

Sub-Saharan Africa: Environment, Politics, and Development

Robert K. Hitchcock

The winds of change are blowing across Sub-Saharan Africa, a diverse region of 47 countries stretching from the rolling savannas south of the Sahara desert to the coastal mountains and valleys of the Cape. In hundreds of cities and towns, pro-democracy demonstrators have taken to the streets. In over a dozen countries, opposition to one-party rule has led to promises of open elections, and major reforms aim at improving relations between governments and their citizens.

Despite these changes, over 70 percent of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa still lack basic civil liberties and human rights. Moreover, the region faces what amounts to a humanitarian crisis as a combination of drought, civil conflict, and economic decline threaten nearly 60 million of the region's 550 million people. Millions more, possibly a quarter of the total population, are poverty-stricken.

The forces of colonialism are partially responsible for Africa's difficulties today. In the nineteenth century, European powers drew political boundaries that cut across indigenous cultural and territorial divisions, exacerbating social tensions. Large areas of land were taken over by colonial administrations or European companies and individuals. Forced off their ancestral land, tens of thousands of Africans became laborers and migrant workers.

When the colonial era ended in the 1950s and 1960s, Sub-Saharan countries were left with few trained personnel and little infrastructure. Exploitative policies extracted Africa's minerals and other natural wealth for the benefit of outsiders. National economies were geared toward

producing goods—including such cash crops as coffee, palm oil, and cocoa—for European markets. Colonial leaders, as well as those who replaced them, devoted little attention to improving the grain and root crops upon which most Africans have depended.

Living mainly in rural areas, many Africans now make a living through a combination of agriculture, domestic animal keeping, and wage labor. About 24 million herders raise livestock both for subsistence and for sale. On the other hand, the urban population is growing rapidly; Lagos, Nairobi, and other cities already have serious shortages of housing, employment, and social services.

One legacy of European-drawn borders is the ethnic diversity that characterizes almost every African state. Nigeria contains as many as 160 different groups. Even countries such as Swaziland that are occupied almost entirely by a single ethnic group are usually subdivided along lines of kinship and social affiliation. The picture is complicated by the fact that the various African societies speak as many as 2,000 different languages and have an array of religious beliefs. These countries are governed by indigenous elites who also vary greatly

in size and cultural characteristics.

For the new African leaders, decolonization offered a chance to implement development programs that would benefit the citizens of independent states, although these countries faced several constraints in their efforts to develop, not least of which were access to capital and technical expertise. But with advice supplied by Western experts and loans from the World Bank, the International Development Association, and other international agencies, African governments embarked on ambitious programs of industrial and agricultural development. The projects they undertook ranged from state farms to large-scale efforts to develop river basins, from road-building to the establishment of schools and health services.

Unfortunately, many projects have yielded mixed results. While access to social services improved in some rural areas, economic growth has been limited at best. Moreover, some government elites and their supporters have used large-scale projects for self-serving political and economic purposes. River-basin developments, in particular, have transferred re-



Okiek woman.

Roderick Blackburn

sources to those in power at the expense of indigenous peoples. For example, the erection of the Manantali Dam on the Senegal River boosted local land values. Backed by government troops, politically well-placed individuals then began registering plots of land in their own names, forcibly relocating local people and almost touching off a war between Senegal and Mauritania.

