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## Introduction to *Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East : Struggles to Survive and Thrive*

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## Introduction

*Robert K. Hitchcock and Alan J. Osborn*

*Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East: Struggles to Survive and Thrive* is about human populations residing in Africa and the Middle East, a diverse region that is connected geographically, culturally, and historically. The African continent is vast and covers 11.7 million square miles, or an area slightly larger than the combined area of the United States and South America (Table 1). Today, the African continent is home to some 771 million people distributed within fifty-four separate countries. Of the world's continents, Africa is by far the most diverse culturally. In Sudan, for example, there are over 200 ethnic groups speaking some 134 languages, while in Nigeria there are some 600 or more ethnic groups who speak as many as 505 different languages.

The Middle East, for purposes of this volume, is taken to include fifteen countries, ranging from Afghanistan in the east to Turkey and Syria in the west. Together, these countries cover a total of 2,704,730 square miles and support a population of 254,428,629 (Table 2). The Middle East includes large, petroleum-rich countries (e.g., Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia) and small countries such as Bahrain (an island monarchy) and a federation of seven small monarchies (the United Arab Emirates).

The Middle East is characterized by the predominance of the religion of Islam, and it is identified in part by the presence of Arabic-speaking peoples as well as non-Arab peoples (e.g., those in Iran, Turkey, and Israel). Some parts of the Middle East, like Africa, are coping with conflict, insecurity, and massive economic and political change. In the Middle East in the year 2001, there were a number of ongoing conflicts, including Turkey and Iraq versus the Kurds, the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein versus the Shi'ite Muslim minority in southern Iraq, and Israel versus the Palestinians

## Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East

**Table 1**  
**Country Size, Population, and Gross National Product Per Capita for Africa**

Name of Country	Size (sq mi)	Population 2000 (millions)	Type of Government	Gross National Product Per Capita (US\$; 1998)
Algeria	919,590	31.5	republic	4,595
Angola	481,351	12.9	nominally a multiparty democracy	999
Benin	43,483	6.1	republic under multiparty democratic rule	857
Botswana	231,803	1.6	parliamentary republic	5,796
Burkina Faso	105,869	11.9	parliamentary	866
Burundi	4,149	6.7	republic	561
Cameroon	183,568	15.1	unitary republic; multiparty presidential	1,395
Cape Verde	1,556	0.428	republic	3,192
Central African Republic	240,534	3.6	republic	1,395
Chad	495,755	7.7	republic	843
Comoros	838	0.694	independent republic	1,400
Congo	132,047	2.9	republic	846
Cote D'Ivoire	124,503	14.8	republic; multiparty presidential regime	1,484
Democratic Republic of Congo	905,568	51.7	dictatorship	733
Djibouti	8,494	0.638	republic	—
Egypt	386,662	68.5	republic	3,146
Eritrea	46,842	3.9	transitional government	984
Ethiopia	471,778	62.6	federal republic	566
Gabon	103,348	1.2	republic; multiparty presidential regime	5,615
The Gambia	4,363	1.30	republic under multiparty democratic rule	1,428
Ghana	92,101	20.2	constitutional democracy	1,735
Guinea	10,830	7.4	republic	1,722

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**Table 1** (*continued*)

Name of Country	Size (sq mi)	Population 2000 (millions)	Type of Government	Gross National Product Per Capita (US\$; 1998)
Guinea-Bissau	13,946	1.2	republic, multiparty since mid-1991	573
Kenya	224,962	30.1	republic	964
Lesotho	11,718	2.2	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	2,194
Liberia	43,000	3.2	republic	—
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	679,362	5.6	republic	—
Madagascar	226,657	15.9	republic	741
Malawi	45,745	10.9	multiparty democracy	551
Maldives	116	0.286	republic	3,436
Mali	478,767	11.2	republic	673
Mauritania	397,955	2.7	republic	1,500
Mauritius	718	1.2	parliamentary democracy	8,236
Morocco	172,414	28.4	constitutional monarchy	3,188
Mozambique	309,496	19.7	republic	740
Namibia	318,260	1.7	republic	5,280
Niger	489,191	10.7	republic	729
Nigeria	356,670	111.5	republic transitioning from military to civilian	740
Reunion	969	0.699	overseas department of France	—
Rwanda	10,170	7.7	republic; presidential, multiparty system	—
Senegal	75,749	9.5	republic under multiparty democratic rule	1,297
Seychelles	67	0.082	republic	6,420
Sierra Leone	27,699	4.9	constitutional democracy	445
Somalia	246,202	10.1	parliamentary	—
South Africa	471,446	40.4	republic	8,296
Sudan	967,499	29.5	transitional—ruling military junta took power	1,240

## Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East

**Table 1** (*continued*)

Name of Country	Size (sq mi)	Population 2000 (millions)	Type of Government	Gross National Product Per Capita (US\$; 1998)
Swaziland	6,702	1.008	monarchy; independent member of Commonwealth	4,195
Tanzania	364,901	33.5	republic	483
Togo	21,928	4.6	republic under transition to multiparty democratic rule	1,352
Tunisia	63,170	9.6	republic	5,169
Uganda	91,136	21.8	republic	1,072
Western Sahara	102,703	0.292	legal status of territory and question of sovereignty unresolved	—
Zambia	290,584	9.2	republic	678
Zimbabwe	150,804	11.7	parliamentary democracy	2,489

*Source:* Data from United Nations Population Fund 2000, [www.unfpa.org/swp/2000](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2000); Population Reference Bureau, [www.prb.org/pubs/wpps2000](http://www.prb.org/pubs/wpps2000); CIA The World Fact Book 2001, [www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/).

in a conflict that began late in 2000 known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Conflicts within Afghanistan involving Soviet troops and U.S.-backed Mujahedeen (holy warriors) continued for ten years (1979–1989). Following the September 11, 2001 attacks upon the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and World Trade buildings in New York City, the United States and allied forces bombed Taliban forces and sent in specially trained troops to search for Osama Bin Laden. At this time, this military action continues.

The Middle East's past also demonstrates evidence of major changes over time: humankind's first cities, some of them surrounded by fortifications to protect the inhabitants from opponents; the world's earliest systems of writing and record keeping; highly organized societies that were as sophisticated ritually as they were socially and politically; and complex and wide-ranging trading systems involving the exchange of minerals, food, wine, pottery, and other products. The boundaries on the map of the Middle East have been redrawn numerous times, and the domestic political landscape has been modified in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The fifteen contemporary countries of the Middle East contain a diverse set of peoples, ranging from small-scale tribal societies such as the various Bedouin groups who occupy Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Israel, the West Bank, and the Sinai (now part of Egypt) to large-scale populations such as the Kurds who number

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**Table 2**  
**Country Size, Population, and Gross National Product Per Capita for Middle East**

