

Europe

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Ukraine dominated the headlines during 2014, following the removal of then President Viktor Yanukovych in January after weeks of unrest and the establishment of an interim government shortly afterwards. This was followed in late February by the seizure of the Crimean parliament building by pro-Russian armed separatists and a referendum in March, widely condemned as unfair by international observers, that led to Russia's annexation of the region. Since then, continuing into 2015, eastern Ukraine has witnessed an escalation of conflict between the government and separatist forces, causing widespread displacement and an increasingly nationalistic environment in Russian-held areas. This situation has been especially difficult for minorities and indigenous peoples, particularly the Crimean Tatars.

Rising nationalism, meanwhile, was evident across Europe during the year, driven in large part by the protracted effects of the international financial crisis and growing anxiety around immigration. This in turn has helped boost

Below: A young Tatar activist holding the flag of the Crimean Tatars on the Maidan, at a rally in Kiev, Ukraine, March 2014. *Panos/Iva Zimova*

the popularity of right-wing political groups in countries such as Hungary, where national elections in April saw the right-wing Jobbik group secure 20 per cent of the national vote on an anti-Semitic and anti-Roma ticket. These sentiments have fed into the mainstreaming of xenophobic and discriminatory policies for certain ethnic and religious minorities, such as targeted police checks, restrictive legislation and other measures.

While generally not officially sanctioned, the stance of authorities towards their minority and indigenous communities can indirectly contribute to a heightened risk of violence. Hate crime and hate speech, though occurring in a range of contexts, has been especially evident in urban areas. Some of the most vulnerable groups in Europe, such as migrants, Muslims and Roma, are concentrated in cities and therefore offer a visible target for attacks. But though these



groups are frequently blamed by racist groups for taking jobs or crime, it is more often the case that they are themselves excluded from urban labour markets and disproportionately affected as victims of violence.

In many cases, the social and political marginalization of these communities is reinforced in European cities by physical distance and separation. Within a context of widening urban inequality and even in affluent capitals such as Paris, black and Arab residents are being pushed out into insecure, segregated suburbs. Roma, too, are typically concentrated in poorer settlements, often in sub-standard housing, and stigmatized by official policies that often encourage segregation or eviction. Without targeted interventions and the creation of more inclusive urban planning, European cities risk becoming even more inhospitable towards their minorities.

Yet despite these challenges, across Europe urban areas continue to attract and sustain minority and indigenous communities. Many disadvantaged groups remain in cities because they are better placed to access employment, health care and education than outside them. There are plenty of examples, too, of thriving urban neighbourhoods across Europe where a large minority or indigenous presence has enriched these areas. The religious and ethnic diversity of urban areas, though it can be a source of tension, has also created more tolerant and welcoming environments for these groups. These issues were demonstrated in Sweden when, following several attacks on mosques at the end of the year that included incidents of suspected arson, fire bombing and vandalism, crowds gathered in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg and other cities to participate in a so-called 'love bombing' – a collective show of support from fellow citizens for the Muslim community.

Bulgaria

Political instability continues to beset Bulgaria in the wake of the collapse of the socialist-led government in July after barely a year in office. Snap elections in October resulted in a precarious coalition between former Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's centre-right GERB party, which garnered the most votes, with the

Reformist bloc, a group of small pro-market parties. The coalition also secured the support of the nationalist Patriotic Front, whose policies include building a wall on the Turkish border and limiting welfare support, of which the Roma minority are among the principal recipients.

Tied for second place was DPS, the ethnic Turkish minority party, with 15 per cent of the vote. During the campaign DPS proposed a bill to make Turkish language lessons compulsory for Turkish students in public schools. Under current laws the language course is elective and the use of Turkish during public election campaigning is banned. Shortly after the election, DPS proposed further bills in parliament to penalize ethnic crimes committed during Communist rule in the country and to review the 1991 Revival Process laws which force ethnic Turks who are Bulgarian citizens to accept Bulgarian names on official documents. However, in November the coalition government, prompted by the Patriotic Front, suggested moving the twice-daily Turkish news bulletins from the national broadcasting stations to cable channels.

Roma are still subjected to high levels of discrimination. Estimates vary regarding the size of the Roma population in Bulgaria. According to the 2011 census, there were over 325,000 Roma, constituting 4.9 per cent of the population. However, commentators point to the fact that feelings of stigma may lead Roma to self-identify as belonging to other groups; they put the figure at double the census results or even higher.

More than half the community live in ghettoized neighbourhoods on the edge of urban centres. The remaining Roma population live in poor isolated villages scattered throughout the country. A 2012 study on housing deprivation by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions found that Roma in Bulgaria are far more disadvantaged than nearby majority populations: for instance, they were 'three times more likely to lack access to improved forms of sanitation and almost eight times as likely to live in sub-standard housing, such as shacks and other run-down buildings'. Since 2010, the European Commission has overseen the national Bulgarian strategy for Roma integration and in the spring it published the results of its latest assessment of their



situation. Although some progress was noted, it found that significant action was required in every area of implementation. Specifically, the report called for a constructive dialogue with the Roma community and the development of anti-discrimination activities to support Roma integration. Positive initiatives for promoting Roma inclusion were observed in the west of the country, where civil society, international donor organizations and local authorities are working together to integrate Roma into the wider community through initiatives such as desegregated school transport, extra-curricular activities such as volunteering, microfinance and various mentoring schemes involving Roma youth.

Nevertheless, prejudice remains. Two incidents in the second half of 2014 highlight the problems that urban-dwelling Roma face in terms of lack of secure tenure and limited access to basic services. In July, Roma residents of 55 houses scheduled for demolition clashed with riot police after forming a human chain around their homes. The structures were deemed illegal, having been built without permits in a

Roma suburb of the city of Stara Zagora. Two protesters were arrested and the demolition eventually proceeded as planned. In December, Bulgaria's health minister Petar Moskov faced criticism when he suggested during a speech in parliament that ambulances should be barred from entering Roma neighbourhoods, claiming that medics were unsafe in predominantly Roma areas. The Sofia-based human rights watchdog, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, described the speech as 'incitement to racial hatred'.

In March the release on bail of a security guard charged with shooting and killing a Roma teenager in 2013 triggered protests by minority groups, which were countered by nationalist demonstrations. Civil society groups have reported a surge in nationalist and xenophobic sentiment, leading to an increase in attacks on ethnic and religious minorities. Unfortunately, this xenophobia is shared by a significant portion of the population, as suggested by recent research conducted by Sofia University which found that half of the city's residents would not want to live in a neighbourhood with African, Arab, Chinese or Roma communities.

Left: Roma neighbours in front of their houses in the village of Vrachesh, Bulgaria, January 2015. Bulgaria is home to one of the largest populations of Roma in the EU. *REUTERS/Stoyan Nenov*

Racist attitudes towards religious minorities have been encouraged by Bulgaria's nationalist political wing. In February, in spite of protests from Jewish groups and the ethnic Turkish party, DPS, Bulgarian nationalists marched through Plovdiv to commemorate Hristo Lukov, a Second World War general who espoused anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi views. The annual rally, which is accompanied by pro-fascist and xenophobic slogans, had been banned from Sofia by the city's mayor. The march was organized by the far right Bulgarian National Union. This was followed in June by the defacing of Sofia Central Synagogue with pro-Nazi graffiti alongside a swastika. According to the Anti-Defamation League, 44 per cent of Bulgarians harbour anti-Semitic attitudes – 10 per cent higher than the average for Eastern Europe as a whole.

