



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**March 15, 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 SUMMARY

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## UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AP</b>	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
<b>AFP</b>	=	Agence France Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )
<b>BBC</b>	=	British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">http://news.bbc.co.uk</a> )
<b>CNN</b>	=	Cable News Network ( <a href="http://www.cnn.com">www.cnn.com</a> )
<b>DPA</b>	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur ( <a href="http://www.dpa.com">www.dpa.com</a> )
<b>HRW News</b>	=	Human Rights Watch News ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )
<b>IRIN</b>	=	Integrated Regional Information Network ( <a href="http://www.irinnews.org">www.irinnews.org</a> ) (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 ( <a href="http://www.marekinc.com/NCN.html">www.marekinc.com/NCN.html</a> )
<b>PANA</b>	=	Pan African News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )
<b>Xinhua</b>	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm">http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm</a> )

## AFGHANISTAN

UN investigates abuses against ethnic Pushtuns: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Mary Robinson traveled to the northern regions of Afghanistan March 7 for a four-day visit to investigate reports of human rights abuses committed by the Northern Alliance towards ethnic Pushtuns. Robinson's arrival coincided with the release of a Human Rights Watch report, containing similar accusations, that was compiled from four weeks of research among "dozens" of Pushtun villages. Senior Researcher for Human Rights Watch, Peter Bouckaert, reported "that Pushtuns throughout northern Afghanistan are facing serious abuses, including beatings, rapes, and widespread looting." The ethnic groups primarily identified as the abusers within the Northern Alliance were the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. Attacks were thought to have been committed against the Pushtuns because the majority of the Taliban government were ethnic Pushtuns. The Northern Alliance has been responsible for initial offensive attacks that drove the majority of the Taliban into hiding following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. that have been attributed to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qa'ida terrorist network. The Taliban were the ruling party in Afghanistan and harbored Al-Qa'ida fighters despite U.S. requests to hand over Osama bin Laden and other Al-Qa'ida members following the attacks. (BBC, Human Rights Watch, March 7, 2002)

*Note: The Human Rights Watch report can be found at <http://www.hrw.org>*

Government calls for a truth commission: The six-month interim government leader Hamid Karzai and UNHCR Mary Robinson held a joint press conference following a UN-led workshop March 9 in Afghanistan, calling for the establishment of a truth commission in Afghanistan that would begin to "right the wrongs of the past." Karzai and Robinson have stated they believe a truth commission would be a necessary step for Afghans to heal from the abuse they have suffered in the past two decades, and Robinson noted that highlighting human rights was necessary to fight terrorism. Since the Taliban have been ousted from power in the U.S.-led war on terrorism in December 2001, human rights investigators have found mass graves throughout Afghanistan. (Reuters, March 9, 2002)

U.S. admits to civilian casualties: The U.S. military issued a statement admitting to killing 14 Afghan civilians in an air strike near the border of Pakistan. The Afghan Islamic Press reported March 7 that 16 civilians were killed by U.S. warplanes that bombed two vehicles three miles from the Pakistan border in the Paktia province. Six of the 16 were en route to pray at a shrine for the release of another family member who had been arrested by the U.S. two months earlier. The U.S. began an offensive attack in the eastern region of Afghanistan near the border of Pakistan March 1, where the last stronghold of Taliban and Al-Qa'ida fighters have been hiding. (DPA, Financial Times, March 9, 2002)

Afghan leader visits Russia: A high-level governmental delegation, which included Karzai, traveled to Russia March 11 for talks on joint economic ventures and Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts. Russian President Vladimir Putin told Karzai that Russia "wants to see Afghanistan as an independent, flourishing, friendly state" and Karzai acknowledged Russia held a "great role" in Afghanistan's reconstruction. The discussed joint ventures between the two countries included gas and oil production, and Putin said Russia would contribute farming and

industrial equipment to Afghanistan. Russia and Afghanistan were involved in a ten year conflict from 1979 to 1989 that resulted in the deaths of some 15,000 Russian soldiers and 1.2 million Afghans. In the years of Taliban rule, which began in 1996 in Afghanistan, Russia had contributed humanitarian aid and military weapons to support opposition political leaders. (DPA, March 12, 2002)

