



Peace & Justice Update
December 12, 2003
(Volume 7, Number 12)

The countries for the Peace and Justice updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute. The International Human Rights section is intended to focus on aspects of international law. For information on specific cases of human rights abuses, please visit www.hrw.org or www.amnesty.org. The Gender and Peace section highlights events in peace building and human rights that pertain to gender.

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.

The Peace & Justice updates are written by the Fall 2003 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Lara Cunanan (University of Arizona), Kimberly Edmunds (Emory University), Mercede Goates (University of San Diego), Michael James (University of California, San Diego), and Vanessa Lucas (University of San Diego).

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
AFP	=	Agence France Presse (www.afp.com)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allAfrica.com)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/)
CDC News	=	Center for Disease Control News (www.thebody.com)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
CPJ	=	Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
HRW News	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
IWPR	=	Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org) (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: (www.unog.ch))
NCN	=	New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency (www.panapress.com)
RSF	=	Reporters Sans Frontieres (www.rsf.org).
TASS	=	ITAR-TASS News Agency (www.itar-tass.com/english/)
UPI	=	United Press International (www.upi.com)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
WPS	=	What the Papers Say (www.wps.ru:8101)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)

UPDATE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

UN troops rescue 37 prisoners; Kabila presents economic recovery plan

GENDER AND PEACE

African NGO receives award; Iranian Nobel Prize winner accepts prize without hijab

GUATEMALA

Farmers protest U.S. agriculture subsidies

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Watch reports labor abuses in El Salvador; Chilean lawyers want Pinochet tried again; Iraq tribunal to be established

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

UN sends issue of Israeli “security barrier” to ICJ; Palestinian cease-fire talks fail

KOREAN PENINSULA

U.S. and North Korea make proposals for “steps” to resolution; South Koreans stage large protest against Iraq troop dispatch

KYRGYZSTAN

Bishkek court sentences Uzbek extremists; President signs reform outlawing torture

NEPAL

Maoists call school strike

SOMALIA

Ministers agree to another postponement of reconciliation talks

SUDAN

Sudanese government expects final peace deal soon

UGANDA

Ugandan army rescues youth

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

UN troops rescue 37 prisoners: Soldiers from the UN Mission (MONUC) in the DRC raided several camps in the Djugu area of the Ituri district December 2. The troops liberated prisoners held by the Nationalist Integrationist Front (FNI) in the villages of Dala, Lalu, Banana, and Dego. Three of the men were held in underground cells, while 34 women were kept as sexual slaves. The women ranged in age from 12 to 23, and were held for four months. In addition to the rescues, UN forces arrested four FNI commanders and transferred them to MONUC facilities in Bunia. The troops also destroyed six FNI militia camps and seized a variety of antipersonnel mines and electronic detonators. Approximately 4,500 UN troops were in the Ituri district, which remained volatile despite the signing of the Lusaka Peace Accords in 2000 and the transition to a power sharing government. In total, 50,000 people have died in the Ituri district since the outbreak of violent conflict in the DRC in 1998. Nationwide more than three million people have died in the DRC's five-year conflict. (AllAfrica, December 3; Associated Press, December 4; Reuters, December 3, 2003)

Kabila presents economic recovery plan: President Joseph Kabila presented his economic recovery plan for the DRC to the parliament. The plan, which would make agriculture, poverty reduction, and democratic order its main priorities, would be in effect for the next two years when general elections would be held. The arrangement would focus on food self-sufficiency as the main component of agricultural recovery. Emphasizing food self-sufficiency would require all Congolese to practice agriculture, fishing, and to raise livestock. Kabila also proposed development of rural areas and the creation of an economic and social framework to combat high poverty rates. The DRC was recently added to the World Bank's Highly Indebted Countries Initiative program, which would allow the country to work on poverty reduction with the aid of the international community. (IRIN, December 4, 2003)