Name of Country	Size (sq mi)	Population 2000 (millions)	Type of Government	Gross National Product Per Capita (US\$; 1998)
Afghanistan	250,000	22.7	Theocratic republic	—
Bahrain	262	0.691	Monarchy	—
Iran	636,293	67.7	Theocratic republic	5,121
Iraq	167,924	23.1	Military regime	—
Israel	7,847	6.2	Parliamentary democracy	16,861
Palestinian Territory	2,426	3.1	Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement	1,560
Jordan	36,193	6.7	Constitutional monarchy	2,615
Kuwait	6,880	2.0	Constitutional monarchy	—
Lebanon	4,035	3.3	Parliamentary republic	4,144
Oman	82,031	2.5	Monarchy	—
Qatar	4,247	0.591	Monarchy	—
Saudi Arabia	900,004	21.6	Monarchy	10,498
Syrian Arab Republic	71,494	16.1	Military regime, republic	2,702
Turkey	301,384	66.6	Parliamentary republic	6,594
United Arab Emirates	32,000	2.4	Federation of small monarchies (7)	18,871
Yemen	203,850	18.1	Parliamentary republic	658

**Source:** Data from United Nations Population Fund 2000, [www.unfpa.org/swp/2000](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2000); Population Reference Bureau, [www.prb.org/pubs/wpds2000](http://www.prb.org/pubs/wpds2000); CIA The World Fact Book 2001, [www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/).

some 20 million and are found in six countries and engaged in efforts to promote their cultural identity and gain greater control over decision making about their futures.

The Kurds and the Palestinians, among other Middle Eastern popula-

tions, consider themselves nations—groups who see themselves as “one people” on the basis of common ancestry, history, customs, language, institutions, territory, and religion.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, the Kurds and Palestinians lost out in the rush toward state formation in the Middle East in the twentieth century. This process also occurred in the cases of a number of minority populations in the region such as the Baluch in Iran and Afghanistan and the Alawis in Syria.

### ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

As this volume will demonstrate, cultures, societies, and ethnic groups appear, persist, and change as a consequence of local, regional, and global conditions. Various interrelated components of culture such as demography, economy, technology, political organization, and religion undergo numerous changes, some of them subtle, others dramatic, and still others massive and wrenching.

In order to understand the dramatic transformations that are happening in Africa and the Middle East, we need to examine briefly the variable nature of culture as a complex system that enables human populations to respond to a multitude of problems. These problems may involve our own biology (e.g., human diseases such as malaria, influenza, tuberculosis, and diabetes) or the natural environment (e.g., drought, floods, or deforestation, and competition or cooperation with other human populations).

Current world news seems to be filled with accounts of widespread conflict in Africa and the Middle East. It is very important, therefore, that we understand what ethnic groups are, how they form, and what their benefits and costs are for the peoples of Africa and the Middle East. For example, ethnic boundaries can be both inclusive and exclusive with respect to the accessibility of scarce or limited resources such as arable land, water, wildlife and livestock, jobs, or other forms of wealth. Although the news media usually makes passing reference to “age-old political and/or religious” disputes, many ethnic group conflicts throughout Africa and the Middle East result in part from human competition over scarce resources. Disputes and acts of aggression begin at these “fault lines” of economic disparity that are defined, in part, by ethnic distinctions. Anthropologists tell us that ethnic groups are collective groups of people who believe that they share a common ancestry. Membership in a common ethnic group frequently is defined on the basis of shared language, religion, dress (including body ornamentation), and food habits. Ethnic groups are often assumed to share cultural values, to be biologically self-perpetuating, and to define themselves (and to be defined by others) as a distinctive group.

Ethnic group members sometimes categorize themselves in terms of “we” versus “them.” Members of such ethnic groups interact and communicate with one another by means of shared conventions, codes, symbols, and

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behavior patterns. In such instances, members of an ethnic group share actual genetic ties—they are differentially related to one another, depending on the total number of people included within the group.

Ethnic groups may also be defined from the “outside.” Frequently, ethnic distinctions have been made by colonial governments. For bureaucratic purposes, colonizing states may arbitrarily split or lump indigenous populations into new groups. Such administrative and economic distinctions crosscut existing genetic, social, linguistic, religious, and cultural values in the newly conquered or incorporated lands. Frequently, ethnic affiliation is quite fluid. People certainly interact on both short-term and long-term bases across boundaries established by differences in physical appearance, genetic affiliation(s), food ways, cultural values, and/or religion(s). Members of some ethnic groups may be multilingual and are able to interact successfully across language boundaries. Ethnic groups may emphasize their “ethnicity” in order to maintain cooperative ties so that they can successfully compete in various economic and social situations. They may also manipulate their ethnic identities for their own purposes in seeking to achieve their various goals.

## AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

For many people, Africa and the Middle East generate kaleidoscopic images of vast deserts, sinuous rivers, mist-shrouded mountains, rocky hills, and expansive grasslands. These spectacular, varied landscapes have captivated the imagination and interest of innumerable outsiders and insiders. For many people, Africa and the Middle East represent an alluring, yet dangerous, region—a set of places where the explorer, adventurer, fortune hunter, missionary, or colonist could quite easily become ill or die as the result of a thousand causes. For Africans and Middle Easterners themselves, the many challenges of the environments in which they reside pose risks, but they also present opportunities.

For the peoples of present-day Africa and the Middle East, the immense region represents a homeland that has sustained their ancestors and their families for millennia. The natural resources of this land continue to sustain the primary needs for many of the current generation. The people of Africa and the Middle East have relied heavily upon the support provided by their close and distant kin and upon assistance provided by governments, international agencies, churches, and nongovernment organizations. Approximately 36 percent of Africans live in cities, compared to a world average of 46 percent. In the Middle East, it is estimated that 60 percent of the population will be residing in cities by 2010.<sup>2</sup> A significant percentage of Africa’s people are peasant farmers who live and work in rural areas and who supplement their income through various kinds of small-scale industries and income-generating activities. Middle Easterners, like Africans, of-



ten combine income-generating activities, engaging in trade and wage labor in addition to engaging, in many cases, in farming or herding.

Africa is the birthplace for humankind. Between 4 and 5 million years ago, an assortment of relatively large-brained, bipedal or upright hominids (humanlike creatures) began to expand their ranges along the margins of the grasslands and woodlands of eastern and southern Africa. For the next 4 million years, these early hominids would evolve biologically and culturally, and they would fill the entire continent and ultimately colonize the earth. As they did so, there were changes in the physical and cultural characteristics of the prehuman and human populations. It is believed by some that the ancestors of all modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, were found in Africa and that they gave rise to virtually all of the more than 6 billion people on the planet today. These were hunting and gathering populations who lived on the continent for millions of years and in some cases continue to do so in places such as the savannas of eastern and southern Africa and the rain forests of central Africa. Many of the continent's hunter-gatherers would shift to becoming settled villagers, domesticate a number of plants and animals, irrigate arid lands, develop iron metallurgy, travel and trade widely, and diversify their sociopolitical systems into numerous tribes, chiefdoms, states, and in some instances, empires.

