

Conflict Update
Countries of Focus for the Institute's Dedicatory Conference
July 27, 2001
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Choice of countries for updates: The countries for the conflict updates are the countries that have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute's dedicatory conference, "Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century," December 5-7, 2001.

Source information: Information presented in this update is condensed from wire and newspaper reports from Lexis/Nexis and from electronic sites on the World Wide Web. Complete biographical information is unavailable from these services, but every attempt has been made to properly cite information and give credit to source materials. This update is intended for use by IPJ staff and associates for informational purposes only. As the material in this update is condensed, and does not directly quote the primary source, information from the update should not be quoted.

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UPDATE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Ceasefire still holding; Demilitarization of Kisangani contested; EU aid commissioner travels to Congo; Human rights concerns in DRC

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Guerrillas use kidnapping to fund a new uprising; Controversy surrounds Portillo's government

MACEDONIA

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NEPAL

New prime minister elected; Government and rebels agree to a truce; Rebels release hostages

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AP	=	Associated Press
AFP	=	Agence France Presse
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	=	Cable News Network
EFE	=	Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: www.unog.ch)
JED	=	Journaliste En Danger
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Ceasefire still holding: Despite the ceasefire that has held in the DRC for the last six months, the situation remains “fragile,” according to a July 18 press briefing by Kamel Morjane, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the DRC. While hailing the progress that has been made in the DRC compared with the situation last year, Morjane noted, “We have to continue efforts, in particular in the east, where there is still fighting between the Rwandese forces and the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) on the one side, and the armed forces on the other.” Rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda have fought government troops backed by Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia since August 1998. The ceasefire agreement, provided for under the 1999 Lusaka Peace Accords, began to take hold earlier this year when Joseph Kabila took over the presidency after the assassination of his father Laurent Kabila in January. (AP, July 18; IRIN, July 19, 2001)

Demilitarization of Kisangani contested: Kinshasa wants its ambassador to the UN to ask the Council to take measures against Uganda and Rwanda they have violated the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the DRC. The government wants them to withdraw their troops from Congolese territory immediately. The government alleged that RCD forces had declared their intention to relocate their headquarters from Goma to Kisangani, a move which would violate the 1999 Lusaka agreement and threaten a renewal of fighting in the eastern DRC. A government statement urged the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC) to deploy forces in Kisangani to assure the demilitarization of the eastern border. A statement issued by RCD spokesman Kin Key Mulumba defended the rebel group’s continued presence in eastern Congo as an effort to safeguard the sovereignty of the Congolese population from abuse by DRC government forces. Mulumba said that while the RCD-Goma did not oppose UN Security Council decisions, it feared that government forces would re-occupy Kisangani after its forces withdrew. The RCD “has never rejected the principle of demilitarizing Kisangani, but we have always made known our concerns in our capacity as Congolese,” Mulumba stated. This issue was addressed during a special meeting convened July 14 between RCD-Goma leaders and Kamel Morjane to discuss the accusations being forwarded by both sides of the conflict. (IRIN, July 19; PANA, July 17, 2001)

EU aid commissioner travels to Congo: The European Union’s development commissioner Paul Nielson arrived in the DRC July 18 for a series of meetings with President Kabila and rebel leaders regarding the troubled ceasefire. Nielson was in the DRC to assess the commitment of all parties to the peace process and the progress of the ceasefire in advance of the release of pledged EU development aid. In addition to a meeting with Kabila, Nielson held a working session with the country’s finance minister and central bank governor. Nielson traveled to Goma in rebel-controlled eastern DRC July 20, meeting with RCD leaders to gain assurances of their commitment to DRC unity. The EU froze development aid to the DRC in 1992 because of human rights abuses during former President Mobutu Sese Seko’s three-decade rule. In March, the EU council of ministers granted the DRC 120 million euros (more than US \$100 million for

spending on health, roads, education, and justice, conditioned on the progress of the inter-Congolese dialogue. (IRIN, July 23; PANA, July 22, 2001)

Human rights concerns in DRC: The African Association of the Defense of Human Rights in Congo (ASADHO), the main human rights organization in the DRC, has expressed concern over the April 23 extradition of 19 DRC residents from the Republic of Congo (ROC) by DRC authorities. The press release stated that the 19 had sought asylum in ROC following a wave of arrests of anyone suspected of plotting the October 2000 coup against the government of late president Laurent Kabila. ASADHO called on the DRC government to allow the 19 prisoners unrestricted visits by family members, doctors, lawyers, and the International Committee of the Red Cross; and that they be scheduled to appear as soon as possible before an impartial court.

Three government officials burst into the home of the director of publications of the newspaper L'Avenir, July 18 in an attempt to serve a summons for his appearance before the Public Prosecutor's Office's Criminal Investigation Department (PJP). According to the newspaper the men blamed the journalist for "playing with the head of state," and that it was the president himself who allegedly "asked that they search every corner" to find the journalist. The director had just been released June 21 from a seven day imprisonment linked to L'Avenir's publication of a story which was critical of the head of state's cabinet director. (IRIN, July 20, 24; JED, July 20, 2001)

GUATEMALA

Guerrillas use kidnapping to fund a new uprising: During a police raid July 18 to rescue a Guatemalan engineer kidnapped a week earlier, five alleged members of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) guerrilla movement and a police investigator were arrested. The government said that the former left-wing guerrillas were disillusioned with the 1996 peace accords and turned to kidnapping to fund a new armed uprising. A leader of the URNG party, an umbrella organization representing four former guerilla groups forged into a peacetime political party, denied the government's charges by claiming that the charge was "inadmissible" and "politically motivated." Enrique Coral of the URNG party said that none of the five people arrested by police was a current member of the URNG party, and only three had past links to a guerrilla group tied to the organization. The URNG was a major party involved in the 1996 UN-brokered peace agreement with the Guatemalan government. (EFE, Reuters, July 20, 2001)

