



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.

The Peace and Justice updates are written by the Spring 2002 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Mark Cottrell (University of San Diego School of Law), Beth Rogers-Witte (University of San Diego), and Aimee Sepp (University of San Diego).

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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)
EFE	=	Agencia EFE (www.efenews.com)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
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 (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)

AFGHANISTAN

UN rejects request for more troops: A UN official announced the request for expanding and increasing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that includes troops from 17 countries has been denied, but has stated that the current 4,500 troops deployed to the capital, Kabul, may lengthen their stay by as much as six months. The statement came as a disappointment to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Afghan six-month interim leader Hamid Karzai both of who have fervently requested a larger force be deployed throughout Afghanistan. The UN official stated the UN primarily made its decision due to pressure from U.S. officials in the Pentagon who opposed an increase of ISAF troops. ISAF began its deployment in Kabul December 2001 shortly before the inauguration of the six-month interim government December 22, 2001 and has been under British control. The ISAF's primary role has been maintaining security within Kabul. (Agence France Presse, March 20, 2002)

CHECHNYA

Rebels attack a military convoy: Chechen rebels attacked a military convoy March 15 in Argun, nine miles east of the capital of Grozny. One Russian serviceman was killed and eight others wounded when the leading vehicles in the convoy hit a land mine, and the rebels opened fire after the explosion. Russian security forces returned to Chechnya in September 1999 after several apartment buildings in Moscow were bombed, allegedly by separatist Chechen rebels. Chechnya was left with de facto independence following the 1994 to 1996 war between Russia and Chechnya. (EFE, Interfax, March 16, 2002)

Investigation begins in Staryye Atagi: Officials from the Russian-appointed Chechen administration and the Russian military traveled March 14 to the village of Staryye Atagi, nine miles south of Grozny, to investigate the murder of seven civilians during a March 8 "security sweep" in the village. The officials visited the village one day after hundreds of residents protested in Grozny to demand the release of villagers detained during the sweeps. The protestors carried the corpses of the seven civilians killed during the March 8, three-day "security sweep." Russia's top human rights official for Chechnya, Viktor Kalamonov, said that the Chechen administration acknowledged that a crime had been committed, but did not say who was responsible. After investigating the "security sweep," officials were led to investigate four criminal cases that looked into the deaths or disappearances of Chechen civilians by Russian security forces, including the case of the seven victims carried in the protest. Russian troops have conducted four organized searches for suspected rebels in Staryye Atagi since January 1, 2002. (AP, March 14; BBC, March 15, 2002)

Rebels remain in Pankisi Gorge region: The head of Georgia's interior ministry troops, Major-General Georgii Shervashidze, announced March 18 that approximately 500 Chechen rebels might still be in the Pankisi Gorge, a strip of mountains on Georgia's border with Chechnya. Shervashidze said that the 500 rebels could include some Al-Qa'ida fighters and that Russian and Georgian troops had increased security on Chechnya's border with Georgia. He also noted that some Chechens have found ways around the border security, especially in the mountainous areas. Approximately 150 U.S. military instructors have been expected to arrive in Georgia this

week to train local troops for a major operation to drive Chechen rebels out of the Pankisi Gorge. (AFP, March 18, 2002)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Rebels capture strategic town: The Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD-Goma) seized the town of Moliro following fighting March 14 with government troops. Although Major General Sylvain Buki, chief of staff of the RCD-Goma, said that only RCD-Goma rebels were involved in the offensive on the small settlement on the southwestern shores of Lake Tanganyika, France's UN envoy, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, told the UN Security Council March 15 that the rebels were joined by as many as 10,000 Rwandan troops. Levitte called the offensive a "serious resumption of the war." Rwandan officials denied its troops were involved in the rebel attack, insisting that the nearest Rwandan troops were 185 miles to the north of Moliro. The UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC), which has been monitoring the cease-fire in the DRC, confirmed that Moliro's airstrip was under RCD-Goma control, but was unable to confirm whether Rwandan troops participated in the fighting. Major General Mountaga Diallo, a MONUC commander, met Rwandan President Paul Kagame March 16 for clarification of the country's role in the fighting. Congolese government forces moved into Moliro March 2001, which violated the 1999 Lusaka cease-fire agreement that required all combatants to remain at least nine miles from the town. The war in the 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, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. (AP, Reuters, March 15, 16, 2002).

