



**Peace & Justice Update**  
***December 7, 2007***  
***(Volume 17, Number 8)***

The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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***The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Fall 2007 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Ray Amberg (University of California, Riverside); Ryan Millard (University of Oregon); Alissa Skog (University of San Diego); and Dana Twal (University of San Diego).***

## SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

The Age	=	The Age ( <a href="http://www.theage.com.au">www.theage.com.au</a> )
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus ( <a href="http://www.africafocus.org">www.africafocus.org</a> )
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )
Al-Jazeera	=	Al-Jazeera ( <a href="http://english.aljazeera.net">english.aljazeera.net</a> )
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com">www.allafrica.com</a> )
AHN	=	All Headline News ( <a href="http://www.allheadlinenews.com/news/">http://www.allheadlinenews.com/news/</a> )
Amnesty International	=	Amnesty International ( <a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a> )
Antara News	=	Indonesian News Portal ( <a href="http://www.antara.co.id/en">www.antara.co.id/en</a> )
AP	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
The Australian	=	The Australian ( <a href="http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au">www.theaustralian.news.com.au</a> )
Awareness Times	=	Awareness Times ( <a href="http://awaresstimes.com/drwebsite/publish/index.shtml">http://awaresstimes.com/drwebsite/publish/index.shtml</a> )
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development ( <a href="http://www.awid.org">www.awid.org</a> )
B92	=	B92 Net ( <a href="http://www.b92.net/eng/">www.b92.net/eng/</a> )
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">news.bbc.co.uk</a> )
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports ( <a href="http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk">www.monitor.bbc.co.uk</a> )
Cape Times	=	The Cape Times ( <a href="http://www.capetimes.co.za">www.capetimes.co.za</a> )
Canberra Times	=	The Canberra Times ( <a href="http://canberra.yourguide.com.au">canberra.yourguide.com.au</a> )
CBC News	=	CBC News ( <a href="http://www.cbc.ca">www.cbc.ca</a> )
Christian Monitor	=	Christian Monitor ( <a href="http://www.christianmonitor.org">www.christianmonitor.org</a> )
Civil.ge	=	UNA Georgia Online Magazine ( <a href="http://www.civil.ge">www.civil.ge</a> )
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook ( <a href="http://www.cia.gov">www.cia.gov</a> )
Concord Times	=	The Concord Times ( <a href="http://www.concordtimesl.com">www.concordtimesl.com</a> )
Crisis Group	=	International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisgroup.org">www.crisisgroup.org</a> )
Daily News	=	Daily News, Sri Lanka ( <a href="http://www.dailynews.lk">www.dailynews.lk</a> )
The East African	=	The East African ( <a href="http://www.nationmedia.com/estafrican/current">www.nationmedia.com/estafrican/current</a> )
einnews	=	The Russia News Service ( <a href="http://www.einnews.com">www.einnews.com</a> )
eKantipur	=	Kantipur Online ( <a href="http://www.kantipuronline.com">www.kantipuronline.com</a> )
eng24.kg	=	News Agency 24 ( <a href="http://eng.24.kg">http://eng.24.kg</a> )
EU	=	European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )
Financial Times	=	Financial Times News ( <a href="http://www.ft.com">www.ft.com</a> )
FMM	=	Free Media Movement ( <a href="http://www.freemediasrilanka.org">www.freemediasrilanka.org</a> )
Gazeta	=	Gazeta ( <a href="http://www.gazeta.ru/english">www.gazeta.ru/english</a> )
Georgia Today	=	Georgia Today ( <a href="http://www.georgiatoday.ge">www.georgiatoday.ge</a> )
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network ( <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk">www.guardian.co.uk</a> )
Ha'aretz	=	Ha'aretz ( <a href="http://www.haaretz.com">www.haaretz.com</a> )
The Hindu	=	The Hindu Newspaper ( <a href="http://www.hinduonnet.com">www.hinduonnet.com</a> )
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )
Herald Tribune	=	International Herald Tribune ( <a href="http://www.iht.com">www.iht.com</a> )
ICC	=	International Criminal Court ( <a href="http://www.icc-cpi.int">www.icc-cpi.int</a> )
ICG	=	International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisweb.org">www.crisisweb.org</a> )
ICTY	=	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia ( <a href="http://www.un.org/icty">www.un.org/icty</a> )
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune ( <a href="http://www.iht.com">www.iht.com</a> )
Independent	=	The Independent ( <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk">www.independent.co.uk</a> )
IndiaTimes	=	India Times ( <a href="http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com">www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com</a> )
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency ( <a href="http://ipsnews.net">ipsnews.net</a> )
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network ( <a href="http://www.irinnews.org">www.irinnews.org</a> )
IRNA	=	Islamic Republic News Agency ( <a href="http://www2.irna.ir/en/news">www2.irna.ir/en/news</a> )
ISN	=	International Relations and Security Network ( <a href="http://www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm">www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm</a> )
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting ( <a href="http://www.iwpr.net">www.iwpr.net</a> )
The Jakarta Post	=	The Jakarta Post ( <a href="http://www.thejakartapost.com">www.thejakartapost.com</a> )

Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com.np">www.nepalnews.com.np</a> )
KL	=	KosovaLive ( <a href="http://www.kosovalive.com">www.kosovalive.com</a> )
Jerusalem Post	=	Jerusalem Post ( <a href="http://www.jpost.com">www.jpost.com</a> )
Jurist	=	The Jurist ( <a href="http://jurist.law.pitt.edu">jurist.law.pitt.edu</a> )
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times ( <a href="http://www.latimes.com">www.latimes.com</a> )
Mehr	=	The Mehr News Agency ( <a href="http://www.mehrnews.com/en">www.mehrnews.com/en</a> )
The Messenger	=	The Georgian Messenger ( <a href="http://www.messenger.com.ge">www.messenger.com.ge</a> )
Monitor	=	The Monitor ( <a href="http://www.monitor.co.ug">www.monitor.co.ug</a> )
Nepal News	=	Nepal News ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com">www.nepalnews.com</a> )
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times ( <a href="http://www.nepalitimes.com">www.nepalitimes.com</a> )
The New Citizen	=	The New Citizen ( <a href="http://www.thenewcitizen-sl.com">www.thenewcitizen-sl.com</a> )
New Vision	=	New Vision ( <a href="http://www.newvision.co.ug">www.newvision.co.ug</a> )
News24	=	News24 ( <a href="http://www.news24.com">www.news24.com</a> )
Novosti	=	RIA Novosti ( <a href="http://en.rian.ru">en.rian.ru</a> )
NYT	=	The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )
Patriotic Vanguard	=	The Patriotic Vanguard ( <a href="http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/">http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/</a> )
Peace Africa	=	Peace Africa ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica">www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica</a> )
PCBS	=	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics ( <a href="http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/">www.pcbs.gov.ps/</a> )
PDO	=	People's Daily Online ( <a href="http://english.peopledaily.com.cn">english.peopledaily.com.cn</a> )
PINR	=	Power and Interest News Report ( <a href="http://www.pinr.com">www.pinr.com</a> )
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a> )
Oxford Mail	=	Oxford Mail ( <a href="http://www.oxfordmail.net">www.oxfordmail.net</a> )
RadioFreeEurope	=	RadioFreeEurope, Radio Liberty ( <a href="http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007">www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007</a> )
ReliefWeb	=	Relief Web ( <a href="http://www.reliefweb.int">www.reliefweb.int</a> )
Reuters	=	Reuters ( <a href="http://www.reuters.com">www.reuters.com</a> )
RNZI	=	Radio New Zealand International ( <a href="http://www.rnzi.com">www.rnzi.com</a> )
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières ( <a href="http://www.rsf.org">www.rsf.org</a> )
The Rising Nepal	=	The Rising Nepal ( <a href="http://www.gorkhapatra.org">www.gorkhapatra.org</a> )
Russia Today	=	Russia Today ( <a href="http://www.russiatoday.ru">www.russiatoday.ru</a> )
SDUT	=	San Diego Union Tribune ( <a href="http://www.signonsandiego.com">www.signonsandiego.com</a> )
Scotsman	=	The Scotsman ( <a href="http://news.scotsman.com">news.scotsman.com</a> )
SC-SL	=	The Special Court for Sierra Leone ( <a href="http://www.sc-sl.org">www.sc-sl.org</a> )
Scoop	=	The Scoop Independent News ( <a href="http://www.scoop.co.nz">www.scoop.co.nz</a> )
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance ( <a href="http://www.seapabkk.org">www.seapabkk.org</a> )
SLCMP	=	Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program ( <a href="http://www.slcmp.org">www.slcmp.org</a> )
The SMH	=	The Sydney Morning Herald ( <a href="http://www.smh.com.au">www.smh.com.au</a> )
The Star	=	The Star.com ( <a href="http://www.thestar.com">www.thestar.com</a> )
TCA	=	Times of Central Asia ( <a href="http://www.timesca-europe.com">www.timesca-europe.com</a> )
Torres News	=	Torres News ( <a href="http://www.torresnews.com.au">www.torresnews.com.au</a> )
Transparency Int.	=	Transparency International ( <a href="http://transparency.org">transparency.org</a> )
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization ( <a href="http://www.unesco.org">www.unesco.org</a> )
UNFPA	=	United Nations Population Fund ( <a href="http://www.unfpa.org">www.unfpa.org</a> )
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ( <a href="http://www.unhcr.ch">www.unhcr.ch</a> )
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund ( <a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> )
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women ( <a href="http://www.unifem.org">www.unifem.org</a> )
UNIOSIL	=	UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone ( <a href="http://www.uniosil.org/">http://www.uniosil.org/</a> )
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage ( <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a> )
VOA	=	Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )
WP	=	The Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua ( <a href="http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-07/08">http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-07/08</a> )
Yediot Ahranot	=	Yediot Ahranot ( <a href="http://www.ynetnews.com">www.ynetnews.com</a> )

