

Côte d'Ivoire faces threat of more killings as country rises significantly in 'Peoples Under Threat' 2011 ranking

Minority Rights Group
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Côte d'Ivoire has shot up the internationally-acclaimed Peoples under Threat survey indicating that the risk of further civilian killings in the country remains dangerously high, Minority Rights Group International says.

Launching Peoples under Threat 2011 today, MRG says that African states continue to dominate the survey, including a number of states that have risen considerably up the table since the previous year.

MRG says that in Côte d'Ivoire, despite the departure of former President Laurent Gbagbo and the installation of President Alassane Ouattara, the risk of further killing remains high, with over one million internally displaced, and armed militias on both sides threatening revenge attacks.

'Recent post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire has polarised an already divided country and our worst fear is that cracks are shaping along ethnic lines,' says Mark Lattimer, Executive Director of MRG.

'There may now be a democratically-elected President in Abidjan, but his militias face allegations of mass killing. There must be an impartial investigations into human rights violations on all sides,' Lattimer adds.

Over the last five years, Peoples under Threat has pioneered the use of statistical analysis to identify situations around the world where communities are at risk of mass killing. On numerous occasions in those five years, countries that have risen sharply up the table have later proved to be the scene of gross human rights violations, among them Sri Lanka, Sudan, Pakistan and Yemen.

The other African countries that have risen significantly in the table this year are Uganda, Guinea and Libya.

In Uganda, which saw mass ethnic killing before the coming into power of the National Resistance Movement, human rights violations and communal tensions have both risen again in the later years of Museveni's Presidency, MRG says.

'There has been a national conversation in Uganda about the unpredictable nature of the transition the country will take,' says Marusca Perazzi, MRG's Spokesperson, adding, 'The situation is exacerbated by the mistrust between central government, political parties, and kingdoms, heightened by the government's swift passing of the Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act 2011 and arbitrary arrests of opposition leaders.'

Libya has dominated the headlines since US - and NATO-led forces have carried out aerial bombings, and attempts by forces loyal to Colonel Gaddafi to retake rebel-held towns have caused widespread civilian casualties. But less has been reported about targeted racist attacks in the country. Officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees recently stated that refugees arriving from eastern Libya at the Egyptian border reported that armed Libyans had been going from door to door, forcing sub-Saharan Africans to leave. Tens of thousands of refugees arriving at camps in both Tunisia and Egypt have said they were accused of being mercenaries hired by the government, and told of racist killings and beatings.

Somalia and Sudan, where violence is ongoing, remain at the overall head of the table.

More than half of the top ten countries that lead the ranking are African states, including also the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Nigeria, as well as Côte d'Ivoire.

Notes to Editor

1. The Peoples Under Threat survey seeks to identify those peoples or groups that are most under threat of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression in 2011. The survey, with a description of how it is compiled, will be available at 0600 (GMT+1) 12 May 2011 on [MRG's website](#)

2. [Previous Peoples Under Threat surveys](#)

3. Minority Rights Group International (MRG) is a non-governmental organization working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide.

Interview opportunities are available with the panellists after the event.

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