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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> )
VOA	=	Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm">www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm</a> )

## **CHECHNYA**

Russian convoy hits landmine: One soldier of the Russian Interior Ministry was killed and three wounded March 12 in the Chechen capital of Grozny, when a military convoy hit a radio-controlled landmine planted less than half a mile from a meatpacking factory in the village of Kayama, in the Staropromyslovskiy district. The Chechen Prosecutor's Office opened a criminal case to investigate the suspected act of terrorism. Russian troops sent into Chechnya in October 1999 have established a hold over much of the republic, but separatist rebels have continued to operate in Grozny at night and launch raids in rural districts. Russian security forces returned to Chechnya in September 1999 after Chechen rebels allegedly bombed several apartment buildings in Moscow. The war between Russia and Chechnya from 1994 to 1996 left Chechnya with de facto independence. (BBC, March 13, 2003)

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

Parties fight over resources in Ituri: According to UN Organization Mission in the DRC spokesperson Colonel Pieter Hamse, Ugandan troops attempted March 6 to maintain control of the Ituri region's valuable mineral resources when the Union of Congolese Patriots, a militia backed by Rwanda, attacked Ugandan forces stationed around Bunia and other main towns in the Ituri region. Hamse stated that Ugandan forces were to withdraw from the DRC by March 20 as planned by the presidents of the DRC and Uganda in February 2003 in accordance with the Ituri Peace Commission (IPC). The IPC was charged with unifying local tribal militia groups in preparation for the future powersharing government. The UN Security Council published reports in October 2002 that accused Uganda of training local militias to maintain control of resources and accusing Rwanda of arming the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma, but Rwanda denied the allegations. The conflict in the DRC 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, which Kabila countered with the assistance of troops supported by Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. More than 3 million people have died in the four-year war. (BBC, March 12; DPA, IRIN, March 6, 2003)

MONUC investigates violence: The UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) sent a mission of inquiry March 5 to Bogoro, in the northeastern region of Ituri, to investigate alleged massacres carried out the week of February 24. Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) leader Thomas Lubanga accused Ugandan troops of being involved in the massacres, but Uganda denied the charge. Head of MONUC, Namanga Ngongi, expressed his frustration March 5 with the continued violence in Ituri and the delay of the implementation of the IPC and Pretoria agreements. Ngongi stated that he would seek UN Security Council action if the rebels in Ituri continued to block peace efforts in the region where 500,000 people have been displaced, numerous human rights violations have occurred, and children have been recruited as soldiers. The UPC was originally supported by Uganda, but in late 2002 the UPC demanded the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the DRC and formed an alliance January 6, 2003 with the Rwandan-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma. (AllAfrica, IRIN, March 5; BBC, March 4, 2003)

Peace talks continue: Representatives of the government and of rebel groups Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and Congolese Movement for Liberation (MLC) agreed March 6 in Pretoria, South Africa, during the second phase of the Inter-Congolese dialogue (ICD) to establish a transitional government and army. Points of the Pretoria Accord of December 2002 were approved, providing for a transitional government consisting of the current President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents, two of whom would be former rebel leaders. The government of the DRC stated it was prepared to allow UN forces to occupy the capital and other major towns until the new national army, comprised of soldiers from all internal parties to the conflict was established. According to ICD facilitator and former President of Botswana, Ketumile Masire, the final session of the ICD has been scheduled for the end of March, during which all parties must ratify the agreements of all previous sessions of the ICD. The negotiations to end the war in the DRC began with the signing of the Lusaka Agreement in July 1999. (BBC, March 7, 2003)

### **ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA**

Eritrea warns of a renewed war: Eritrea's foreign minister Ali Said Abdella warned March 14 that the country might enter into another war with Ethiopia if the Ethiopian government were to reject the border ruling issued in April 2002 by an independent border commission. According to Abdella, Ethiopian authorities had publicly stated that it would not accept the boundary drawn by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC). He stated that Ethiopia's public announcements to reject the EEBC decision "was a recipe for conflict and war." Abdella called on the UN Security Council to send a message to Ethiopia that they must abide by the border ruling or face serious consequences. In April 2002 the EEBC issued its decision on the boundary line between the two countries following a two-year border war that ended with the signing of the December 2000 Algiers Peace Accord in which both sides agreed that any border ruling would be final and binding. (AllAfrica, BBC, March 14, 2003)