The extreme nationalist party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization continued to organize protests in front of the courthouse in Pazardjik against the wearing of religious attire and the propagation of Islam. In August the Chief Mufti of Bulgaria announced that there had been 12 hate crime attacks against Muslims and Muslim places of worship since 2012. The most recent attack was reportedly on Karaja Pasha Mosque in July.

In a report on religious intolerance in Bulgaria in 2013, released in July, the US State Department criticized the government for failing to consistently protect religious freedom in the country, citing incidences of anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims and harassment of Jehovah's Witnesses. Given that the religious minority communities reside predominantly in urban areas, Bulgaria's cities and towns often provide the setting for the most severe examples of xenophobia and hate speech. In February, for example, over a thousand protesters attacked the historic Dzhumaya mosque in Plovdiv, hurling bricks and fireworks at the building. Of the 120 people detained by police, eight were charged with hooliganism and received fines or other minor sentences. The protest followed moves

by Bulgaria's Chief Mufti to have properties historically owned by the Muslim community formally returned to the community.

The situation of refugees in Bulgaria, particularly in urban areas, is illustrative of the discrimination faced by minorities. Unused to hosting large numbers of refugees, the government has been unable to respond effectively to the influx of thousands of Syrian refugees. According to the FCJ Refugee Centre, Bulgaria previously received about 1,000 asylum seekers every year; in 2013, however, this figure leapt to 9,100, with 4,000 coming from Syria alone. Though conditions appeared to improve later in the year, the influx has put pressure on housing in urban areas and given rise to xenophobic reactions. For example, in April residents of one village petitioned to evict three Syrian refugee families just two days after they moved into rented accommodation in the village. Konstantin Penchev, the National Ombudsman, said that their actions were a demonstration of intolerance and could not be justified. Most of the refugees who remain in Bulgaria identify as Kurdish. In an interview with the FCJ Refugee Centre, Nikolay Chirpanliev, the chairman of Bulgaria Refugee Agency, described Syrian refugees of Kurdish origin as 'a lot worse than our Gypsies in every aspect'. This comment demonstrates the high level of institutional prejudice against ethnic minorities.

France

The attack on the Paris offices of satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015 and the subsequent shootings at a Jewish supermarket in the city's eastern suburbs left 17 people dead, stunning a country already struggling with social division and the rise of the far right National Front Party, who in April 2014 won an unprecedented number of seats in local elections on a strongly anti-immigrant ticket. In the aftermath of these events, President François Hollande restated commitment to protect freedom of expression, but also reiterated the government's responsibilities to end France's extreme inequalities, including the ghettoization of certain urban areas. The lack of social integration and spatial segregation of many of France's minorities, particularly its marginalized



Above: French citizens gather at the Unity March in Paris to protest against the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, France, January 2015. *Kelly Kline*

Muslim population, was acknowledged by Manuel Valls, France's Prime Minister, shortly after the shooting when he described the 'territorial, social, ethnic apartheid' at work in the capital, which has 'relegated the poor and heavily immigrant population to ghetto-like suburbs of Paris'.

Studies have found that certain ethnic groups, such as those of African descent, find it harder to move out of poor suburbs and are three times more likely to move into the least advantaged neighbourhoods. Spatial segregation also has an impact on unemployment, with recent immigrants facing much longer commutes, thereby restricting their access to jobs and adding to the barriers already raised by frequent discrimination against individuals of North African origin. The inequalities evident in Paris's suburbs or *banlieues* are visible in the poor level of housing, high rates of unemployment and the securitization of these urban fringes. Although tension has not reached the levels witnessed during the 2005 riots, violent crime in the *banlieues* remains a serious concern.

Naturally, the integration of immigrants

and their descendants in French society has become a high priority for the government. Efforts have been further bolstered under the Hollande administration with a series of interventions, including a €5 billion investment in neighbourhoods where social disadvantage is significant. However, research conducted on the social exclusion experienced by immigrants in France concluded that the government's continued push for assimilation, together with the French political tradition of secularism (*laïcité*), may have prevented the state from tackling discrimination and in the process alienated some minorities. For example, France's law banning the wearing of full-face coverings on the grounds that their use reduced opportunities for 'living together' – a stance affirmed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in July – has been condemned by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other rights groups as a breach of the rights of freedom of religion and expression. According to statistics gathered in 2009, an estimated 1,900 Muslim women in France are affected by the full-face veil ban, many of whom are well integrated into French society. The ban has provoked significant public debate regarding the potentially negative effects of *laïcité*.

According to a survey conducted in spring

2014 by Pew Research Center into European public opinion towards minorities, of the seven countries polled the proportion of French people with a favourable opinion of Muslims – 72 per cent – was the highest. However, a human rights report finalized in December and presented by the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner Nils Muižnieks in February 2015 indicated a rise in intolerance and racism across France, particularly with regard to homophobic, xenophobic and anti-Muslim incidents. There were concerns in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks that hostility towards the Muslim population could increase further.

Anti-Semitic incidents have been on the rise in France as well as across Europe, nearly doubling in France in the first seven months of 2014, compared with the previous year. According to statistics published by the Jewish Agency for Israel, which encourages emigration to that country, the number of French Jews leaving for Israel remained steady at about 2,000 annually until 2013, when it rose to 3,400 before peaking at more than 7,000 during 2014. The agency predicts that as many as 15,000 French Jews will leave the country during 2015 in reaction to the attack in January this year on the Hyper Cacher supermarket in a Jewish neighbourhood of Paris, which left four hostages dead. However, Jewish community leaders urged calm, noting that emigration would be giving in to terror – many pointed out that the person who helped hostages to safety was a young Muslim.

The already tense public debate regarding anti-Semitism and freedom of speech was further polarized in January when French comedian Dieudonné M’bala M’bala was criticized for a down-arm gesture called the *quenelle*, a gesture interpreted by some rights groups as an inverted Nazi salute. It provoked Valls to issue a memo to police providing the legal justification for banning performances considered to be anti-Semitic, such as those by Dieudonné. Twelve months later Dieudonné was in the spotlight once again when, a few days after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, he wrote on Facebook, ‘As far as I am concerned, I feel I am Charlie Coulibaly.’ By combining the popular slogan ‘*Je suis Charlie*’ (meaning ‘I am Charlie’), used by thousands to express their grief for the murdered journalists

and support for the magazine, with a reference to gunman Amedy Coulibaly, Dieudonné was deemed to be publicly supporting terrorism and was promptly detained by police.

