girls to take the test as a way of curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. However, by placing sexual responsibility on the girls, virginity testing had ignored the gender dynamics contributing to the pandemic and had become part of the problem: testing failed to address male sexuality and responsibility, and the high levels of gender violence in the country.

Sudan

Darfur

Open warfare erupted in Darfur Province in February 2003 when two loosely allied rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), attacked military installations. The rebels, made up of predominantly African sedentary tribes such as Fur, Zaghawa and Massalit, seek an end to the region's chronic economic and political marginalization. They also took up arms to protect their communities against a 20-year campaign by government-backed militias recruited among groups of Arab extraction in Darfur and Chad. These 'Janjaweed' militias have over the past two years received greatly increased government support to clear civilians from areas considered disloyal. Aerial bombardment, militia attacks and a scorched-earth government offensive have led to massive displacement, indiscriminate killings, looting and mass rape, all in contravention of Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other provisions of international law that prohibit attacks on civilians. The government, however, denied any connection to the Janjaweed militia, calling them 'thieves and gangsters'. While the conflict has a political basis, it has also acquired an ethnic dimension in which civilians were deliberately targeted on the basis of their ethnicity, and an economic dimension related to the competition between pastoralists (generally Arab) and farmers (generally non-Arab) for land and water. To date some 2 million people are estimated to now live in camps, having fled their homes, and at least 180,000 are thought to have died during the crisis, mostly through starvation and disease; 200,000 have fled to neighbouring Chad.



Above: Old man in front of the ruins of his shop in the destroyed village of Terbeba. After Janjaweed militants attacked the village he evacuated his family across the Chadian border to a refugee camp. Sven Torfinn/ Panos Pictures

Both sides have been accused of committing serious human rights violations, including mass killing, looting, and rapes of the civilian population. However, the better-armed Janjaweed quickly gained the upper hand. By the spring of 2004, several thousand people — mostly from the non-Arab population — had been killed and as many as a million more had been driven from their homes, causing a major humanitarian crisis in the region. The crisis took on an international dimension when over 100,000 refugees poured into neighbouring Chad pursued by Janjaweed militiamen, who clashed with Chadian government forces along the border. More than 70 militiamen and 10 Chadian soldiers were killed in one gun battle in April.

Chad brokered negotiations in N'djamena leading to the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement between the Sudanese government and JEM and SLA. The African Union formed a Ceasefire Commission (CFC) to monitor observance of the 8 April cease-fire. In early July 2004, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and (then) US Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Sudan and the Darfur region, and urged the Sudanese government to stop supporting the Janjaweed militias. The African Union and European Union sent monitors in July to monitor the cease-fire but the Janjaweed attacks did not stop.

On 23 July 2004 the United States Senate and House of Representatives passed a joint resolution declaring the armed conflict in the Sudanese region of Darfur to be genocide and calling on the Bush administration to lead an international effort to put a stop to it. On 30 July, the UN gave the Sudanese government 30 days to disarm and bring to justice the Janjaweed, under UN Security Council Resolution 1556; if this deadline was not met in 30 days, it expressed 'its intention to consider' sanctions. Resolution 1556 also imposed an arms embargo on the Janjaweed and other militia. Sudan warned Britain and the United States not to interfere in its internal affairs.

In August 2004, the African Union sent 150 Rwandan troops in to protect the cease-fire monitors; however, 'their mandate did not include the protection of civilians'. They were joined by 150 Nigerian troops later that month. Peace talks, which had previously broken down in Addis Ababa on 17 July, were resumed on 23 August in Abuja. The talks reopened amid acrimony, with the SLA accusing the government of breaking promises that

it made for the little-respected April cease-fire.

The UN's 30-day deadline expired on 29 August, after which the Secretary-General reported on the state of the conflict. He noted that the Janjaweed militias remained armed and continued to attack civilians (contrary to Resolution 1556), and militia disarmament had been limited to a 'planned' 30 per cent reduction in one particular militia, the Popular Defence Forces. He also noted that the Sudanese government's commitments regarding their own armed forces had been only partially implemented, with refugees reporting several attacks involving government forces. He advised a substantially increased international presence in Darfur 'in order to monitor' the conflict. However, he did not threaten or imply sanctions, which the UN had expressed its 'intention to consider' in Resolution 1556.

On 9 September 2004, the (then) US Secretary of State Colin Powell declared to the US Senate that genocide was occurring in Darfur, for which he blamed the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed. This position was strongly rejected by the Sudanese Foreign Affairs Minister Najib Abdul Wahab. The UN, like the African Union and the European Union, has not declared the Darfur conflict to be an act of genocide. If it had constituted an act of genocide, international law is considered to have allowed other countries to intervene.

Also on 9 September 2004 the US put forward a UN draft resolution threatening Sudan with sanctions on its oil industry. This was adopted, in modified form, on 18 September as Resolution 1564, pressuring the Sudanese government to act urgently to improve the situation by threatening the possibility of oil sanctions in the event of continued non-compliance with Resolution 1556 or refusal to accept the expansion of African Union peacekeepers. Resolution 1564 also established an International Commission of Inquiry to look into human rights violations, and to determine whether genocide was occurring. In the wake of this resolution, the peacekeeper force was to be expanded to 4,500 troops.