“Six-plus-Two” meet in Afghanistan: Representatives of Afghanistan’s neighboring countries, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan along with representatives of the Russian Federation and U.S. officials met for its “first ever meeting Afghanistan” March 11 to discuss Afghanistan’s reconstruction efforts. Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah attended, marking the first time an Afghan official has ever been present during the group’s meeting. The UN released a press statement following the meeting that said the group announced renewed and continued support towards Afghanistan and its interim government and supported the establishment of greater security forces throughout Afghanistan. Six-plus-Two began in September 1999 by the initiative of officials in Uzbekistan who gathered representatives from Afghanistan’s neighboring countries to discuss and design a working plan to eliminate Afghanistan’s narcotic drug production and trafficking problem. In February 2000 Six-plus-Two received backing and support from the UN International Drug Control Program whose aim has been eliminating drug trafficking while promoting human rights. (UN News Center, March 11, 2002)

## **CHECHNYA**

Clashes continue between police and rebels: Two police and one rebel were killed in clashes March 10 in the Oktyabrskiy district in the capital of Grozny. Two Russian soldiers were killed when a grenade exploded in Grozny Park the evening of March 10 and two more Russian police were killed when a mine exploded under their vehicle as they were passing through the village of Martan-Chu, southwest of Grozny. A spokesman for the Russian army said March 11 that Russian soldiers killed four rebels and detained 18 others. Russian troops and Chechen police forces carried out special measures to detain 40 alleged members of illegal armed groups in Grozny. Russian security forces returned to Chechnya in September 1999 after several apartment buildings were bombed in Moscow, allegedly by separatist Chechen rebels. The 1994 war between Russia and Chechnya, which ended in 1996, left Chechnya with de facto independence. (AFP, DPA, ITAR-TASS, March 11, 2002)

Russia criticizes UN war crimes prosecutor: UN war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, met with Chechen rebel representative Akhmed Zakayev March 8 to propose a tribunal to prosecute Russian soldiers for alleged atrocities committed in Chechnya. Russian foreign ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko criticized Del Ponte, saying that “the objectivity and impartiality of the prosecutor’s decisions inevitably come into question.” Human rights organizations have accused Russia of using excessive violence in Chechnya, but the Russian government has denied the accusations and said it is only “cracking down on alleged abusers.” Zakayev said that the talk with Del Ponte was part of a series of steps to get the international

community involved in ending the violence in Chechnya. Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov and the Chechen rebel leadership have publicly supported the creation of a war crimes tribunal similar to the international tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. (AFP, March 11; Reuters, March 8, 11, 2002)

Chechens rally against Russian military raid: Approximately 300 Chechens from the city of Starye Atagi gathered March 13 at a rally in Grozny to protest a recent raid of their town by the Russian military that left seven Chechens dead. The demonstrators carried with them the corpses of the victims of the raid, which had ended March 11. The protestors said four of the Chechen victims were found in a deserted house and an armored personnel carrier crushed three others. The demonstrators were protesting Russian security sweeps in their village and demanding that villagers detained during the sweeps be freed. A spokesman for Russia's Federal Security Service, Alexander Zdanovich, labeled the rally as a "provocation." Russian troops have conducted four organized searches for suspected rebels in Starye Atagi this year. (AP, United Press International, March 13, 2002)