Later in January, shortly after the ‘Dieudonné affair’, around 17,000 protesters marched through the streets of Paris chanting racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic slogans. The demonstration, dubbed the ‘Day of Anger’, ostensibly provoked by the government’s inability to counter unemployment, quickly descended into a verbal assault on minorities. At least 150 protesters, mostly youth, were arrested and 19 policemen suffered injuries, including one who was seriously wounded.

The French government’s policies towards its Roma population are an ongoing concern. In 2014, 13,483 people were evicted by law enforcement agencies from 138 different locations. This figure was lower than the number of Roma evicted in 2013, but remains high compared to neighbouring countries.

Many Roma are concentrated in communities on the edges of towns and cities with limited access to basic services such as water and sanitation. Roma face a number of obstacles in accessing education, employment and housing. Their illegal camps are systematically demolished by public authorities and many are often deported to their home countries.

One tactic employed to promote integration, as an alternative to eviction, has been the construction of so-called ‘insertion villages’, housing developments in existing towns, where certain Roma, selected using ‘social diagnostics’ on the basis of their education levels, language skills and job prospects, are rehoused in temporary facilities and provided with basic services and schooling for a limited period. However these methods have been criticized for being akin to social engineering, with the new settlements merely formalizing segregation and benefiting only a small sub-section of the Roma population.

In June the intersecting issues of urban disintegration and social discrimination against Roma and the *banlieues* were brought into stark relief when a group of around a dozen youth from a north Paris estate abducted Darius, a 16-year-old Roma boy, from a nearby camp and

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Case study *by Bill Bowring*
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Little change, two decades on, for Turkey's displaced Kurds

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Turkey's Kurdish community, besides being the largest minority in the country, is also one of the most discriminated against. Historically, Kurds are concentrated in the eastern and south-western parts of the country. Their situation deteriorated further following the outbreak of fighting in 1984 between the government and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), an armed opposition group fighting for self-determination. Increasing violence on both sides resulted in the displacement of millions of civilians.

A major factor in Turkey's rapid urbanization in recent decades, especially the main cities in south-eastern Turkey, was the policy of village destruction, which was central to Turkey's internal conflict against the PKK. By 1994, at least 3,000 villages had been deliberately destroyed as part of this campaign. The European Court of Human Rights gave judgment in a number of cases and established that Turkey had destroyed many villages as part of a military strategy. In this context, urban centres such as Diyarbakir experienced rapid growth, tripling in size during the 1990s even as many residents themselves moved elsewhere in Turkey or abroad to escape the violence.

Though there is no consensus on how many exactly were displaced, reliable estimates range between 1 and 3 million. This legacy of displacement persists today, with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimating there to be at least 953,700 Kurdish internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Turkey as of December 2014 –



Above: Syrian Kurd boys watch people coming to the Thursday animal bazaar in Suruc, Turkey. Panos/Iva Zimova

the majority of them those who were originally uprooted by fighting between 1986 and 1995. IDMC reports that most have had to survive without external support, either in urban areas in relative proximity to their home villages or in cities in other regions of the country, often in low quality housing.

Though the government has reportedly undertaken periodic attempts to support return, through village rehabilitation and compensation for those displaced, as well as payments to those



affected by the 2013 conflict, IDMC reports that as of 2009 only 187,000 IDPs had returned. However, the political will to implement these changes has been questioned given that conditions in former villages often make return unfeasible, with little in the way of basic services or livelihood options. Some areas still reportedly contained landmines. With hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring Syria now settled in the country, the prospects of a speedy resolution are even slimmer.

Those who have migrated out of the main Kurdish-populated areas to western Turkish cities face other challenges. A 2012 study for the Immigration and Refugee Board of

Canada included interviews with local researchers who described the ‘atmosphere of pressure’ and the ‘nationalist backlash’ that the Kurdish minority often experienced when in western Turkish cities. This poses significant challenges for their long-term integration and well-being. A large portion of Istanbul’s Kurdish population, for example, having been displaced during the conflict, were forced to move to the periphery of the city to live in areas with low rents or weak regulations where they could settle illegally. Many today are still living in neighbourhoods such as Karayollari, a spatially segregated neighbourhood that continues to struggle with high levels of unemployment and crime.

Kurdish communities in Istanbul are facing new challenges, including gentrification. In one high-profile case, Kurds and Roma residents were evicted from informal settlements in Karayollari in order to make way for Avrupa Konutlari, an up-scale gated community comprising numerous high-rise buildings around a large swimming pool and aimed at middle-class commuters. Kurds living nearby have told journalists that they see the buildings as a provocation, while some admit that they welcome the job opportunities which the construction industry provides.

At the same time, some commentators have highlighted that internal migration, even in difficult circumstances, can contribute to cohesion and also bring benefits to Kurds and other marginalized groups in terms of greater life opportunities. Though studies on displaced households have highlighted the continued longing for return among many of those displaced more than two decades ago, it is likely that others will remain in their new locations. As the country attempts to move towards lasting peace, support for those wishing to return and more targeted urban strategies to encourage the development and inclusion of Kurdish communities in urban areas will be essential. ■

beat him severely before dumping him in a car park. *Le Monde* newspaper used their front page editorial to criticize the government, saying the attack was ‘the result of several years of inefficient public policy which maintains the misery of these Roma communities and allows the racism latent in French society to prosper’. The Darius case served to highlight two central problems: the precarious situation of the *banlieues* and the inhumane treatment of the Roma. Certainly there are important questions to be answered about the danger of allowing parallel societies to emerge and the lack of police control in marginalized areas of France’s cities.

Georgia

In June, Georgia signed an association agreement with the European Union (EU), initialled at the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit of November 2013. The agreement, which was ratified by the Georgian parliament on 18 July, is a decisive step in the country’s reform process and includes provisions on the protection and inclusion of minorities. As part of its developing relationship with the EU, Georgia has also committed to a four-year communication and information strategy that explicitly underlines that specific efforts should be undertaken to ensure that minorities in Georgia receive information in a language that they understand. In May the government also adopted an anti-discrimination law that prohibits discrimination on religious, ethnic or other grounds, though the legislation was modified from its original version following strong resistance from the Orthodox Church, particularly over its provisions on sexual orientation.

Though Georgia contains a variety of religious minority communities, including Muslims, various non-Orthodox Christian denominations and other faith groups such as Bahá’í, with freedom of religion guaranteed in the Constitution, the majority Orthodox Church has played an increasing role in recent years in the country’s political life. Numerous human rights organizations have highlighted instances where the Orthodox Church has received preferential treatment from the state, while at the same time many minority communities have experienced discrimination. Despite its legislative framework

Right: A family of Syrian migrants who arrived by boat to the island of Lesbos, Greece, 2014. They now live in an apartment provided by an NGO. *Panos/Carlos Spottorno*

on anti-discrimination and the creation of a new state agency on religious affairs in 2014, increased attacks on Muslims and Jehovah’s Witnesses have been recorded across Georgia, including numerous incidents in different villages where the rights of Muslims were infringed by the local population, often with the involvement of local authorities and police officers. Furthermore, some civil society groups and religious leaders have expressed concern about the mandate of the newly established Agency of Religious Issues, fearing it might be used by the government to control religious organizations.