Government withdraws from Inter-Congolese dialogue: The government of DRC President Joseph Kabila suspended its participation March 14 in the Inter-Congolese dialogue being held in Sun City, South Africa. Representatives of the government cited as grounds for withdrawal the offensive launched in Moliro March 14 by the RCD-Goma and, allegedly, by members of the Rwandan military. RCD-Goma Secretary-General Azarias Ruberwa said that the government had used the fighting as a pretext to pull out of the talks. Organizers of the Inter-Congolese dialogue tried to persuade the government to continue to participate in the peace talks, and former Botswana President Sir Ketumile Masire, the principal facilitator of the dialogue, sent two aides to Angola, DRC, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to seek help from each president on restarting the talks. Rwandan President Paul Kagame traveled to South Africa March 14 for talks with South African President Thabo Mbeki on the DRC conflict. The Inter-Congolese dialogue, mandated by the 1999 Lusaka agreement, was designed to bring together government, rebel, and civil society officials to end the three-year civil war and to establish peace and political unity in the DRC. (AP, March 14; Reuters, March 16, 2002)

DRC military court starts Kabila murder trial: Approximately 115 soldiers and civilians went to trial March 15, accused of involvement in the January 2001 assassination of DRC President Laurent Desiré Kabila. Among the most prominent of those accused was Eddy Kapend, Kabila's former personal chief of staff. Kapend was identified as the government's top suspect despite an August 2001 governmental inquiry that made no mention of Kapend and placed primary blame for Kabila's death on his bodyguard. Last year's government-sponsored inquiry had also

suggested that the murder was part of a failed coup attempt by Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebels who had been fighting in the DRC since 1998. The late president of the DRC was replaced as head of state by his 29 year-old son, Joseph Kabila. (AP, Reuters, March 15, 2002)

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA

UN Security Council votes to extend UNMEE's mandate: The 15 member, UN Security Council voted unanimously March 15 to extend the UN Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) until September 15, 2002. It further called upon both countries to comply and cooperate with UNMEE following the UN Border Commission's decision due to be announced April 13. UNMEE would monitor the 4,500 troops deployed to the border region, oversee demarcation of the border, and monitor the status of the Algiers Agreement in which both countries agreed to fully adhere to the UN's border decision. The Security Council urged leaders of both countries to release all Prisoners of War according to the Geneva Conventions and asked for the implementation of projects aimed at boosting economic development and reducing tensions between the neighboring countries "for the benefit of all the people and with the view to promote regional peace and security." Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace agreement in December 2000 and agreed to allow the UN Border Commission to investigate each country's claim to the 160 square mile disputed border region. The UN deployed some 4,500 troops patrol the border region proceeding prior to and following the Border Commission's decision. (UN News Center, March 15, 2002)

GUATEMALA

Anti-corruption movement calls for President's resignation: Guatemala's anti-corruption movement has called for President Alfonso Portillo to step down from office because of the implications of his involvement in the March 16 murder of agricultural engineer Jorge Rosales of the opposition Patriot Party in the capital, Guatemala City. Patriot Party leader General Otto Perez publicly accused Portillo and other high-ranking officials within the governing Guatemalan Republican Front including Guatemalan Vice President Juan Francisco Reyes. The accusations against Portillo and others have been under investigation by the Guatemalan Congress, the Anti-Corruption prosecutor, the attorney general and others but there hasn't been enough evidence to charge the President. The human rights group Civic Movement began collecting signatures March 19 from Guatemalan civil society for a petition asking for the President's resignation. Portillo has responded to the allegations saying he has been the target of a well-organized, well-financed conspiracy to oust him from office. The anti-corruption movement began when Ramiro de León Carpio was chosen to succeed President Jorge Serrano Elías who was ousted from office by the military due to his unpopular political measures in 1993. During his years as President from 1993-1996, Carpio was able to pass anti-corruption reforms that led to a UN-supervised peace agreement between the warring rebels and government which ended the country's 36-year civil war. The anti-corruption movement has continued in the country to uncover and prosecute issues of human rights abuses that occurred during and now following the war. (EFE, March 16, 18, 2002)

