

*A Kosovan boy describes his experiences of ethnic cleansing; he was 16 at the time:*

“It’s been bad since I was born, but it was really bad later. In 1989, 1993, 1998. 1998, like, exploded. Everywhere. Much of it was not fighting, just Serbs killing people – kids, women, men. Kicking them out... I could be dead in a second. I was forced to leave. I went on my own to Pristina. I was not long there. My family, I don’t know where they are right now. I’ve tried to get in touch...”

*A professional musician was forced to flee because there were too many 'nationality problems':*

“My husband is Georgian; my husband’s mother is Ossetian. Georgians were kicked out from Abkhazia and their homes taken over. You can’t live in Georgia. After Chechnya, they [Russians] don;t ask you if you’re Chechnyan or Georgian. We look Caucasian. They can kill you [in Russia] just because you look like that... Where can we live? Now it’s Russian territory...”

*A man fled China after being persecuted for his membership of Falun Gong, a spiritual sect:*

“[I was arrested because] I wrote an article... in favour of Falun Gong. [It said] people in China don't have any freedom... I was imprisoned for a year – beaten with metal rods, electrical rods.”

*Both these men had been repeatedly tortured for trying to preserve cultural identity:*

“All that I was doing was defending my people... I was fighting for my sense of cultural identity. To get back our history... I analysed all these things and explained them to my people. They understood their rights and began to form a rebellion but it was suppressed” *Indigenous Bolivian leader*

“I was not allowed to teach Arabic to my own children. I had to teach Farsi... If a teacher is caught teaching Arabic they deprive you of your job... Arab nationalism is punishable by death.” *Arab tribal leader*

*The situation in Algeria in the early 1990s was similar to that in Afghanistan under the Taliban:*

“In Algeria, the danger was in the same stairwell. The man delivering death threats – he’s the one you could have been having coffee with this morning, lunch with yesterday. The danger is everywhere, all around. I’ve never hidden my opinions. I was anti-fundamentalist. At that time (1993) only 3,000 had been killed. It seems terrible to say ‘only’ but it turned out to be just a start. One of my friends was killed. Then I received a threatening letter from the Islamists, and another letter, then a third. I told only three people. Two days later, all the area knew about it. They spread a rumour: if he doesn’t comply, his throat will be cut in two days”