Despite the many positive legal developments in Georgia during the year, including the adoption of the 2014–20 National Human Rights Strategy and an action plan for its implementation, other legislation had negative implications for minorities in the country. In particular, the Law of Georgia on Stateless Persons and Refugees, adopted on 1 September, has decreased the length of visa-free stay for foreigners in Georgia from 360 days to 90 days in any 180-day period. The law also cancelled the visa-free regime with 24 countries. These new migration policies have created serious problems for foreigners who are permanent residents of Georgia and for former citizens of Georgia whose citizenship was suspended because they were granted citizenship of another country. Among those affected are ethnic Armenians living in Georgia’s southern Samtskhe-Javakheti region, since many travel to Russia every year to work as manual labourers. Before the passing of the new legislation, Armenian citizens were able to live in Georgia without any additional documents, as long as they crossed a state border once every year.

Georgia’s urban landscape has changed rapidly since its independence in 1991. The transition towards a market economy was accompanied by economic decline and increasing regional disparities due to the difficulties of moving from a rural to an urban economy. Much of the country’s urban life is concentrated in the capital,



Tbilisi, where almost half of the country's urban population is based. While Tbilisi is responsible for over 50 per cent of national production, other regions are less developed. For example, the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli – the only two of Georgia's nine regions in which minorities make up a majority of the population – have struggled to keep up with the rapid economic growth of the capital. Both remain predominantly agricultural regions.

Rural–urban disparities have reinforced existing inequalities experienced by certain minority populations. These gaps are especially evident in terms of service access: for example, only 29 per cent of the households in Samtskhe-Javakheti and 44 per cent in Kvemo Kartli have bathroom facilities. Regional disparities, poverty and unemployment have been flagged as key priorities by the government in the new Social-Economic Development Strategy for 2020, which if implemented could benefit a large proportion of Georgia's minorities.

Greece

Under the continuing burden of recession and austerity measures imposed by the EU

to manage Greek debt, many Greeks have been impoverished by unemployment, wage limits, reduced welfare benefits and rising household costs. At the same time, Greece has also experienced a large influx of migrants and refugees due to its geographic proximity to areas of conflict and displacement in the Middle East. The Greek coastguard detained over 17,000 undocumented migrants, over half from Syria, in the first eight months of 2014 alone. Inadequacies in the Greek asylum system over the last decade have resulted in thousands of migrants trapped in detention centres, suspended in a legal limbo without the necessary documentation. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted in its December 2014 *ECRI Report on Greece* that in the centre of Athens many migrants rent and live in sub-standard accommodation, often deprived of access to public social welfare services, with an increasing number who are homeless. According to the report, NGOs are barred by law from providing housing to undocumented migrants, adding to the destitution.

As the large-scale influx has coincided with one of Greece's worst economic and social crises

for decades, attitudes towards the migrant and refugee population in Greece appear to be among the most negative in Europe. A Pew Research Center survey of seven EU countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom) in spring 2014 found that anti-immigrant sentiment was highest among respondents in Greece (86 per cent).

At its extreme, hostility towards migrants and refugees has extended to racist violence which has blighted some urban areas. According to the Greek Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) annual report for 2014, well over half of the incidents of hate crime recorded by the network in 2014 were committed against immigrants or refugees. The majority of attacks occurred in public places or on public transport, often in the centre of Athens in neighbourhoods with concentrations of immigrant and refugee residents. In the great majority of cases the victims believed they were targeted because of their ethnic identity and other characteristics marking them out as ‘foreigners’, such as skin colour and religion. Half of the attacks were reportedly carried out by groups of offenders, apparently including extremist groups. A number of the incidents were allegedly perpetrated by police officers; some occurred in police stations and detention centres. While providing a picture of the racist and xenophobic violence occurring in urban areas in Greece, these incidents are likely to represent only a fraction of racist crimes committed given that many (especially undocumented) victims are reluctant to report them.

In addition to hostility against migrants and refugees, negative attitudes prevail about other minorities in Greece. Public attitudes towards Jews in Greece appear to be among the most negative in Europe. Almost half (47 per cent) of the respondents in Greece in the 2014 Pew Research Center survey were unfavourable towards Jews. Another survey, the Anti-Defamation League’s *ADL Global 100*, also suggested that anti-Semitic attitudes were more prevalent in Greece than other European nations: 69 per cent of the survey’s respondents in Greece were judged to be harbouring anti-Semitic attitudes on the basis of their agreement with anti-Semitic tropes presented in survey

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Case study by *Linda Szabó*
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How the redevelopment of Józsefváros is pushing out Budapest’s minorities

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In recent years Budapest’s most stigmatized neighbourhood, Józsefváros, has been undergoing significant change. ‘Józsefváros is being rebuilt,’ goes the municipality’s slogan – the only question is for whom. While Józsefváros has long been one of the city’s most diverse areas, with the highest concentration of Roma and migrant populations, the local municipality’s plans for the area threaten to displace its most underprivileged groups, including poor minorities.

Józsefváros has always been attractive for newcomers and migrating traders, though, beginning with the arrival in the late 19th century of Jewish merchants and then Roma musicians, who moved here to play at local restaurants. But while Józsefváros – with the exception of the Palace Quarter – was never considered an affluent part of town, the appearance of slums in the area only became obvious in the 1960s as plans to refurbish



public housing stock were not implemented. At that time, due to the serious shortage of residential housing in Budapest, multiple families were forced to share apartments and the local council did not allocate sufficient funds for the maintenance of its buildings.

Subsequently, from the mid-1970s, a construction boom allowed the most affluent tenants to flee the overcrowded and deteriorating tenement houses. At the same time, a state-led programme which dismantled the impoverished Roma colonies on the outskirts forced many families to move into inner city neighbourhoods such as Józsefváros. By the 1980s, the area had become highly stigmatized due to its bad housing stock, the relatively high number of poor Roma and the concentration of criminal activities such as prostitution in certain neighbourhoods.

The country's reintegration into the global market economy has only worsened the situation of those living in the district. Although most apartments were quickly privatized over the 1990s, the highest number of social houses remained in District 8. The local municipality could not sell its property, either because it was not allowed to by law due to the poor housing conditions or because the tenants could not afford to buy their residences. The efficiency of social regeneration projects based on the accessibility of EU funds has been very limited so far. At the same time, more and more migrants became interested in certain disused areas following the collapse of state socialism; for instance, the underutilized land around Józsefváros railway station was occupied by Chinese and other migrant traders.

Yet despite the fact that these migrant-run businesses have provided poorer residents with lively and inexpensive retail areas, their contribution has never been recognized. On the contrary, their operation is often presented negatively in public media. Though the local municipality has not launched a directly xenophobic or racist campaign, in 2013 it decided to close down the 23-year-old Chinese market, reportedly to construct a local sports

Left: A derelict building in Józsefváros, Budapest, 2014. *Neményi Márton*

facility, and closure took place in June 2014.