GENDER AND PEACE

African NGO receives award: The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) was one of two organizations and three individuals to receive the UN human rights prize, awarded once every five years. Women's groups from Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea established MARWOPNET in 2000. The network has been active in the region providing conflict resolution training to the media and NGO leaders. MARWOPNET also worked in refugee camps. Additionally, in 2001 the organization initiated a dialogue between the national leaders of the three countries that resulted in peace talks, the re-opening of borders, and the rebuilding of diplomatic relations. In August, MARWOPNET was involved in the Liberian peace talks and was instrumental in introducing human rights and peace building techniques to the leaders who were involved. Members of MARWOPNET said that their future challenge was to have women be equal partners with men in both peace and decision-making processes. (Inter Press Service, December 5, 2003)

Iranian Nobel Prize winner accepts prize without hijab: Shirin Ebadi, the first Iranian woman to receive the Nobel Peace prize, accepted the award December 10 without wearing the hijab, a headscarf all Iranian women are required to wear at home or abroad. She said she wanted Iranian women to be free to not wear the hijab, but also stated that she was opposed to the move in France to ban the veil from schools. Her actions caused furor in her home country, as hardliners warned she would pay for appearing in public without the hijab and for shaking the

hand of a man. Approximately 70 female Iranian students protested at the all female Al-Zahra school in Tehran December 3, where she spoke on the rights of women and children. She also received criticism from some opposition circles in Iran for her support of the government's gradual democratization efforts. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her democracy-building efforts, and work to improve human rights in Iran. She was the third Muslim and the eleventh woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. (AFP, December 8, 10; DPA, December 3, 8, 2003)

GUATEMALA

Farmers protest U.S. agriculture subsidies: Hundreds of Guatemalan rice and livestock farmers demonstrated outside the Embassy of the United States in Guatemala December 1. The protests were against subsidies the U.S. grants its agricultural producers. Protesters said that the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), being negotiated between Washington and the Central American countries, could destroy their agricultural sector and cause the "gradual death of millions of Guatemalans." Further, producers said that CAFTA went against social peace and was unfair because there was no equity in competing with subsidies received by the U.S. agricultural producers. (Xinhua, December 2, 2003)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Watch reports labor abuses in El Salvador: Human Rights Watch conducted a study in El Salvador which found widespread abuse of labor rights. The report was released just as final negotiations were to begin for El Salvador to create a free trade agreement with the U.S. The report documented many examples of violations of worker's rights in the country's manufacturing, textile, and transport industries. It also criticized enforcement of labor laws and the inability of many Salvadorian workers to fight labor abuses through the legal system. Human Rights Watch recommended that the U.S. insist on the adaptation of labor laws that meet international norms and an increased number of inspectors. Currently 37 inspectors cover a work force of about 2.6 million. (New York Times, December 4, 2003)

Chilean lawyers want Pinochet tried again: Chilean lawyers stated that they would resume their efforts to try the former dictator Augusto Pinochet for human rights crimes. Chile's Supreme Court halted a trial of Pinochet in 2001 on the grounds that he was mentally unfit after court-ordered medical exams showed he suffered a mild form of dementia brought on by minor strokes. In a recent television interview that was broadcast in Miami, the lawyers said Pinochet appeared neither senile nor forgetful. They said they would take the next step and request a new round of medical tests. (New York Times, December 3, 2003)

Iraq tribunal to be established: Iraq's political leaders were expected to vote this week to create a special court to try members of Saddam Hussein's government. The all-Iraqi tribunal would have the power to prosecute individuals accused of the mass executions, expulsions, and lethal gassings of many Iraqi citizens over the past 35 years. The proposal called for a five-judge panel to decide the cases based on both international and Iraqi criminal law. The tribunal would hear charges against the top officials of the old government and anyone accused of knowingly taking part in mass killings, war crimes, or crimes against humanity. The draft law was prepared in close collaboration with Bush administration lawyers. Unlike most of the war crimes tribunals

of the past decade, the proposed Iraqi court did not provide a role for the United Nations. (New York Times, December 8, 2003)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

