

Afghanistan: Most of the country is controlled by the Taliban, a militant Sunni sect based exclusively on the Pushtun majority who historically ruled the country. Afghanistan has been at war since the late 1970s and the Taliban continue to fight regionally-based Tajik and Uzbek opponents who earlier held or shared power in Kabul. In 1998 [ck. year] Taliban forces captured areas held by the Hazari, a Shi'a minority, and massacred many but stopped short of politicide in the face of threatened Iranian intervention. The risks are high of politicide against Tajiks and Uzbeks when Taliban seizes control of their areas.

Burma: The SLORC, the military council that controls Burma, has relied mainly on repression to control its domestic opponents, including communal separatists such as the Karen and Shan and the urban-based democratic opposition. They also targeted the Muslims of the northwest Arakan region for destruction or expulsion in 1978 and again in the early 1990s. The potential that any of these conflicts might escalate into geno/politicide is moderated by several factors. First, the SLORC has sought negotiated settlements with most regional separatists, which suggests that it is shifting away from exclusive reliance on repression. Second, the country is being opened up to foreign investment and international influence in ways that reduce its rulers' future options about how it deals with opponents.

Pakistan: Pakistan's past military-dominated regimes carried out politicides against separatist Bengalis and Baluchi in the 1970s though they failed to prevent the secession of Bangladesh. In the 1990s Pakistan has experienced serious intercommunal violence, for example between Sindhis and Mohajirs (descendants of Muslims who fled to Pakistan from India after independence) and between Shi'a and other Muslims. In the 1980s and 1990s both democratic and military governments have been cautious in their response to these and other challenges, none of which poses a direct threat to the government's stability. Moreover Pakistan's economic and military ties with a number of Western countries can be counted on to encourage moderation by Pakistan's leaders. Probably the main factor inhibiting gross human rights violations in Pakistan is not included among the general risk factors: it is the country's ongoing rivalry with India over Kashmir. International conflict helps build internal cohesion and displaces anger over internal divisions onto the external enemy. If the Kashmir conflict were settled on terms unfavorable to Pakistan, however, we would anticipate reprisals against scapegoats such as non-Islamic minorities.

Indonesia: Indonesians were responsible for two episodes of geno/politicides in the last 40 years, against suspected Communists and Chinese in 1965-66 and against Timorese rebels from 1975 to the early 1990s. Massacres against the rebellious Aceh of northern Sumatra have been widely reported. A potentially genocidal campaign by Indonesia-supported militias after East Timor's independence referendum in 1999 was checked by an Australian-led intervention force. Two factors may offset the risks of similar violence against other regional peoples who may resist Jakarta's control. Externally, Indonesia has substantial and expanding economic and political ties with other Asian countries and with the United States, which may exert more restraint than in the past on Indonesia's domestic policies. Internally, Indonesia has begun a transition to democracy under its newly elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid, who prefers accommodation with the regime's opponents. But the military, which was the principal agent of past geno/politicides, retains a great deal of influence.

Algeria: Islamist militants are the most likely perpetrators of mass murder in Algeria, not the nationalist-secular government. The issues are political and doctrinal: militants acting in the name of a distorted version Islam have massacred tens of thousands of pro-government villagers and defectors from their cause. It is likely that if the militants came to power, secular Algerians would be widely targeted. However it seems increasingly unlikely that the militants will gain power because the government has sought, with some initial success, to encourage moderate Islamists to participate in the electoral process and thus weaken support for the militants.

China: Three geno/politicides have been carried out during Communist rule in China, one after the Communists took power in 1950-51, the second in Tibet in 1959, the last during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1975. Some of the risk factors remain high, but in our judgment they are declining. Beijing's rulers in the 1990s are more pragmatic in doctrine and practice than their predecessors. China is more engaged economically with the rest of the world, with the likely long-term result of constraining domestic policies that offend trading partners and investors. Nonetheless the regime responds harshly to resistance by Tibetans and by Muslim Uighers in Xinjiang province, and to imagined security threats from Christians and the Falun Gong movement. Unless and until the Chinese government becomes more willing to accommodate national minorities and believers, the risk remains that repression can escalate into policies aimed at eliminating the offending groups.