Presumably, the municipality expects further growth in the number of upwardly mobile or upper middle-class residents in the district – most of whom at present are concentrated in a part of the district that already underwent significant redevelopment in the early 2000s. This first major renewal project of the district was carried out in public–private partnership as old social housing blocks were demolished to accommodate private developments, raising property prices in the area to the highest in the district – in the process making housing for the original tenants unaffordable. A significant number of the more than 1,000 households evicted from the neighbourhood were Roma. Some of them were able to stay in the district, but others had to leave, including many who decided to take cash compensation instead of another apartment.

It is very likely that, in the coming years, other housing blocks will be demolished, and the original tenants as well as retailers catering to the current local communities will have to move. The district mayor has publicly promised to transform the area from a 'ghetto full of criminals' to a 'university town', yet it is unclear to what extent minorities and other marginalized groups will be able to share in this vision. This form of urban regeneration is supported by the national government, too, which recently designated a campus area for a newly established university in the district. The new reconstruction project, as opposed to the previous one, is being carried out mainly from public funding and will affect around 2,200 households until the end of 2017. The redevelopment includes plans to replace social housing with university buildings, again threatening the living space of Roma families concentrated in the area. Unless the local housing movement is able to successfully stand up for the rights of the tenants concerned by both the continuing public–private partnership development and the national government-led project, a number of the current inhabitants may be pushed out to the margins of Budapest or even outside the city altogether – a situation that will leave them even more invisible than before. ■

questions. However, despite the apparently high level of anti-Jewish sentiment in Greece suggested by these surveys, incidents of violence against Jews appear to be infrequent. This may be due to the small size of Greece's Jewish minority – numbering a little over 5,000 people, residing mostly in the cities of Athens, Larissa and Thessaloniki. However, cemeteries, Holocaust memorials and other sites have been targeted, with the number of incidents in 2014 reportedly exceeding the total for 2012 and 2013 together, according to the *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014* report. This included, in December, the vandalism of a Jewish cemetery in Larissa with swastikas and abusive graffiti. Notably, however, there were no personal physical attacks against Jews reported.

Conditions for Greece's Roma community, estimated to be in the region of 265,000 persons, or approximately 2.5 per cent of the population, are characterized by social exclusion and deprivation. Many Roma live in sub-standard housing with inadequate water supply and sewage facilities on the periphery of urban areas and on the edge of small towns and villages. Roma have also been subject to racist abuse and violence. In November 2014, three men were convicted of a violent racist attack on a Roma woman Paraskevi Kokoni and her nephew in the town of Etoliko, western Greece, in the previous year. The victim believed that she was targeted because she is a relative of a leader of the local Roma community. This attack did not occur in isolation, but in the context of a series of threats and attacks attributed to members and supporters of the extreme right-wing Golden Dawn party.

Despite the strain on the Greek state in managing Greece's financial and social crisis there have been some positive developments. In September 2014 a new anti-racism law was adopted by the Greek parliament which strengthened the response to racist violence and incitement. An extensive investigation of Golden Dawn was pursued across 2014. The parliamentary immunity of all Golden Dawn MPs was removed and they were charged with membership of a criminal organization, along with other criminal charges. Incremental gains are being made in improving living conditions and attacking the social exclusion of Roma

through the National Strategy for the Social Integration of Roma 2012–20. Legislation in 2011 promised an overhaul of Greece's asylum system. This was delayed, in part by government austerity measures, but the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has recently noted some improvements, including reduced waiting times and better quality of interviews. Nevertheless, in January 2015, UNHCR maintained that other EU countries should not return asylum seekers to have their applications processed in Greece – a clear sign that more still needs to be done. The new government, elected in January 2015, has released many detainees from immigration detention centres and promised further reform. However, tensions persist in the areas in which undocumented migrants and refugees are concentrated. Municipal authorities, especially in Athens, have struggled to provide adequate support and housing. Some local business people and residents blame migrants for the ghettoization and deterioration of their neighbourhoods; however, this does not acknowledge the constraints faced by migrants without the necessary legal documentation.

Latvia

While Russians comprise the largest of Latvia's minorities, amounting to over a quarter (27.2 per cent) of the population, the country includes a diverse range of smaller ethnicities as well. There are also, in a country with a population totalling 2.1 million, more than 270,000 'non-citizens': this category was introduced after Latvia's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union to designate former Soviet citizens without direct links to the pre-Soviet Latvian Republic. These people were not granted automatic Latvian citizenship; instead they became 'non-citizens' eligible for naturalization subject to conditions – including passing Latvian language tests.

The naturalization process has since been simplified through successive legal amendments, mostly to satisfy the conditions of EU membership, which was obtained in 2004. But while more than 142,000 were granted citizenship between 1995 and January 2014, applications for naturalization have since fallen. Moreover, while the children of 'non-citizens' may be registered as Latvian citizens by at least one parent – and many

parents have chosen to do so – in July 2014 there were still over 8,700 ‘non-citizen’ children, their parents having refrained from registering them. The reasons for this included: parents’ belief that citizenship should be granted automatically; insufficient knowledge of existing registration procedures; and more favourable travel conditions to some Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries for ‘non-citizens’. According to 2012 official figures, while 99.8 per cent of ethnic Latvians had Latvian citizenship, there was a much higher incidence of non-citizenship among those belonging to other ethnic groups: 34 per cent of Russians, 54.6 per cent of Belarusians and 55.6 per cent of Ukrainians.

While ‘non-citizens’ have continued to have access to rights such as social benefits, they have not been granted voting rights and access to some forms of employment, mostly in the civil service. A survey conducted in May and June by the research centre SKDS among people belonging to national minorities (Belarusians, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians and others) showed that 58 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I am proud of being Latvian’, up from 35 per cent in 2009. Yet 80 per cent of minority ‘non-citizens’ stated that they did not wish to acquire Latvian citizenship, while only 11.3 per cent planned to apply for it (the remaining 8.1 per cent were uncertain). In light of these findings, in August Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma conceded that ‘too little has been done in the field of community cohesion’, while the importance of national unity was stressed in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. Straujuma added that the government would intensify efforts to provide Latvian language training and facilitate citizenship acquisition.

Public protests, particularly with the participation of Russians/Russophones, were triggered in early 2014 by an agreement among coalition members of the former government, proposing that publicly funded minority schools incrementally switch to education in the state language. Existing legislation has provided for Latvian to be employed in no less than 60 per cent of teaching time, while the remaining time can be devoted to other (both minority and foreign) languages. Approximately a quarter of students have been receiving part of their

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Case study by *Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach*
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Remembering Warsaw’s Jewish community through heritage conservation

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Before the outbreak of the Second World War, when Poland was home to the largest Jewish community in Europe, more than 380,000 Jews lived in Warsaw. During the war, however, the Nazis annihilated the majority of the city’s Jewish population and destroyed much of their physical heritage. Under Communist rule, the surviving synagogues and other Jewish buildings deteriorated further due to neglect. Only a few monuments were protected as valuable historic sites.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first efforts to rediscover Warsaw’s forgotten heritage emerged. But it was not until February 1997, when the Law on the Relationship between the State and the Union of Jewish Religious Communities was adopted, that the long process of restituting Jewish communal heritage began. The law also provided for the establishment of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODZ) to reclaim and administer synagogues, cemeteries and other sites, especially outside large cities where there was no longer a Jewish population to take care of them. The same year also witnessed the revival of the Warsaw Jewish Community, the largest of the eight Jewish municipalities operating in major Polish cities and which together form the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland.