UN sends issue of Israeli “security barrier” to ICJ: The UN General Assembly approved a resolution asking the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule on the legality of the security barrier under construction in the West Bank. The vote was 90 in favor and eight opposed, with 74 abstaining. The resolution was largely symbolic, as General Assembly resolutions were not binding and the ICJ was not obligated to render an opinion. Arab nations worked for the resolution in the hope of increasing pressure on Israel over what they considered an illegal land grab. The U.S. refused to endorse the resolution, and stated it lacked balance by not condemning acts of the terrorism against Israel. The barrier includes electronic fencing, concrete walls, trenches and guard towers, and Israel argued it was needed to prevent Palestinian attackers and suicide bombers. (New York Times, December 8, 2003)

Palestinian cease-fire talks fail: Palestinian militant groups failed to come to an agreement at talks in Cairo. The groups were discussing a temporary, limited cease-fire. The militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad and three other armed factions were amenable to suspending attacks on civilians in Israel, but not those on settlers and soldiers in the West Bank. However, it was expected the militant groups will now issue a joint press release making no mention of refraining from attacks on Israeli civilians or any kind of cease-fire. Palestinian Prime Minister, Ahmed Qurei, attended the talks. The failure to secure a truce was a setback to the effort by Qurei to gain credibility among ordinary Palestinians. Ehud Olmert, Israel's deputy prime minister, said the collapse of the Cairo talks on Sunday showed that Qurei was reluctant to rein in militants. Olmert pointed to the "possible failure" of Qurei's government "in the near future." (BBC, December 7; Reuters December 9, 2003)

KOREAN PENINSULA

U.S. and North Korea make proposals for “steps” to resolution: North Korea made a counterproposal December 9 to a U.S.-backed plan to resolve the standoff over North Korea's nuclear program. The U.S.-backed proposal, created by the U.S., South Korea, and Japan, was unclear in the details. South Korean officials said it called for “coordinated steps,” seeking agreement on three principles: a peaceful solution to the crisis, a “complete, verifiable, and irrevocable” dismantling of North Korea's nuclear program, and security assurances for North Korea. A statement issued by the North Korean state-run Korean Central News Agency spelled out what it called “initial steps” to ease tensions. The statement said these steps included the freezing of North Korea's nuclear activities in exchange for the country's removal from the U.S. terror sponsor list, the lifting of political, economic, and military sanctions, and the provision of heavy fuel oil, electricity and other aid. The proposals came one week prior to a second round of talks scheduled for December 17-18. (New York Times, December 9, 2003)

South Koreans stage large protest against Iraq troop dispatch: Thousands of protestors throughout South Korea marched December 6 to protest South Korea's decision to send troops to Iraq and its repression of the labor movement. There were approximately 4,000 antiwar activists in the capitol, Seoul, and approximately 80,000 protestors participated in similar rallies in Busan, Kwangju, Daegu, and several other provincial cities. The protests followed the death of two

Korean electricians in an ambush near Tikrit in Iraq November 30. There were several hundred non-combat South Korean soldiers already in Iraq, and President Roh Moo Hyun recently decided to dispatch an additional 3,000 troops to Iraq at the request of the Bush administration. There were no disturbances reported in Seoul and only 10 riot police reported injured in clashes with protestors in Kwangju, unlike at the labor and antiwar protests held November 9, when 44 police and 100 protestors were injured in Seoul. (BBC Monitoring, December 6, 2003)