On 15 October the World Health Organization estimated that 70,000 people had died of disease and malnutrition in Darfur since March. On 2 November the UN reported that Sudanese troops had raided the Abu Sharif and Otash refugee camps near Nyala in Darfur, moving a number of

inhabitants and denying aid agencies access to the remaining inhabitants inside. Meanwhile, the Abuja talks continued, with attempts made to agree on no-fly zone over Darfur in addition to a truce on land and a disarmament of the militias.

On 9 November the Sudanese government and the two main rebel groups, the SLA and JEM, signed two accords in Abuja aimed toward short-term progress in resolving the Darfur conflict. The first accord established a no-fly zone over rebel-controlled areas of Darfur – a measure designed to end the Sudanese military's bombing of rebel villages in the region. The second accord granted international humanitarian aid agencies unrestricted access to the Darfur region.

Despite these accords, violence in Sudan continued. On 10 November – one day after the accords – the Sudanese military conducted attacks on Darfur refugee villages in plain sight of UN and African Union observers. On 22 November, alleging that Janjaweed members had refused to pay for livestock in the town market of Tawila in northern Darfur, rebels attacked the town's government-controlled police stations. The Sudanese military retaliated on 23 November by bombing the town.

On 25 January 2005 the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur report to the UN Secretary-General found the government of the Sudan and the Janjaweed responsible for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law amounting to crimes under international law, however, the government of Sudan had not pursued a policy of genocide in Darfur. The Commission identified 51 individuals responsible for the violation of human rights and recommended immediate trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

On 29 March Security Council Resolution 1591 was passed, strengthening the arms embargo and imposing an asset freeze and travel ban on those deemed responsible for the atrocities in Darfur. It was agreed that war criminals would be tried by the ICC and on 5 April it was reported that the UN had given the ICC the names of 51 people suspected of war crimes. The Sudanese president snubbed the UN resolution, declaring that he 'shall never hand any Sudanese national to a foreign court'.

The UN released a new estimate of 180,000 in April 2005 of those who had died as a result of illness and malnutrition in the 18 months of the

conflict. It did not attempt to estimate the number of violence-related deaths. Médecins sans Frontières' Dr Paul Foreman was arrested by Sudanese authorities over the publication of a report detailing hundreds of rapes in Darfur. Claims began to surface that the Bush administration's noticeable toning down of its description of the situation in Sudan – it stopped calling the Darfur conflict a genocide, and claimed that UN death toll estimates may be too high – was due to increased cooperation from Sudanese officials towards the 'War on Terrorism'.

The SLA and JEM announced in May 2005 they wanted to resume peace talks. After a period of several months without attacks, concern was raised in September 2005 by the commander of the African Union peacekeeping force over an increase in banditry and a number of attacks on humanitarian workers and aid convoys by Darfur's largest rebel movement, the SLA. On 15 September 2005, a series of African Union-mediated talks began again in Abuja with representatives of the Sudanese government and the two major rebel groups participating in the talks. The Sudanese Liberation Movement faction refused to be present. The rebel groups in Darfur appeared to be splintering and the African Union mission said the Sudan Liberation Army was destabilizing the region and jeopardizing peace talks with the Khartoum government.

Political developments

On 31 December 2004 the parties to the north-south warfare in Sudan signed accords making a peace deal to end 21 years of fighting. The agreement included a permanent cease-fire and protocols on wealth- and power-sharing agreements. The conflict pitted the Muslim north against Christians and animists in the south, leaving some 1.5 million people dead. The government and the southern rebels have agreed to set up a 39,000-strong army comprising fighters from both sides. They agreed that the south should be autonomous for six years, culminating in a referendum on the key issue of independence. The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) accepted that Sharia could remain in the north. Sudan has become an oil exporter and both sides have agreed on the key issue of how to share out the revenue, which mostly comes from the south. The SPLA has secured a large share of Sudan's oil money and government jobs. On 9 July 2004 John Garang, leader of the SPLA

was sworn in as vice-president but died three weeks later in a helicopter crash on 30 July. Salva Kiir took over as southern Sudan's leader following the death of John Garang and was sworn in as Sudan's vice-president in Khartoum.

Uganda

In July 2005 parliament approved a constitutional amendment, which scrapped presidential term limits. Voters in a referendum overwhelmingly backed a return to multi-party politics.

Acholi

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), formed in 1987, is a rebel paramilitary group operating mainly in northern Uganda. The group is engaged in an armed rebellion against the Ugandan government in what is now one of Africa's longest-running conflicts. It is led by Joseph Kony, who proclaims himself a spirit medium and apparently wishes to establish a state based on his unique interpretation of biblical millennialism. The LRA has been accused of widespread human rights violations, including the abduction of civilians, the use of child soldiers and a number of massacres.