Security Council extends UNMEE mandate: The UN Security Council extended the mandate March 14 of the UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) for six months. This decision came after the security council considered a report by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan encouraging the adoption of resolution 1466, affirming the ability of UNMEE to monitor the two countries' fulfillment of their responsibilities set forth in the Algiers accord. The security council called on both Eritrea and Ethiopia to cooperate fully and expeditiously with UNMEE in the implementation of its mandate, and to allow UNMEE full freedom of movement. The security council also demanded immediate removal of any restrictions impeding UNMEE's work, as well as to ensure the security of UNMEE staff when operating in territories under their control. Annan stated that both parties have cooperated, but that they still need to implement the April 13, 2003 border ruling. (AllAfrica, Xinhua, March 14, 2003)

Eritreans flee to Ethiopia: The Tigray Refugees Affairs Bureau said March 7 that approximately 200 Eritreans who opposed the policies of the Eritrean government had crossed into Ethiopia. The bureau said the Eritreans included approximately 55 soldiers, 125 civil servants, and 20 university and secondary school students. The bureau also said

it had confirmed that several illegally jailed Eritreans were escaping from prisons and fleeing to Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. The border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea resulted in the displacement of an estimated 150,000 Ethiopians and 100,000 Eritreans. (BBC, March 8, 2003)

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

Indonesia sentences former East Timor military commander: The East Timor Human Rights Ad Hoc Tribunal in Jakarta, Indonesia issued a five-year prison sentence March 12 to former East Timor military commander Brigadier General Noer Muis for failing to prevent massacres in the former Indonesian territory of East Timor before and after an August 30, 1999 UN-sponsored independence referendum. Muis was indicted for allowing an attack on a church September 6, 1999 by pro-Jakarta militias that killed 27 people, and allowed the same militias to invade the home of Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo, which resulted in another 15 civilian deaths. Muis has been the highest-ranking officer to be convicted over the 1999 related violence. At least 18 Indonesian officials and officers have been accused of human rights abuses during the 1999 UN referendum period and await trial. In 1999, approximately 2,000 civilians were killed and another 250,000 fled their homes when Indonesian troops attempted to force people to vote for the continued union of East Timor and Indonesia. In May 1999, East Timor gained full independence with the assistance of the UN referendum. (AP, Financial Times, Xinhua, March 12; New York Times, Straits Times, March 13, 2003)

ICC judges sworn in: Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan were present as 18 judges were sworn in March 12 to the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague, the Netherlands. Eleven men and seven women representing the countries of Brazil, Britain, France, Latvia, Samoa, and South Africa were sworn in to administer justice “impartially and conscientiously.” The objective of the ICC has been to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. The ICC would be able to try the accused from a signatory state, or of a crime committed in a signatory state after July 1, 2002. The ICC was designed in the 1998 Rome Statute, and was officially established July 2002. (Financial Times, March 11,12; Xinhua, March 12, 2003)

Council of Europe proposes Chechen war crimes court: A member of the Parliamentary Assembly, an intergovernmental human rights organization of the Council of Europe, Rudolf Bindig, proposed March 4 to establish an ad hoc international war crimes tribunal, similar to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, to try war crimes and abuses in the Russian republic of Chechnya. A text resolution adopted by the legal affairs and human rights committee of the Council of Europe, which was to be submitted to the parliamentary assembly plenary session between March 31 and April 5, stated that continual Russian and Chechen abuses accounted for the failure to properly and justly deal with transgressors since 1994. Former Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Ivan Rybkin, expressed his approval of the tribunal’s creation deeming it “right and proper” in order to deal with the thousands of people who are unaccounted for. Conversely, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Yevgeny Voronin disapproved of such a court by saying it would deprive Russia of its sovereign right to carry out justice

on its own territory. Russian forces withdrew from Chechnya in 1996 after a failed 20-month campaign, leaving Chechnya with de facto independence. Russian troops returned in 1999 after a series of rebel attacks and deadly apartment bombings that Russia attributed to Chechen rebels. (AFP, AFX European Focus, March 5; Financial Times, March 4, 5, 2003)