The survival strategies of Africans and Middle Eastern peoples today are extremely variable, ranging from dryland and irrigated agriculture to live-stock keeping (pastoralism) and from rural economic activities to wage labor in urban industries. Many people in the region combine work in what is known as the formal sector of the economy, in which people are provided wages in exchange for their services, with work in the informal sector, taking part, for example, in craft manufacture and the manufacture and sale of beer or palm wine to other people, as can be seen, for example, in some societies in West Africa. Some 50 million people in Africa and the Middle East, such as the Somali of the Horn of Africa and the Qashqa'i of Iran, as discussed in this volume, are herders of livestock and small stock (the latter category includes sheep and goats). Some 1.4 million Africans are foragers or part-time foragers who depend to a significant extent on wild plants and animals, as can be seen, for example, among the Okavango Delta peoples in northern Botswana (see Chapter 8). Foraging as a way of life may be rare, but a substantial number of people in Africa and the Middle East supplement their incomes through the collection of wild resources (e.g., medicinal plants and firewood).

The people of Africa speak more than 2,011—or 30 percent—of the world's 6,703 distinct languages.<sup>3</sup> A recent anthropological study of West African language diversity demonstrates that more people make use of a common language over larger areas in geographical regions characterized by greater resource risk. Ecological risks in West Africa are generated by limited, sporadic rainfall and resulting unpredictability of crop production.

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African peoples within this region lessen the risks of food scarcity by involving themselves in larger and larger exchange or markets systems. Economic exchange is, then, mediated by means of a shared language.<sup>4</sup>

Many ethnic groups form extremely valuable economic ties that prove to be mutually beneficial. For example, the pastoral Fulani and their agricultural neighbors the Hausa in Nigeria, West Africa, have established such economic interdependence or symbiosis (mutual dependency). The Fulani and the Hausa speak different languages. The Fulani herd cattle and move about the savanna or grasslands in search of forage for their animals. Their lives are dictated primarily by the needs of their livestock. Between May and October, the Fulani follow the rains and resulting grasslands as they move northward toward the arid frontier near the Sahara Desert. They attempt to move their herds along the expanding front once the rains begin. Rains bring welcomed abundance of forage and drinking water for their cattle. The wet season, however, also brings tsetse flies (*Glossina* spp., carriers of human sleeping sickness and cattle-threatening trypanosomiasis), as well as mosquitoes (carriers of debilitating or life-threatening malaria). Once the rains cease and dry conditions return to the region, the Fulani and their cattle herds move southward.<sup>5</sup>

Seasonal movements of the Fulani and their cattle are responses to cyclical environmental changes. Their movements are also carefully coordinated with Hausa peoples who also inhabit this environment. Trade forms an important component of these interethnic relationships. The pastoral Fulani, then, trade milk, butter, and meat to the sedentary Hausa farmers for agricultural crops (bulrush millet, maize, peanuts, rice, sweet potatoes), salt, and metal tools. Furthermore, a very significant component of their symbiotic relationship involves Fulani livestock and Hausa farm fields. Fulani cattle fertilize Hausa fields as they graze on remnant crops following the harvest. In this case, we can see that the specialized economic roles of the Fulani and the Hausa are effectively combined into a multiethnic economic system that provides a relatively long-term, sustainable way of life for these people in western Africa.

In the recent past, Africa has experienced a number of devastating natural disasters including droughts, floods, and losses of wildlife and livestock. Droughts occur cyclically every three to five and six to eight years in northern Ethiopia and about every eight to ten years for the entire country. Scientists have learned that the El Niño Southern Oscillations (ENSO) and corresponding La Niña events (temperature changes in the Pacific Ocean that occur on a periodic basis) play a very central role in monsoonal rains and droughts that impact eastern and southern Africa. For example, between 70 and 85 percent of the floodwaters that have usually inundated Egypt's rich alluvial floodplains each year for the last six to seven millennia originate in the Ethiopian highlands. Rainfall in the highlands are, in turn, driven by the monsoons in the Indian Ocean to the east. Variations in water

flow in the Nile at Aswan in Egypt are correlated with El Niño Southern Oscillations or warming trends in the ocean waters in the Pacific Ocean. Variation in the timing and the amount of flooding in the lower Nile Basin can now be predicted about one year in advance. Such important meteorological predictions will provide an extremely valuable tool for managing the critical water within the Nile Basin in eastern Africa and Egypt, a region that includes ten countries and covers a huge area—3,443,670 square miles.

At the other extreme, certain regions of Africa have experienced catastrophic floods. This was the case, for example, in areas along the Limpopo River in southern Mozambique in the January–March period 2000 and, more recently, in 2001 along the Zambezi River in central Mozambique. The 2000 Limpopo floods killed 929 people, displaced 733,000 others, and destroyed \$1 billion in crops and property. More than 1,930 square miles of the coastal lowlands were covered with floodwaters, affecting biological productivity and farming potential. Floods, droughts, and other natural disasters have wreaked havoc in many parts of Africa, something that has led to initiatives to predict these kinds of problems.

Drought relief, rehabilitation, and labor-based development programs have helped in Africa and the Middle East after natural and human disasters. Morbidity (illness) rates among refugees and internally displaced people are declining in many areas as a result of better service provision by international agencies, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In the Republic of Botswana, not a single life was lost to starvation during the severe drought of the early 1990s, thanks to the effective nutritional and health surveillance and relief programs that were established there. Refugee and drought relief programs in central Africa and the Horn also served to save the lives of tens of thousands of people and to facilitate a process whereby at least some of them have been able to reestablish their economic systems, as can be seen, for example, in the cases of Eritrea and Ethiopia, as discussed in Chapter 4 by Lucia Ann McSpadden.

### POPULATION ISSUES

Of the world's continents Africa has the highest rate of population growth. The rate of population increase equals 2.5 percent per year, which means that the total population of Africa will double by the year 2028. Forty-three percent of Africa's total population are under fifteen years of age, whereas the world average, according to the United Nations, is 31 percent. The percentage of the population below age fifteen in the Middle East is 40 percent.<sup>6</sup> In the 1960s, the Middle East had the world's highest population growth rate, but since about 1970, fertility levels have been

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declining. In a number of African and Middle Eastern countries, population expansion rates are outstripping food production. Competition between various kinds of land uses, such as agriculture and livestock keeping, is on the increase. Some people in Africa and the Middle East are moving into more marginal habitats in an effort to earn a living via agriculture and pastoralism, a process that is leading to higher rates of deforestation (the loss of forests) and desertification (the spread of deserts due to habitat losses as a result of overutilization by people and their animals and soil erosion, which leads to lower agricultural productivity). The losses of vegetation cover and soil erosion lead to higher soil temperatures, a process that, in turn, can lead to localized reductions in rainfall. These processes can contribute to a decline in the water table, thus making access to groundwater, crucial to the economic well-being of a substantial number of the region's people, more problematic.