Controversy surrounds Portillo's government: After civilian groups held a series of demonstrations against a proposed tax hike, President Alfonso Portillo threatened June 29 to reveal material documenting the group's alleged activities. The National Advance Party (PAN), Guatemala's leading opposition party, formally accused Portillo July 19 of espionage, and of violating the constitution, usurping power, failing to comply with the duties of his office, and making illegal recordings. Portillo denied charges that he spied on groups allegedly engaged in subversive activities. Instead, he said "honest businessmen" had given him documents on the groups. During a press conference July 21, Portillo attacked those who opposed the tax package, which he defended as an urgent

means of collecting the necessary funds to invest in charitable work, avoid economic collapse, and maintain peace. (EFE, July 22, 23, 2001)

MACEDONIA

Thousands in Skopje protest diplomatic intervention, fighting in Tetovo: Approximately 2,000 demonstrators rioted July 24 in the Macedonian capital of Skopje, reacting to an outbreak of fighting in the northern city of Tetovo and expressing frustration with the intervention of Western nations and the international community. The protestors set fire to three vehicles outside the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe building, smashed the windows of the British and German embassies, and pelted the United States embassy with stones. Unrest among Macedonian citizens has been increasing since the de facto breakdown of the July 5 cease-fire after six hours of clashes between the Macedonian army and Albanian rebel forces known as the National Liberation Army (NLA) July 22 and 23. Thirty-one people were injured and two killed July 23; most residents have fled the town since fighting restarted on July 25. The ethnic Albanian insurgency began in February 2001 in the north of the country; the rebels claim to be fighting for greater rights for the ethnic Albanian minority but the Macedonian government insists that the rebels are seeking to create a greater Albanian state. (AFP, BBC, CNN, July 25, 2001)

Draft peace plan rejected: Peace talks between the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanian political leaders suffered a setback July 19 when Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski soundly rejected the draft peace plan proffered by United States and European Union envoys, interpreting it as a capitulation to ethnic Albanian demands. Georgievski particularly castigated the plan for its provisions for making Albanian a second official language and allowing for locally appointed police, calling the proposals “totally unacceptable” and criticizing the U.S. and E.U. envoys’ “brutal style in their efforts to break the state institutions in Macedonia.” Talks had endured strain even before Georgievski’s denouncement of the peace proposal; two days earlier the leading Albanian politician, Arben Xaferi, had walked out of peace talks after Macedonian officials presented an alternative peace plan that offered fewer concessions to the ethnic Albanian minority. One of the accomplishments of the talks, however, has been the agreement on procedures to give ethnic Albanians and other minority groups a stronger voice in ethnic-related legislation. If a peace agreement is reached, the disarmament of the ethnic Albanian rebel force known as the NLA could begin within days. (BBC, July 19; The Los Angeles Times, July 22, 2001)

NEPAL

New Prime Minister elected: Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected Prime Minister of Nepal July 21 receiving 72 of the 113 votes from members of the Nepali Congress in the House of Representatives. The former prime minister resigned from the position July 18. Deuba’s first priority will be to end the six-year insurrection by Maoist rebels. His hope is to solve this problem politically through dialogue. Deuba said he will run his government in consultation with outgoing Prime Minister Koirala and pursue Koirala’s

14-point agenda for national consensus. Between 1995 and 1997, Deuba led an unwieldy coalition government but was ousted in a no-confidence vote in parliament when two of his own lawmakers failed to show up to support him. He is known as a flexible leader who tries to accommodate opposition parties. Last year he persuaded the Maoist rebels to agree for the first time to peace talks with the government, but claims the government failed to respond. Former Prime Minister Koirala was subjected to intense pressure to step down for failing to prevent the royal massacre June 1, as well as failing to end the Maoist insurrection. ([BBC July 22,23](#); [CNN July 23](#); [Nepalnews.com July 22](#); [The New York Times July 23, 2001](#))

Government and Rebels agree to a truce: The Nepal Government and Maoist rebels said July 22 they would stop all offensive action against each other to pave the way for peace talks. The agreement was made one day after rebels attacked a police post in Pandusen Village 375 miles west of the capital Kathmandu killing 17 police officers. Both sides have instructed troops to suspend offensive action, but neither side is sure how long the truce will last. Prime Minister Deuba has pledged to take all necessary steps to create an atmosphere of confidence for a dialogue. The rebels are demanding information about those who have allegedly disappeared in police custody and the exchange of prisoners as well as wanting a decision by the outgoing prime minister to deploy the army and create a separate armed police unit to fight the rebels reversed. Even if the demands are met, the two sides are fundamentally divided. The rebels want an interim government and a new constitution to make way for a republican communist regime. The government, however, is committed to defending the present constitution that guarantees constitutional monarchy and multi-party parliamentary democracy. More than 1,700 people have been killed since the rebels began a violent campaign in 1996 to convert the Himalayan country's constitutional monarchy into a republic through what they call the "People's War." ([BBC July 23](#); [CNN July 23](#); [The New York Times July 23, 2001](#))

Rebels release hostages: Maoist rebels released 22 abducted policemen in two groups July 20 and 21 in Ropla and Ramechhap districts. The policemen were set free following mediation by a seven-member team of human rights activists. The release is not being directly linked to the selection of a new prime minister but is seen as a goodwill gesture by the Maoists who had called on the former prime minister to step down. Fifty-nine policemen remain in captivity in Ropla district where rebels abducted them July 10. This is the first time anyone has been released since the army was deployed there July 11 to free policemen and recover looted arms and ammunition. ([BBC July 22,23](#); [CNN July 22](#); [Nepalnews.com July 22, 2001](#))