War crimes tribunal indicts seven rebel leaders: Sierra Leone's war crimes tribunal indicted seven rebels March 10 for human rights abuses during the West African country's nine-year civil war that began in 1991. Among the seven charged were Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh, former junta leader Johnny Paul Loroma, and Internal Affairs Minister Samuel Hinga Norman. Sankoh was charged with murder, rape, enslavement, looting and forced conscription of children. Norman was charged with the orchestration of attacks by pro-government militia, attacking UN peacekeepers, sexual slavery, and torturing and summarily executing opponents. Five out of the seven accused have been placed in custody. If convicted, the maximum sentence issued by the court would be life imprisonment. With more than 200,000 believed dead from the conflict, the court was created by the UN and Sierra Leone to address violations of international and national humanitarian law since November 30, 1996. (AP, March 10; Financial Times, Guardian, New York Times, March 11, 2003)

## **MACEDONIA**

Two NATO soldiers die in explosion: An explosion March 4, killing two Polish North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) peacekeeping soldiers and wounding three Macedonian civilians near the villages of Sopot and Sicevo, northeast of the capital, occurred when a landmine exploded under a NATO vehicle. NATO stated March 7 that the explosion was a criminal act, but did not identify the motive or responsible party. NATO supported an investigation into the incident led by the Macedonian Interior Ministry. NATO forces were deployed in September 2001 after the signing of the Ohrid Agreement that ended the country's seven-month conflict that began when ethnic Albanians took up arms against the government in February 2001 to fight for the rights of the ethnic Albanian minority. NATO, which created an alliance of 12 independent nations committed to each other's defense, was formed April 4, 1949. (AP, March 4, 7, 2003)

EU to replace NATO: EU Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana announced March 11 that the EU would replace NATO peacekeeping forces in Macedonia by the end of March 2003. The NATO, "Operation Harmony," would be taken over by an EU force of approximately 350 soldiers. NATO's mandate was extended twice because the EU had not been able to solidify an agreement on its permanent relations with Macedonia, mainly due to disputes between Greece and Turkey. The commander of NATO forces in Macedonia, General Bernardo Alvarez, stated March 11 that the security situation in the region at large was good and progress had been made, but that peacekeeping forces would stay in Macedonia as long as they were welcome, and that the current state of security could be attributed to the cooperation between the Macedonian and Serbian-Montenegrin governments. (AP, Financial Times, March 11, 2003)

Rebel activities persist: Albanian authorities blocked Gafurr Adili, the head of the Albanian National Army (ANA), March 10 at the Rinas airport as he attempted to enter Albania. Adili had a Macedonian passport and had planned to spend several days in Albania before crossing the border into Macedonia, but was ordered by Albanian police to return to his residency in Switzerland. Florian Seriani, a spokesperson for the Albanian interior ministry, stated March 10 that Albania was committed to peace and stability in the region and would not allow any person working against peace to use its territory as a passage. The ANA has claimed responsibility for violent incidents in southern Serbia and Macedonia and has aimed to unify the territories of the Balkans in which Albanians live. In the latest of its appeals, the ANA asked Albanians to leave the ranks of the multi-ethnic police forces that were established after the hostilities ended in Macedonia and southern Serbia. (AFP, AP, Financial Times, March 10, 2003)

## **NEPAL**

UN encourages inclusion of women: UN Resident Representative to Nepal Henning Karcher urged the government March 8 at International Women's Day celebration to include women in the ongoing dialogue between government officials and Maoists, and that a failure to do so could be detrimental to the long-term sustainability of a settlement. Karcher added that women's experiences, security concerns, values, priorities and commitment to peace would be valuable to both the process and outcome. The Minister for Women, Children, and Social Welfare Gore Bahadur Khapangi said Nepali government officials and people were responsible for ensuring the elevation of women's social status by promoting awareness and concern to liberate women from disease, hunger, illiteracy, and poverty. Nepal ratified the international convention on the elimination of discrimination against women April 22, 1991. More than 7,800 people have died in the seven-year struggle by Maoists to overthrow Nepal's constitutional monarchy and establish a "people's republic." (Kathmandu Post, Rising Nepal, March 8; Press Trust of India, March 9, 2003)