In February 1994, journalist Robert Kaplan described what he saw as "the coming anarchy": overpopulation, scarcity, conflict, environmental degradation, and disease, which were, he argued, rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet.<sup>7</sup> Nowhere were these factors more evident than on the continent of Africa. Lawlessness was far more significant in Africa, in Kaplan's estimation, than its experiments in democracy. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) of the United Nations have pointed out that hunger is a major problem in Africa, with 1 person in 3 chronically undernourished and over 291 million people, more than the population of the United States in 2000, living on less than \$1 a day. It is estimated that 22 percent of the population of Africa will be malnourished in 2015 unless steps are taken to alleviate hunger and poverty there.<sup>8</sup>

The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, explicitly linked population, environment, and development. For our purposes here, we will take *development* to mean the process whereby nations improve the well-being of their citizens. Africans and Middle Easterners see development and a healthy environment as basic human rights. Many people in the region also see population issues as crucial concerns of both individuals and communities. While they wish to retain the right to make their own choices about the numbers of children they have, they realize that large families may have as many costs as they do benefits. High rates of economic growth, while having positive impacts on standards of living, do pose risks for the environment. More and more efforts are being invested in the construction of large-scale urban, agricultural, and water development projects; hundreds of thousands of people in Africa and the Middle East (e.g., in Turkey) are being relocated to areas where they live in higher densities and place greater pressure on resources than they did before.

## CONFLICTS AND THEIR CAUSES

The peoples of Africa and the Middle East have experienced substantial numbers of human conflicts, particularly since the colonial expansion of European states during the 1800s. Millions of African people were forcibly removed from their homes and sold into slavery in Brazil, the Caribbean, and the southeastern United States. Between 1700 and 1800, more than 5.5 million Africans were transported to the Western Hemisphere. Thirty-three percent of the slaves went to Brazil, 50 percent went to the Caribbean, and 6 percent were enslaved within what is now the United States.<sup>9</sup>

Africa and the Middle East served as staging grounds for many conflicts during both World War I and World War II, as well as the Cold War that involved the United States, the former Soviet Union, and their allies. The Cold War had a destabilizing and devastating effect upon many of the region's countries such as Angola, Somalia, and what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). During this time, Africa and the Middle East constituted one of the most militarized regions of the world. Africa has experienced more than thirty wars in the past three decades. In 1996, for example, wars engulfed fourteen of Africa's fifty-four countries; these wars produced more than 8 million refugees. In 1999, wars ripped through more than twenty countries including Algeria, Angola, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Namibia, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Many of these recent conflicts have specifically targeted civilian populations in the Great Lakes region of Africa in the early to mid-1990s, as well as in Sierra Leone and Sudan during the late 1990s and into the new millennium. Sudan, at the end of 1999, had 4 million people who were internally displaced, the largest internally displaced population in the world.<sup>10</sup>

In 1997, twenty-one of the world's poorest thirty countries were in Africa. Many of the valuable economic resources in Africa are controlled by the elite, as well as by foreign multinational corporations. The benefits of Africa's wealth are rarely enjoyed by the people themselves, especially by the poor. In the mid-1990s, Africa's combined external debt equaled U.S.\$313 billion, a figure that represented 235 percent of its export income and 83 percent of its gross domestic product.<sup>11</sup> Africa also lacks any appreciable financial capital from countries outside the continent, though it does receive assistance from international organizations and multilateral development banks such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Development Association (IDA).

The conflicts throughout Africa and the Middle East waste significant and vital economic resources. Some of the poorest countries in the region spend the most money on weapons purchases. In 1999 Eritrea expended more than 36 percent of its gross national product on weapons. Iraq spent an even greater percentage of its gross national product on weapons and the military.

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African countries in general spent more than U.S.\$8 billion in 1999.<sup>12</sup> Significant investments were made by some countries and rebel groups in anti-personnel weapons including land mines. Some countries in Africa, such as Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Somalia, have so many land mines scattered across them that it is difficult for their populations to work in the fields or even to walk on public roads without risk. Substantial sums of money have to be channeled into land mine clearance and into assisting people who have been injured and lost limbs from land mine explosions.

The African continent is essentially an ancient plateau composed primarily of low-grade iron. This landmass, however, is crosscut or punctuated by veins and volcanic pipes that are filled with various minerals (gold, copper, iron, mica, quartz, chrome, bauxite [aluminum ore], cobalt, zinc, and manganese), as well as precious gemstones (diamonds). Africa supplies 17 percent, 70 percent, and 80 percent of the world's copper, gold, and diamonds, respectively.

In addition, African oil has recently become more important on the world market, adding to the already substantial amount of oil coming out of Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran. Africa currently possesses roughly 7 percent of the world's proved reserves, or 75.4 billion barrels. A great deal of this oil is to be obtained from offshore deposits along Africa's western coasts that stretch from Nigeria to Angola. Forty-four major refineries in twenty-five countries produce 3,000 barrels per day, or 4 percent of the world's total daily oil product.<sup>13</sup> Wealth derived from such rich natural resources can potentially mean improved quality of life for many Africans. Equatorial Guinea, for example, earned \$100 million in 1997 from crude oil production from Mobil Oil Corporation. Western nations including the United States, France, and Britain have worked very hard to establish and to maintain strong diplomatic, economic, and in some cases, military ties to African countries like Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, and Angola, as well as the Congo Republic. It is likely that the United States will grow to depend more and more heavily upon Angola and Nigeria for their oil. In 1998, Angola supplied roughly 10 percent of the U.S. demand for oil.<sup>14</sup>

More than three decades of oil production by Shell Oil in Nigeria have resulted in tremendous profits for both the oil companies (Shell, Mobil, Agip, and Elf-Aquitaine) and Nigerian government officials. Nigeria produces nearly 2 million barrels of oil per day and remains one of the world's largest producers.<sup>15</sup> Nigeria's oil fields have probably generated several hundred billion (U.S.) dollars during the past thirty to forty years. Oil exploration, drilling, and spills have wreaked considerable environmental damage on the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and have exacerbated social tensions there, especially with the Ogoni, the indigenous people of the Niger Delta region, as described in Chapter 7 by A. Olu Oyinlade and Jeffrey M. Vincent. Farmlands have been despoiled, drinking water has been con-

taminated, and many fish populations have been decimated. In addition, oil-related development has led to increased landlessness, inflation, prostitution, and illegitimate children. In certain cases, the oil companies have been charged with destabilizing local communities through bribes and alleged killings of members of the opposition. Nigeria's tremendous oil wealth has only served to worsen the quality of life for its people.<sup>16</sup>

Oil is most probably now at the root of the eighteen-year-long civil war in Sudan. The government of Sudan and Canadian-based Talisman Energy have recently completed a 994-mile pipeline from Bentiu in the Sudd region of the south with Port Sudan on the Red Sea. Sudan's exportation of crude oil has recently increased very dramatically to more than 200,000 barrels per day. Annual oil revenues for the Sudanese government have now reached U.S.\$1.8 billion and are expected to top U.S.\$2 billion in 2001. Recent developments of Sudan's oil fields in the south of the country have been constructed and financed by American, Chinese, Malaysian, and Canadian companies.<sup>17</sup> There is little doubt that the Sudanese government has used oil revenues to finance genocidal activities that have been directed toward ethnic groups like the Nuba, Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk in central and southern Sudan (for a discussion of the difficulties faced by people in Sudan, see Chapter 6 on the Nuba by Mona A. Mohamed and Margaret Fisher).