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

Inter-Congolese dialogue officially begins: After a one week delay, the Inter-Congolese dialogue officially opened March 8 with a plenary session that gathered together approximately 350 delegates. Conference officials said the dialogue would be extended beyond the planned 45-day period as a result of the initial delay. Olivier Kamitatu of the Ugandan-backed Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) told reporters March 8 that consensus had been reached on enough issues to allow for the plenary session to begin. The resumption of the Inter-Congolese dialogue came a day after representatives of the MLC accused the DRC government of trying to absorb opposition groups into the existing government administration instead of forming to a new one. The Inter-Congolese dialogue, mandated by the 1999 Lusaka peace accord, was designed to bring together government, rebel, and civil society representatives to establish peace and political unity in the DRC. An earlier round of talks in Ethiopia in October 2001 was abandoned when the government walked out, claiming there was insufficient funding and representation of parties. The current war in DRC began in August 1998 when Laurent Desiré Kabila's main sponsors, Rwanda and Uganda, turned against him and began supporting an anti-government rebellion. Kabila countered the rebellion with the assistance of troops supplied by Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. None of the neighboring foreign countries with troops in Congo have been invited to the peace talks. (Reuters, March 8, 2002)

## **ERITREA-ETHIOPIA**

Annan asks for continued aid from the UN: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked the UN to extend the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) for an additional six months in order to implement the UN's upcoming border ruling by the Border Commission. In the December 2000 Algiers agreement that ended the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, both countries agreed to adhere to the border demarcation, due to be announced in April. Annan stated in a "progress report" that the UNMEE's specific role would be determined by the situation in Eritrea and Ethiopia following the announcement of the decision by the Border Commission. Annan wrote letters to the leaders of both Eritrea and Ethiopia in January to encourage dialogue

between the two governments aimed at continuing the peace process prior to and following the long-awaited border decision. UNMEE began operations in July 2000, serving as “liaison” between the governments and providing a mechanism for monitoring the peace agreement. (UN News Center, March 14, 2002)

Ethiopians sign petition to oppose upcoming border decision: Members of the Ethiopian’s Democratic Party (EDP) have been attempting to collect 100,000 signatures from civilians living in the country’s capital, Addis Ababa, which they plan to submit to the UN to protest the UN Border Commission’s upcoming border ruling between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The petition would oppose the Algiers agreement that called for both countries to adhere to the decision of the Border Commission. The EDP has claimed the agreement of the leaders of both countries to adhere to the Border Commission’s decision was entered into without the consent or acknowledgment of the Ethiopian people. The UN Border Commission was established to determine the physical boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia following the December 2000 peace agreement between the two countries. (Financial Times, March 8, 2002)

## **GUATEMALA**

Scientists receive death threats: Eleven members of the Guatemalan Anthropology Foundation received death threats and were told they would be the “first to die” because they have been excavating the remains of victims of the country’s 36-year civil war. In response to the threats, Guatemalan Interior Minister Eduardo Arevalo issued additional security for the group, which is headquartered in Guatemala City. The group of scientists has been excavating grave sites since 1992 in hopes of identifying corpses, giving proper burials, and mounting evidence to bring perpetrators of the murders to justice. Since 1992, 2000 bodies have been exhumed from 191 separate gravesites. (BBC, March 5, 2002)

## **MACEDONIA**

Parliament passes amnesty law: After one day of debate, Macedonia's 120-seat assembly approved amnesty March 7 for former ethnic Albanian rebels. The amnesty, which covers only crimes committed during and related to the conflict, would apply only to those Albanian insurgents who voluntarily disarmed before September 26, 2001 under North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) supervision, including insurgents who have already been jailed. The law, however, would specifically exclude amnesty for crimes that could be the basis of future indictments by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The ICTY announced last year that it was investigating the alleged activities in several incidents of both Macedonian and ethnic Albanian forces. Parliament’s passage of the amnesty bill was praised by officials of the European Union, NATO, and by U.S. officials as a key step towards establishing lasting peace in the country. Amnesty was mandated by the August 2001 Western-backed Ohrid peace accord that ended an eight-month conflict between the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanian insurgents seeking greater political rights and recognition for their minority community. Observers expected the passage of the amnesty law to open the way both for fiscal aid from the international community and continued deployment of Macedonian police to those areas formerly controlled by rebel insurgents. (AP, Reuters, March 7, 8, 2002)

