



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 bibliographical 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

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| 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/) |
| BCR | = | Balkan Crisis Group (http://www.iwpr.net) |
| CDC News | = | Center for Disease Control News (www.thebody.com) |
| Channel NewsAsia | = | Channel NewsAsia (www.channelnewsasia.com) |
| CNN | = | Cable News Network (www.cnn.com) |
| CPJ | = | Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org) |
| DPA | = | Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com) |
| EU2004 | = | European Union Presidency 2004 (www.eu2004.ie) |
| 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) |

UPDATE SUMMARY

BALKANS

KOSOVO

Albanian forces target peacekeepers

SERBIA

Parliament provides assistance to war crimes suspects; U.S. suspends aid to Serbia

GENDER AND PEACE

HRW criticizes tribunal over rape cases; Rwanda holds regional conference for women

GREAT LAKES

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Armed rebel forces attempt coup

RWANDA

Government plans to release genocide suspects

UGANDA

Army rejects LRA offer for peace talks; Ugandan security forces detain and torture political opponents

HORN OF AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

Authorities investigate Gambella violence

SOMALIA

Peace talk discussions begin

SOMALIA-UGANDA

EC allocates millions in aid

SUDAN

Authorities arrest suspects of coup attempt; Darfur conflict affects peace talks

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

ICJ criticizes U.S.; EU's asylum proposal raises concerns; UN speaks on human rights responsibility

NEPAL

Police arrest Maoist leader; Congress initiates talks with Maoists

BALKANS

KOSOVO

Albanian forces target peacekeepers: A UN spokesperson said March 26 that UN and NATO forces in Kosovo were on heightened alert after receiving threats that Albanian groups may specifically target peacekeepers. The area endured riots and unrest from March 17 to the 19, largely perpetrated by ethnic Albanians against Serbs. Twenty-eight people were killed, 600 wounded (including 150 peacekeepers), and approximately 4,360 people were displaced. The attacks culminated in the death of two UN policemen in a roadside shooting March 24, which was attributed to Albanian nationalists from the northern town of Podujevo. UN police arrested more than 200 people following the violence. Most observers believed the far-right nationalist group National Movement for the Freedom of Kosovo (LKCK) was responsible for the unrest. The head of the LKCK, Fatmir Humolli, described the UN and NATO as occupying forces, and was quoted March 26 as saying that “[since] political means have failed, we are ready to use other means.” Although Serbia offered to grant Kosovo measures of autonomy, Albanian nationalists wanted Kosovo declared independent from Serbia. The region has been under the control of the UN and NATO since 1999. (BCR, March 29, 2004)

SERBIA

Parliament provides assistance to war crimes suspects: The Serbian parliament voted March 30 in favor of a new “Indictees Law,” which would award salaries and provide money for legal fees to 25 Serbian war crimes suspects currently awaiting trial at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague (ICTY). The suspects, including former Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, would also be given money to cover mail, phone bills, and travel expenses for their families. The legislation was sponsored by the Serbian Radical Party, whose leader Vojislav Seselj was interred at The Hague. However, it was also supported by newly elected Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, who came to power as part of a coalition of moderates and conservatives. The law was opposed by the pro-West Democratic Party, which rebelled against Milosevic in 2000 and supported his 2001 extradition to the ICTY on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity for the 1990s Balkan wars. (AP, BBC, March 30, 2004)

U.S. suspends aid to Serbia: The U.S. suspended \$25 million in aid to Serbia March 31 for failure to cooperate with the ICTY. The installment was part of a \$100 million aid package that aimed to help Serbia reform its economy. A U.S. State Department spokesperson said that funds for Kosovo, humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of democracy would not be affected by the suspension. The U.S. decided to suspend aid due to continued Serbian intransigence regarding the tribunal, and the Serbian government’s unwillingness to extradite 16 war criminals, including former Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic. The tribunal charged Mladic with complicity in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in which an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed. (BBC, WP, March 31, 2004)

GENDER AND PEACE

HRW criticizes tribunal over rape cases: A representative from Human Rights Watch criticized the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda March 24, claiming that the tribunal was overly dismissive of numerous rape cases. Rape was used as a tool of war during Rwanda's 1994 genocidal campaign, in which government-sponsored Hutu militias killed an estimated 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Approximately 250,000 women were raped by Hutu militiamen during the war, resulting in the birth of more than 10,000 children. Many rape victims also contracted AIDS, and the children have become orphaned as their mothers died from the disease. (BBC, March 24; WP, March 30, 2004)

Rwanda holds regional conference for women: The United Nations Development Fund for Women announced March 25 that Rwanda would hold a regional conference for women in May 2004. The conference was to draw attendees from Burundi, the DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and would discuss several issues, such as peace, security, good governance and development. Organizers hoped to get several high-profile women to attend, including first ladies of the region, and expressed their belief that peace and development could not be realized without large numbers of women helping to make important decisions. (Xinuha, March 25, 2004)