Recently, greater attention has been given to the international political significance of rich oil and gas reserves in the Caucasus region—particularly in the Caspian Basin (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). Maximum estimates for this region equal 2000 billion barrels of oil and 565 to 665 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas.<sup>18</sup> Various countries and multinational energy and engineering companies from the United States, Britain, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and China are actively competing for controlling interests in a number of multibillion-dollar pipelines that will crisscross the Caucasus region.<sup>19</sup> There is reason to believe that the United States had already planned to establish a military presence in this region—especially within Afghanistan—prior to the attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C.<sup>20</sup> Afghanistan is not considered to be rich in oil and gas but it does provide a corridor for a 1,000-mile-long, 48-inch diameter pipeline that will carry more than 1 million barrels of oil per day. Interestingly, U.S.-based Unocal Corporation holds more than 46 percent of the interests in the international consortium of energy and engineering companies involved in planning this enormous pipeline system known as the Central Asian Oil Pipeline Project.<sup>21</sup> Once again, we find that access to, and control of, critical energy resources underlie many of the world's current conflicts.

Africa's wealth in diamonds has had even more devastating impacts on its people. Each year more than U.S.\$50 billion is spent by the world's wealthy on diamond jewelry, and more than 65 percent of this figure is

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spent within the United States. Generally, only 5 to 10 percent of the world's diamonds are gem quality. Significantly, between 70 and 80 percent of the world's gem-quality diamonds are found in Angola.<sup>22</sup> Diamonds from Angola are sold to finance a decade-long, very complex war that has killed 500,000 people, mostly civilians. During the 1990s, this war involved fighting between a Socialist government and UNITA (Uniao Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola). Many gem-quality diamonds from Angola are easily mined, and a great deal of the mining is carried out illegally. These "conflict diamonds" or "blood diamonds" are laundered through a number of neighboring countries, for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast, en route to international diamond dealers in Israel, Belgium, Canada, and the United States. Many diamond companies throughout the world—including De Beers, Almazy Rossii-Sakha, Steinmetz, and Oderbrecht—have purchased gem-quality diamonds from Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) generals and through officials within the Empresa Nacional de Diamantes de Angola (ENDIMA) and UNITA, the guerrilla group contending for power in Angola that is led by Jonas Savimbi. The wealth represented by such sales amounted to U.S.\$1 billion in 1996–1997 to the De Beers Company alone.

In 1999, it was believed that as much as U.S.\$2 billion was obtained by government leaders and rebel forces in Sierra Leone from the sale of conflict diamonds. In Sierra Leone, rebel forces and their leaders armed with machetes have brutally maimed infants, children, and women; they have killed 75,000 civilians; and they have forced 460,000 people to flee into nearby countries. Conflict diamonds have provided a great deal of money for purchasing weapons and supplying rebel forces. Diamond industry officials estimate that 4 percent of the world's diamonds are blood diamonds—those sold on the market to raise funds to underwrite warfare and rebellion.<sup>23</sup> Efforts by the international community to prevent the sale of blood diamonds potentially could have impacts on the legal diamond trade, and such countries as Botswana, which are highly dependent on diamonds for their gross national product, could be affected negatively. The Republic of Botswana, for its part, uses a significant portion of its diamond revenues to finance an efficient health, education, and welfare system, some of which is aimed at combating HIV/AIDS, poverty, and other critical problems facing the country.

Given these examples, it would appear that one of the most horrific threats to people throughout the world may come from within and outside of one's culture simultaneously. In Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Angola, and Sierra Leone the atrocities of forced migration, ethnic cleansing, looting, torture, rape, starvation, and brutal murder are carried out against one's own people due to voracious human greed. These atrocities, in turn, are directly attributable to the profit motives of individuals, governments, and multinational companies that wish to sell



death and to purchase precious resources such as oil, gold, diamonds, emeralds, and exotic timber.

According to representatives of some African and Middle Eastern groups who are at risk from the actions of governments and companies who have spoken at international forums such as the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in Geneva, individuals and communities are having to cope with mass killings, arbitrary executions, torture, mental and physical mistreatment, arrests and detentions without trial, forced sterilization, involuntary relocation, destruction of their subsistence base, and the taking of children from their families. In some cases, these actions have been described as genocidal—the planned, systematic destruction of a people on the basis of who they are—much as occurred during the Holocaust in Europe in World War II. On the one hand, there is physical genocide, the destruction of indigenous peoples themselves; and on the other, there is cultural genocide or ethnocide, the destruction of a group's culture.

In Africa and the Middle East at the end of the second millennium, there were examples of both kinds of genocides being perpetrated. The terrible loss of life in the April–July 1994 period in Rwanda claimed between 500,000 and 800,000 victims, mainly Tutsi, moderate Hutu, and an unknown number of Twa (Pygmies), as described in Chapter 11 on the Rwandese by Clea Msindo Koff and Ralph J. Hartley. In Iraq in 1988, Saddam Hussein's military forces in Iraq unleashed chemical weapons on Kurdish villagers in a campaign known as Anfal, which led to the deaths of hundreds of people and the destruction of their communities.<sup>24</sup> Some 75,000 to 80,000 people have been killed since 1992 in struggles between members of Islamic fundamentalist groups and the government of Algeria. Tens of thousands of people were killed in the 1980s and 1990s in the struggle against Siad Barre and the faction fighting among clan groups in Somalia following Barre's fall in January 1991, as noted in Chapter 12, Virginia Luling's contribution on the Somali of the Horn of Africa.

These kinds of situations are by no means new in Africa and the Middle East. The Hereros of Southwest Africa (now Namibia) were treated brutally by the Germans in the early twentieth century (1904–1907). Those who were not killed in direct action were driven into the Kalahari Desert, where thousands of people died of thirst and starvation. This kind of process is seen today, as well, notably in the Sudan. Internally displaced people and refugees, caught in the crossfire between warring states, often are at tremendous risk. This was the case with refugees in the Eritrea-Ethiopia border war of 1998–2000, as discussed by Lucia Ann McSpadden in Chapter 4, and in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan.

There are several types of genocide involving African and Middle Eastern peoples. The first of these is genocide in the context of a struggle between a state and an indigenous group or collectivity of several collaborating groups who are resisting the actions of the state. Few, if any, nations have

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willingly given up their land and resources, and some of them have sought actively to assert their autonomy, as seen in the case of the Mali and Niger with respect to the Tuareg, as described by Susan Rasmussen in Chapter 13, or the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, as discussed by Laurel Erickson in Chapter 5. Often defined by governments as insurgents, separatists, or terrorists, resisting nations tend to consider themselves freedom fighters or people seeking self-determination. Many of these groups are numerically outnumbered and outgunned by the state, so they resort to guerrilla tactics or civil disobedience. Some states have conscripted members of indigenous or minority groups into their armed forces, sometimes at gunpoint. This was the case, for example, in southern Africa, where the South African Defense Force (SADF) drafted members of !Kung, Khwe, and Vasakela San (Bushmen) groups in the war against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Angola and Namibia in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, the San were characterized by some researchers as "the most militarized ethnic group in the world."<sup>25</sup>

Another major context in which genocides and massive human rights violations against indigenous peoples occur is where efforts are made to promote social and economic development, often characterized as being "in the national interest." Sometimes called developmental genocides, these kinds of actions occur when states, agencies, companies, or transnational corporations oppress local peoples during the course of implementing various kinds of development projects. Some analysts see the destruction of indigenous groups as a "necessary by-product" of economic development. One of the defenses offered by government officials to charges of genocide is that the killings of indigenous people cannot be defined as genocide if they are done for "economic" reasons.