Donors pledge \$515 million in aid: International donors approved a Macedonian aid package March 12 totaling approximately \$515 million to assist the country in its recovery from last year's civil war. The pledges were made at a one-day donor conference organized by the European Commission and the World Bank, and were widely viewed as an expression of confidence in the Ohrid peace accord. The money pledged included \$274 million for macroeconomic assistance, support of reconstruction efforts, and implementation of the peace agreement, and an additional \$241 million for "general economic development purposes in 2002." The aid package was designed to help Macedonia control its widening budget deficit, rebuild damaged homes and infrastructure, and establish institutions needed to maintain a multi-ethnic democracy. Donors, representing 38 countries and 19 organizations, stressed that the pledge of assistance was conditional on the country's continued fidelity to the Ohrid peace accord and on its implementation of economic reforms designed to boost private sector productivity and public sector efficiency. A March 8 report issued by the International Monetary Fund forecasted the growth of the country's economy at 4.0 percent in 2002, up from a negative 4.6 percent last year, and predicted inflation to fall to approximately 2.5 percent, down from last year's 5.3 percent. (AP, Reuters, March 8, 12, 2002)

Former rebels deny ties to slain gunmen: Former ethnic Albanian rebels denied allegations March 5 that they had links with seven suspected gunmen killed March 3 in a clash with police. Police officials had said the men, who were killed in a suburb of the capital of Skopje, were suspected "mujahideen," foreign fighters from Muslim countries planning attacks on government officials and foreign embassies. Police also said they found uniforms bearing ethnic Albanian rebel insignia at the scene, which they believed showed the gunmen had been working with the former rebels. Gezim Ostreni, a former general of the rebel National Liberation Army (NLA) that led the eight-month insurgency in 2001, described the allegations by the Macedonian interior ministry and police as "simply false," and said, "the NLA did not conduct a religious war in Macedonia." Western officials in Macedonia have been skeptical of the government's allegations because international monitors had not been allowed to see the bodies and the only information about the incident had come from the Macedonian government. (Reuters, March 5, 2002)

## **NEPAL**

Rebels attack communication and energy infrastructure: Maoist rebels used explosives to destroy a hydropower substation of the Nepal Electricity Authority March 9 in the Kapilbastu district, disrupting the electricity supply to the areas surrounding the district. The rebels reportedly warned the men on duty at the substation to cut off their power supply and used explosives to destroy the station after the employees did not comply with the orders. In response to the attacks, the Royal Nepal Army began a search operation in the area. A group of Maoist rebels also destroyed a repeater station of the Nepal Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) the night of March 10 at Reshunga in Gulmi, approximately 150 miles northwest of the capital of Kathmandu. The NTC restored the communication lost at the repeater station through satellite means. More than 2,600 people have been killed since the Maoist rebels began fighting in February 1996 to replace the constitutional monarchy with a "People's Republic." (BBC, March 10, 11, 2002)

Police and rebels die in attacks: The Defense Ministry reported that troops of the Nepalese Army killed five Maoist rebels March 7 after encountering a group of heavily armed rebels in the Bardia district, and two other armed rebels were killed by police forces in the Rukum and Jajarkot districts. Rebels killed a former policeman and two civilians March 7 in the southern district of Sarlahi. Nepalese government authorities stated that eight Maoist rebels were killed in attacks by security forces March 9 in the districts of Rolpa and Morang and two rebels were killed in the Sindhuli and Kaski districts. Two army personnel deaths were confirmed March 10 in the Kharanitar district after rebels ambushed a vehicle carrying police. The police killed two Maoist rebels and arrested 26 others on March 10 in a massive search operation after the ambush of the police vehicle. Police forces have increased security measures since the state of emergency was extended February 21 for three months. (BBC, March 8, 9, 11; Japan Economic Newswire, March 8, 2002)