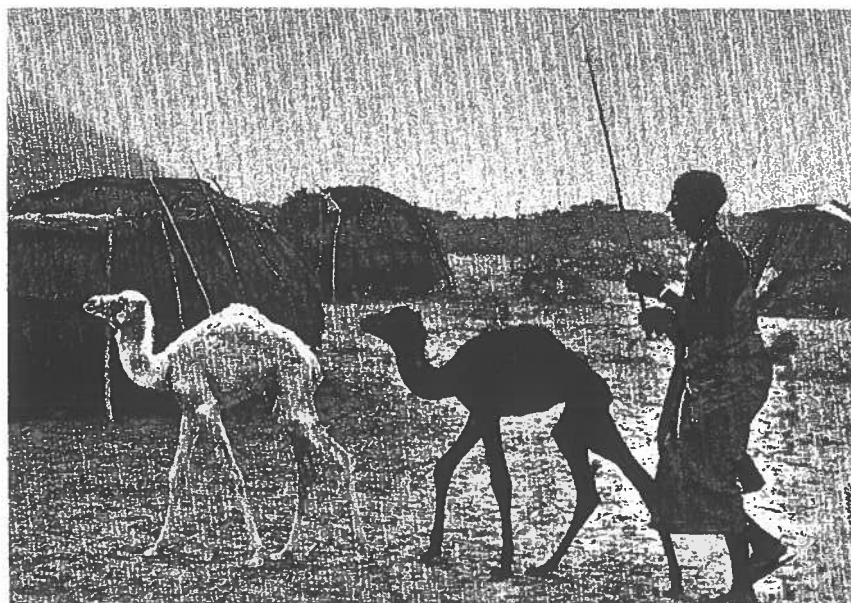
Many of the elite are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of distinct indigenous groups within their countries' boundaries. Rather than grant one group primacy, states maintain that all resident groups are indigenous. Thus, it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable census data broken down along tribal affiliation or ethnic group membership. Estimates of the number of indigenous Africans range from 25 million to 350 million.

Relatively few African governments have targeted development at improving the living standards of groups that are defined on an ethnic basis. One reason is that states understandably want to avoid South Africa's apartheid system of separate development. Thus, Botswana, one of Africa's oldest democracies, expanded its Bushmen Development Program to include all people in remote areas. In this case, as in many others, there was a less commendable reason as well. Botswana could now well-to-do assist people in the remote areas in addition to Bushmen. The program thus became a source of subsidies for wealthier people to develop cattle ranches and farms in out-of-the-way places.

VICTIMS OF PROGRESS

At time, dependence on funds from international development agencies and multilateral development banks has resulted in the imposition of programs that are geared more toward objectives defined by those agencies rather than by Africans. For example, "structural adjustment programs" have meant drastic cuts in spending on social services, reductions in government subsidies, and increases in food prices.

Misguided development efforts and structural adjustment have hit hardest those at the bottom—the very poor, particularly those in urban areas. Per capita incomes declined at an annual rate of over 1 percent in the 1970s and 1980s in Sub-Sa-



Rendille elder.

haran Africa. Since the 1970s, unemployment has spread, especially among the growing numbers of young people. In many countries, half the population is 15 years old or younger, with profound implications for government expenditures on social services and economic assistance.

Competition for scarce resources has increased the pressure on governments to come up with sustainable long-term development policies. However, at the same time, Africa's external debt now stands at \$255 billion. Much of the continent's export earnings now go to paying off these debts: African governments spend twice as much money on debt service as on health and education, even while they curtail investments in social and economic development.

The failures of development are not the only reason that African economies and living standards have deteriorated. One of the worst threats to Africa is militarization. During the Cold War, the superpowers poured billions of dollars worth of weapons and military assistance into the continent. Hundreds of thousands of Africans have died at the hands of state-supported military units. Governments such as those of Sudan and Ethiopia spent considerable sums—sometimes over half the national budget—on weapons and supporting armies. Scarce foreign currency was used for military hardware—money that could have been used for development or humanitarian aid.

In response to the crisis of survival that many Africans face, literally thousands of self-help organizations and multipurpose development associations have emerged at the grassroots level. In east Africa, the Organization of Pastoral People has been established to seek rights for Maasai and other herding peoples. In Swaziland, women have formed some 200 *zenzele* ("do-it-yourself") voluntary associations. These groups engage in activities ranging from day-care services to horticulture projects. Since 1986, a cooperative joining 32 Ju/'hoansi Bushmen communities in northeastern Namibia has undertaken farming activities and worked to establish secure rights to land and natural resources. Oromo in Ethiopia are actively conserving the range lands on which they depend.

