



# RISK ATLAS HUMAN RIGHTS

## Put the world to rights

Recent research spells out the scale of human rights abuses worldwide – and the role of multinationals in fighting against it

PEOPLES' UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CONSTITUTES human rights is different around the world. But in no country is it acceptable for multinational organisations to treat people poorly just because they are poor.

Among the UN's standard definition of every human being's entitlements are the right to life, liberty and security. No one should be subjected to degrading treatment and everyone has the right to recognition before the law. However, human rights abuses and poverty tend to be interrelated, as research by risk consultancy Maplecroft shown here demonstrates.

### Vulnerable areas

The worst countries for human rights abuse tend to be the ones suffering from conflict or which have weak governance structures and a poor rule of law. Many multinationals have a footprint in these places either through partnerships, supply agreements or through direct operations.

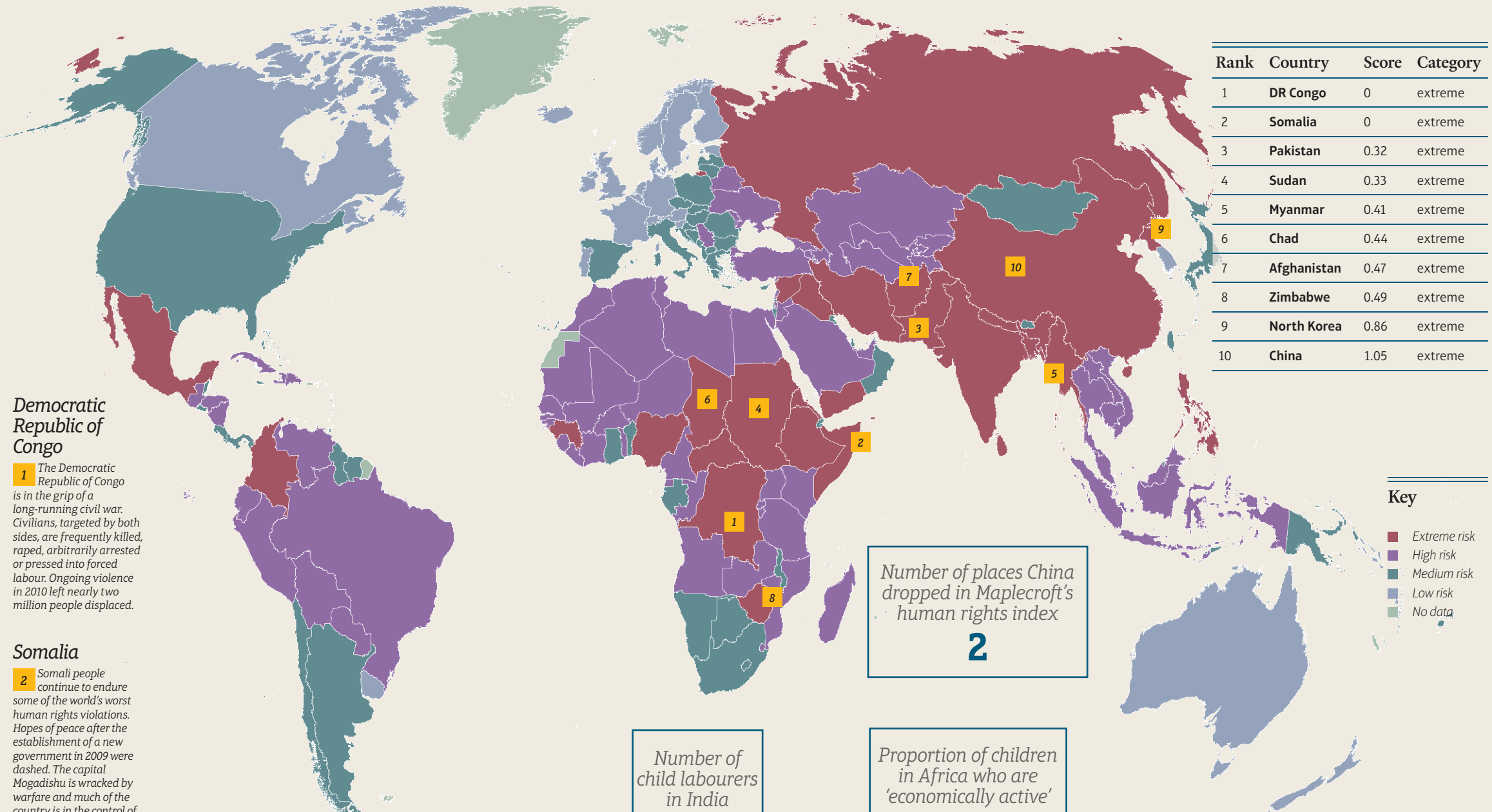
Child labour is a big problem, particularly in Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. The economic crisis has contributed to a worsening of the situation; as companies are squeezed, they squeeze the workforce harder. There's also less chance of money being spent on improving the lot of the average worker.

