



Peace & Justice Update
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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 or www.amnesty.org

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)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
EFE	=	Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)
HRW News	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org) (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: www.unog.ch)
JED	=	Journaliste En Danger
NCN	=	New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)

AFGHANISTAN

Years of censorship end: Afghanistan's interim government leader Hamid Karzai signed a law for guaranteed freedom of the press and free speech, including the right to criticize the government. The new law has ended years of censorship enforced by the previously governing Taliban. Among new magazines that have been emerging since the bill was inaugurated in early February was the "Women's Mirror," the country's first magazine written for a female audience. Since his inauguration as the country's six-month leader December 22, 2001, Karzai has continuously stated that he is committed to bringing about equality measures in the country, such as allowing women entrance into the educational system, and has campaigned for international assistance towards reconstruction and security efforts. (BBC, February 9, 2002)

Government blames a Northern Alliance faction for minister's murder: The Afghan interim government has blamed high ranking, government officials of the Jamiat-I-Islami faction of the Northern Alliance for the February 14 murder of Minister of Air Transport and Tourism Abdul Rahman at an airport in the country's capital Kabul. Karzai has promised harsh punishments for those involved including the five men already detained in custody, two suspected to be in Afghanistan, and three that have escaped to Saudi Arabia. Karzai said the killing was "planned," but has continued to deny that there were any political implications in the murder. Some Afghan officials have disagreed and believe Rahman, who was a member of the political Rome group, was murdered for his association with the former Afghan King Zahir Shah, who has planned to return to Afghanistan in March from exile in Rome. Factional disputes have arisen throughout the country since the interim-government took office and have brought the government's authority to unify the country's many political and ethnic factions into question. The country's four largest political factions agreed upon a 30-member cabinet of the interim-government that took office December 2001, which represented both exiled groups and more powerful factions including the Northern Alliance and the Rome group loyal to former king Shah. (BBC, February 15; National Post, February 18; The Toronto Sun, February 16, 2002)

CHECHNYA

Police forces raid village: Russian forces killed 48 Chechen rebels during a three-day raid that began February 14 in Staryye Atagi, located on the southern outskirts of the Chechen capital, Grozny. Federal forces reportedly attacked Staryye Agagi because rebels had established a large base in the area. Another 216 Chechens were arrested under suspicion of being members of armed gangs. Russian forces have also started eight comprehensive search operations in Ackhoy-Martanovskiy, Groznenskiy, Grozny, Gudermesskiy, Naurskiy, the Shalinskiy and Shelkovskiy districts, Urus-Martanovskiy, and Vedenskiy. Russia's top commander in Chechnya, General Vladimir Moltenskiy, stated that Russian federal forces were going to pursue a 28-month offensive until "all suspected terrorist camps are completely uprooted and the last rebels destroyed." Russia and Chechnya were engaged in a war 1994-1996 that left Chechnya with de facto independence. Russia blamed Chechen rebels for the September 1999 apartment

bombings in Moscow and launched a self-proclaimed anti-terrorist operation in the republic. (AFP, February 19, 20; BBC, February 20; ITAR-TASS, February 19, 2002)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Zimbabwe to begin troop withdrawal: Colonel Peter Williams, Chief of Staff for the UN Mission to the DRC (MONUC), announced February 17 that Zimbabwe would begin withdrawal February 18 of several hundred of its troops stationed in the DRC. Williams stated that the departure would represent the first major withdrawal of Zimbabwean troops from the DRC since their introduction in 1998 and would likely place pressure on Rwanda to do the same with its own troops. The war in DRC began in August 1998 when President Laurent Desiré Kabila's main sponsors, Uganda and Rwanda, turned against him and began supporting an anti-government rebellion, which Kabila countered with the assistance of troops supplied by Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. A 1999 regional accord signed in the Zambian capital of Lusaka called for an end to the fighting and for the eventual withdrawal from the DRC of foreign troops. Rwanda has indicated it will not withdraw troops as long as members of an ethnic Hutu militia, Interahamwe, who participated in the 1994 Rwandan genocide that killed approximately one million people in 100 days, remain in the DRC. (AP, Reuters, February 17, 2002)

