



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**April 24, 2003**  
*(Volume 5, Number 11)*

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 SUMMARY

### **CHECHNYA**

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

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### **PHILIPPINES**

Bombing suspects are arrested; MILF, government clash; Government, NPA clash

## 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> )
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**

UN rejects censure of Russia: UN Committee for Human Rights rejected a resolution April 16 submitted by the European Union (EU) that urged the Russian government to tackle abuses including forced disappearances, summary executions, and torture carried out by its forces in Chechnya. The motion also condemned hostage taking and attacks by Chechen separatists. The EU-sponsored resolution was rejected by 21 of the 53 voting members with 15 countries voting in favor of the resolution and 17 abstaining. UN officials acknowledged that abuses have taken place but said claims by human rights groups were overstated and that the situation in Chechnya had improved. Russia claimed that Chechen separatists have been supported by international terrorists and that Russia's military action in Chechnya has been a part of international efforts to fight terrorism. Russian forces entered Chechnya in 1999 after Chechen rebels were accused of several apartment bombings in the Russian capital of Moscow. (AFP, AP, April 16, 2003)

Refugees return: More than 200 Chechen refugees returned to the capital of Grozny April 18 after living for three years in a tent camp in the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. The Chechen authorities provided buses to bring the refugees and their belongings to a former university dormitory in Grozny. Russian Minister for Chechnya Stanislav Ilyasov said, after a visit to the five temporary accommodation facilities set up in Grozny, that three of them were substandard and refused to approve them. In January 2003 19,000 Chechen refugees were still living in tent camps in Ingushetia, with 84,000 people internally displaced. (AFP, April 22, 2003)

Rebel, federal forces clash: An April 2003 military operation carried out by Russian federal forces in Chechnya and its neighboring republic of Dagestan resulted in 11 rebel deaths. Six gunmen in Grozny and three in Dagestan from the rebel group Wahhabi Dzhamaat were killed while two alleged rebels from the Chechen rebel group led by Shamil Basayev were killed in the Nozhay-Yurtovsky District. The leader of Wahhabi Dzhamaat, Lechi Eskiyev, was injured during the operation but escaped. Several armed separatist groups have been fighting Russian federal forces since 1994. Wahhabi Dzhamaat has been accused of having ties to the terrorist group Al'qaeda, and Basayev's group was held accountable for the October 2002 seizing a Moscow theater that resulted in 119 deaths. (BBC, April 21, 2003)

OSCE to sponsor round table: A round table supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) entitled "Conflicts in the Caucasus: Abkhazia, Nagornny Karabakh, Chechnya" has been scheduled to take place in The Hague, the Netherlands April 28. The Netherlands Helsinki Committee and the Interchurch Peace Council IKV have organized the round table with the financial support of the office of OSCE. The round table would include scholars and analysts of the conflicts in the Caucasus and would produce recommendations for increasing the efficiency of OSCE activities in the Caucasus. Representatives of international nongovernmental organizations, and of the Netherlands' parliament and foreign ministry will have taken part in the "round table." (BBC, April 22, 2003)

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

President declares general amnesty: President Joseph Kabila granted general amnesty April 16 for people accused of acts of war and political crimes during the country's four-year war. The amnesty would not include war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Amnesty would be applicable for crimes committed from August 2, 1998 to April 4, 2003, the time between the start of the war until the adoption of the new constitution. Kabila stated that amnesty would be a key step to reuniting the Congolese people after the long war that resulted in approximately 3 million deaths. 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 Laurent Kabila countered with the assistance of troops from Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. (AFP, April 16, 17; BBC, April 17, 2003)

