



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. The Gender and Peace section highlights events in peacebuilding that pertain to gender and human rights.

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)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allAfrica.com)
Amnesty International	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/)
CDC News	=	Center for Disease Control News (www.thebody.com)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
CPJ	=	Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
FT	=	Financial Times (www.ft.com)
GlobalSecurity	=	GlobalSecurity (www.globalsecurity.org)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (http://www.guardian.co.uk/)
HRW News	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org) (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: (www.unog.ch))
IWPR	=	Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kantipur Online	=	Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com .)
NCN	=	New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency (www.panapress.com)
RSF	=	Reporters Sans Frontieres (www.rsf.org).
TASS	=	ITAR-TASS News Agency (www.itar-tass.com/english/)
UPI	=	United Press International (www.upi.com)
UN News Center	=	UN New Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
WP	=	Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
WPS	=	What the Papers Say (www.wps.ru:8101)
WWP	=	Women Waging Peace (www.womenwagingpeace.net)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)

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BALKANS

ALBANIA

Protesters demand Prime Minister's resignation: Between 6,000 to 20,000 protesters marched in Tirana February 21, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Fatos Nano. Nano has served as Prime Minister three times, including periods during the country's Communist era. The march was organized by 10 opposition groups, and led by former President Sali Berisha and supporters of his Democratic Party. The protestors alleged that Nano's Socialist Party was corrupt and that the prime minister had not done enough to improve living standards since taking power in 2002. This was the second anti-government rally within a month; on February 7, demonstrators attempted to storm government headquarters, but were dispersed by police. Saturday's protest was peaceful, with organizers releasing white doves into the air. Albania, one of Europe's poorest countries, had an estimated unemployment of 30 percent and an average monthly income of less than \$200. The country emerged from Communist rule in 1990, but democratic reforms have been marred by political infighting and widespread accusations of corruption and fraud, including the collapse of pyramid investment schemes in 1997 that cost thousands of citizens their savings. Berisha, the first president elected post-communism, was in power during the 1997 financial crisis and resigned soon after. (WP, February 19, February 21, 2004)

MACEDONIA

Plane crash kills President: A plane carrying Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski and eight others crashed in heavy fog and rain in the mountains of southern Bosnia February 26. All on board were killed. At the time of the crash, Trajkovski was traveling to an international investment conference in the Bosnian city of Mostar. NATO peacekeepers and Bosnian police combed the mountains for wreckage in a remote area heavily mined during Bosnia's 1992 – 1995 war. Trajkovski was considered a moderate leader and was admired by Western countries for averting a civil war in 2001, when Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority launched an armed campaign to gain more rights. Since the 2001 implementation of a Western-brokered peace deal, Trajkovski had called for greater integration of ethnic Albanians into government institutions. Trajkovski was elected President in 1999, the second person to hold the office since Macedonia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Macedonia avoided the ethnic conflicts that beset neighboring Balkan countries during the 1990s, but weathered a refugee crisis in 1999 as 300,000 ethnic Albanians fled the Serbian assault in Kosovo. (AP, February 26; BBC, February 27; WP, February 26, 2004)

SERBIA

Prime Minister says extraditing war criminals not a priority: Newly appointed Serbian Prime Minister-designate Vojislav Kostunica announced February 21 that his government would not place a high priority on extraditing suspected war criminals to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague. Kostunica was highly critical of the tribunal, characterizing it as being anti-Serb. In a recent interview, Kostunica said he

believed Serbia had more important issues to contend with, such as relieving social conflicts and repairing the ruined economy. The announcement could aggravate relations with international donors, who have tied continued financial aid to the extradition of war crimes suspects. Yet Kostunica argued that the arrests and extraditions only inflame ethnic tensions, strengthening the position of the ultranationalist Radical Party, who gained a majority of seats in recent Parliamentary elections. Kostunica became President of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2000, after helping oust former President Slobodan Milosevic. However, he was opposed to the pro-Western leanings of then-Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, who organized Milosevic's extradition to The Hague in 2001. (WP, February 21, 2004)

GENDER AND PEACE

Ugandan women launch campaign against bride price: Women's activists called for an end to the practice of paying a bride price (or dowry) at the International Conference on Bride Price in Kampala February 16-18. The conference, organized by the Mifumi Project, drew attendees from throughout Africa, who decried paying bride price as an outdated practice that exposed women to human rights violations. "This is a practice that subordinates women, objectifies them, commercializes marriage and threatens women's physical and mental health," organizers said in a statement. In certain cultures, bride price was a payment in the form of money or property that was made by or on behalf of a prospective husband to the bride's family. In rural Africa, such payment was often a cow, a highly valued commodity. According to Atuki Turner, Executive Director of the Mifumi Project, the payment of bride price gives men complete dominion over their wives. A woman cannot deny her husband sex or ask him to use a condom, even if she knew he had a mistress and feared being exposed to HIV. Turner also noted that some underage girls were wed very early because their parents needed the money. Such marriages, she contended, could cause complications with pregnancy because the brides were not mature enough to bear children. Furthermore, since parents have to refund the bride price in the case of separation or divorce, many women have been coerced into staying in unhappy marriages. The Ugandan Human Rights Commission called for an abolition of the practice and sponsored a related petition before Uganda's Constitutional Court. (AllAfrica, February 17, 21, 23, 2004)