Likewise, indigenous groups have resisted the establishment of certain development projects, as was the case with the Barabaig, a society of farmers and pastoralists in northern Tanzania. With financial support from Canada's International Development Agency, the Tanzanian National Agriculture and Food Corporation had acquired title to some 100,000 acres of the Barabaig's crucial dry-season grazing land for a wheat project. Tanzania didn't compensate Barabaig for their losses, even though the project reduced livestock numbers and milk yields. Police have arrested Barabaig for trespassing on what used to be their own land and saddled them with large fines for damage their cattle did to the wheat crop. With the help

Ellie Farklin

of the Legal Aid Committee of the University of Dar Es Salaam, the Barabaig are seeking to have the government recognize their customary rights.

The Barabaig case is but one of many instances in which indigenous groups have had to resort to legal action to press their claims. Many other ethnic and tribal groups in Sub-Saharan Africa have become vocal about infringements on their rights. G/wi and G//ana, assisted by journalists, have argued for continued rights of residence and resource use in Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve, despite a 1986 government recommendation that these Bushmen peoples be relocated. In northeastern Namibia, Ju/'hoan Bushmen collaborated with film makers who documented their efforts to convince herders who had moved into their area to leave peacefully.

Long viewed as "victims of progress," indigenous peoples in Sub-Saharan Africa are moving to take control of their own destinies. They are protesting the

ways in which governments, multinational corporations, and development agencies have treated them, and they are seeking redress through the media and the courts and in their own communities.

Sub-Saharan Africa Resources:

African American Institute, 833 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

Africa Recovery Briefing Paper, United Nations Department of Public Information.

Africa Watch, 485 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017.

African Cultural Institute, 13 Avenue du President Habib Bourguiba, Boite Postale 1, Dakar, Senegal.

Human Rights Internet, 1338 G St., SE,

Washington, DC 20003.

International African Institute, Lionel Robbins Building, 10 Portugal St., London WC2A 2HD, England.

International Institute of Human Rights, 6 Place de Bordeaux, 67000 Strasbourg, France.

TransAfrica, 545 Eighth St., SE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20077.



Village health worker trainees, 1992.

Vicki Harris

BUSHMAN PEOPLES IN NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

Megan Bieseke

Bushman Resource:

IKung San Foundation
Nyae Nyae Development
Foundation of Namibia
c/o Cultural Survival
215 First St.
Cambridge, MA 02142.

For the Ju/'hoan and other Bushman groups in Namibia, progress on rights has been substantial in the last few years regarding land, education, and culture. However, glaring inequities persist, primarily in the areas of economic and political rights.

Labor and regional-government laws and structures are only now being created in Namibia to replace the institutionalized oppression that was apartheid. Attention to better communication and to addressing the conditions of unfairness that characterized the previous South West African administration under South Africa will have to take place on a massive scale.

Nowhere are injustice and cultural blundering more apparent than in the inability of the Roman-Dutch legal system, still reigning in Namibia, to address the needs and sensibilities of the Bushmen. The legal system pays little attention to the economic needs of communities, and Bushmen frequently run afoul of this system because it defines out of existence some of their bases of survival. Without land on which to farm or do hunting-gathering, Bushman peoples face a choice between starvation and poaching or cattle theft. In one 1993 case, a Namibian court sent all the men in one village to jail for violating hunting laws that remained un-

clear despite years of requests for clarification. The ownership of game and other wild natural resources on communal land is also still in question.

Cultural translation is partly, of course, a linguistic matter, and this area, too, needs urgent attention. Social and domestic crimes and legal rights involving theft are often tragically confused. The very existence of differing social codes is acknowledged only punitively: cultural assumptions about infanticide and senilicide clearly underlay a March 1993 murder conviction.

Cultural misunderstandings of a "blame the victim" variety abound and may be illustrated graphically in the case of the 4,000-plus Bushman people, many originally from Angola, who fled with the South African Defense Force after Namibia became independent in 1990. Fearing reprisals from the new Namibian government as former collaborators, Bushman soldiers and their families were enticed to flee with promises of training, education, and a secure place to live in South Africa. A scant couple of years later, the former Bushman soldiers are trying, in droves, to return. The SADF failed to anticipate their needs, and they have become an embarrassment to the South African government.