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## **GEORGIA**

Saakashvili focuses on IDP returns in Abkhazia: opposition alleges bribery: With Jan. 5 presidential elections on the horizon, former President Mikheil Saakashvili has hit the campaign trail. In a meeting with a group of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia Nov. 28, Saakashvili announced his commitment to their returning to Abkhazia in the “nearest future.” He stated, “We, along with the international community, will create conditions for your return to Abkhazia in safety and dignity in the next few months.” Saakashvili also instructed the mayor of Tbilisi and Minister for Refugees and Accommodation Koba Subeliani to hand over state-owned property to IDPs who have been occupying former city hotels since the 1992-93 war in Abkhazia. In recent years, as part of the country’s drive toward privatization, IDP-populated hotels have been sold en masse and residents have been evicted by investors. Opposition parties responded by criticizing the presidential candidate for “misusing state resources for his own electoral purposes.” Leaders of the New Rights Party and the Republican Party claimed that holding a meeting in city hall and ordering administrative officials to carry out such promises was a misstep in power and a blatant example of “bribing voters.” Koba Subeliani cautioned, however, that Saakashvili had merely “publicly voiced a decision taken ten days earlier, before he stepped down as president.” (Civil.ge, Nov. 28, 29; Dec. 1, 3, 2007)

Nine-party presidential candidate announces key priorities: Levan Gachechiladze, an independent lawmaker nominated as a presidential candidate by the Republican Party, Conservative Party, Georgia’s Way, Freedom Party, On Our Own, Party of People, Movement for United Georgia and Georgian Troupe and National Forum announced Dec. 3 some of his key plans for the country. Gachechiladze advocated the adoption of a parliamentary system of government in an effort to “create conditions that would prevent the usurpation of power by one person, or a narrow circle of people.” The nine-party presidential hopeful also stated that while North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership and the preservation of Georgia’s national interests were of primary importance, the current administration’s “unprincipled and incorrect policy towards Russia should be changed in order to normalize ties with Moscow.” He also stated that “Georgia should undertake measures aimed at the legal recognition of Russia as a side in the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts” and that “the key to conflict resolution was not in Moscow or Washington, but in Georgia itself ... through peaceful means ... with the launch of special programs and civil and economic integration.” Georgia’s relationship with Russia and the separatist states has continued to deteriorate in recent months, as the government has continued to advocate for the removal of the Russian presence in the negotiation process with Abkhazia/South Ossetia and what it has labeled, “numerous provocations of violence” by Moscow. (Civil.ge, Nov. 12; Dec. 3, 2007)