GREAT LAKES

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Armed rebel forces attempt coup: Four key military sites and two broadcasting facilities in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC, were attacked March 28 by armed rebel forces. Officials from the government reported that the attacks resulted in the deaths of two government soldiers and several injuries. The authorities arrested approximately 20 suspects, and continued to search for 18 others involved in the incidents. The attackers were suspected to be former soldiers from the Zairean Armed Forces (ZAF), once loyal to the late President Mobutu Sese Seko. They were believed to have arrived in Kinshasa by boat from Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo. In a televised speech, President Joseph Kabila said that the national armed forces were on high alert to protect the population, but asked civilians to continue their daily business. The UN Mission in the DRC condemned the attack as an attempt to destabilize the transitional process, and increased UN security forces in Kinshasa. Since 1998 the DRC's civil war, which drew in six other nations, caused the deaths of more than 2.5 million people. Under peace deals that ended the fighting in December 2002, President Joseph Kabila assumed leadership of a power-sharing government, which began serious efforts to end existing conflicts and to rebuild the country in August 2003. (AFP, March 28, 29; AllAfrica, March 29; BBC News, March 29; IRIN, March 29, 2004)

RWANDA

Government plans to release genocide suspects: The Rwandan government said March 27 that at least 30,000 suspects who confessed to participating in the 1994 genocide would be released. The released suspects were to be tried in community courts, known as

“Gacaca.” The government said that the release aimed to ease the country’s overcrowded judicial system that strained the government’s budget. The government was to release another group of prisoners next year if the suspects detailed their roles in the genocide. Politically motivated killings began in Rwanda April 7, 1994. Within three months, at least 500,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu had been killed. (AP, March 27, 2004)

UGANDA

Army rejects LRA offer for peace talks: The Ugandan army rejected an offer for peace talks made by Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Kony allegedly ordered his spokesman to contact the government to negotiate peace talks to end the 18-year-long conflict. LRA rebels were also ordered to stop attacking camps for internally displaced persons. Major Shaban Bantariza, an army spokesperson, responded by saying that Kony’s efforts were insincere and aimed at deceiving the public. Bantariza claimed that LRA forces were weakened due to intense pressure from Ugandan forces, and that Kony was merely attempting to give his troops a chance to recover. Recent efforts for peace talks between the LRA and the government, organized by the Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative in early 2003, ended in failure after LRA rebels failed to attend the meetings. Approximately 1.5 million people have been displaced since the LRA began fighting the Ugandan government 18 years ago in an attempt to replace it with one based upon the Biblical Ten Commandments. (IRIN, March 30, 2004)

Ugandan security forces detain and torture political opponents: Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a statement May 29 condemning Ugandan security forces for practicing arbitrary detention, torture and extra-judicial killings. In a statement, HRW said that the government frequently used torture to force suspects to confess to involvement in opposition parties or rebel groups. The statement added that the Ugandan security system, established to pursue armed rebels, had become an instrument to punish and deter political opposition. In a press release, Ugandan Information Minister Nsaba Buturo dismissed the allegations and expressed concerns that the report was heavily influenced by political opponents of the government. However, an opposition leader from the Uganda People’s Congress said that the cases presented in the HRW report were true, and insisted that many opposition supporters were tortured and killed. President Yoweri Museveni has restricted political parties since he gained power in 1986, claiming that the parties contributed to conflict in Uganda. (AP, March 29, 2004)

HORN OF AFRICA

ETHIOPIA

Authorities investigate Gambella violence: The Ethiopian government was to appoint an independent body to investigate reports of ethnic violence in the Gambella region of western Ethiopia. The European Union urged the investigation in response to allegations of involvement by the Ethiopian military in violence against civilians. The commission was to investigate causes for the conflict, and the government’s response to the violence which occurred between December 2003 and January 2004, when approximately 300

civilians were killed. The government unofficially apologized to local tribes March 5 for failing to prevent the December 2003 ambush of eight civilians that triggered the eruption of violence in Gambella. (AFP, March 27; IRIN, March 5, 30, 2004)

SOMALIA

Peace talk discussions begin: Discussions on the rules of procedure for the last phase of Somali peace talks were to begin March 31. Participants of the talks were given a copy of draft rules approved by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). A number of faction leaders walked out of the conference after their request for a postponement of the talks was denied February 23. The leaders argued that Article 30 of the Transitional Federal Charter of Somalia, which addressed the selection of members of parliament, remained unclear and disputed. IGAD claimed that Article 30 had been clarified, and urged the leaders to return to the conference. The last phase of the peace talks was dedicated to negotiating issues of power-sharing to end the 14-year armed conflict in Somalia. (IRIN, March 30, 2004)