Responsible companies should introduce labour standards into their supply chains, regardless of whether it is a legal requirement to do so in that country. Risk managers must monitor the effectiveness of these programmes and ensure that the rules are being followed throughout an organisation's supply chain, its operations and distribution networks.

"Companies need to be more strategic and look at the long-term reputation risks," argues Maplecroft chief executive Alyson Warhurst, who is also a member of the UN Global Compact's human rights working group. "No one likes poor working conditions. And the media will continue to expose companies that fall short." **SR**

*'No one likes poor working conditions. The media will expose companies that fall short'*

Alyson Warhurst Maplecroft



Rank	Country	Score	Category
1	DR Congo	0	extreme
2	Somalia	0	extreme
3	Pakistan	0.32	extreme
4	Sudan	0.33	extreme
5	Myanmar	0.41	extreme
6	Chad	0.44	extreme
7	Afghanistan	0.47	extreme
8	Zimbabwe	0.49	extreme
9	North Korea	0.86	extreme
10	China	1.05	extreme

**Key**

- Extreme risk
- High risk
- Medium risk
- Low risk
- No data

### Democratic Republic of Congo

**1** The Democratic Republic of Congo is in the grip of a long-running civil war. Civilians, targeted by both sides, are frequently killed, raped, arbitrarily arrested or pressed into forced labour. Ongoing violence in 2010 left nearly two million people displaced.

### Somalia

**2** Somali people continue to endure some of the world's worst human rights violations. Hopes of peace after the establishment of a new government in 2009 were dashed. The capital Mogadishu is wracked by warfare and much of the country is in the control of armed groups.

### Pakistan

**3** The security situation in Pakistan is worsening, and killings are a fact of life in most of the big cities. The government gained headway recently but lost momentum as it tried to deal with human rights issues.

### Sudan

**4** Almost six years after a treaty ending 21 years of civil war, Sudanese civilians are still enduring human rights violations and insecurity. Accountability for human rights abuses remains practically nonexistent.

### Myanmar

**5** The ruling junta in Myanmar systematically denies citizens even basic freedoms, including freedom of expression, association and assembly. It regularly imprisons activists and human rights defenders.

### Chad

**6** Chad is destabilised by conflict with neighbouring Sudan. Government forces have carried out extrajudicial killings of rebels, gender-based violence and have used child soldiers.

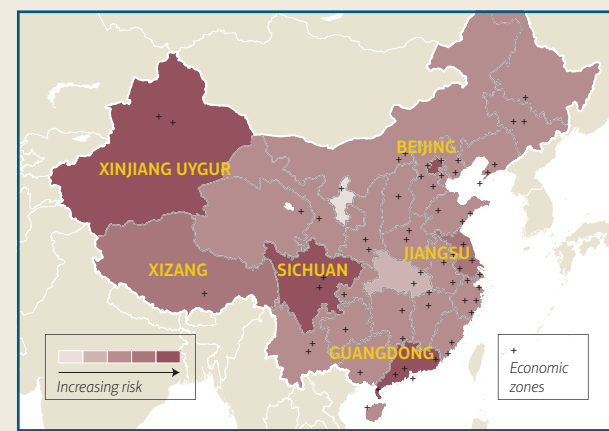
Number of places China dropped in Maplecroft's human rights index  
**2**

Number of child labourers in India  
**55m**

Proportion of children in Africa who are 'economically active'  
**41%**

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Source: Maplecroft



### SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA

CHINA HAS FALLEN TWO PLACES IN MAPLECROFT'S HUMAN RIGHTS RISK ATLAS from eighth last year to 10th. Its poor ranking is a reflection of its dire performance in terms of freedom of speech, the press and religion, minority rights, judicial independence, and arbitrary arrest and detention. The country also ranks extremely badly for trafficking and forced labour. Labour rights violations, especially in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, are commonplace in China due to weak and inconsistent enforcement of labour laws.

Despite this, Maplecroft chief executive Alyson Warhurst sees the situation improving in the next five years. The introduction of a labour contract law in 2008 is already enabling Chinese workers to demand improved pay and conditions. As the Chinese economy moves into a domestic-led growth phase, "amazing things" are happening, says Warhurst. "China is at a point of change."