Megan Bieseke



Ju/'hoan Bushman preschool.

In South Africa, the African National Congress has taken up the issue of land rights in the regions where the government resettled Bushmen. Meanwhile, however, many exiles have asked non-governmental organizations and citizen

groups in Namibia to help them return. Clearly, multicultural understanding is in its infancy in the new nations of southern Africa, and this has profound implications for the human rights of Bushmen and other indigenous peoples.

EFE OF ZAIRE

Roy Richard Grinker

Efe Action:

The Ituri Fund seeks to support the training of local people as health-care providers, health educators, primary school teachers, and community organizers.

Send checks, payable to Cultural Survival—The Ituri Fund, to:
Cultural Survival
215 First St.
Cambridge, MA 02142.

The Efe live in the Ituri rain forest of northeast Zaire, one of Africa's most remote regions. The Efe are among the groups of hunter-gatherers often called "Pygmies;" others include the Aka, the Mbuti, and the Sua.

Numbering about 3,000 today, the Efe population is dwindling. Such factors as seasonal hunger, sexually transmitted diseases, and a poor diet have made Efe fertility rates among the world's lowest. According to Harvard University anthropologist Peter Ellison and UCLA anthropologist Robert Bailey, nearly one-third of post-menopausal Efe women have

never had a live birth. The infant mortality rate is nearly 12 percent. Researchers like Ellison are working to determine the causes of infertility so the Efe can achieve the modest goal of simply having children.

Medicines, food, and money seldom reach the Efe because of the poor condition of bridges and roads. The nearest hospital is 22 miles away, a one-day walk on a dilapidated and muddy road. The very ill must stay home. The Zairian government has no plans to repair the infrastructure of this remote region or to educate villagers about health care.

HIMBA OF ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA

Robert K. Hitchcock

Himba Resource:

Margaret Jacobsohn, with Peter Pickford and Beverly Pickford, *Himba: Nomads of Namibia*, Struik Publishers, 1990.

Himba Action:

Contributions can be made to:
Integrated Rural Development
and Nature Conservation,
c/o Palamwag
Box 339
Swakopmund, Namibia

and to:

Endangered Wildlife Trust
Private Bag X11, Parkview 2122
Transvaal, South Africa.

The semi-nomadic, pastoralist Himba live in the rugged mountains and sandy plains of southwest Angola and the Kaokoland region of northern Namibia. Over the past two decades, the approximately 9,000 Himba have had to cope with drought, poaching, war, and rapidly changing political and economic circumstances.

Himba had ranked among Africa's richest pastoralists, but a drought from 1979 to 1982 destroyed up to 90 percent of some herds, along with parts of the Himba's social fabric. Some Himba engaged in wage labor, others turned to foraging, and still others moved to the peripheries of settlements so that they could get food from relief agencies.

Warfare was a major threat. In the early 1980s, a new front opened in the conflict between South Africa and the South West African Peoples Organization, or SWAPO. Land mines along the border between Namibia and Angola caused many casualties. Guns became much more accessible, with a resulting increase in poaching of elephants, rhinoceros, and antelopes.

As livestock numbers declined and predators were killed off, the need for herders fell. Himba men left home to find other work, while the new market economy altered gender relationships. Men had better access than women to cash and participated more in political activities.

One response of Himba women was to

intensify their efforts to make and sell crafts to tourists. Some families stayed year round at places tourists frequented, a trend that had a severe impact on local vegetation. Conflicts arose as Himba competed among themselves for tourist money.

In response to such problems, an innovative development program was set up in Namibia through the combined efforts of Himba communities and Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), a nongovernmental organization. The Himba were not averse to tourism—as long as they received some of the benefits and had some control over it. Now tourists pay a daily levy of about \$10 per person, which is divided among the lineages that have traditional rights to the area.