The harming of local peoples by multinational corporations is occurring in a number of parts of Africa and the Middle East. The establishment of oil exploitation programs in west and central Africa and the Sudan, the cutting of timber in central Africa, and the extraction of minerals in western, central, and southern Africa have all had serious negative consequences for local peoples. The implementation of large-scale hydroelectric projects, many of them now funded by consortiums of private banks rather than the World Bank or other international finance institutions (IFIs), has resulted in the displacement of literally millions of people, many of them indigenous or minority groups, as seen, for example, in the case of people along the upper Euphrates River in Turkey and along parts of the Nile River in northeastern Africa. All too frequently, local people have been forced out of development project areas with little or no compensation provided to them either in the form of alternative land or cash for lost assets. Involuntary resettlement and loss of land access have had the effect of increasing internal social tensions, some of which are exhibited in higher rates of spouse and child abuse, divorce, and suicide among local people.<sup>26</sup>

## Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East

Ecocide, the destruction of ecosystems by states, agencies, or corporate entities, is a problem facing people in several parts of Africa and the Middle East. This can be seen, for example, in the case of Ogoniland in Nigeria, where Shell Oil has failed to deal with the pollution caused by their petroleum extraction activities (Chapter 7). Genocidal actions sometimes occur where there is also purposeful environmental destruction. For example, herbicides such as Agent Orange were allegedly used to clear forests so that counterinsurgency actions could proceed in Zimbabwe during the 1965–1980 liberation struggle. In southern Iraq in the period following the Gulf War, using herbicides Saddam Hussein's military forces destroyed the land and resource base of Shi'ites in the swamps at the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Another context in which human rights violations occur is one that is not normally recognized in the human rights and environmental justice communities—conservation-related violations. Although it is extremely important to protect endangered animals and plants, in many parts of the world, national parks, game reserves, and other kinds of protection areas have been established, often at significant cost to local communities, many of whom have been dispossessed as a result. Forced relocation out of conservation areas has all too often exacerbated problems of poverty, environmental degradation, and social conflict. In the course of state efforts to promote conservation, legal restrictions have been placed on hunting and fishing through national legislation. Such legislation has not only reduced the access of indigenous peoples to natural resources, but it has also resulted in individuals and sometimes whole communities being arrested, jailed, and in some cases, killed, as is noted in Chapter 3 by Stuart Marks on the Bisa of Zambia.

Even more disturbing than the high rates of arrest are the charges that people have been mistreated by game scouts and other officials. There have been a number of incidents in Africa where people claimed that they were tortured or received inhumane or degrading punishment when suspected of poaching or when being questioned about other people who might be engaged in illegal hunting. There have been cases where people have died of injuries inflicted upon them by game scouts, as occurred at !Xade in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana, in August 1993, when a forty-year-old man died after being questioned by game scouts. Community leaders in the central Kalahari argued that authorities stepped over the line from anti-poaching to persecution. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Survival International took note of these allegations, as did the United States in its *Country Reports on Human Rights* for 1993.<sup>27</sup>

Some indigenous groups are taking matters into their own hands, blocking company roads into forest areas and stopping tourists from entering tourist areas and national parks. Such an event occurred in Namibia in 1997, when a group of Hai//om blockaded the entrance to Etosha National

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Park. Police arrested seventy-three Hai//om for this action, although they eventually let them go. Others are using less confrontational tactics, appearing before the United Nations and congressional subcommittees in the United States and holding teach-ins and training sessions on how to write letters to boards of directors of companies. The San of Botswana, for example, had a representative body, the First People of the Kalahari, attend the meetings of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva in March 1996, where a presentation was made about the plight of the San people and the need for recognition of their basic human rights. San and other indigenous peoples from various parts of Africa have attended the meetings of the Working Group of Indigenous Populations of the United Nations in Geneva for the past two decades.

Those areas of Africa and the Middle East where population densities are high and where there is intense competition for resources tend to have significant environmental, social, and economic problems. It must be stressed that innovative efforts are being made to address these problems in the region. Community-based natural resource management programs (CBNRMPs) in southern and eastern Africa (e.g., in Zambia) and parts of the Middle East (e.g., in the Sinai region of Egypt, as noted in Chapter 2 by David Homa) are helping to reduce wildlife losses and to provide incomes to local communities. The San of Botswana, the Pygmies (TWA) of central Africa, the Tuareg of the Sahara, the Somali of the Horn of Africa, and the Mzeina Bedouins of Egypt have been called conservationists par excellence for their abilities to sustain themselves without doing irreparable harm to their habitats. They apply their wide-ranging environmental knowledge in the utilization and protection of resources and the areas in which they are found. Balancing population and environment is not easy, but it is possible.

### THE THREATS OF DISEASE

Africa and the Middle East are facing major health issues, ranging from HIV/AIDS to newly emerging diseases such as Ebola, an extremely lethal virus from the tropics, or, as one journalist described it, “the hot zone.” Virulent strains of malaria and dengue fever, spread by mosquitoes, are on the increase. On the other hand, river blindness—onchocerciasis, a disease carried by black flies—has been reduced significantly, owing to a multinational spraying and health education effort carried out with support from the United Nations, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other agencies in the Senegal River Basin and surrounding areas.

Africa is the global epicenter of HIV/AIDS in the new millennium. HIV/AIDS represents a substantial threat to human health, and it ranks as one of the most important diseases facing humankind in the twenty-first century. Since its initial clinical identification and description some two de-

ades ago, AIDS has resulted in over 16 million deaths worldwide. The United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that there are 36.1 million people worldwide who are either HIV positive or living with AIDS. Of these 25.3 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa. HIV/AIDS is also on the increase in the Middle East.<sup>28</sup>

Nearly 6,000 Africans die each day from HIV/AIDS. Twenty-one countries on the African continent exhibit the highest rates of HIV infection in the world. During 1999, approximately 3.8 million Africans contracted an HIV virus, and nearly 11 million children lost their parents to this epidemic.<sup>29</sup> Orphans, who currently number some 12 to 14 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, are placing a tremendous burden on families and communities who are attempting to assist them. Rates of infection have increased significantly in southern and eastern Africa during the 1990s, particularly in regions where adult males leave their homes and families to seek work elsewhere and are more apt to have sexual relations with prostitutes. In more economically depressed areas, these prostitutes tend to have increased numbers of clients, and increased promiscuity appears to ultimately produce even more virulent strains of HIV viruses. There are several countries in southern Africa, including Botswana and Zimbabwe, where rates of HIV infection now exceed 25 percent of the adult population. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has had a tremendously devastating impact upon African population structure, the labor force, and the economy. These costs have canceled out much of the per capita growth that African countries have experienced during the past several decades.