Ethnic clashes occur in the northeast: Fighting broke out February 16 and 17 between members of the Hema and Lendu ethnic communities in the northeast of the DRC. A spokesperson for the Hema estimated that approximately 200 had died following an attack by Lendu militiamen on the Hema village of Kparnganza, located some 15 miles north of the Congolese town of Bunia. Ugandan army spokesperson Major Shaban Bantariza confirmed fighting in the region but said that Ugandan troops stationed in the area had not intervened to stop the killing because they had not received a request to do so from either the UN or rebel groups in the area. A spokesperson for the Rally for Congolese Democracy-Kisangani/Liberation Movement (RCD/ML), Jean Louis Kyaviro, announced that the Ugandan-backed rebel group sent its own soldiers to the area February 17 to help quell the hostilities. Tensions between the Hema and the Lendu have been exacerbated by the country's three-year civil war that has resulted in more than 3 million deaths. (BBC, February 16; Reuters, February 16, 17, 2002)

Presidents of Uganda and Rwanda meet: Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni met February 14 to discuss ways to ease strained relations between the two former allies. In a statement following the meeting, Kagame described the one-day talks as fruitful and Museveni reported he was "satisfied with the meeting." The Presidents' visit followed a February 10 meeting between the two countries' defense ministers at which the ministers agreed to establish regular contact between their respective heads of military intelligence to create patrolling arrangements in border areas and to mutually appoint defense attachés. The Presidents reiterated the agreements previously reached by the defense ministers and pledged additional work towards a bilateral extradition treaty between their nations. Rwanda and Uganda both sent troops to the DRC in 1998, initially in support of Laurent Desiré Kabila and later in opposition to his presidency, but differences over the strategies and objectives of the war effort led to

fighting between the two armies in August 1999. Although a ceasefire negotiated that same month ended direct hostilities between them, the power struggle between Rwanda and Uganda has continued by proxy in the form of fighting between competing Congolese rebel groups, the Rwandan-backed RCD-Goma and the Ugandan-backed RCD-Kisangani. ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#), February 14, 2002)

ERITREA

President responds to recent criticism: Eritrea's president Isaias Afewerki released a statement defending recent government actions as a response to growing accusations of human rights violations from the international community. The European Parliament adopted a resolution February 7 that called the situation in Eritrea an "authoritarian trend" in response to the government's current ban on all private press, the lack of presidential elections, and recent, continued prohibition of political parties. The resolution also accused the government of Eritrea of not implementing its constitution. Afewerki called the resolution of the European Parliament "unfair and unjustified" stating that the National Assembly that convened for the first time in eighteen months early February did not ban political parties but rather delayed ruling on that specific law. Afewerki demanded "redress" from the European Parliament for what he called "gross misrepresentation of facts." The European Parliament, as a part of the European Union is the largest aid contributor to Eritrea. Denmark has notified the Eritrean government that it will discontinue aid beginning in 2005 in response to the government's alleged human rights abuses. ([BBC](#), February 8; [IRIN](#), February 19, 2002)

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA

Religious leaders commit to peace: Eritrean and Ethiopian religious leaders of the Orthodox, Evangelical, and Muslim religions held talks in the countries' capitals in which they pledged their support and efforts towards reconciliation and peace between the countries. Diplomats, members of civil society, and religious clergy were able to attend the talks that began in the Eritrean capital of Asmara February 13 and concluded February 15 in Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa at the United Nations Conference Center. In their discussions, the religious leaders "agreed on a plan of action" that would foster confidence among civil society in the on-going peace process and maintain accountability between the two countries. The talks deliberately concluded before a February 28 border ruling by a UN Border Commission that was to determine the physical boundary between the two countries. Tensions have remained high following a peace agreement that was signed December 2000, which ended a four-year border dispute between the two countries. Although these meetings marked the first time the religious leaders of the two countries met in each other's capitals, the leaders had previously participated in five meetings held in the U.S., Europe, and Kenya. ([BBC](#), [DPA](#), [IRIN](#), February 15, 2002)

MACEDONIA

NATO extends Macedonian peacekeeping force: Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), George Robertson, announced February 18 that the treaty alliance had agreed to extend its peacekeeping mission in Macedonia for an additional three months. Robertson also confirmed that Germany would continue leadership of the operation despite Italy's offer to relieve Germany of command of the lightly armed, 1,000-strong soldier force. NATO made its decision to extend the Task Force Fox mission February 6 following the filing of a formal request for an extension by Macedonia's Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski. NATO forces were initially deployed in September 2001 to protect international monitors observing the return of government forces and displaced persons to areas controlled by National Liberation Army insurgents during the eight-month conflict that ended in August 2001. NATO's mandate for its mission was extended once before in December 2001 and has now been scheduled to end June 26, 2002. (New York Times, February 18; Reuters, February 13, 18, 2002)