So far, the Foundation and the Communities have become the owners of only a small portion of Poland’s Jewish physical heritage. Besides the restoration, reconstruction and protection

of existing buildings, there are also efforts to commemorate pre-war Jewish communities with monuments and memorial plaques, often in cooperation with local non-Jewish residents. However, limited funding and insufficient capacity has meant that the Warsaw Jewish Community is only able to deal with one or two projects at any time.

The subject of Jewish physical heritage remains controversial, however. There is no consensus on how the reclaimed buildings should be used since the number of Jews living in Poland is very small, and they cannot afford to maintain all Jewish properties. Should the synagogues be preserved as architectural monuments due to their historical value? Should they be retained for their symbolic value to remind people of Poland's multicultural past? Should they be sold for commercial use? Or perhaps, should they serve local, mostly non-Jewish communities, who will then take care of them? There is no clear vision about this. In Warsaw, apart from an active *mikvah* located in the historical Nożyk synagogue, the building of an old *mikvah* in Praga houses a secondary school and the Polish Jewish Youth Organization. The Nożyk synagogue itself, besides its religious



function for the city's Jewish population, is a venue for cultural events, such as concerts, debates or exhibitions.

Lingering anti-Semitism continues to threaten the survival of Warsaw's Jewish heritage as well, with occasional acts of vandalism at cemeteries, synagogues or other monuments. In February 2015, for instance, an unknown group of people defaced the fence of the Okopowa Street cemetery, an old but still active cemetery managed by the Jewish Warsaw Community. The gate was spoiled with yellow paint and on the walls vandals painted in red: 'Jews for slaughter.' According to FODZ's annual reports, several such incidents take place in Poland every year, mostly consisting of anti-Semitic slogans or swastikas painted on buildings or other forms of damage inflicted on memorial plaques, graves and fences. Though the incidents are reported to the police, in most cases the perpetrators are never found.

One way to raise social awareness of Poland's minority heritage is through education, especially in a form which is attractive to younger generations. A lot of hope has been invested in the new Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which inaugurated its main multimedia exhibition on 28 October 2014 after years of preparation. It is hoped that the museum, with its innovative approach to commemoration, will engage visitors by linking the multi-faceted Jewish life directly to Polish history. Contemporary art, performance and new technologies are employed to enrich the experience and give visitors the opportunity to explore Jewish heritage. Instead of focusing on the Holocaust, the exhibition – developed by an international team of over 120 respected researchers, activists and curators – presents the rich history of Jewish life in Poland, based on the idea of an open-ended past. In doing so, it emphasizes the continuity of Jewish heritage throughout Poland's history, testifying not only to the immeasurable loss Warsaw has suffered but also the continued enrichment Jewish culture brings to the city today. ■

Left: Inside the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Magdalena Roeseler

education in a minority language, mostly Russian. Plans for near-monolingual education were ultimately set aside.

Roma remain one of the most marginalized groups in Latvia and still suffer disproportionately from discrimination in areas such as employment and education, as well as being victims of racist attacks. In December 2014 the ECRI issued conclusions on the implementation of its 2011 recommendations to improve the integration of Roma in schools. Roma children have been at times placed in separated schools or classes, with added problems relating to poor school attendance and low educational achievements. Despite efforts to facilitate their integration in the education system, the percentage of Roma children who attended special needs schools increased from 10.6 per cent in 2011 to 16.1 per cent in the academic year 2013/14.

In 2014 Latvia's levels of urbanization were just below 70 per cent and predicted to slightly increase in the coming decades, although unemployment and economic austerity have contributed to emigration, which is particularly felt in large cities. Latvian cities such as Riga and Dagavpils often have a high proportion of Russian speakers. The Russophone minority is represented in Latvian municipal organs, particularly in Riga, where the parties supported by Russian speakers have generally performed well in local elections. Since 2009 the mayor of Riga has been an ethnic Russian, Nils Ušakovs.

The majority of Latvia's Roma are also city dwellers, residing in the cities of Riga, Jelgava and Ventspils. Latvia's Roma became largely settled in the post-war period, while post-independence they have moved from rural to urban areas, and from smaller to larger towns, given the disappearance of collective farms. Roma often live in overcrowded housing and are affected by social exclusion. Research conducted in various Latvian cities and towns has revealed a high level of intolerance towards a range of ethnic groups, particularly Roma.

At the same time, urban areas in some instances provide opportunities to advance minority rights. For example, public discussions and training seminars have been held in various cities of Latvia for teaching assistants of Roma ethnicity with a view to facilitating the

integration of Roma children. Moreover, in Riga, compared to other parts of the country, there seems to be better majority–minority dialogue on the issue of education and linguistic policies, while nearly half of schools provide bilingual education.

Russia

According to the 2010 census, nearly 20 per cent of the Russian Federation's population identify themselves as belonging to ethnic groups other than the Russian majority and there are more than 170 peoples recognized in the country, including indigenous peoples. Diversity is entrenched in the very structure of the Federation, with 21 ethnic republics in which local languages are recognized as official alongside Russian. Despite this, under President Vladimir Putin an emphasis has been placed – in official discourse, the education system and the media – on national unity and Russian patriotism, a trend that continued during 2014. Throughout the year, authorities continued to repress civil society organizations, including those working on minority and indigenous peoples' rights, through the application of the controversial 2012 'Foreign Agents' law that requires NGOs in receipt of foreign funding and engaged in 'political activities' to register as an 'organization performing the functions of a foreign agent'. Among others, the Anti-Discrimination Centre (ADC) Memorial, which had campaigned against discrimination against Roma and migrants, closed its office in St Petersburg in April 2014 following a court ruling requiring it to register as a 'foreign agent'.

In March, following civil unrest and protests in Ukraine, Russia annexed Crimea after a referendum that was condemned by international observers as neither free nor fair. Unsurprisingly, this development and continued fighting with pro-Russian armed separatists in eastern Ukraine has had a profound impact on Russian society. Among its consequences has been the acute politicization of issues concerning Ukraine, and at times direct harassment of Ukrainians residing in Russia. For example, in April 2014, a swastika was painted on the door of the flat belonging to a Ukrainian residing in Vologda, while flyers were stuffed in the mailboxes of other residents in the

Below: A young Uzbek migrant sells SIM cards outside a metro station after leaving his family in Andijan, Uzbekistan to find work in Moscow.
Zachary John Kraemer

same building ‘informing’ them, through the use of derogatory terms, that a Ukrainian lived there. While such direct harassment has been uncommon, Ukrainians have reportedly been affected by a general atmosphere of intimidation, particularly in light of the state media’s biased coverage of events, routinely linking Ukrainian nationalists to fascism. At the same time,

developments in Ukraine have overshadowed the actions of ultra-nationalists, resulting in their public events, such as anti-immigration rallies, gaining less media attention and public support than in previous years.