## **INDONESIA**

Papuans raise their flag: Papuans celebrated their “Independence Day” Dec. 1, the anniversary of the day in 1961 when the process of decolonization from Dutch rule had begun and the people first raised their own flag and sang their own anthem. Around the world, this day was marked with symbolic flag-raising events. However, the Indonesian government banned any raising of the Free Papua Organization’s (OPM) “Morning Star” flag and reminded Papuans of this ban Nov. 28. The Indonesian national news agency Antara quoted Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono as saying that Papuans could have expressed their views through the provincial governors and district heads instead of raising the banned flag. Nevertheless, the “Morning Star” flag was raised Dec. 1 in Papua and as a result, twenty people were arrested. On Dec. 2, police released fourteen of those arrested but six remained in custody, three of which were OPM activists and the other three of which had

carried weapons. The flag was also raised in front of the Town Hall in Oxford, England; in front of the Indonesian embassy, in Canberra, Australia; and outside of the army headquarters in Wellington, New Zealand. Furthermore, around five hundred Papuan students staged a rally in Indonesia's second largest city, Surabaya, in East Java. Indonesia annexed Papua in 1969 after a referendum widely regarded as fraudulent.

(AFP, Dec. 2; AHN, Nov. 28; Oxford Mail, Dec. 3; RNZI, Dec. 2; Scoop, Nov. 29, 2007)

Indonesia is "exploiting Papuan prejudices": The Indonesian military has exploited prejudices against indigenous Papuans in order to remain in the region, researcher Richard Chauvel of Victoria University in Australia has said. He claimed that the Indonesian army retained a stronger presence in the Central Highlands region of Papua than did the local government. Chauvel said that the military and some government officials stigmatized the people of the Central Highlands as separatists so that the military could remain in the region. "[U]nderlining this perception that it is a volatile area, ... is like vindicating the existence of security forces." Apparently, the people in the region were suspicious and very guarded in expressing their views. Chauvel reported, "The atmosphere is [one in which] people were really always looking over their shoulders." Over the past few years, troop numbers in Papua have increased. The International Crisis Group has estimated a presence of 12,000 Indonesian troops and 2,000 to 2,500 paramilitary police in Papua.

(The Age, Dec. 3, 2007)

## **KOSOVO**

Kosovo talks fail to resolve status: The final round of talks between Serb and Kosovar negotiators under the mediation of the Contact Group Troika failed Nov. 28 to bring about a formal resolution to the question of the southern province's status. Hashim Thaci, head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, said that the talks were over, and stated, "We will make the next moves in consultation with Washington and Brussels." Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku, when asked by a reporter whether Kosovo would have independence by March 2008, responded, "even earlier." Serb officials continued to stress that support for a unilateral declaration of independence, which Kosovo has been seeking from Washington and Brussels, if implemented without the approval of the United Nations would amount to a breach of international law and create instability in the region. Meanwhile, U.S. State Department Undersecretary Nicholas Burns stated Nov. 29 that "certain decisions" would have to be taken with regard to the Kosovo question, and added that he hoped Russia would accept "the reality on the ground in Kosovo." Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton complemented such statements Nov. 30 by "firmly urg[ing]" U.S. recognition of unilateral Kosovar independence. (B92, Nov. 28-30, 2007)

Kosovo mediators present working report after failure of talks: The American, Russian and German envoys from the Contact Group Troika, which mediated the last four months of the negotiation process between Serb and Kosovar diplomats, presented a working version of their report Dec. 3 to other members of the Contact Group, and then later to diplomats from Serbia and Kosovo. After the meeting in Belgrade, German envoy Wolfgang Ischinger said that the Troika would not make any proposals in the report that could surprise anyone. The report, whose details were still not available to the public, was scheduled to be submitted officially to the Contact Group in Vienna Dec. 10, after which it would be passed on to the United Nations. Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has been considering implementation of a "Plan B" for Kosovo after the failure of talks. The plan, according to a Nov. 30 article from B92, "treats the status question in terms of creating more tangible European prospects for Serbia and the province." Serbia has been

seeking membership in the European Union for many years, but also has viewed Serb sovereignty over Kosovo as of paramount importance. (B92, Nov. 30; Dec. 3, 2007)

## **NEPAL**

Dwindling security and increased threat of violence cause Village Development Committee (VDC) Secretaries to flee: Since 2005, Village Development Committee (VDC) secretaries from Terai districts have resigned their posts en masse, citing a combination of increased violence, threats and extortion from armed groups as the primary impetus for their flight. VDC secretaries are civil servants whose primary responsibility is for basic services and development; registration of births, deaths and marriages; management of voter lists; and land tax collections in rural villages. Three hundred seventy four VDC secretaries from various districts in the Terai region filed their resignations Nov. 29 after they received threats of abduction and murder. Resignations by VDC secretaries have steadily increased over the past few weeks due largely to an estimated two dozen armed groups that have surfaced in the eastern Terai seeking independence or autonomy for the region. Villagers have complained that they are deprived of VDC services as a result of the exodus and development projects in various areas are at a stand-still since the government has been slow to fill vacated posts. (eKantipur, Nov. 19, 20, 24, 26, 30, 2007)