It is estimated that around 20,000 children have been kidnapped by the group since 1987 for use as soldiers and sex slaves. The group performs abductions primarily from the Acholi people, who have borne the brunt of the 18-year LRA campaign. The insurgency has been mainly contained to the region known as Acholiland, consisting of the districts of Pader, Gulu and Kitgum, though since 2002 violence has overflowed into other districts. The LRA has also operated across the porous border region with southern Sudan, subjecting Sudanese civilians to its horrific tactics.

Up to 12,000 people have been killed in the violence, with many more dying from disease and malnutrition as a direct result of the conflict. Nearly 2 million civilians have been forced to flee their homes, living in internally displaced peoples (IDP) camps and within the safety of larger settlements, sleeping on street corners and in other public spaces. IDP camps themselves have been attacked and burned down, leaving thousands homeless. Despite these forced migrations, the plight of the Acholi people has received little media coverage in the developed world. Not until April 2004 did the UN Security Council issue a formal condemnation.

From the middle of 2004 rebel activity dropped markedly under intense military pressure. There were reports of significant numbers of LRA rebels taking advantage of the government Amnesty Act. In mid-December 2004 a number of civilians were killed by bands of LRA operating near the Sudanese town of Juba. These rebels had purportedly lost contact with their chain of command under the ongoing government assault. On 31 December 2004, a truce in place since mid-November expired without an agreement.

The signing of a peace deal ending the civil war between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army prompted speculation that a more stable Sudan would help end the LRA insurgency. In late January, SPLA leader John Garang pledged that he would not allow the LRA to operate in the south once he gained formal control of the region. On 3 February 2005, President Museveni announced an 18-day cease-fire, backing away from previous commitments to sustain military operations until the LRA committed to withdraw from the bush and admitted for the first time that it was recruiting former abductees and returning them to the battlefield. The army stated that around 800 former abductees had been recruited, hundreds of whom are believed to be below 18 years of age.

During the first half of March 2005, the LRA carried out six reported attacks in which 12 civilians were reported dead and about 50 were abducted, often in response to government proclamations that the rebels were nearly or completely defeated. The government has been the target of increasingly pointed criticism from the international community for its failure to end the conflict. International aid agencies have questioned the Ugandan government's reliance on military force and its commitment to a peaceful resolution. In May 2005, the World Food Programme reported that 1.4 million people displaced by the conflict were facing severe food shortages. The ongoing insecurity prevented the IDPs from tilling and planting farm land, as well as making it difficult for relief organizations to reach persons in need.

International initiatives

International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo formally opened an investigation in January 2004. Some local Ugandan groups have criticized this move, as an ICC prosecution of Joseph Kony and his senior lieutenants is seen to

make a negotiated end to the conflict nearly impossible. In November 2004, President Museveni was reported to be exploring ways to withdraw the referral made to the ICC, which was seen as a complication to what appeared to be a significant movement towards a negotiated peace. In February 2005 the ICC announced that 12 arrest warrants were to be issued for LRA war crimes suspects.

Zimbabwe

Since the defeat of the constitutional referendum in 2000, politics in Zimbabwe have been marked by slow regression away from many of the norms of democratic governance. International pressure on the Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, to change his damaging policies significantly increased in the second half of 2005. The UN, South Africa and other African powers are pressing him to restore democracy and change economic management. Perhaps the greatest pressure has resulted from the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy, which has left millions hungry. In five years, the economy has contracted by 50 per cent, according to Harare economists. Inflation stands at 255 per cent and unemployment at 75 per cent. The seizure of almost all white-owned commercial agricultural land, with the stated aim of benefiting black farmers, has led to sharp falls in production. In late 2003 fewer than 900 commercial farms were still operating and the country has endured critical food shortages. In mid-2004, 5 million Zimbabweans still needed food aid, with almost half the neediest living in urban areas (a traditional locus of opposition support). Food aid was used as an instrument of political strength by the government in the run-up to the 2005 elections.

In July 2005 Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) cost some 700,000 Zimbabweans their homes or livelihoods or both, and otherwise affected nearly a fifth of the troubled country's population. The UN Secretary-General's special envoy's report on the military-style campaign shows that the Zimbabwe government collectively mounted a brutal, ill-managed campaign against its own citizens. Whatever its intent – the urban clean-up claimed by authorities, or more sinister efforts to punish and break up the political opposition as city dwellers voted overwhelmingly for the opposition in recent elections – the campaign has exacerbated a desperate situation in the country.

After destroying homes in the cities and moving

people into transit camps, the government assigned people to rural areas on the basis of their identity numbers. On the identity cards carried by all Zimbabwean citizens, the first few digits form a code for the bearer's home area. This, however, reflects one's ancestral home rather than one's own birthplace. Zimbabweans of foreign parentage are finding themselves in a particularly difficult situation.

A change in the citizenship law shortly before the 2002 presidential elections meant that being born in Zimbabwe no longer automatically conferred nationality. Zimbabweans who had one or both parents born outside the country were reclassified as aliens unless they formally renounced claims to foreign nationality. Although most observers believe the law was designed to disenfranchise whites, it also affected the status of Zimbabweans who have roots in other African countries. ■