The conditions of migrant workers have continued to deteriorate. Migration regulations are continuously modified and are becoming increasingly restrictive. In addition to bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining work and residence permits, since 2013 law enforcement officials have used particularly repressive means to crack down on illegal immigration. Measures



have included police raids and the rounding up of people on the basis of their 'non-Slavic appearance'. For example, between 23 October and 2 November 2014 the Moscow authorities implemented 'Operation Migrant 2014', reportedly arresting 7,000 migrants in the first four days, in some instances resorting to violence; some of those arrested had administrative or criminal charges brought against them. A similar operation took place in St Petersburg in September and October 2014. The absence of registration or even identity documents has made migrants – and some particularly disadvantaged



minorities such as Roma – vulnerable to police abuse, leading to illegal searches, arbitrary detention and extortion of bribes. Ultra-nationalist groups have carried out their own attacks on migrants, in a form of vigilantism seeking to combat crimes allegedly perpetrated by ethnic minorities and illegal immigration. The groups most at risk of ethnically motivated violence have been people of 'non-Slavic appearance', particularly people from the North Caucasus (Russia's southern republics), the South Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Roma. The SOVA Centre's preliminary data for 2014 indicate that 19 people were killed and 103 injured in Russia as a result of hate crime; as in previous years, most victims were from Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Instances of hate crime can go unreported. For example, the Moscow Helsinki Group in 2014 documented cases of Meskhetian Turks in the south of Russia who had been victims of ethnically motivated attacks, and who did not report these instances to the police – due to fear of reprisals and distrust of law enforcement officials themselves. Meskhetian Turks are a minority who have been subjected to widespread harassment and discrimination, and hundreds of whom are still reportedly stateless.

Indigenous peoples, besides enduring higher unemployment rates, poorer standards of living and lower life expectancy, face limited opportunities for political participation. In September, representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations were prevented from leaving Russia to attend the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York. Various means were used to this end, including obstructing their journey to the airport (e.g. Valentina Sovkina, head of the Saami parliament of Kola Peninsula), or the confiscation of passports at Sheremetyevo airport before their flight (e.g. Rodion Sulyandziga, director of the Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North).

As in previous years, 2014 saw poor implementation of the legal rights of indigenous peoples, which include their free access to lands in 'territories of traditional nature use' (TTNUs). These are protected territories, which require impact assessments before the exploitation of their natural resources (oil, gas and metals) or



Above: A Roma woman in Ukraine, June 2014.
Steve Evans

construction projects (such as pipelines and dams) can take place. Though Russian law provides that TTNUs are to be established at the federal, regional and local levels – and some TTNUs have been designated at the regional level (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous *okrug* and Khabarovsk *krai*) – the federal authorities have continued to refrain from designating TTNUs at the federal level. Moreover, in December 2013 the definition of TTNU changed from ‘specially protected natural territories’ to ‘specially protected territories’. This lowers the legal status of such territories and eliminates requirements to conduct environmental impact assessments before commercial projects are implemented.

Two-thirds of the approximately 250,000 persons belonging to indigenous communities do not reside in urban areas: they are scattered around two-thirds of Russia’s territory, often in regions with limited access to public transport or means of communication. As a result, they do not benefit from the essential infrastructure and political institutions available in urban areas, frequently leading to their social and political marginalization. Their children often have no choice but to study in special boarding schools which, in addition to separating children from

their parents, tend to have lower educational standards than regular schools. This can make the preservation of their languages, many of which are on the verge of extinction, logistically difficult: the remoteness of these locations, and the vast distances between speakers of these languages, complicate the organization of own-language tuition.

Levels of urbanization in Russia are high: nearly three-quarters of its population live in urban areas. Small villages have continued to be depopulated as their inhabitants – including those belonging to minorities – have left rural areas for cities to seek employment opportunities. This trend leads to the reduction in the number of locations where people belonging to the same minority live in substantial numbers, reinforcing a tendency among new generations growing up in urban areas that are effectively monolingual. Moreover, ongoing plans for the ‘optimization’ of the education system have led to the closure of small village schools, which are more likely than city schools to teach minority languages, or to provide instruction through the medium of these languages.

While access to services is generally better in cities than in rural areas, some of those belonging to minorities residing in urban centres continue to experience extremely poor living

conditions. This is particularly the case with Roma settlements and the typically overcrowded areas where migrant workers reside. Both groups have remained affected by sub-standard living conditions due to poverty and discrimination. Announcements of housing for rent are often accompanied by statements ‘only for Russians’ or ‘only for Slavs’, resulting in darker-skinned people being penalized. Roma have at times been subjected to expulsion from their settlements and the destruction of their houses, without alternative accommodation being provided. These groups have further been the targets of ‘special operations’ carried out by law enforcement officials, nominally for document checks but often leading to ill-treatment.

Cities have also been the location of the majority of violent attacks against minorities: according to the SOVA Centre, in 2014 most such incidents occurred in Moscow and St Petersburg. On 15 May, hundreds of football fans in Moscow chanted racial abuse and nationalist slogans as they marched to a migrants’ dormitory, before being stopped through the intervention of the riot police. Raids took place on commuter and underground trains throughout the year, perpetrated by right-wing extremists. In some instances those who tried to defend ‘non-Slavs’ were themselves physically attacked.

Ukraine

Demonstrations in late 2013 against the government of Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych, in response to his decision to abandon a planned agreement with the EU, intensified in early 2014 when hundreds were killed or injured in violent clashes between protesters and authorities before Yanukovych was removed from office on 21 February. Shortly afterwards, as an interim government was formed in Kiev, pro-Russian militias seized control of the Crimean parliament building with the stated intention of declaring independence from Ukraine. Following a controversial referendum on 16 March that was condemned by international observers as neither free nor fair, Crimea was formally annexed by Russia – a situation enforced by the growing presence of Russian troops.

From April, Russia had gained control over much of the region and began establishing state

institutions, while state buildings were then seized by armed rebels in the provinces of Donetsk and Luganska in eastern Ukraine. In response, the Ukrainian government deployed soldiers to these areas, leading to direct conflict with separatist forces in June that, despite multiple attempts to reach a ceasefire, continued throughout 2014 and into 2015. As of April 2015, parts of Luganska and Donetsk remain under separatist control. According to UN estimates, the conflict had led to around 6,000 people killed and another 15,000 injured between April 2014 and the end of February 2015. The conflict also triggered a wave of internal displacement amid increasing insecurity, with hundreds of thousands of civilians – including many from ethnic or religious minorities – affected.

Though the uprising against the Yanukovych government was not motivated primarily by ethnic concerns, the subsequent annexation of Crimea and the separatist seizure of territory in eastern Ukraine with suspected Russian involvement has deepened existing political divisions in the country that correlate with ethnicity. Troublingly, one of the first acts of the interim government in February 2014 was the voting in of a controversial amendment to 2012 legislation on minority languages, which recognized Russian as a second official language in some areas of Ukraine. Its annulment could have deepened the tensions between Russian speakers and other linguistic minorities in the country. However, the move provoked criticism from rights activists and the recently appointed president of the interim government, Aleksandr Turchinov, subsequently announced that it would not be implemented.