GREAT LAKES

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Kitenge residents flee Mayi-Mayi militia: Since January 2004, more than 150,000 people have fled the village of Kitenge located in the southern province of Katanga, where Mayi-Mayi militiamen killed approximately 100 civilians. The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, a local NGO, said that the Mayi-Mayi terrorized the Kitenge residents by extorting, looting, raping, burning homes, and cutting off people's fingers and sexual organs. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been living with their friends and relatives, lacking humanitarian aid due to the militia's continued attacks on

available health and humanitarian facilities. The DRC government said that military officers were sent to persuade this faction of the Mayi-Mayi to join other militiamen and to integrate into the DRC national army. In June 2003, a majority of the Mayi-Mayi agreed to join the DRC national armed force. The conflict in the DRC, which erupted in the summer of 1998, led to the deaths of more than three million people. The Lusaka Peace Accords signed in 2000, officially ended the activities of foreign countries in the conflict. In August 2003, the DRC interim government began serious efforts to end existing conflicts and to rebuild the country. ([IRIN](#), February 23, 2004)

RWANDA

NGOs urge donors to freeze aid: Four Dutch NGOs, Cordaid, ICCO, Kerkinactie and Novib, urged Rwanda's development partners including the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK, to stop sending aid to the government of Rwanda. In a press release, the NGOs accused the government of being responsible for the disappearance of five political opponents of the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in early 2003. The NGOs also raised concern about Rwanda's role in the exploitation of natural resources in eastern DRC. The press release stated that Rwanda allegedly delivered arms, provided training, and gave other forms of military support to different militia in the DRC. The NGOs pressured the major donor countries to cease their budgetary supports to Rwanda until these issues were properly investigated. The Rwandan government did not issue a response to the accusation. ([BBC Monitoring](#), February 19, 2004)

UGANDA

Rebels massacre 200 IDPs: The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacked an IDP camp February 22 in the northern district of Lira, killing at least 192 people. About 300 LRA rebels dressed in Ugandan army attire attacked the camp and overpowered the local defense forces. Survivors of the attack said that most IDPs who died were burned alive when the rebels set fire to their huts after ordering them into their houses at gunpoint. Others attempting to escape were killed by rebels. The IDPs who managed to survive were to be transferred to camps closer to Lira. President Yoweri Museveni blamed a local army commander for allowing a loosely guarded, unofficial IDP camp to be established in the area. A spokesperson for the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) said that the army would track the rebels who were responsible for the attack. This latest incident came four days after government soldiers attacked a group of rebels in northern Uganda, killing approximately 62 insurgents. The LRA, led by Joseph Kony, has been fighting the UPDF in an attempt to replace the existing government with an authority based on the Biblical Ten Commandments. The largest LRA killing of civilians before the latest incident occurred in 1995 when at least 240 people were killed. ([CNN](#), February 22; [Guardian](#), February 23; [IRIN](#), February 24, 2004)

HORN OF AFRICA

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA

Axworthy visits Ethiopia: UN Special Envoy Lloyd Axworthy arrived in Ethiopia February 19 to initiate a dialogue between Eritrea and Ethiopia. His visit was intended to assess concerns and ease tensions between the two countries regarding the stalled peace process. Axworthy was expected to meet with both leaders, but was unable to visit with Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki. Afewerki criticized the appointment of a UN special envoy and rejected requests for mediation, opting to abide by the ruling of a boundary commission, established by the 2000 Algiers Agreement, to award the town of Badme to Eritrea. Ethiopia rejected the boundary commission ruling and called for the appointment of a new commission. The Algiers Agreement signed by both parties ended the two-year border war, and declared that the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission was final and binding. (IRIN, February 24, 2004)

SOMALIA

Final stage of talks begins: The third and final stage of the Somali peace talks began February 23 under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). This phase of the talks was expected to establish a future interim government and select parliamentary representatives from major clan groups. The four major Somali clans were expected to choose 61 members of parliament (MPs), and 31 MPs were to be selected by a coalition of smaller clan groups. Despite a call for postponement by six faction leaders opposed to the Transitional National Government (TNG), IGAD reported that the final stage would continue as planned. The six leaders of the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC) had requested a location change for the talks after accusing Kenya and Djibouti of expressing bias towards certain groups. Despite the absence of the SRRC leaders at the conference, IGAD recognized the plenary endorsement of the January 29 landmark agreement signed between the TNG and Somali political leaders. This agreement came after 14 months of discussion on an all-inclusive government, and ended the 14-year armed conflict in Somalia. (BBC Monitoring Africa, February 24; IRIN, February 23, 25, 2004)