Maoists, government sign code of conduct: A senior member of the Nepal Communist Party (Maoists), Baburam Bhattarai, and government negotiator, Narayan Singh Pun, signed a 22-point Code of Conduct March 13, which finalized the January 29 ceasefire and would allow both sides to proceed with negotiations. The memorandum stated that all 22 points must come into effect immediately and should be fully implemented within three weeks from March 13. Both sides agreed to refrain from any acts of violence, such as arrests, kidnappings and extortions, and to not express any views via the media that could derail the peace process. In addition, both the rebels and the state agreed to gradually release detainees as the peace dialogue progresses. The signing of the 22-point code was the first time the government and Maoists had developed a code to facilitate peace talks to end the seven-year Maoist insurgency. (BBC, Kyodo News Service, Rising Nepal, March 13; Kathmandu Post, March 12, 2003.

Government supplies food to Maoists: Government negotiator Narayan Singh Pun procured 1,500 tons of food grains March 9 to feed Maoist rebels living throughout the country. Pun said that providing necessary food aid to impoverished areas would discourage looting sprees. Pun mentioned that food supplies would not be handed over

until the strength of the Maoist militia was made known. (BBC, March 9; Kathmandu Post, March 8, 2003)

Pro-insurgent students carry out university lock-out: Students associated with the All Nepal National Independent Students' Union-Revolutionary (ANNISU-R) padlocked more than one dozen government colleges March 9 in the Kathmandu Valley. ANNISU-R President Devendra Parajuli said that the government and Tribhuvan University administration have not yet fulfilled ANNISU-R's five-point list of demands. These demands included releasing students in government custody, providing information to the whereabouts of missing students, allowing admission to pro-insurgent students, providing treatment to student victims of torture in jails, and removing all lawsuits against students. This college-aimed lockout was the second attempt by ANNISU-R to have their demands met. The first lockout occurred December 2002, and another was planned for February but was withdrawn after the January 29 ceasefire announcement in order to encourage peace negotiations between the Maoists and the government. (Financial Times, Kathmandu Post, March 9; Xinhua, March 10, 2003)

## **PHILIPPINES**

MILF cancels peace talks: An MILF spokesperson stated March 6 that they would not return to negotiations with the Philippine government until army forces withdrew from Mindanao where rebels and government forces began fighting in February 2003. Initial peace talks were scheduled for March 7 but the MILF did not accept the invitation to engage in those negotiations. President Gloria Arroyo planned to send a representative, Roberto Romulo, to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia March 12 to ask for help in convincing rebels to return to negotiations. Renewed hostilities began in the Mindanao region February 8 and have left more than 200 people dead and approximately 100,000 displaced. Peace talks initially began in January 1997 but were repeatedly inhibited by hostilities between the two groups. (AFP, March 12; AP, March 6; DPA, March 11; Manila Times, March 5, 6, 2003)

Terrorists bomb airport: A homemade bomb exploded March 4 in a waiting area in Davao City airport on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. Government authorities announced March 5 that they had detained five members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in connection with the bombing. Muntazer Sudang, a member of the MILF, was suspected to be the bomber and was killed when the bomb exploded prematurely. The blast, that wounded approximately 157 people and killed 21, appeared to be in retaliation for the government's week long attack on an MILF compound that left approximately 40 MILF members dead. The MILF denied responsibility for the bombing and another rebel group, the Abu Sayyaf, claimed responsibility for the attack. The claim by Abu Sayyaf of responsibility for the attack was dismissed as propaganda by Philippine government authorities. The MILF launched an offensive against the government in 1978 in order to create an independent Muslim state. (BBC, Financial Times, Washington Post, March 6; Manila Times, March 5, 2003)