KYRGYZSTAN

Bishkek court sentences Uzbek extremists: Two Uzbek citizens were detained by border guards at the Manas airport for possession of false identification documents. It was later confirmed that they were members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which was also known in Kyrgyzstan as the Islamic Party of Turkestan. They were charged with involvement in an illegal armed group, organizing a “criminal community,” and using forged documents. They received 15 and 17-year prison sentences, respectively. On a recent trip to Bishkek, the U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Stephen Young, declared the IMU “the most implicit threat” to the U.S. and its interests in the area. IMU guerillas mounted incursions into Kyrgyz and Uzbek territory in 1999-2000, but the organization was dealt a major blow when many members were killed or captured in Afghanistan in late 2001 with the fall of the Taliban. Recently, the IMU was pronounced extremist by the Kyrgyz Supreme court, banned for its involvement in “terrorist acts,” and all activities of the party pronounced illegal. (BBC Monitoring, December 5, 8; IWPR, December 3, 2003)

President signs reform outlawing torture: Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev passed a decree November 14 outlawing the use of torture by law enforcement officials. Police and other officials could face criminal charges and up to 10 years in prison if convicted for using torture. Akaev’s passing of the reform came just a few weeks after the release of a critical report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the report criticized Kyrgyzstan’s human rights record and named it as one of the former Soviet states that had not fulfilled an international obligation to prohibit torture. Human rights activists documented numerous cases of torture in Kyrgyz prisons. Police and government officials repeatedly denied the allegations, and the Chief of the Interior Ministry’s press service once accused human rights activists of inventing stories to acquire grants from abroad. Following the president’s passing of the reform, presidential advisor Bolot Januzakov admitted there had been individual cases of police abuse. (IWPR, December 3, 2003)

NEPAL

Maoists call a school strike: A strike called by a Maoist student body began December 7 and left schools in the Eastern Development Region closed. All educational institutions in 23 districts of Nepal were completely closed and the strike affected scheduled exams. The Secretary of the Ministry of Education said the ministry was not aware of the strikes, but added that if he heard information about school closures, he would attempt to open schools by talking with school authorities. Other government officials reported most schools in the eastern part of Nepal were closed, and in Janakpurdhham, more than 1,000 public and private schools remained closed due to the strike. (BBC Monitoring, December 8, 2003)

SOMALIA

Ministers agree to another postponement of reconciliation talks: The Somali leaders' reconciliation talks were put off for a second time. The 10-day retreat was earlier postponed from November 20 until December 9 and postponed again until December 18. Ministers from member states of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) allowed the postponement. The ministers agreed to invite all Somali leaders and warned that any leader who did not attend the retreat would be considered uninterested in the reconciliation process. Any decision made at the retreat would be fully endorsed by IGAD country leaders and the third phase of peace talks would begin immediately following the retreat. IGAD-sponsored peace talks began October 2002 to bring stability to Somalia, which has been without a central government for over a decade. The talks have been plagued with disputes over issues such as an interim charter, the number of participants, and the selection of future parliamentarians. (IRIN, The Nation, December 9, 2003)

SUDAN

Sudanese government expects final peace deal soon: Sudan's Vice President, Ali Osman Taha, and the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), John Garang, met in Kenya December 6 to continue talks aimed at ending the 20-year civil war. The Sudanese government said that a peace agreement between the Islamic government and the Christian and Animist SPLM/A would be signed by the end of 2003. Earlier rounds of talks in July 2002 and September 2003 produced significant progress towards ending the war. The current talks have centered around solving three remaining questions: power sharing, wealth-sharing, and the status of three disputed regions not part of the south (Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile). The conflict, which started in 1983, has claimed more than 1.5 million lives and displaced more than four million others. (AFP, December 6, 7; Panafican News Agency Daily Newswire, December 7, 2003)

UGANDA

Ugandan army rescues youth: Approximately 90 child soldiers were rescued by the Ugandan army in Northern Uganda. The youths were able to escape while the army was fighting the rebels. An army spokesperson stated that nine rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and one army soldier were killed in the fighting. The LRA has abducted more than 20,000 children to fight as child soldiers or to serve as sex slaves. The LRA has been fighting against the Ugandan government for 17 years with the aim of replacing the government with one based on the Biblical Ten Commandments. (DPA, December 7, 2003)