Most people in the developing world, including Africa, do not have access to antiretroviral therapies and drugs due to cost, availability, and the lack of health programs and facilities. In spite of the constraints, tremendous efforts are being made to curb the spread of the disease. Health education programs, including AIDS education, are on the increase in many parts of Africa, and it appears that in some parts of the continent, such as Uganda, Rwanda, and Botswana, as noted in this volume, the programs are having positive impacts.

Recently, veterinary authorities throughout Africa and the Middle East have recognized a range of animal diseases that involve wildlife, livestock, and in some instances, human populations. Livestock diseases are not new to the African continent. During the late 1800s, the rinderpest virus was introduced to eastern and southern Africa, where it decimated up to 95 percent of the cattle owned by highly mobile, pastoral peoples including the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania as well as countless wild antelopes such as buffalo and wildebeest.

A number of livestock diseases are carried by insects including the tsetse fly (*Glossina* spp.) that spreads blood parasites (*Trypanosoma* spp.) to herds of wild ungulates as well as domesticated animals. These parasites cause sleeping sickness in both humans and animals. Cattle herders like the

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Fulani of Nigeria move their herds frequently in advance of the rains and the spread of the tsetse flies.

Other livestock diseases such as foot and mouth disease (FMD) and Rift Valley fever (RVF) are caused by viruses. Lungsickness (contagious bovine pleuropneumonia [CBPP]) and brucellosis are caused by bacteria. During the early 1990s, hundreds of thousands of cattle were killed by government personnel to control a major outbreak of CBPP in northern Botswana, a process that had major impacts on the social and economic well-being of thousands of people who were dependent in part upon cattle for their subsistence and income (see Chapter 8). During September and October 2000, Rift Valley fever (RVF) spread from cattle in eastern Africa to herds in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.<sup>30</sup> Rift Valley fever is a viral hemorrhagic fever that causes flulike symptoms or encephalitis and ultimately death. Such outbreaks and the threats of the spread of diseases across international borders have devastating economic impacts given the importance of livestock sales. Exports of meat and other livestock products have been banned recently throughout Africa and the Middle East including Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria, and Yemen.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Africa and the Middle East in general lack large areas of arable land except in some of the fertile river valleys. Soils in many parts of the region are poor for agriculture due to their deficiencies in phosphorus, organic material, and moisture absorption capacities. Africa and the Middle East have experienced substantial soil losses through erosion that has been caused by deforestation and desertification. Considerable areas of forest and shrub lands have been cleared for farming, timber, and fuel wood. Firewood is the major source of fuel for cooking, heating, and other domestic tasks for 80 percent of Africa's population. Africa's demand for fuel wood to cook meals exceeds 22 billion cubic feet per year.<sup>31</sup> In areas of greater scarcity, people have altered their diets, reduced the number of meals, and developed more efficient stoves.

Africa and the Middle East are also experiencing water shortages due to population growth, rapid urbanization, and climate change. Africa and the Middle East's water and their people are not distributed evenly across the region. In Africa, thirteen countries supply 80 percent of the freshwater. Consequently, competition for freshwater is increasing, and a number of cooperative transboundary water management plans and treaties like the Nile Basin Initiative have been implemented.

We have all seen television news broadcasts of violent clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians (usually young, rock-throwing men) in communities on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These acts of aggression and violence are said to be the result of long-term enmity between

Jews and Arabs. Political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon, the director of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Toronto, has argued that recent conflicts have arisen in this region of the Middle East, in part, because of the scarcity of freshwater. He has pointed out that Israel now uses more fresh water each year than they “earn” or receive from rainfall and rivers that flow through their lands. In fact, Israel, Jordan, and Gaza currently use 113 billion cubic feet of water per year, yet renewable water supplies equal only 85 billion cubic feet per year.<sup>32</sup> This annual deficit results from the fact that deep wells (drilled by the Israelis) “overpump” the aquifers or underground sources of freshwater.

Forty percent of Israel’s fresh water is derived, then, from beneath the West Bank territory where many Palestinians live. During the past several decades the Israeli government has imposed very stringent restrictions upon water use and water allocation within the West Bank. As Homer-Dixon has pointed out, there is a very marked disparity between the Israeli and Palestinian residents of the West Bank with respect to water access and use. Israeli settlers have greater access to expensive well drilling equipment and pumps than do the Palestinians. Lema Bashir in Chapter 9 on the Palestinians describes this situation in more detail.

Israeli wells have been drilled deeper than the Palestinian wells. As a consequence, water levels have been depressed deeper and deeper. Salt water has been drawn into these “vacuums” and has contaminated freshwater supplies that remain closer to the surface. Palestinians have traditionally made use of pumped water in order to irrigate their fields. The area of their irrigated farmlands has declined nearly 85 percent during the 1990s. In addition, some of this farmland has been confiscated by the Israelis. Polluted drinking water and reduced food supplies have served to worsen health conditions among the Palestinians—particularly among the children. Homer-Dixon concluded that increased economic disparities and environmental degradation have caused or, at least, exacerbated ethnic conflict between Jewish and Arab people within this region of the Middle East.

A major issue facing Africa and the Middle East is the presence of “environmental refugees”—people who have had to leave their homes and move elsewhere because of environmental change, drought, and the loss of resources caused by climatic or human-induced events (e.g., overutilization of forest resources for firewood). Environmental degradation, famine, and conflict all too often are tied together, resulting in large numbers of people being on the move both within their own countries and across borders. Some of these people can be considered “economic refugees”—people who move in order to obtain jobs and earn income. A fairly sizable proportion of economic refugees are urban migrants, people who relocate from rural to urban areas in the hopes of finding new opportunities and a better lifestyle.

Many of the problems facing African and Middle Eastern peoples today are the result of global processes, specifically colonization and expansion

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of mercantile trade and development, which have deprived them of their lands and lifestyles. These processes are ongoing, not least in the form of resource exploitation. Today, another global process—the development of international laws recognizing indigenous and minorities and women’s rights—has the potential of redressing past injustices and ameliorating present circumstances. For African and Middle Eastern peoples, it is crucial to identify and define the best combination of international, regional, national, and local policies and governance to promote their welfare and enhance their standards of living.

From the perspective of peoples in Africa and the Middle East, colonization was essentially “Europeanization,” involving the imposition of European concepts of sovereignty, religion, and civilization. One effect, perhaps the crucial one, was the drastic reduction of local peoples’ land bases and their restriction to progressively smaller areas. In South Africa, for example, “homelands” were created by the Native Land Act in 1913 and Africans surrendered 87 percent of their land to white settlers and companies.<sup>33</sup> In Botswana, much of the most productive land was set aside as freehold land and given to white farmers. When their lands were lost, local peoples also lost livelihoods, graves and other sacred sites, history (for history was written on the landscape), and much of their religions. Europeans and their colonial offshoots offered in return their form of civilization, based on Christianity, individualism, and private property ownership. In virtually every area of the world where colonization took place, local peoples were subjected to intensive pressures to assimilate, to become European, and therefore to disappear. In this way the “indigenous problem” or “native problem” would be solved without a more overt strain of genocide. Local peoples, however, did not disappear but have endured. Their identities, however, often were fractured by the pressure of assimilation efforts.

