



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**February 1, 2002**  
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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](http://www.hrw.org) or [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

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## **UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AP</b>	=	Associated Press
<b>AFP</b>	=	Agence France Presse
<b>BBC</b>	=	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CNN</b>	=	Cable News Network
<b>DPA</b>	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur
<b>EFE</b>	=	Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)
<b>HRW News</b>	=	Human Rights Watch News
<b>IRIN</b>	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: <a href="http://www.unog.ch">www.unog.ch</a> )
<b>JED</b>	=	Journaliste En Danger
<b>NCN</b>	=	New Congo Net
<b>PANA</b>	=	Pan African News Agency
<b>Xinhua</b>	=	Xinhua News Agency

## AFGHANISTAN

International community pledges financial support: During a two-day conference January 22 in Tokyo, Japan, more than 50 countries pledged their financial support to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, summing nearly \$4.5 billion. The U.S. pledged \$296 million and announced that they would release approximately \$240 million worth of assets that were frozen in 1996 when Taliban forces took control of the Afghan government. Participants at the conference also established a monitoring body consisting of the World Bank, UN, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development bank to oversee the distribution of funds to rural areas. Following the conference, the UN estimated that a minimum of \$10 billion above what was pledged would be needed for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan over the next 10 years. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack by members of Al-Qa'ida on the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers in the U.S. that resulted in more than 3000 deaths, the U.S. has taken the lead in the "War on Terrorism." The U.S. and British governments sent troops into Afghanistan beginning in early October and have continued bombing Afghanistan in an effort to dissolve Al-Qa'ida and the Taliban government. Al-Qa'ida, founded and led by Osama Bin Laden, was established in 1988 and has been suspected of being responsible for a number of attacks against U.S. citizens abroad, including the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya that resulted in more than 200 deaths. (BBC, January 17; Financial Times, January 22; New York Times, January 21, 22, 23, 2002)

Taliban officials set free: Gul Agha, the governor of Kandahar, a province in southwest Afghanistan, allowed seven high-ranking members of the Taliban to be released January 9 from custody. The seven members voluntarily entered the city of Kandahar and willingly surrendered to city officials. Agha granted amnesty to the Taliban members after they surrendered their weapons and vehicles, and allowed them to return to their villages. The U.S. government and Afghan's interim government were not notified of the surrender until after the men had been released. A U.S. official expressed concerns over the interim government's lack of authority over provincial leaders like Agha, who had previously pledged their allegiance to the interim government. The six-month interim government, led by Hamid Karzai and established December 22, 2001, has been comprised of individuals representative of Afghanistan's various ethnic and political groups in an attempt to rally support and compliance among the factionalized populous while the country is in transition from its prior Taliban rule. (Financial Times, New York Times, January 10; Los Angeles Times, January 11, 2002)

Debate continues over POW status for detainees: U.S. President George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have refused to grant the Al-Qa'ida and Taliban detainees who have been arriving at Camp X in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba since January 12, status as Prisoners of War (POWs), instead calling them "unlawful combatants." Others, such as U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights Mary Robinson, have stated that the detainees are POWs and are entitled to the rights awarded them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 including protection from inhumane, degrading, or cruel treatment, mutilation and violence, and protects their right

to due process. While detainees have been given two uniforms, blankets, pillows, a copy of the Koran, and a mat on which to pray, human rights groups such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International have voiced their objections to the prisoners' treatment particularly during their transporting to Camp X when they were handcuffed and blindfolded with their hair and beards shaven, and forcibly sedated. Since U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., nearly 400 suspected Al-Qa'ida and Taliban members have been captured and detained. (BBC, January 11, 17; New York Times, January 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 2002)

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

Britain and France push for end to war: British Foreign Minister Jack Straw and French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine arrived in the capital, Kinshasa, January 22 for talks aimed at facilitating a peaceful settlement to the four-year conflict. In public statements following their meeting with DRC President Joseph Kabila, Vedrine emphasized the importance of the recovery of DRC's "territorial integrity" as mandated by the 1999 Lusaka Accords. Straw and Vedrine traveled later that day to the Rwandan capital of Kigali to meet with the Goma-based Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD-Goma) Secretary-General Azarias Ruberwa and President Adolphe Onusumba, and with Rwandan President Paul Kagame. Straw and Vedrine also traveled to Uganda to meet with President Yoweri Museveni, and to Burundi to meet with President Pierre Buyoya. War broke out in August 1998, resulting in more than 3 million deaths, when Rwanda and Uganda sent troops into DRC to back rebels fighting against Laurent Desiré Kabila's government. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe later deployed troops to support Kabila. A regional accord was signed in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, in 1999, but has not yet been fully implemented. (AFP, Reuters, January 22, 2002)