Women's rights integral to peace in Nepal, says U.N. officials: Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General in Nepal Ian Martin and Representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Richard Bennett addressed the National Consultation of Women Human Rights Defenders Nov. 29, and highlighted how the roles of women are fundamental to the success of the peace process in Nepal and in maintaining the unity of the Seven-Party Alliance. Martin emphasized that the challenges that currently face Nepal's political leadership can only be resolved through continued dialogue and that such dialogue must include women within and beyond the political parties. He also added that there was a great need to include in the review of the peace process, and in any final agreements, a parliamentary declaration guaranteeing 33 percent of all political and civil service appointments to women. According to Bennett, violence against women has persisted even after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed last year. He noted the need to address the post-war wave of domestic violence and discrimination toward women who were sexually abused during the conflict. Bennett cited "research that has shown that violent conflict tends to be more common in countries which limit women's decision-making power, characterize women as inferior to men, and accept domestic violence as a norm." Therefore, improving gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women has been regarded by U.N. representatives as paramount to conflict resolution and prevention in Nepal. (eKantipur, Nov. 29, 2007)

## **PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

U.S. withdraws U.N. resolution on Annapolis: In what the New York Times described as "an embarrassing diplomatic about-face," the United States withdrew a resolution Nov. 30 that it had introduced to the United Nations Security Council. Less than 24 hours after the resolution was introduced by U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, endorsing the Israeli-Palestinian joint statement from the Annapolis conference and receiving "a very positive response" from Security Council members, the resolution was withdrawn due apparently to Israeli objections to the Security Council playing a role in the fledgling negotiations with the Palestinians. Unnamed diplomats told the

International Herald Tribune that Khalilzad not only failed to consult with Israelis and Palestinians before introducing the resolution behind closed doors, but also failed to get broader support from the Bush administration. According to State Department spokesman Sean McCormack, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice decided to withdraw the resolution, stating, "I am not sure that we saw the need to add anything else to the conversation. Sometimes, the results and the event speak for themselves." (International Herald Tribune, Jerusalem Post, New York Times, Nov. 30, 2007)

Child labor rising in Gaza: "In the streets of Gaza, isolated by the Palestinian government and much of the world, growing numbers of children are being sent out to work." This was the observation of Owen Fay, a correspondent for Al-Jazeera reporting from Gaza Dec. 1. According to Fay, "statistics show that seven percent of children in Palestine, where 52 percent of the population are under the age of 18, is now working." The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) reported an increase in Palestinian children in the work force from the last statistical year. This was occurring in one of the poorest and most crowded regions of the world, where 70 percent of the citizens of Gaza were living below the poverty line. Fay concluded that "regardless of all warnings, there are no serious efforts to help these children and prevent the growing phenomenon of child labor in Gaza." According to UNICEF, over 218 million children worldwide work in some form of economic activity. (Al-Jazeera, Jun. 12; Dec. 1, 2007; PCBS, 2007)

## **SIERRA LEONE**

Sierra Leone to liberalize trade: Following in the footsteps of other West African nations, Sierra Leone has announced intentions to sign the European Union (EU)'s Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The EPA will replace Sierra Leone's current preferential access to EU markets, which was ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization and set to expire at the end of 2007. Many southern and east African nations have signed the EPA, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of which Sierra Leone is a member, fears it will be left behind if it does not sign. Sierra Leone's Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Richard Conteh, stated that Sierra Leone's position is "with the ECOWAS and we stand firmly behind the position of ECOWAS." However, many anti-poverty activists have objected to the signing of the EPA, asserting that it would compromise Sierra Leone's post-war reconstruction efforts. Christine Thomas of Sierra Leone's Chamber of Commerce warned that signing "may increase the dependency of the government on donor funding and lead to increase in direct income taxes on the hard-pressed taxpayer and the loss of approximately 60 percent of ... tax revenue derived from import duties." Furthermore, the director of the civic organization Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Abu Brima, said that the EPA is flawed because it lacks democratic processes and will transform West Africa into a "dumping ground for EU's excess product." He further pointed to the fact that many organizations based in EU member countries, such as Oxfam and Christian Aid, have criticized the EPA because of its perceived negative effects on developing countries. (AFP, Dec. 1; Concord Times, Dec. 3, 2007).