SOMALIA-UGANDA

EC allocates millions in aid: The European Commission (EC) allocated an estimated \$9.7 million in humanitarian aid to Somalia, and \$7.3 million to Uganda. The allocation for Uganda was expected to target approximately 500,000 people affected by the conflict involving the LRA, Uganda's main rebel group. Funds allocated to Somalia were expected to assist with the humanitarian needs of 500,000 civilians affected by civil war, security issues, and climatic conditions. According to the EC, access to basic health care services in Somalia remained extremely limited, with an estimated 30 percent without any access to health care, clean water, sanitation, or education. (IRIN, March 23, 2004)

SUDAN

Authorities arrest suspects of coup attempt: Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the Islamist Popular Congress Party (PCP), was arrested March 31 following suspicions of involvement in an attempted military coup. Ten officials and a number of other PCP supporters were also arrested March 28. The alleged plot to overthrow President Omar al-Bashir was suspected to be linked to the ongoing conflict in the western Darfur region. Al-Turabi denied allegations that the PCP supported rebel movements in Darfur, and argued that he was against the killing of innocent people in the west. The year-old Darfur conflict erupted after rebel groups accused the government of oppressing the black African population. Peace talks to discuss the Darfur crisis were expected to begin in Chad following a March 18 agreement by the Sudanese government. (BBC, March 30, 31, April 1; Channel NewsAsia, March 30, 2004)

Darfur conflict affects peace talks: The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that the escalating conflict in Darfur delayed the progress of peace talks between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. The ICG declared that the fate of the talks depended largely on developments in the Darfur crisis, and urged the international community to intervene. The Sudanese peace talks had previously made progress on issues of power-sharing, wealth-sharing, and security issues; negotiations on regional disputes remained unresolved. The talks were expected to end the 20-year civil

war in Sudan between the predominately Arab-Muslim north and African-Christian south. ([IRIN](#), March 26, 2004)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

ICJ criticizes U.S.: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague ruled that 51 Mexican prisoners on death row in the U.S. did not receive a fair trial, and ordered a review of their convictions. The court based its ruling on the argument that although the Mexican citizens were entitled to consular aid, they were not informed of this right. The ICJ stated that had the prisoners been given consular assistance they might not have received the death penalty. Under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, governments were required to inform detainees of their legal right to consular aid. ([BBC](#), March 31, 2004)

EU's asylum proposal raises concerns: A group of NGOs claimed that the European Union's (EU) proposal on asylum procedures violated international human rights and refugee law. Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, and the European Council for Refugees and Exiles were among the NGOs who argued that the proposal, expected to transfer asylum seekers to countries outside of Europe, was a violation of human rights. They added that the proposal's suggestion for increased immigration control denied asylum seekers access to a fair procedure. In a joint letter to the European commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, the NGOs asked for the withdrawal of the proposal. A common asylum policy was to be established by May 2004. ([HRW](#), March 29, 2004)

UN speaks on human rights responsibility: The UN Human Rights Committee which was in charge of interpreting the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—a human rights treaty ratified by 148 countries—issued an opinion informing the international community that their governments were responsible for human rights violations committed in the territories under their "effective control." The Committee outlined that states must respect and ensure the rights indicated in the treaty namely a judicial review and a trial by a court that meets international fair trial standards, to anyone who is in their custody regardless of the state's territorial boundaries. HRW pointed out that this principle could hold the U.S. responsible for any human rights violations that occurred in offshore facilities such as Guantanamo Bay. ([HRW](#), March 30, 2004)

NEPAL

Police arrest Maoist leader: Indian police arrested Mohan Baidya March 30 in the town of Siliguri, India. The detainee remained in Indian custody and was to be extradited upon the request of the Nepalese government. Baidya was a member of the Maoist group Bharatiya Nepali Ganatantrik Morcha, and was regarded as a senior figure in the insurgency. He faced charges of conspiracy and illegal possession of firearms. More

than 9,000 people have lost their lives during the nine-year insurgency, as the Maoists have fought to remove the monarchy and install a communist state. (BBC, Kantipur Online, March 30, 2004)

Congress initiates talks with Maoists: Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala said March 30 that he would hold a dialogue with the Maoists and other pro-constitutional forces to find a resolution for the current crisis. He claimed that the inaction of the King and his royalist government was the reason for his initiative. Koirala welcomed the March 24 appeal by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that the government and the Maoists resume talks, and condemned the government for rejecting the proposal. The Maoists broke a seven-month cease-fire with the government August 2003, claiming the government was not addressing their political demands. (Kantipur Online, March 30, 2004)