Groups agree on key issues in Brussels Talks: Congolese opposition and civic groups signed an informal accord in Brussels, Belgium January 17 during a three-day conference between opposition parties, religious groups and community leaders to discuss electoral, constitutional, and security issues in advance of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which has been set to resume in late February in Sun City, South Africa. The signed accord includes agreement on the formation of a new government and the length of a transitional government, and the conditions under which elections should be held. However, the Kinshasa government and the RCD were not present during the talks and have not signed the accord. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which was mandated by the 1999 Lusaka Accords, has been mediated by former President of Botswana Ketumile Masire and was designed to bring together government and rebel representatives, as well as members of civil society. (Reuters, January 17, 2002)

## **ERITREA - ETHIOPIA**

Border meeting nears conclusion: The UN Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) sent a 4200 strong force to the Yirga Triangle, a 160 square mile area of land located between the two countries, to protect the border while a UN-mandated International Commission determined the precise physical boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The International Commission has planned to announce its decision in February and both governments have agreed to adhere to it. Eritrea has occupied the Yirga Triangle since December 2000 when both governments signed a peace agreement officially ending the four-year border dispute. Rebels began fighting for Eritrean secession in 1962 and Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1993. (BBC, January 17, 21, 2002)

## **GUATEMALA**

Families of victims receive compensation: Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo apologized to the relatives of over 200 Guatemalans killed in the northern village of Los Dos Erres in 1982 and gave the families \$1.8 million in compensation. The apology and compensation were part of Portillo's promise to investigate and bring to justice those involved in the atrocities committed during the 36-year civil war. The massacre of the men, women, and children in Los Dos Erres was one of many that occurred during the Guatemalan civil war in which more than 200,000 people "disappeared" or were killed, and ended with the signing of a peace agreement in 1996. (BBC, December 12, 2001)

## **MACEDONIA**

Parties agree on devolution bill: Macedonia's four main political parties, representing both the Albanian and Macedonian ethnic groups, reached agreement January 22 on a law granting local and regional authorities greater autonomy over budgetary policy, public services, culture, education, and health policy. Parliament debated the law January 24 and later approved it by an 85 to 4 margin. Passage of the law was a primary aim of the August 2001 peace agreement that ended last year's eight-month insurgency by the ethnic-Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA). The NLA agreed to disarm and disband in exchange for the promise of more Albanian political control over regions where they formed majorities. The passage of the devolution bill has also satisfied the final criteria placed on Macedonia by the European Union in order to convene a donor conference that could bring in more than \$170 million in financing. (AFP, January 23, 24; Los Angeles Times, January 25; Reuters, January 17, 22, 2002)

Police retake former rebel stronghold: Police units comprised of Macedonian and ethnic-Albanian officers assumed control January 27 of a former NLA stronghold near the capital, Skopje. Specially trained officers encountered no hostility as they entered the village of Matejce, approximately 10 miles north of Skopje, in the presence of Western European peace monitors. The redeployment of government police into areas controlled by the NLA was envisaged in the August 2001 peace agreement, but had been previously delayed due to disagreements over the terms of the devolution bill. Frustration over the slow pace of redeployment, with police patrolling only an estimated 21 of the 80 villages

formerly controlled by the NLA, prompted the resignation January 18 of Macedonia's Deputy Prime Minister, Dosta Dimovska. (AP, January 27; Reuters, January 18, 2002)

## **NEPAL**

Security forces increase safety measures: The government stepped up military operations in January against Maoist rebels after the government claimed that the Maoists broke a one-month ceasefire and resumed attacks on security forces. Security forces killed 21 Maoist rebels January 27 in the eastern region of Nepal, and four police officers were killed by landmines in the western district of Kailali. Eight Maoists were killed January 21 in shoot-outs in the northwest districts of Kanchanpur and Lamjung. King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency and proclaimed the Nepal Communist Party terrorists November 2001 following attacks on security forces by the Maoists. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said that security operations would continue until the rebels surrendered their arms. More than 2,500 people have been killed since the Maoist rebels began fighting in 1996 to replace the constitutional monarchy with a "People's Republic." (BBC, January 28; NepalNews, January 22, 2002)