## **SRI LANKA**

U.S. warns LTTE: The U.S. government warned the ethnically Tamil Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against violating the permanent ceasefire agreement with the Sri Lankan government that was signed February 23 as a foundation for direct peace talks. The American Embassy in the capital city of Colombo issued a statement March 11 that said there had been “credible reports that the (rebel) Tamil Tigers stepped up recruitment- including children- in the north and east of Sri Lanka.” The U.S. government said that the LTTE should be careful about observing the terms of the ceasefire or “they would become increasingly isolated.” The ethnically LTTE has not officially responded to either the allegations or to the U.S. reports. The Sri Lankan government has not made any complaints against the LTTE since the ceasefire was signed. Norway and other Scandinavian countries sent observers March 2 into Sri Lanka to monitor the ceasefire between the government and the LTTE. The LTTE and the majority Sinhalese government have been fighting since civil war broke out in 1983, resulting in approximately 64,000 deaths. (BBC, Japan Economic Newswire, March 11, 2002)

## **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

UN report says tribunals' legal aid abuses curbed: A UN internal oversight office released a report March 11 announcing that the UN criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) have succeeded in stopping most lawyers from splitting fees with defendants, an abuse UN auditors first detected in 2001 and which U.S. officials have criticized. The report also acknowledged that the ICTY would issue additional regulations April 1 specifically prohibiting fee-splitting and imposing sanctions for violators, and would institute a new payment system for lawyers. In testimony before Congress in February, Pierre-Richard Prosper, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes, harshly criticized both the ICTR and the ICTY for gross mismanagement and corruption, including the problem of fee-splitting, a process by which defense attorneys agree to share a portion of their tribunal-paid fees with the defendant as a pre-condition for being retained. The ICTY was created in 1993 to punish Serbs, Croats and Muslims guilty of committing atrocities in the former Yugoslavia. The Security Council established the ICTR a year later to punish the perpetrators of Rwanda's state-sponsored genocide in which as many as one million, most of them minority Tutsis, were killed. (Reuters, February 12, 2002)

War crimes debate divides Yugoslav government coalition: Following a dispute over approval of a draft law allowing for extradition of war crimes suspects to the ICTY, Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica's party announced March 8 that it would stop participating in meetings of the government's ruling coalition, effectively withdrawing from the 18-party alliance that leads the country. Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia objected to the draft extradition law due to the unwillingness of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), the coalition's largest party and a strong supporter of cooperation with the ICTY, to consider objections to the law from the Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (SNP). Kostunica and the SNP defeated a similar extradition law in 2001 that would have enabled the extradition of Slobodan Milosevic to the ICTY, but Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjia, leader of the DOS, bypassed that decision and relied on separate measures for the June 2001 extradition of Milosevic. The DOS has stated that if the SNP vetoes the present measure, the DOS would use the same legal measures for extradition of other suspects as was used in Milosevic's case. Kostunica, a former professor of law, has long insisted that extradition of Serbian suspects to the ICTY requires passage of a special national law, while also consistently maintaining the unconstitutionality of such laws, which would prevent any additional suspects from being transferred to the Hague for prosecution. ICTY prosecutors have said that no special law on extradition is required since Yugoslavia is obliged as a member of the UN to cooperate with all UN institutions, including the international criminal tribunals established under its authority. The U.S. Congress has insisted, as a precondition of continued U.S. economic assistance to the federation, that Yugoslavia cooperate with the ICTY and transfer remaining war crimes suspects to the tribunal before March 31. (Reuters, March 8, 9, 2002)

ICTY investigates mass grave in Croatia: The ICTY launched a weeklong investigation March 7 into the murder of dozens of civilians in a central Croatian village during the country's war with rebel Serbs in 1991. Investigators from the tribunal, which is located in The Hague, Netherlands, intended to probe executions allegedly carried out by Serb rebels of 50, mostly elderly, civilians in Dubica. The investigation could lead to indictments against former local rebel leaders and possibly officers of the Yugoslav Army, which backed Serb rebels during the fighting. Dubica was one of the first places to fall into the rebel hands during the six-month conflict. The country's second-largest mass grave, containing 56 bodies, was discovered there in 1995, shortly after Croatian government forces had recaptured the area. Minority Serbs rebelled against Croatia's independence from the Yugoslav federation in late 1991. Besides the 50 civilians believed executed in Dubica in 1991, approximately 320 villagers have remained missing. (Reuters, March 7, 2002)