Retiring U.N. Representative is vilified, lauded: The retirement announcement of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Victor Angelo, received mixed reactions Dec. 4. The Patriotic Vanguard described Angelo as "one of the most remarkable and impressive U.N. diplomats Sierra Leone has ever seen in recent times." The newspaper continued, recognizing the key role that Angelo played in September's elections, which have been recognized as free and fair by most domestic and international observers. Yet Angelo's farewell followed the call from the Sierra Leone

People's Party (SLPP) for his retirement after having accused him of fixing the presidential elections and giving preferential treatment to the All People's Congress (APC) candidate, and election victor, Ernest Bai Koroma. An unnamed SLPP Executive reported to the Awareness Times that Angelo was a "hypocrite" and stayed silent while the APC sacked top SLPP civil servants in the government for "no good reasons." The SLPP National Chairman, Alhaji U.N.S. Jah, composed a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon which labeled Angelo "a disgrace" to the U.N. and called for his removal. To some observers, this letter may have come too late. However, the writer Sogno Ngobi asserted in September that even though Angelo would leave the U.N. this year, he wished to return the next year as a Governance Advisor to President Koroma. (Awareness Times, Nov. 30; Patriotic Vanguard, Dec. 4; UNIOSIL, Dec. 3, 2007)

## **UGANDA**

LRA delegation, victim's relatives, give contradictory accounts of consultations: The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) delegation said that it has wound down its consultations before the next round of peace negotiations with President Yoweri Museveni's government. The delegation representatives stated that the overwhelming message they received during their consultations with the victims of the 21-year civil war was one of forgiveness and reconciliation. "Our consultations have been going on very, very well ... I would like to tell the world that the LRA delegations have received [a] very good response ... The ... underlying message that has come out is that the people are not any more interested in doling out punishment because [that] does not bring long-lasting peace to the people of northern Uganda," said David Matsanga, the technical advisor for the LRA on International Criminal Court (ICC) issues. However, this news came after a report released by The Monitor Dec. 1 saying that the LRA had faced "tough times" from the relatives of the victims during the consultations. Apparently, many residents at Barlonyo IDP camp in Lira District boycotted the meeting with the LRA delegation, and others who attended only did so to hear an explanation as to why the LRA killed so many innocent civilians. George Olot, the chairperson of Ogur LC III (Local Council in the sub-county of Ogur) told the visiting LRA delegation, "We mobilized people for these consultations. However, many of them have refused to come, saying it is a waste of time since their relatives killed by the rebels will never come home again." The consultations form part of the third agenda item in the peace talks, which is accountability and reconciliation. (VOA, Dec. 3; The Monitor, Dec. 1, 2007)

Women's rights are not upheld in northern Uganda: Amnesty International (AI) accused the Ugandan judicial system of failing to act against the rape and sexual abuse of women in northern Uganda Nov. 30. AI released two reports Nov. 30, the first entitled, "Uganda: Doubly Traumatized." This report said that female victims of violence in northern Uganda face "insurmountable difficulties in trying to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice." The second report, "Uganda: Justice System Fails Victims of Sexual Abuse," detailed individual cases of sexual abuse against women and girls in northern Uganda. Godfrey Odongo, AI's researcher in Kampala said, "The utter lack of justice faced by women and girls who are the victims of sexual violence requires the immediate attention of the Ugandan government and the international community." Both the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan military have been accused of widespread aggression towards women during the 21-year civil war, and despite the fact that both groups are currently engaged in peace talks, violence against women has persisted. Odongo further claimed, "The majority of the cases of violence against women are not reported to the police because most victims have lost hope in getting justice." Victims interviewed by AI researchers said that police were reluctant to investigate cases involving soldiers and that often there were no police

officers to report cases to since the stations were few and remote. Police have also been known to demand bribes to investigate cases. The bishop of the Gulu archdiocese, John Baptist Odama, reiterated Dec. 3 that little has been done to protect women and girls in northern Uganda against human rights abuse. (AFP; AI; All Africa; New Vision; The Monitor, Nov. 30; The Monitor, Dec. 4, 2007)