## **SRI LANKA**

Norway assists with peace talks: A peace negotiation team, led by Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen, met with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and recently elected Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe January 10 to discuss ending the nation's 18-year civil war. Talks were also held between the team from Norway and members of the opposition Tamil political parties in south and east Sri Lanka. According to Helgesen, the main goal of the negotiation was to build confidence with both the Sri Lankan government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Norwegian delegation also proposed terms for a permanent truce to replace the present one-month ceasefire that was signed December 24, 2001 by the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. The ceasefire marked the first time in seven years that the government and rebel groups have halted fighting. Civil war broke out in 1983 between the majority Sinhalese Sri Lankan government and the ethnically Tamil LTTE, which has resulted in approximately 64,000 deaths. The LTTE has been fighting for equal rights and a separate Tamil state. (BBC, January 2,10; Times of India, The Early Word on Karnataka, January 12, 2002)

Government reduces restrictions for Tamils: The government announced January 15 that it would ease economic embargos on areas held by the LTTE in the north, allowing nearly all goods to be traded with the exception of weapons or arms, and food and medicines could be delivered to the north for the first time in seven years by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Other restrictions on fishing rights and the movement of civilians in and out of the Tamil town of Vavuniya were also lifted. The lifting of economic embargos has been a primary demand of the LTTE during recent peace negotiations. The decision to ease the embargos has been part of a government plan to address issues raised by the Tamil ethnic minority. (BBC, January 2, 13, 14, 15, 2002)

## **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

Protocol banning child sex trade enters into force: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, outlawing the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, entered into force January 18 after Romania became the 16<sup>th</sup> country to ratify it. The Optional Protocol has called upon signatories to ensure that adults involved in the exploitation of children are punished and take decisive action when their nationals take part in the abuse of children abroad. Signatories have also been called upon to ensure the protection of children trafficked across borders and to design services that allow full social reintegration and physical and psychological recovery for children who have been sexually trafficked. The Optional Protocol has also stipulated the need to protect vulnerable groups of children and the rights of child victims, such as those who are witnesses in court proceedings. The Optional Protocol has been signed by 89 countries and ratified by 16, including Andorra, Bangladesh, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Holy See, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Norway, Panama, Qatar, Romania, Sierra Leone, Spain, Uganda, and Vietnam. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 191 countries. Only Somalia and the U.S., which is a signatory to the Convention, have failed to ratify it. (Reuters, January 18, 2002)

East Timor truth and reconciliation commission begins: East Timor launched a truth and reconciliation commission January 21 in an effort to document the widespread human rights violations committed during Indonesia's rule over the territory. The commission, similar in principle to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission that examined apartheid-era abuses, has been established under the authority of the UN, which is responsible for administering the territory in advance of its formal May 20 transition to independence. The commission, which has been strongly supported by Timorese political leaders, will operate for two years with the possibility of an additional six-month extension. Although the commission has no formal judicial function, it does have broad power to probe abuses and has been authorized to refer evidence of more serious crimes to Timorese courts. Indonesia's 1975 invasion and subsequent 24-year occupation of the former Portuguese territory left more than 200,000 people, a quarter of the population, dead from fighting, famine, and disease. The UN never recognized Indonesian authority over the territory. (Reuters, January 14, 16, 2002)

Sierra Leone and UN agree to form war crimes tribunal: The Sierra Leone government and the UN agreed January 16 to terms for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal to try persons guilty of committing atrocities during the West African country's decade-long civil war. The tribunal, based in the capital of Freetown, would indict individuals responsible for various atrocities, including rape, murder, and forced amputations. Indictments would be issued for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international law. Sierra Leone endured civil conflict from 1991, when rebels of the Revolutionary United Front attempted to oust the government and gain control of the country's lucrative diamond fields, until November 2000, when the UN-brokered peace agreement brought an end to the fighting. (AP, January 18; Reuters, January 16, 18, 2002)

Genocide trial begins against Bosnian Serb leaders: Two Bosnian Serbs went on trial January 23 before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), accused of coordinating the genocide of hundreds of Croats and Muslims during the Bosnian war. General Momir Talic and his close political ally, Radoslav Brdjanin, have both been charged with twelve counts of various war crimes, including genocide. The prosecutor, Joanna Korner, has contended that Talic and Brdjanin presided over the Krajina region, an area subjected to campaigns of ethnic cleansing during the war. Both men, who would face lifetime prison terms if convicted, pleaded not guilty to all charges. They have been in custody at The Hague since 1999. Reports of Serb atrocities in Bosnia provoked UN sanctions against Serbia and eventual US-led air strikes against the Bosnian Serb government in 1995. The war, which began in 1992, officially ended with the signing of the Dayton peace accords in 1995. The ICTY, created May 25, 1993 by the UN Security Council, has possessed jurisdiction in matters involving genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws of war. (AP, January 23; Reuters, January 22, 2002)