U.S. revokes Guatemalan General's visa: The U.S. embassy in Guatemala City confirmed reports that it revoked General Francisco Ortega Menaldo's U.S. entry visa March 18 due to allegations of drug trafficking. Menaldo sought asylum in Panama since he attempted a military

coup May 25, 1993. Despite this failed coup, Guatemalan newspaper El Periodico reported Menaldo has continued to have political ties in Guatemala and served as Portillo's private adviser in 2000. Retired General Otto Perez called Menaldo the "hidden power" of influence in Portillo's administration. El Periodico claimed Menaldo was one of the founders of "Cofradia" in 1979, which has been accused of drug trafficking, human rights abuses, and smuggling. (EFE, March 19, 2002)

Rebel's widow files claim in the U.S. Supreme Court: After 10 years of seeking justice for the murder of her husband Efrain Bamaca Velasquez, a rebel killed by Guatemalan troops during the country's 36-year civil war, attorney Jennifer Harbury took her case before the Supreme Court March 18 and sought sanctions against U.S. officials she claimed lied to her. Harbury alleged that former Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake lied to her in 1993 and 1994 about her their efforts to uncover the truth about her husband's murder. Harbury stated one of her husband's murderers was a paid CIA informant and has asked Christopher, Lake, and other U.S. officials to explain their actions regarding her husband's murder. Human rights organization, American Civil Liberties Union, along with other human rights organizations, has supported Harbury's efforts and her case before the Supreme Court. (EFE, March 18, 2002)

MACEDONIA

Former rebels march to celebrate anniversary: One year after their insurgency began, former rebels and ethnic Albanian Macedonians rallied in western Macedonia March 14 to celebrate the August 2001 peace agreement. Former rebel fighters and commanders were able to leave their mountain hideouts to attend the rally without fear of prosecution as a result of the amnesty law passed March 7 pardoning most of those involved in last year's conflict. Since passage of the amnesty law, Macedonian authorities have released approximately 300 former rebels of the National Liberation Army (NLA), including their leader Ali Ahmeti. Ahmeti and other NLA fighters took up arms March 2001 against Macedonian government troops. The six-month conflict ended with an August 2001 peace agreement that granted greater civil rights to the ethnic Albanian minority. (Reuters, March 14, 2002)

EU ready to take-over NATO's operation: European Union leaders agreed March 16 at a summit in Barcelona, Spain that the 15-nation bloc could be ready to take over peacekeeping duties from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Macedonia if the NATO mission needs to be continued. An EU mission in the former Yugoslav republic would first require a formal agreement with NATO on joint access to NATO's planning structure. The EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana told reporters March 15 that he hoped an agreement would be possible by June 30, 2002. Approximately 700 NATO troops have been operating in Macedonia to oversee the August 2001 peace agreement. (Reuters, March 16, 2002)

NEPAL

Army and police force kill rebels: Security forces conducted an attack March 17 against rebel training camps in Kabhra-Gumsal in the western district of Rolpa. Approximately 63 rebels were killed and dozens injured during the attack that lasted several hours. The army and police

force searched the area after being notified that rebel training activities were being carried out in the area. The training camps were destroyed and a collection of arms, ammunition, training materials, and food were recovered. Security forces announced that they would use offensive and defensive measures to counter the rebels after more than 160 police were killed February 16 in Achham. 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, DPA, The Press Trust of India, March 17, 2002)

Rebel leader suggests peace talks: Maoist rebel leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal said March 16 that his party was willing to resume dialogue with the government. It was the second time in two months that the rebels have offered a truce. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said that there was no possibility of negotiations until the rebels surrendered all of their arms. The government declared a state of emergency in November 2001 after the rebels pulled out of peace talks and broke a four-month ceasefire. Parliament extended the state of emergency February 21 for three months. (Japan Economic Newswire, March 16; The Statesman, March 17, 2002)