IRDNC was also instrumental in establishing a game guard system in which local people, selected by the Himba, monitor wildlife and detect poachers. Since local people now benefit more from wildlife, they are more willing to conserve this resource, and elephant, rhinoceros, and other wild animal populations are rising.

Such efforts have succeeded in part because Himba themselves planned and implemented them. But if the programs are to remain viable, the right of Himba communities to resources needs to be backed up with legal protection. Himba must also have the opportunity to play significant roles in the emerging political institutions of Namibia and Angola.

NHARO BUSHMEN OF BOTSWANA

Mathias Guenther

Nharo Resources:

First People of the Kalahari
P.O. Box 173
Ghanzi, Botswana

KURU
P.O. Box 219
Ghanzi, Botswana

Mathias Guenther, *The Nharo Bushmen of Botswana: Tradition and Change*, Helmut Buske Verlag, 1986.

The Nharo, numbering about 6,000, live in the Ghanzi District of western Botswana and in eastern Namibia. Most work as laborers on European-owned cattle ranches; in Botswana a few hundred live at settlements set up by the government. In the Ghanzi farm block, an area of about 3,000 square miles, game and wild food plants have been depleted, so hunting-gathering can no longer meet people's subsistence needs. Hunger and malnutrition are serious problems; especially during droughts, many Nharo depend on the government for food.

The Nharo and their Bushman neighbors lost their land a century ago through treaty negotiations in which they played no part. Land remains the Nharo's principal problem, even though the government, in the mid-1970s, set aside a number of farms for the Nharo and other Ghanzi Bushmen groups to set up ranching cooperatives and several other development projects. However, some of these farms may revert back to the government for private ranching schemes.

A 1992 letter to the Botswana central government by the "First People of the Kalahari," signed by several Bushman spokespeople identified three urgent needs. Land was the first. The other concerns were the absence of development

officials and programs that "meet the special needs of the N/oa khwe" (the "red people," the Nharo's new self-designation) and the need for a national council of Bushmen as "a legitimate negotiating partner" with government.

A significant catalyst to developing such self-directed initiatives is KURU, a grassroots organization that grew out of the Dutch Reformed Church mission in D'Kar in 1986. *Kuru* is a Nharo word meaning to make or accomplish, reflecting the organization's aim to promote self-managed schemes among the Nharo and other farm Bushmen. Projects include a vegetable-garden operation, a tannery and leather workshop, a district-wide preschool program of eight schools, crafts marketing, a contemporary-art project, and a highly promising cochineal harvesting project that will incorporate 32 family garden units.

KURU strives to loosen the ties of dependency of the Nharo and other farm Bushmen, but its limited resources and lack of recognition and support on the part of the district and federal governments reduce its effectiveness. Moreover, only the government has the authority and capacity to meet the three demands of the farm Bushmen: land, political representation, and empowerment.

NUER OF SUDAN

Sharon Hutchinson

Nuer Action:

The UN-sponsored "Operation Lifeline Sudan" is struggling to assist the estimated 1 million Southerners facing starvation, but international pressure must push Khartoum to end restrictions on the relief agencies' freedom of operation. The government must also suspend bombardments and allow the hundreds of thousands of Southern civilians held hostage in government-controlled towns to leave.

Moreover, the extreme vulnerability of Southern refugees living in the North to human-rights abuses by the Iranian-backed National Islamic Front-inspired military regime requires vigilant international attention.

Occupying 22,000 square miles of savannah and marshland along the central southern tributaries of the White Nile, the Nuer are the second largest cultural-linguistic group of southern Sudan. Numbering more than a million, they are transhumant agro-pastoralists whose economy centers on sorghum and cattle.

Since the second Sudanese civil war in 1983, the Nuer have been trapped in a vortex of violence, famine, and disease that has claimed the lives of 600,000 Southern Sudanese and displaced at least 3 million and possibly many more. An uneasy 11-year truce in which the central government granted the South "regional autonomy" separated this war from the first Sudanese civil war (1955-1972).