Another legislative development related to minority and indigenous peoples’ rights, this one positive, was the amendment of Ukraine’s existing anti-discrimination laws in May. The revisions added new definitions, strengthened protections for victims and expanded the powers of the Ukraine’s Commissioner for Human Rights. However, human rights defenders have noted significant problems with implementation and stressed the importance of practical support, such as free legal assistance for victims and training for law enforcement agencies, to reduce hate crimes and other forms of discrimination.

The need for adequate protection is especially acute for Ukraine's growing population of IDPs, many of them from minority or indigenous communities. Until recently a migration hub due to its location between the EU and Russia, Ukraine now faces mass internal displacement as a result of the conflict. As of April 2015, the country had close to 1.3 million IDPs concentrated largely in the eastern provinces. Women and children constitute the majority of IDPs as men tend to stay home, either for work-related reasons or in an attempt to protect family property. One of the most pressing issues is the integration of IDPs in new communities, particularly for minorities, who often face disproportionate challenges during displacement. Very few have been able to find jobs since their displacement, with most relying on savings, family assistance or limited social benefits to survive. Many cannot even search for jobs as they have to take care of small children, pensioners or disabled persons.

Housing is another area where IDPs have experienced difficulties. As the state did not have emergency infrastructure in place to accommodate displaced civilians from the conflict zone, resettlement has been ad hoc and varied according to the policies of the regional or local authorities. As a result, a large proportion have been housed in dilapidated sanatoriums, dormitories, summer camps and other forms of sub-standard shelter. These facilities are often located in isolated locations outside urban areas, which complicates the search for employment and creates further obstacles for IDPs attempting to integrate into new communities. At present, one of the best responses to the crisis has come from authorities in Khersonska province, next to Crimea, where 18,000 free land plots were granted to Crimean Tatars for resettlement. By contrast, Roma – already one of the most discriminated against groups in the country before the conflict began – have reported experiencing particular difficulties in accessing housing from local authorities due to discrimination.

Displaced Roma from eastern Ukraine face additional hurdles as, according to NGOs working with community members, more than half of them have never had birth or identity documentation, meaning they cannot be registered as IDPs or gain access to social

welfare. Furthermore, from the first stages of the conflict, ethnically motivated violence against the community appears to have escalated. In April 2014, a joint statement by the European Roma Rights Centre and other rights organizations highlighted the rising levels of violence directed against Roma. This included, among other incidents, an attack on a Roma community earlier in the month in Sloviansk, with residents beaten and their homes looted. Following the attack, Roma residents fled the city. At the end of April, a Roma family's house in Cherkassy was set on fire after weeks of intimidation from locals, with the police reportedly failing to intervene to protect the victims.

The conflict also had a negative impact on the lives of religious minorities. In Donbas, the active efforts of Protestant pastors to provide shelter to IDPs, distribute humanitarian assistance and take civilians out of the zone of conflict led to frequent intimidation, theft and violence from separatists. After parts of eastern Ukraine fell under separatist control, many churches and religious facilities, particularly those belonging to evangelical Christian sects, were expropriated and community members forced to leave their possessions.

Much of the conflict has been concentrated in urban areas such as Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as other smaller cities in the eastern conflict zones, with rising casualties among civilians and widespread damage to urban infrastructure. According to Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) research, the vast majority of IDPs have come from urban or semi-urban areas. Those minorities still living in separatist-held areas face new challenges in an increasingly nationalistic climate. In Donetsk, for instance, where until recently the population included a diverse mix of Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Tatars, Turks and foreign students, there have been accounts of increased intolerance and hate speech. African nationals, who even before the conflict faced frequent discrimination, have reportedly been particularly exposed to verbal abuse. Religious minorities, too, have been exposed to threats and intimidation, particularly people following non-Russian Orthodox forms of Christianity, with places of worship and other buildings seized from their communities by

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Case study by Nataliya Novakova
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Deteriorating rights for Crimean Tatars under Russian rule

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At the beginning of 2014, following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the government of Ukraine lost control over the peninsula. The subsequent transition to the legislation of the Russian Federation and the continued presence of unregulated paramilitary groups, known as *samooborona*, posed considerable threats to the local population, particularly for ethnic and religious minorities.

The concerns were especially acute among many of Crimea's indigenous Tatar population, given their history of repression under Soviet rule. This culminated in their eventual mass deportation by Stalin to Siberia in 1944. Though many have returned to Crimea following the collapse of communism, the community continued to struggle with unemployment, lack of access to basic services and ongoing barriers to the restoration of their former lands. Ukraine itself never resolved the issue of providing land or other housing opportunities to returnees. The temporary solution was so-called 'fields of protest' – places where illegal settlements of Tatars were built. The authorities did not legalize the settlements, but also did not prevent them from being set up.

However, although following the annexation the Russian government initially wooed the Tatar population with promises to address housing and other pressing concerns, since then the behaviour of the authorities towards the community has become increasingly draconian. On 15 November, for instance, around 60 people were arrested *en masse* in a market in Simferopol and taken to the police station to be questioned about their migration status. Several days later, a crackdown in another of the city's markets led to the detention of around 15 people of 'non-Slavic' appearance, all of whom were reportedly Crimean Tatars.

Political bodies and civil society organizations representing Tatars also face constant intimidation, with two leading Tatar representatives, Mustafa Dzhemylov and Refat Chubarov, denied re-entry to Crimea in the wake of the annexation.

Meanwhile members of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, an executive committee that has served as a representative body to the Ukrainian government and international community, has reported increased harassment in the form of constant checks and ad hoc requests to provide immediate reports on their activities to authorities. Since the organization was forced to register in the Russian Federation as an ordinary non-profit organization, its status as an elected representative body of the Crimean Tatars no longer applies.

There have also been a number of cases of forced disappearances of Crimean Tatar activists, with at least eight documented cases between March and early December. Little progress has taken place in the investigation of these incidents. Several Tatar activists have also been brutally killed, and others detained, tortured or threatened, including many who have advocated on issues such as land rights for their community. This is part of a general crackdown on freedom of expression that has particularly affected minorities, as evidenced by the attack on Nadir Bekirov, a Crimean Tatar activist, in September ahead of his planned attendance at the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York, leaving him unable to travel to the event. Tatar media has also been targeted, with the forced closure of ATR, Crimea's only Tatar television channel, after it was repeatedly refused registration as a Russian channel by regulators in Moscow.

Tatars, most of whom are Muslim, have also found themselves affected by a climate of increasing nationalism and religious chauvinism in Crimea. Muslim communities have been attacked, religious literature burned and members of the remaining Tatar population have been pressured to renounce their Ukrainian citizenship. Other communities, such as members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, have also faced persecution. In this climate, the possibility of Crimea's Tatars finally achieving a resolution to decades of injustice seems slimmer than ever. ■