SUDAN

Pro-government militias kill Darfur civilians: Approximately 81 civilians in the Darfur region of western Sudan were killed by pro-government militia groups February 10. The Center for the Prevention of Genocide confirmed February 18 that the massacre was perpetuated by an armed group aligned with the government of Sudan, the Janjawid militia, in the town of Shatatyia and surrounding villages. The Janjawid, an Arab militia group, attacked villages in Darfur in an attempt to remove the African civilians in the area. Conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan, inhabited by Arabs and indigenous African populations, has continued despite President al-Bashir's victory claim over rebel groups February 9. Since the Darfur conflict emerged a year ago between government forces, pro-government militia, and rebel groups, approximately 800,000 civilians have been displaced in Darfur. (Capital Hill Press Releases, February 17; IRIN, February 18, 2004)

UN teams arrive in Darfur: Following a visit from Tom Vraalsen, the UN special envoy for humanitarian affairs to Sudan, UN teams arrived in the Darfur region February 19 to evaluate humanitarian needs. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that food and supplies were delivered to internally displaced persons throughout Darfur, and assessment for medical supplies, water, and plastic sheeting were evaluated by the UN Rapid Response Team. The 13-member team also prepared to initiate a meningitis immunization campaign for 60,000 children in the area. Since the start of the Darfur conflict, more than 180,000 refugees fleeing to neighboring Chad and 800,000 internally displaced persons have remained in need of humanitarian aid. (IRIN, February 19, 2004)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Presiding Judge on Milosevic trial resigns: The International Criminal Court announced February 22 that British Judge Richard May was to resign May 31 from the trial of former Serbian president Slobodon Milosevic. His resignation was expected to cause delays in the two-year-old trial which was predicted to last until 2005. However, the latest development could prompt Milosevic to challenge Judge May's replacement or seek a mistrial. Milosevic has refused to enter a plea before the court and has attempted to denounce its legitimacy. Milosevic was charged with 66 counts of crimes against humanity in Kosovo, Croatia, and for the alleged genocide of Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s. (BBC, February 25, 2004)

New UN Human Rights appointee: Louise Arbour, a Canadian Supreme Court Justice and ex-prosecutor for UN war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, was named the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Arbour served as Associate Professor of Law and later Associate Dean at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University for 13 years before she became a member of the Canadian court in 1987. Arbour was recognized by Amnesty International as one of the chief advocates for human rights. (Amnesty International News, UN News Center, February 20, 2004)

Iran's reformist newspapers close down: Iran's judiciary ordered the closure of two reformist newspapers February 17, three days prior to the parliamentary elections. "Sharq" and "Yas-e Nau" were the only papers that published excerpts of a letter, circulated by more than 100 members of parliament, that criticized Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for approving the Guardian Council's disqualification of more than 2,000 reformist candidates from the February 20 elections. Almost half of the Guardian Council members were chosen by Khamenei, who was appointed for life. Human Rights Watch (HRW) asked Iran's judiciary to immediately reverse the order in regards to the two newspapers. HRW also urged members of the UN Commission on Human Rights to pass a resolution condemning the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran and to reinstate a UN special representative for monitoring human rights developments in the country. (BBC, February 4; HRW News, February 19, 2004)

NEPAL

Government arms civilians: On February 4, Maoists attacked the village of Sudama. The International Crisis Group (ICG), a non-profit organization working to prevent and resolve deadly conflicts, claimed that the residents of Sudama had been armed as part of the government's civilian militia plan called "Rural Volunteer Security Groups and Peace Committees." The attack was repelled without any injuries to civilians, yet ICG expressed concern because the village was targeted for its reputation as a "pilot location" for the militia program. In November 2003, Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa announced plans for arming villagers against the Maoist insurgency but denied that the distribution of weapons had already begun. ICG feared that arming minimally trained civilians might lead to the creation of a new terrorist network, such as al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Turkish Hizbollah, which all originated as government-linked militias or underground groups. The conflict between the security forces and Maoists has intensified since the Maoists' decision to withdraw from the seven-month cease-fire in August 2003. (ICG, February 17, 2004)

Maoists recruit school children: The Nepali language daily, "Nepal Samacharpatra," announced that Maoists were to recruit 50,000 school children as militants in western Nepal by the end of May. The Maoists admitted that the large number of students abducted from different parts of western Nepal in recent weeks were meant for a child militia and promised to raise a militia unit in each school. The new recruitments came as the government claimed to make progress against the insurgency in most parts of the country. (DPA, February 23, 2004)