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Preface

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While every JEMIE issue makes a novel contribution to the study of minorities, the present issue opens up a new chapter in JEMIE's coverage by shifting the focus beyond Europe. Although ECMI's activities and focus have included minority politics and developments on other continents, this is the first JEMIE issue made up solely of non-European cases. As a well-read journal on minority issues, it is an important and highly relevant step. The articles in this issue show that minority problems are far from new or settled phenomena and that they continue to require strong political, legal and social attention, not only at the national or regional level, but globally. Moreover, the present JEMIE issue reconfirms some classic patterns of the problems faced by minorities, not least with the denial of rights to territory (see Makulilo in this JEMIE issue). Despite the significance of the context and specific conditions that are decisive in each minority situation – such as national legislation, historical minority-majority relations and/or resources – the broader challenges of living a minority life are not too different. This JEMIE issue demonstrates that some of the classic challenges, such as creating peaceful co-existence, are a recurring challenge all over (see Dessalegn and De Villiers in this JEMIE issue). But it is time to start a deeper exploration of what similarities and differences exist within minority issues globally, and to begin to exchange knowledge and experience. There are novel factors that need to be integrated into such an exchange, with new challenges such as terrorism threatening not only minorities, but also majorities (see Anderson in this JEMIE issue). The present JEMIE issue might only be the start of this explorative process, but it reconfirms what

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ECMI has worked for over the past two decades: that despite the many and diverse challenges involved, it is never too late to start paying attention to minority issues.