



Peace & Justice Update
September 26, 2003
(Volume 7, Number 2)

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.

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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)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Countries perpetuating DRC's war to be named: The United Nations (UN) Security Council commissioned an expert panel to evaluate the role of foreign states in continuing the war in DRC. The panel should submit a report to the Security Council prior to October 31 in which it was expected to name Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Angola as the countries involved in perpetuating not only violence, but also the pillaging of DRC's natural resources. The expert panel was created in June 2000 by the Security Council and is led by Ambassador Mahmoud Kassen of Egypt. Once the Security Council reviewed the document, the members would decide on what course of action should be taken against the countries involved. In 1998, the DRC exploded into violent conflict fueled by the involvement of foreign nations in providing arms and money to various rebel militias. It is estimated that since the beginning of the war more than 2.5 million people have died. The Lusaka Cease-Fire Agreement was signed in 1999; however, its implementation has yet to be fully completed. (Inter Press Service, September 20, 2003)

Police force to move to Ituri: Vice-President Azarias Ruberwa, head of defense and security portfolios, announced September 20 that the national government would send 3,035 police officers to the volatile Ituri District in the northeast. The police force would consist of former members of government, Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie, Mouvement de Liberation du Congo, and the Mayi-Mayi forces. The force would be deployed in December and would cost \$3 million. The government received assurances from both the World Bank and the African Development Bank that funds would be available for the implementation of the police unit. Despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force, the Ituri District has remained volatile, it is hoped that the new police force would provide an additional source of stability in the area. (IRIN, September 22, 2003)

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA

Officials meet to discuss peace process: Military officials from both Eritrea and Ethiopia, as well as representatives from several international organizations, convened at the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) to evaluate the status of the peace process. Brigadier-General Elliot Kamteni of the African Union (AU) stressed the importance of the border demarcation process to maintain stability in the region. Ethiopia's government delayed the demarcation process twice. Despite previous disagreement, Brigadier-General Yohannes Gebremeskel, the leader of the Ethiopian delegation, emphasized that his country was ready to comply with the Boundary Commission. The Boundary Commission was established as part of the Algiers Agreement signed in December 2000, after Ethiopia and Eritrea ended a two-year war that killed over 100,000 people. (BBC, September 17; IRIN, September 19, 2003)

Aid organizations call for release of political prisoners: Humanitarian agencies Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders, RSF), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and Human Rights Watch called on the government of Eritrea to release 14 journalists imprisoned for the past two years. The reporters were arrested in September 2001 after the government suspended the operation of all non-state media. In March

2002, the journalists began a hunger strike protesting their imprisonment and demanding a fair trial. The prisoners were never formally charged with a crime. During their imprisonment, the reporters were denied communication with individuals outside of the prison. Despite demands from the international community to release the journalists, President Isais Afewerki denied that they were being detained, and instead insisted that the reporters were fulfilling mandatory military service. Under Eritrean law it is illegal to hold a prisoner more than 30 days without charges being filed. (AFP, September 18; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, September 17; CPJ, September 18; HRW, PANA, September 17, 2003)

GENDER AND PEACE

Filipina women outline their roles in the peace process: Moro women from throughout the Philippines met in Cotabato City to discuss their role in the peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The women perceived that they were continually left-out of decision-making processes and were meeting to design a plan that would allow them to take a more active role in the peace process. The goal of the event was to provide Moro women with information and education regarding the history and future of the peace process. A similar summit was held in 2002 and produced a 15-point resolution outlining the Bangsamoro women's desire for self-determination and full participation in policy-making bodies. The Regional Legislative Assembly created the RCBW in 1997 to ensure that the rights of the Bangsamoro women were protected under the law and that the women were able to advance their agenda in empowering women. Throughout the 1990s, the Filipino government and Muslim militias were engaged in civil conflict. In 2001, MILF and the government created a cease-fire agreement; however, the agreement was dissolved in February 2003. (Mindanews, September 15, 2003)

GUATEMALA

Amnesty International voices elections concerns: Amnesty International (AI) released a report September 22 entitled "Guatemala: Legitimacy on the line." The report outlined AI's concerns over patterns of violence, including extra-judicial executions and threats to opposition party leaders, in the run up to previous elections in the country. AI called on the international community to take action to secure the ability of Guatemalans to go freely to the polls and elect the candidate of their choice. AI's report came as the result of tensions over the presidential candidacy of General Efraim Rios Montt. Rios Montt ruled Guatemala from March 1982 until August 1983. He faces lawsuits in Guatemala and abroad for genocide and crimes against humanity for army-led massacres in four specific areas of the country. According to Guatemalan law, the president is elected by absolute majority for a four-year term with no possibility of re-election. If necessary, a second round will be called for the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the first round. (Amnesty International, September 22, 2003)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Zimbabwean government bans newspaper: The Daily News, Zimbabwe's only independent daily newspaper and frequent critic of President Robert Mugabe, was banned

by a government commission. The Media and Information Commission did not register The Daily News because the paper waited eight and a half months after a government deadline before submitting its application, and failed to supply the commission with free copies of the paper as the registration law requires. The decision meant that the government would now have control of all major news outlets. Independent journalists said that this registration law, passed last year after Mr. Mugabe's re-election, required news executives to disclose their political affiliations and held journalists liable for reports judged by the commission to be inaccurate. President Robert Mugabe and his government have become increasingly authoritarian, and have employed numerous methods of silencing its critics and eliminating its opposition parties. (New York Times, September 20, 2003)