The current conflict began after the Northern-dominated government decided to construct a massive, environmentally disruptive canal through the central marshlands of the Upper Nile; to deny the Southern regional government's claims on the massive oil deposits discovered in

its territories in the mid-1970s; to dissolve the Southern Regional Assembly and redivide the South into three provinces; and to impose a particularly brutal version of Islamic *Shari'a* law.

Because Nuer territories contain the richest known oil deposits in the South, they were among the first to be devastated by raids by government-sponsored Arab militias. Beginning in late 1983, these raids destroyed or dislocated scores of Nuer and Dinka villages. The raiders captured and enslaved hundreds of women and children.

Since the post-1985 buildup of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, these raids have largely been contained, but the western Nuer were next overwhelmed by an epidemic of visceral leishmaniasis that has claimed more than 60,000 lives. Although Médecins Sans Frontiers has tried to check the epidemic by opening small treatment centers, medical supplies are urgently needed, as are fishing equipment, agricultural tools, cattle vaccines,

Address letters to:

His Excellency Lieutenant Colonel Omar
Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the National
Salvation Revolutionary Council, and
Brigadier General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the
Interior
P.O. Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan.

Relief aid can be sent to:

Save the Children (UK)
P.O. Box 39664
Nairobi, Kenya
Médicins Sans Frontiers
P.O. Box 10014
1001 EA Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

mosquito nets, sorghum seed, and school materials.

Between 1983 and 1988, the central and eastern Nuer regions were subjected to extensive government offensives and periodic air bombardments. Some 400,000 Southerners, including many Nuer, sought refuge in Ethiopia, only to be driven out after the fall of Mengistu's Dergue government in May 1991. In addition, 2 million more Southern Sudanese, camped on the outskirts of Northern cities, desperately need relief and protection. Beginning in the late 1980s, the government has systematically bulldozed these enclaves and has dumped some 500,000 of the inhabitants in distant camps devoid of

adequate water, food, and medical supplies.

Barred by bureaucratic rules from obtaining national identity cards, displaced Southerners are subject to arbitrary arrest, torture, murder, and forcible conscription into the army. Because only government-backed Muslim organizations can work with this population, formal allegiance to Islam is a principal criterion in who gets what little humanitarian relief is available.

Unless concerted pressure can be brought to bear for a political solution to the war, the plight of the Nuer and other Southern Sudanese is unlikely to be relieved in the foreseeable future.

OGONI OF NIGERIA

Jennifer Rathaus

Ogoni Resource:

Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
24 Aggrey Rd., P.O. Box 193
Port Harcourt, Nigeria
(234)84-331763

Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa
63 Tejuosho St.
P.O. Box 696
Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria
(2341)832218.

Ogoni have farmed and fished on the fertile alluvial plains of the Niger Delta in southern Nigeria for hundreds of years. After 30 years of oil exploitation in their territory, however, the 500,000 Ogoni can no longer fish, farm, or hunt because the rivers are polluted and the farmlands have been rendered unproductive.

Almost all of Nigeria's oil, which accounts for 94 percent of the country's GNP, comes from the delta and its fringes. Since 1958, Shell and Chevron have extracted \$30 billion in oil from Ogoni land, yet Ogoni communities lack telecommunications, hospitals, electricity, roads, pipe-borne water, industry, and well-equipped schools. Their unemployment rate is as high as 85 percent. Oil exploration has resulted in respiratory diseases, hearing problems, and air-borne diseases in Ogoni communities. The companies flare gas 24 hours a day—and have done so for 33 years—in defiance of Nigerian law.

Oil extraction has profoundly effected Ogoni society as well. Innumerable oil spills from outdated equipment have driven fish offshore, where the Ogoni are not equipped to fish. In this former "food basket" of the Niger Delta, people must now violate traditional taboos against buying food because acid rain has destroyed the productivity of the land. Environmental degradation is so severe that over 20,000 Ogoni migrate annually to Gabon and Cameroon to work, leading to family breakups and other social stresses.