NEPAL

Maoist rebels attack security forces: Maoist rebels killed approximately 150 police officers, soldiers, and government officials late February 16 in two separate attacks. Rebels attacked government offices and police posts at Mangelsen in the western Achham district, as well as a rural airport at Sanphe Bagar located 16 miles from Mangalsen. In response to the attacks, the government ordered security forces to double their efforts to "crush" the rebels and told them to launch immediate offensive and defensive operations against the Maoists. Reporters said that the attacks appeared well planned and coincided with National Democracy Day and the scheduled parliamentary debate on the state of emergency in Nepal. Parliament has scheduled a vote February 21 on the extension of the state of emergency that had been imposed in November 2001. A two-thirds vote of the 205-member parliament would be necessary to pass the extension. King Gyanendra appealed to Nepal for unity February 19 during his National Democracy Day address. The attacks produced the greatest number of casualties since the Maoist rebels began fighting in February 1996. More than 2,600 people have been killed since the Maoist rebels began fighting to replace the constitutional monarchy with a "People's Republic." (BBC, Reuters, February 17, 18, 19, 2002)

SRI LANKA

Government cuts defense spending: Defense Minister Tilak Marapone said February 18 that there would be a "substantial drop" in military spending due to recent efforts to end the country's civil war. Marapone stated that the army would not be buying equipment on the same scale as past years, possibly reducing the country's defense budget by \$750 million. The government has had difficulty in creating a new defense budget due to recent changes in government structure and the creation of a new interior ministry. The recent move to reduce defense spending has been attributed to the Norwegian-backed talks between the government and the ethnically Tamil Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE). Civil war broke out in 1983 between the majority Sinhalese government and the

LTTE and has resulted in approximately 64,000 deaths. The current ceasefire, initiated December 24, 2001 and extended until February 24, 2002, was the first time in seven years that the government and rebel groups halted fighting. ([AFP](#), February 19; [BBC](#), February 18, 2002)

Police arrest former Deputy Defense Minister: Police arrested former Deputy Defense Minister Anuraddha Ratwatte February 19 for his alleged connection with the killing of 10 Muslim opposition members during the December 2001 elections. The 10 victims were killed when a grenade was thrown into their vehicle as they were taking ballot boxes to a counting station in the central town of Madawala prior to the December 2001 election. Ratwatte was an army general in the war between the government and the opposition LTTE, former Deputy Defense Minister, as well as the uncle of current President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Ratwatte has denied knowledge of the killings and said that the arrest was part of a plot to incriminate him. ([BBC](#), February 20; [MSNBC](#), February 19, 2002)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

ICJ rejects Belgium's arrest warrant for DRC war crimes suspect: The Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ), rejected February 14 Belgium's international arrest warrant for Abdulaye Yerodia Ndombasi, a former foreign minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alleged to have committed crimes against humanity. The ICJ ruled that Belgium had no legal basis on which to issue the arrest warrant because government ministers charged with war crimes enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution. In issuing the warrant, Belgium relied on a 1993 Belgian law that extended the jurisdiction of its national courts to prosecute persons alleged to have committed crimes against humanity and criminal abuses of human rights, regardless of where the offenses have been committed. The DRC initiated proceedings against Belgium before the ICJ following the issuance of the warrant in April 2000, arguing that the warrant, issued for a then-sitting Foreign Minister, constituted an affront to its national sovereignty and a breach of the principle of ministerial immunity. The highest-profile case pending in Belgium under the 1993 law has concerned charges against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for alleged war crimes committed while he was defense minister in the early 1980's. Belgian criminal proceedings have also been brought against Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Cuban President Fidel Castro, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo, and former President of Iran Hashemi Rafsanjani. ([AP](#), [Reuters](#), February 14, 2002)

Protocol banning child soldiers enters into force: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict that has outlawed the sending of children under the age of 18 into combat and the recruitment into regular armed forces of children under the age of 16, entered into force February 12 after Kenya became the 14th country to ratify it. The UN has estimated that more than 300,000 children under the age of 18 have been fighting worldwide, primarily with rebel groups and mostly involuntarily, having been forcibly conscripted following abduction from their homes. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which ten years

ago initiated work leading to the adoption of the Optional Protocol, has been charged with monitoring the progress of states who are parties in implementing the instrument. The Optional Protocol was adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2000 and has been signed by 96 states and now, ratified by 14 parties, including Andorra, Bangladesh, Canada, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Holy See, Iceland, Kenya, Monaco, New Zealand, Panama, Romania, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The United States, which has permitted voluntary military enlistment at the age of 17, signed the Optional Protocol but has since opposed ratification of the accord. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 191 countries. Only Somalia and the United States, which is a signatory to the Convention, have failed to ratify it. (AP, Reuters, February 12, 2002)