Child combatants in Colombia: Guerilla and paramilitary forces in Colombia used more than 11,000 child combatants to help them in armed conflict. These groups exploited the desperation of poor children in rural combat zones. Training for these children included learning how to use assault rifles, watching prisoners being mutilated, and executing other children who tried to desert. Many male commanders used their power to form sexual liaisons with underage girls. Girls as young as age twelve were required to use contraception, and forced to have an abortion if they became pregnant. The Colombian government failed to enforce the law stating that armed forces cannot recruit children under the age eighteen. Colombia has been ravaged by a decades-long violent conflict, involving guerilla insurgencies, drug cartels and gross violations of human rights since the 1960's. (Human Rights Watch, September 18, 2003)

Exploitation of migrant workers in the Persian Gulf: The Migrant Workers Convention, supported by the World Bank, guaranteed human rights protection of migrant workers against any abuse by employers. The Convention was ratified by 22 states, while many of the wealthy countries that depend on migrant labor did not adopt it. This Convention was formed to help migrant workers in the Persian Gulf states. These workers endured discrimination, intimidation, and violence. Children were particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Employers often confiscated migrants' documents, restricting their freedom and ability to report mistreatment. There are nearly ten million migrant workers currently working in the Gulf states. (Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2003)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Israel seeks U.S. approval for security fence: An Israeli delegation sought approval from the U.S. for the security fence under construction in the West Bank. U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice urged Israel to minimize the impact of the fence on the lives of the Palestinians. Israel said that the security fence would be a barrier to prevent Palestinian militants from entering Israel to carry out attacks. Plans for the route were said to include as many Israeli settlements as possible, which could lead to the annexation of more Palestinian land. Some Palestinians described the fence as a new "Berlin Wall." President Bush said that the fence would make it hard to develop a contiguous Palestinian state, but has not yet made the decision whether to penalize Israel over the issue. However, U. S. displeasure over the fence has been voiced and economic sanctions threatened. The U.S. has taken an active role in trying to bring peace to this

region, which has seen conflict since the creation of Israel in 1948. (BBC, September 22, 23; Reuters, September 22, 2003)

KOREAN PENINSULA

South Koreans reunite with North Korean relatives: A group of 453 South Koreans left September 20 to meet with their families in North Korea. The relatives will reunite for the first time in fifty years. This is the first stage of the eighth round of inter-Korean reunions. In the second stage a separate group of 100 elderly South Koreans will reunite with 263 North Korean relatives September 29. More than 7,000 South Koreans have met with their separated family members in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) through seven rounds of reunions since 1998. However, 120,000 more South Koreans are waiting to have their names picked by computer lottery from the long waiting list of the reunions. This is another move in a steady progression in North-South Korean relations. (Xinhua, September 20, 2003)

KYRGYZSTAN

Conference on Kyrgyz media held in Bishkek: At a Central Asian conference held recently in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, journalists and government ministers discussed the development of media and freedom of speech in the region. Kyrgyz foreign minister Askar Aytmatov said that 700 media outlets were registered with the state, 500 printed media and 128 electronic, as well as 800 websites. International organizations said that only a few dozen newspapers, TV channels, and radio stations could be regarded as stable. However, Human Rights Watch documented several cases of harassment of media and arrests of journalists since 2001. Two papers, Asaba in May 2001 and Moya Stolitsa-Novosti in April 2003, were forced to close due to the numerous lawsuits brought by authorities and the large fines they were ordered to pay. The worldwide press freedom index conducted by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which measures the amount of freedom journalists and the media have in each country, listed Kyrgyzstan as 98 out of 139. (BBC Monitoring, September 17; Human Rights Watch World Report 2002; RSF Press Freedom Index, October 2002; RSF, June 13, 2003).