Government seeks help from India: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba traveled March 20 to India for a six-day visit to seek support in ending the civil war in Nepal between the Maoist rebels and the government. Deuba met with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and other high-level officials to discuss a wide-range of issues such as terrorism, bilateral trade, and economic cooperation. Deuba said that he wanted to obtain India's cooperation to block cross-border support for the rebels. The rebels have allegedly established bases in northern and eastern Indian states to train and acquire arms and ammunition. (BBC, Xinhua, March 20, 2002)

SRI LANKA

Prime Minister visits Jaffna: Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe visited the northern peninsula of Jaffna March 13 in the first visit to the area by a Sri Lankan Prime Minister since the civil war broke out in 1983. The BBC said that the visit demonstrated the Prime Minister's "confidence in the peace process he started and his trust in the rebels not to attack." While in Jaffna, the Prime Minister met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, who was touring the area. A ceasefire between the ethnically Tamil Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the majority Sinhalese government, signed February 23, has paved the way for peace talks to end the civil war that has resulted in approximately 64,000 deaths. (BBC, March 14, 2002)

Grenade explosion kills one person: Two separate grenade explosions March 12 killed one person and injured 24 others in Ratnapura, 60 miles southeast of the capital of Colombo. A policeman, who witnessed one of the attacks, said that the grenade was thrown following an argument between members of two opposing political parties, the United National Front and the Peoples' Alliance. The second grenade exploded near the United National Party's office in Ratnapura. The grenades were set off during an alleged political dispute over the upcoming provincial elections. The provincial council elections were scheduled to take place March 20-25. (AP, March 13; MSNBC, March 12, 2002)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

UN rights commission opens annual session: The UN Human Rights Commission opened a six-week session March 18 in Geneva, Switzerland. For the first time in the history of the commission, the U.S. was an observer as 53 other countries, including Cuba, Sudan, and Syria, participated in the annual examination of human rights worldwide. In 2001, France, Austria, and Sweden were elected to the three seats allotted to Western countries, thereby denying the U.S. a seat with this year's commission. The electoral defeat was blamed on poor lobbying by the U.S. at the UN, the debt the U.S. owed the world body, and the general attitude of the Bush administration toward global treaties, as demonstrated by its 2001 abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol. Prior to this year, the U.S., Russia, and India were the only countries to have served on the commission since its inception in 1947. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was the commission's first chair and the main author of the commission's 1948 landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (AP, March 16; Reuters, March 14, 17, 2002)

UN rights commissioner stepping down: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Mary Robinson announced March 18 that she would not seek a new term when her appointment ends in September 2002. Robinson announced her intended departure in an address before the annual session of the UN Human Rights Commission. U.S. representatives had in recent weeks begun to lobby against any further extension for Robinson, who had grown increasingly at odds with the U.S. over the appropriate response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Although she described the attacks as a "crime against humanity," Robinson insisted that reaction to them also threatened to undermine international standards of human rights. Robinson expressed particular concern over the high number of civilian casualties in U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan and had criticized the treatment of detained Taliban and Al-Qa'ida prisoners. Reed Brody, advocacy director of the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch, said Robinson "set a standard of candor and energy for future Human Rights Commissioners." Although some sources have identified a possible successor in Sergio Vieira de Mello, a career UN official from Brazil currently heading the UN operation in East Timor, de Mello discouraged the speculation, saying he suspected that Annan would prefer a woman to succeed Robinson. (AP, Reuters, March 18, 2002)

Cyprus, Macedonia, and Mauritius ratify Rome Treaty: Cyprus, Macedonia and Mauritius became the 53rd, 54th and 55th countries March 5-7 to ratify the Rome Treaty that would create an International Criminal Court (ICC) located at The Hague, Netherlands. Five more nations must similarly ratify the treaty before it is to enter into force. If established, the ICC would prosecute individuals accused of genocide, war crimes, and other gross human rights violations. While the UN Security Council has created ad hoc courts for war crimes committed in the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the ICC would be the first permanent global criminal court. The Rome Treaty was negotiated at a June 1998 conference after which 139 countries signed the treaty. Although the U.S. signed the treaty, the present administration has said it will not ratify it and has undertaken legislation that would forbid any U.S. ties to the court. (New York Times, March 8, 2002)