In recent years, more Ogoni die annually than are born. Ogoni languages are on the verge of disappearing, and public institutions compel Ogoni to speak English

and other dominant languages. Ogoni have little representation in Nigerian federal institutions and virtually no political power. A new constitution, intended to usher in a democratic government in 1993, doesn't protect the rights of the smaller minority populations.

To better redistribute delta oil wealth, in 1991 Nigerian president Ibrahim Babangida created 11 new states and greatly increased the number of local governments. Although variable in size, these local governments receive equal sums of money from the federal administration. This leaves highly populated areas like Ogoniland short of funds for primary schools while other districts have a surplus. Ogoni students have been out of school for a year.

In August 1990, the rulers of the five Ogoni kingdoms signed a draft bill of rights demanding political autonomy, political representation at the federal level, local control of development resources, and religious and cultural rights. Federal inaction on the bill of rights prompted the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People to issue an ultimatum in 1992 to Shell, Chevron, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation—the area's major oil companies—demanding \$6 billion in royalties. The companies' answer was to seek the protection of the government, which promptly sent troops and armed police into Ogoni.

In January 1993, 300,000 Ogoni protested their situation in villages throughout Ogoniland. Since then, tension has been building, and law-enforcement officials are keeping round-the-clock surveillance in Ogoni communities.

SOMALI OF SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA, KENYA, AND DJIBOUTI

Robert K. Hitchcock

Somali Resources:

I.M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*, Africana Publishing Company for the International African Institute, 1982.

Somali Action:

Relief Agencies working in Somalia include:

CARE International
660 First Ave.

New York, NY 10016

Medicins Sans Frontieres
30 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 5425
New York, NY 10012

Save the Children Fund
54 Wilton Rd.

Westport, CT 06880

UNICEF

331 East 38th St.
New York, NY 10016

World Concern

Box 33000
Seattle, WA 98133.

The Somalis of the Horn of Africa are pastoralists who herd camels, sheep, and goats. Numbering an estimated 6 million, they recently have faced severe difficulties as a result of drought, disease, and war.

Somalia, where most Somalis live, has become a potent symbol of human suffering: 150,000 people have died in the past two years, most of them civilians caught in fierce fighting. In early 1992, 1,000 people died every day from starvation and disease; 2 million of Somalia's 7 million people were at severe risk from lack of food, water, and health care.

The tragedy of Somalia is an outgrowth of two decades of internal and external policies. Some efforts aimed at assisting the people of Somalia to become self-sufficient, but militarization overshadowed these projects. The Somali military of President Siad Barre, trained first by the Soviets and later by the United States, fought pitched battles in the late 1980s with such rebel organizations as the Somali National Movement. Countless civilians suffered, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to neighboring Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, where they lived in appalling conditions.

Open warfare and a harsh counter-insurgency campaign resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Somalis, many of them women and children. Men were forcibly conscripted; those who refused to fight were detained and tortured. Water points and other infrastructure were de-

stroyed, livestock killed, and development projects shut down. After Barre fell in January 1991, the country divided into a number of clan-based fiefdoms that continued the struggle for dominance.

One of the greatest problems facing the people of Somalia was the chaos in the countryside. In many places, no stores, clinics, schools, or wells remained. Some markets had literally tons of food, but it was available only to those with cash. Somali children suffered and died within sight of stockpiles of food.

Lack of potable water exacerbated health problems. Medicine was scarce. Looting of relief convoys by armed factions disrupted the flow of aid into areas most in need. By mid-1992, the famine in Somalia was perhaps worse than the one in Biafra in the 1960s or in Ethiopia in 1984-85.

Despite these difficulties, many Somalis and relief agencies have collaborated in an effort to save as many people as possible. CARE International has handled logistical operations, and a number of international relief agencies operate feeding centers.

In early 1993 peace talks among 15 Somali factions led to a somewhat tenuous cease-fire. Somalis hope they can now return to a semblance of a normal life and rebuild their economy and institutions. There are now plans to set up 18 regional governments, each with three representatives. One of the three will be a woman.