Media council criticized by journalists: At a Kyrgyz national conference held in Bishkek September 17-18 government officials created a media council with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The stated of the council was to settle conflicts that arise while journalists perform their professional duties before the conflicts reach the courts. The press secretary to President Akayev said the council was necessary because the large number of lawsuits filed against journalists and media outlets were damaging Kyrgyzstan's image. Several independent newspapers faced repeated lawsuits from the government, with some closed due to bankruptcy from large fines. Journalists criticized the council for the secrecy and questioned the government's motives for the creation of the council. The members of the council include members of the legislature, newspaper, television correspondents, television producers, and a newspaper editor. (BBC Monitoring, September 15; IPWR, September 23, 2003)

MACEDONIA

Defense Minister sees Macedonia as a NATO member in 2006: Defense Minister Vlado Buckovski stated in his address to the “Macedonia in NATO 2003-2006” Forum that he believed Macedonia would receive an invitation in 2006. Buckovski said that the Macedonian Army became a modern professional and well-trained force and increased the representation of the ethnic communities. The Macedonian Army helped with the recent missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Buckovski continued by saying that NATO was the first step towards integration into the Euro-Atlantic systems and also to receiving invitation for membership into the EU. NATO membership would also mean additional security and stability for Macedonia. The fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means. (MTNet, September 22, 2003)

NEPAL

Strike halts life in Nepal: Maoist rebels called for a three-day nationwide strike September 18-20 that ended with little violence but halted normal life in Nepal. The strike was the rebels’ toughest action since their withdrawal from peace talks in August. Most of the country observed the strike, despite government pleas for people to ignore it. Soldiers and police monitored the empty streets; busses, taxis, schools and businesses did not operate. Garbage was not collected for three days, and the sick struggled to get to hospitals due to lack of transportation. The businesses were the hardest hit by the strike. Chandi Dhakal of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce stated that Nepal was already in a depression, and the strike only increased economic problems. Information Minister Kamal Thapa said that the government was ready to start peace talks, but insisted that the rebels must first halt the violence that has escalated since August. The rebels also said they were ready to talk, but the disagreement over the constitution was the issue that led to the breakdown of the peace talks and the general strike. The rebels have been fighting since 1996 to replace the current monarchy with a communist republic and since then, more than 8,000 people have been killed and officials have reported 216 deaths since August. (BBC, September 18, 20, 2003)

Rebel’s violence continues: Maoist rebels shot and killed Ganga Prasad Subedi, a junior advisor to King Gyanendra, September 21. Subedi is one of 200 members on the Royal Advisory Council. On the same day, rebels killed Ramesh Malla, who served on the central committee of Prime Minister Thapa’s National Democratic Party. The killings followed a three-day general strike called by the Maoists. The rebel leader, Prachanda, along with 21 other Maoists, were ordered to appear in a Nepalese court within 70 days to hear charges filed for the assassination of a senior police official in January. Following the end of the cease-fire, Nepalese government declared the Maoists a terrorist group. (AFP, September 21, 2003)

SOMALIA

Hassan’s statement dismissed: President of the Transitional National Government, Abdiqassim Salad Hassan, rejected the adoption of the interim constitution created at peace talks currently underway in Kenya. Hassan issued a statement saying the peace

conference had collapsed. The Somali leaders committee dismissed Hassan's statement September 18 saying that it did not necessarily represent the view of the Somali people. The leaders said that the peace talks that began October 2002, entered a third phase following the adoption of the interim constitution. Somalia has been without a central government, since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. The peace talks are attempting to bring stability to the volatile country. (IRIN, September 18, 2003)

SUDAN

Cease-fire extended for two more months: The Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) agreed to extend their cease-fire for two more months with the goal of ending the 20-year civil war, which killed more than two million people. Sudanese First Vice President Taha and SPLA leader John Garang have been in peace talks since September 4. Garang stated that he "expected to reach a peace settlement in two months." The two sides agreed in 2002 that the south of Sudan, currently under SPLA control, would have an interim six-year period of self-rule. After this period, there would be a referendum to determine whether or not the south would secede from Sudan. Both sides decided that 36,000 troops would be deployed initially; 18,000 from both the government and the SPLA. However, there was still disagreement over how troops would be deployed. The SPLA wanted the number reduced to 6,000 after two years, but the government opposed this. The Sudanese media changed the way they had been referring to Garang, observers stated, in preparation for his assuming a position in the interim government. Instead of "rebel leader John Garang," he was described as "Mr John Garang, leader of the SPLA." (BBC, September 21, 2003)

UGANDA

Ugandan Army rescues captive children: The Ugandan army rescued 149 children who were held captive by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The children were placed in a children's organization for rehabilitation. Humanitarian organizations estimated that the LRA rebels abducted about 20,000 children in the last five years and more than one million people were displaced. The aim of the LRA was to replace President Museveni's secular government with one based on the Biblical Ten Commandments. The LRA have been based in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. The Ugandan government accused the Sudanese government of supporting the LRA; while the Sudanese government blamed the Ugandan government for backing the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The two governments met in Khartoum September 20-21 to discuss plans for cooperation. (The Monitor, September 23, 2003)