



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**January 24, 2003**  
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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 SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS**

AP	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
AFP	=	Agence France Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allAfrica.com">www.allAfrica.com</a> )
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">http://news.bbc.co.uk</a> )
CNN	=	Cable News Network ( <a href="http://www.cnn.com">www.cnn.com</a> )
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur ( <a href="http://www.dpa.com">www.dpa.com</a> )
HRW News	=	Human Rights Watch News ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )
IRIN	=	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> )
NCN	=	New Congo Net ( <a href="http://www.marekinc.com/NCN.html">www.marekinc.com/NCN.html</a> )
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )
UPI	=	United Press International ( <a href="http://www.upi.com">www.upi.com</a> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm">www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm</a> )

## **CHECHNYA**

Referendum for new constitution proposed: Lord Frank Judd, the envoy who reports on the Chechnya to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe began holding meetings January 21 to assess progress toward establishing peace in the region. Judd met with Chechen university students in Moscow to discuss plans for a March referendum on a new constitution for Chechnya. The constitution would provide Chechnya the rights held by other Russian Federations, including reducing the military presence in the region. Europe's oldest human rights body, the Council of Europe has expressed concern regarding the Russian government's treatment of Chechens. Chechen rebels attacked the convoys and military bases occupied by Russian soldiers January 22 killing four and injuring 11. Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov expressed doubt on the effectiveness of the proposed referendum. The Moscow Times reported that Maskhadov described the referendum as "merely an affront to these unfortunate people," indicating that no election would stop the Russian agenda. The referendum and new constitution were proposed to end the conflict which was renewed in October 1999, when Russian troops entered the capital of Grozny in response to a wave of terrorist bombings in Russia, allegedly carried out by Chechen rebels. (The Moscow Times, January 22, 2003)

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

Rebels discuss peace: Ketumile Masire, the former President of Botswana and the facilitator of the Inter-Congolese dialogue, arrived in the DRC January 12, to facilitate the final stages of the inter-Congolese dialogue focused on ending the civil war. The initial agreement signed by all parties in Pretoria, South Africa December 17, 2002 stated that the current government, rebel movements, political opposition, armed militias, and civil groups were to join forces to create an interim administration until elections could be held. The transitional government would consist of President Joseph Kabila and four vice presidents. The power-sharing pact would entitle the Ugandan backed Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) and the Rwandan backed Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) to a vice-presidential post each; the remaining positions would be for a government official and the political opposition. The mediation and inter-Congolese dialogue are efforts toward ending the four-year conflict in the DRC that began in August 1998 when President Laurent Désiré 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 supported by Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Kabila was assassinated in January 2001 and his son Joseph Kabila assumed the presidency and has made strides towards a peaceful resolution of a conflict that has killed more than 3 million people in the four-year war. (AFP, January 12; AllAfrica, January 9; IRIN, January 13, 2003)

UN alleges human rights violations: A UN investigation confirmed reports of human rights abuses carried out by the rebel group Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) and other allied groups in northeast DRC. The reported abuses included rapes, arbitrary executions, kidnappings, torture, looting, and cannibalism. The UN Security Council condemned on the violations of human rights and stated that it held MLC leader Jean-Pierre Bemba responsible for the security of civilians in the territory under his control. Bemba had been expected to play a leading role in the interim government of the DRC

under the recently signed power-sharing accord. The recent violence in the northeast Ituri province of the DRC was caused by rebels attempting to capture the region to gain control of mineral resources. The government stated it would press for World Court prosecution of rebels involved in human rights violations in the Ituri province. (AFP, AP, Financial Times, January 16, 2003)

### **ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA**

Cash shortfall could delay border demarcation: The UN peacekeeping mission faced a cash shortage that could delay the border demarcation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) stated that the cost of demarcating the border would be around \$7.6 million, \$4.6 million more than that allotted. The US and Norway agreed to donate \$1 million each to speed the process, but according to an UNMEE spokeswoman, UNMEE would be appealing for more funds if there were to be a cash shortfall. Developed after Eritrea and Ethiopia's peace agreement December 12, a trust fund was to be used to pay for delimitation and demarcation of the new border that was drawn out in April 2002. The physical construction of the border would be expected to take between four to six months, which would give the Trust Fund enough time to reach the goal of \$7.6 million. This physical border demarcation would finally resolve the border dispute that caused a war to erupt between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998 that lasted two years. (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRIN News, January 10, 2003)

### **MACEDONIA**

Kosovo independence worries leaders: The stability of Macedonia and its neighbors has been linked with the status of Kosovo. According to Deutsche Presse-Agentur, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic stated that Kosovo becoming an independent state and would be dangerous for region. This danger would arise from the continuing conflict between ethnic Albanians, who have fought for an independent Kosovo, and Serbs who have insisted that Kosovo is part of Serb territory. Macedonian Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski stated his country opposes independence for Kosovo and any change in the present borders of Yugoslavia because such a change would escalate violence in the Balkans. Macedonia has struggled with internal conflict between government forces and ethnic Albanian rebels who took up arms against the Macedonian government to fight for the rights of the ethnic Albanian minority in February 2001. The conflict ended in August 2001 with the Ohrid Accord ending a seven-month civil war in Macedonia. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, January 16; Xinhua News, January 18, 2003)

Police charged with torture: The European Council published two reports January 16 confirming that Macedonian police had beaten, tortured, and killed suspects held in detention. According to the AFP, some of the abused prisoners were suspected to be members of the National Liberation Army, an armed Albanian guerilla group. The European Rights organization Anti-Torture Committee insisted that Macedonia's fight against terrorism should not involve inhumane acts. In response to the allegations, the Macedonian government has implemented human rights training for police officers. (AFP, January 16, 2003)

## **PHILIPPINES**

Violence escalates between rebels and government: Muslim rebels from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the “Pentagon gang”, a rebel group composed of more extreme former MILF members and members of the Abu Sayyaf group, engaged in fighting January 9-13 with the Philippine Army resulting in 26 rebel deaths. The military began an attack on the rebels January 9 in Columbio, a town in the province of Sultan Kudarat. The conflict between the rebels and the government has displaced more than 200 civilians in the southern Philippines. The U.S. has labeled the Pentagon gang as an international terrorist organization. According to the U.S. and Philippine governments, Abu Sayyaf has been linked to the al-Qaeda network of Osama Bin Laden. The more moderate MILF claimed that the government violated the cease-fire agreement signed in 2001 by launching offensive operations. The MILF has been fighting for more than two decades to establish an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines. (Financial Times, January 14; Xinhua News, January 11, 2003)

Government proposes peace package: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has expressed willingness to consider the government’s proposal of a peace package. An MILF spokesperson promised that the government’s peace package would not be automatically rejected or approved but would be scrutinized by the rebel group. Formal peace negotiations were last held October 2001; however, informal discussions have been continuing since May 2002. A ceasefire agreement has existed between the MILF and the Philippine government since 2001, however sporadic violence has occurred. (Xinhua News, January 17, 2003)