These identities have been fortified in recent years as local peoples have reasserted their rights to traditional homelands and challenged the assumptions and mechanisms that resulted in their dispossession. In doing so, they have extracted concessions from the still-colonizing powers that govern them. In South Africa, for example, /Khomani San have been able to claim rights over a portion of the land surrounding the Kalahari Gemsbok Transfrontier Park, the first transboundary park in southern Africa, which is shared between South Africa and Botswana. In parts of the Sinai, Bedouin populations, as noted by David Homa (Chapter 2), have been able to obtain comanagement rights over national parks and reserves. Similar efforts can be seen in other parts of Africa and the Middle East, including Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Cameroon, Mali, Iran, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

Conservation and development programs cost a great deal of money. In order to undertake conservation and development projects, most countries, including many of those in the developing world, must borrow funds. They



do this by seeking assistance from multilateral development banks and from private banks (e.g., the Bank of America, Chase Manhattan Bank). Some countries have also turned to environmental nongovernment organizations willing to help pay off debts in exchange for their setting aside conservation areas in a strategy known as debt-for-nature swaps. Others have sought to generate their own funds through community-based natural resources management programs, tourism projects, and rural industries, as seen, for example, in the Okavango Delta region of Botswana, as discussed in Chapter 8 by John Bock and Sara E. Johnson.

Global wealth flows have changed enormously over the past fifty years since the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the United Nations were founded. What has *not* changed is the domination of these flows by wealthy institutions, agencies, and individuals. Over a quarter of the world's population is below the poverty datum line, the line below which it is impossible for an individual to sustain herself or himself. Poor people in the developing world argue vociferously that they have literally been pushed into poverty by both international institution and government efforts to deal with the debt problem. Debt is causing difficulties in a number of African and Middle East countries, where prices have risen at much faster rates than economies have grown. The proportion of malnutrition among children has increased in many of the countries that have undertaken economic reforms. Infant mortality rates have also risen in some areas. Workers' wages have fallen in some of these same countries, resulting in lower buying power at the local level, hurting regional economies.

### RESPONSE: STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE CULTURALLY

African and Middle Eastern communities and groups have begun to organize among themselves and to collaborate with a variety of support organizations in an effort to oppose negative policies and promote human rights. How successful these efforts will be depends very much on whether or not private companies, intergovernmental organizations, states, and nongovernment organizations are willing (1) to come up with strict internationally recognized human rights and environmental standards, (2) to monitor development and conservation activities as they are implemented, and (3) to enforce those standards. What this means, in effect, is that private companies will have to be held to the same standards as governments, and they must be liable to prosecution for genocidal actions and human rights violations.

The international community needs to take further steps to develop a code of business and social ethics that protects the rights of people in areas where businesses are operating. Governments and companies must live up

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to their obligation to protect local peoples and not compromise their rights under the weight of “progress,” economic growth, or free trade. All institutions, whether they are multinational corporations (MNCs), governments of nation-states, nongovernment organizations, or community-based organizations, need to work together to promote the rights not just of endangered peoples but of all human beings.

In recent years, recommendations have been made by indigenous and minority groups and their supporters that the goals of these peoples can best be achieved (1) if they are allowed to participate fully in needs assessments, development planning, and project implementation, (2) if they are provided information on which to base decisions, and (3) if they have the right to determine their own futures. “Participatory development” has become a catchphrase for the kind of approach that many indigenous and minority peoples and the organizations with whom they work are advocating. Various means of bringing about local participation have been suggested, including allowing local people to take part in all phases of the development process and assuring that local people have control over their own land and natural resources.

The concept of participation is one that is not easy to define. It can mean the right to make decisions about development action. Participation can also mean the process whereby local communities and individuals take part in defining their own needs and coming up with solutions to meet those needs. In addition, participation can refer to situations in which local communities and individuals share in the benefits from development projects and are fully involved in generating those benefits. As Robert Chambers notes, “Rural development can be redefined to include enabling poor rural women and men to demand and control more of the benefits of development.”<sup>34</sup> Participation can thus be said to mean simply putting people first. Efforts have been made to promote strategies of community consultation, mobilization, and organization as a means of overcoming development constraints among local peoples.

There is much debate among local communities and their leaders about the goals and objectives of their struggles. Virtually all want a greater say in decisions that affect them, and they would all like to see their standards of living enhanced. Some peoples want autonomy, which they see as the right to make their own decisions. They argue that autonomy means the right to be different and to be able to preserve, protect, and promote customs, values, and ideals that they hold dear. Autonomy and sovereignty imply protection from discrimination and preservation of cultural, linguistic, and spiritual values from assault by the dominant majority. Indigenous and minority peoples in Africa and the Middle East want the right to practice their own cultures, to teach their children mother tongue languages, and to be able to take part in their own customary activities without in-

terference, as is noted in a number of chapters in this book (e.g., Chapter 5 on the Kurds, Chapter 8 on the Okavango peoples of Botswana, Chapter 10 on the Qashqa'i of Iran, and Chapter 13 on the Tuareg).

Toward the end of the twentieth century and in the new millennium there has been a widespread set of social movements of indigenous and minority peoples who are seeking fair and just treatment and protection of their civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights.<sup>35</sup> These movements are aimed in part at gaining access to information and seeking rights to participate in decision making concerning the plans and programs of international agencies, governments, and private companies that might affect local peoples. The organizations formed by these groups engage in numerous activities, from taking cases to court to participating in demonstrations, and from holding workshops and training sessions to carrying out research and disseminating reports. They host meetings to which representatives of local groups are invited. These organizations also sometimes serve as liaisons between members of local groups and other agencies (e.g., state bodies devoted to indigenous or minority affairs or private companies).

The building of capacity for local decision making has been done in a number of ways, as noted in a number of chapters in this volume. It has been facilitated through the holding of workshops or community discussion sessions in which ideas about democratic processes of public policy formation have been addressed. It has also been promoted through training of various kinds (e.g., in how to form committees, draw up constitutions, and run meetings). In addition, capacity building has been facilitated through a number of innovative nonformal educational means, including doing problem-solving exercises, drawing up case studies, and performing role-plays about situations in which communities find themselves. A number of communities have drawn up their own materials and curricula for schools that address social, cultural, and ideological issues of importance to their cultures. These kinds of strategies have been very effective in helping to establish community-based organizations and strengthening cultural identities.

Today, there are literally thousands of grassroots organizations and institutions seeking to enhance their livelihoods and gain greater control over their areas. Many of these organizations are engaged in sustainable development activities. They are carrying out innovative agricultural projects, social forestry programs, and soil and water conservation activities. They are lobbying international agencies, including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, to be more responsive to their concerns.

By doing local, national, regional, and international networking and by increasing their involvement in civil society, African and Middle Eastern peoples have taken some important steps toward gaining recognition of their social, economic, and cultural rights. It is hoped that the lessons

learned from the diverse strategies they have employed will enable them to survive and prosper over the long term.

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### NOTES

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