



REGIONAL FACTS AND FIGURES ASIA – PACIFIC

Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in the criminal justice system:

- ◆ The Maori comprise less than 15 per cent of the **New Zealand** population, yet account for 40 per cent of all court convictions and half the prison population.
- ◆ In **Australia**, the indigenous population in 2001 made up only 2.4 per cent of the total population, yet 19.9 per cent of all adult prisoners were indigenous.

Allegations of abuse at the hands of military forces have been received:

- ◆ In **Myanmar**, members of the village of Tagu Seik, near Einme, were tortured and their community ransacked on the basis of purported communications with another armed opposition group, according to information received by the UN's Special Rapporteur.
- ◆ In the **Philippines**, a similar military attack took place based on allegations that indigenous individuals were members of a "splinter group" of communist terrorists.

Poverty and unemployment rates are very high for indigenous communities in the region:

- ◆ In **Australia**, the indigenous unemployment rate in 2006 was 15.6 per cent, just over three times higher than the non-indigenous rate, while the median indigenous income was just over half the non-indigenous income.
- ◆ In **New Zealand**, the unemployment rate amongst Maori is over twice as high as the national average (7.7 compared to 3.8 per cent) and Maori household income is 70 per cent of the national average.
- ◆ According to the UNDP's Human Poverty Index ranking of countries, indigenous communities in **India** are comparable to sub-Saharan countries, which are ranked in the bottom 25.

Health issues include diabetes, tuberculosis and suicide:

- ◆ Nearly half (44 per cent) of Torres Strait Islanders have diabetes.
- ◆ The prevalence of Type 2 diabetes among indigenous 25- to 50-year-olds in **Australia** is ten times higher than that of Australians of European descent.
- ◆ Pacific Islanders and Maoris are at least 10 times more likely to contract tuberculosis than other people living in **New Zealand**.

Development has caused massive displacements of indigenous groups:

- ◆ The Bakun Dam in **Malaysia** is reported to have caused the forced displacement of up to 8,000 indigenous persons from 15 communities by clear-cutting 80,000 hectares of rainforest.
- ◆ In **Thailand**, several highland communities, including the Karen people, have reportedly been moved out of national parks against their will.

(Continued over page)



- ◆ In **Indonesia**, from 1967 to 1997 oil palm plantations increased 20 times and three million hectares in Borneo are planned to be converted. According to latest estimates, the net forest loss over the period 2000-2005 was 7.5 million ha of forest per year.

The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples was authored by seven independent experts and produced by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

For more information, see: www.un.org/indigenous