Groups form local administration: Rival militia and tribal groups in the northeastern Ituri region agreed April 14 to form a power-sharing local administration in an attempt to stabilize the region. Delegates of the UN-organized Ituri Pacification Commission (IPC) established an interim body that would manage the area until the national government would take over. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to the DRC Amos Namanga Ngongo was present at the April 14 meeting and promised close collaboration between the IPC and the UN. Ugandan forces in the region were urged to prevent the violence and to protect civilians. Representatives from the international nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch stated that recent operations in Ituri have resulted in the killing of civilians and reminded Uganda that it was the responsibility of Ugandan forces occupying the Ituri region to prevent these killings. The IPC, inaugurated April 4, was issued with a mandate to organize the local administration that would maintain law and order, and ensure the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the Ituri region. (BBC, April 14; Human Rights Watch, April 8; United Nations, April 15, 2003)

Ugandan troops to leave Ituri: In accordance with the establishment of the IPC, Ugandan troops were expected to withdraw from the DRC by April 24. Ugandan troops have notionally occupied Ituri as peacekeeping forces. Uganda's presence received criticism for allegedly pitting ethnic Hema and Lendu forces against one another, exploiting natural resources, and encouraging activities that promote instability thus requiring continued Ugandan occupation. However, humanitarian groups and political analysts have expressed concern that the withdrawal of Ugandan troops would result in violence and possible genocide, stating that a military force would be needed after Uganda leaves. According to research conducted by the Ugandan newspaper New Vision, the problems in Ituri could be attributed to ethnic tensions between Hema and Lendu, lack of water and sanitation, lack of health care, community isolation due to violence, and the use of child soldiers in rebel and militia fighting. (BBC, April 15; New Vision, April 18, 2003)

Ituri investigation continues: The April 3 massacre of villagers, that resulted in more than 200 deaths, occurred after the signing of a peace agreement between government, rebel, and civil group representatives in Ituri. The killings were condemned April 9 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Kabila stated

April 9 that those responsible for the attacks had not been identified, and Mello warned that those responsible for the killing of villagers would be charged before the International Criminal Court. A representative of the government, Antoine Mindua Kesia-Mbe, told the UN Commission on Human Rights April 8 that human rights abuses were widespread in the rebel controlled areas of the DRC and called for the UN to focus their attention on these areas and punish the culprits of these offenses. (BBC, IRIN, South African Press Association, April 9; United Nations, April 8, 2003)

IRC reveals results of war: The International Rescue Committee (IRC) stated April 8 that the four-year war in the DRC has resulted in the deaths of 3.3 million people, was the deadliest conflict in African history, and the worst conflict in the world since World War II. The IRC reported that approximately 10 percent of the victims died violently, the vast majority died from starvation and disease that were linked to displacement, collapse of the health care system, and economy as results of the war. According to IRC statistics, in several areas in the DRC approximately fifty percent of the children died before the age of two. Human rights violations continued in April 2003 in defiance of the beginning of the new transitional government with Joseph Kabila as the interim president. (BBC, April 8, 9; Vanguard, April 9, 2003)

#### **ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA**

Afewerki accuses Ethiopia: Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki accused the Ethiopian government in an April 16 radio address of “territorial ambitions and hegemony.” He also stated that the attitude of leaders in Ethiopia continues to obstruct the peace process between the two countries. In April 2002 the UN-mandated Eritrea and Ethiopia Border Commission 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. (BBC, April 16, 2003)

Residents vow to remain: Ethiopian residents of Badme said April 19 they would not vacate their land despite the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) ruling April 13, 2002 that declared Badme as part of the sovereign Eritrean territory. They called on the international community to recognize their conviction to remain on that land. The Ethiopian residents of Badme said that no force could make them leave and the UN peacekeeping forces implementing the border ruling must to execute its mission without any force until the Ethiopian government pursues legal avenues to restore Badme to Ethiopia. (AllAfrica, BBC, April 19, 2003).

#### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

ICC prosecutor is elected: With a unanimous vote of 78 to zero the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) governing assembly elected Argentinean human rights lawyer Luis Moreno Ocampo April 21 to a non-renewable, nine-year term as the first ICC prosecutor due to start June 16. As prosecutor, Ocampo would be required to organize the ICC caseload as well as select the court’s prosecution team members. Currently a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, Ocampo was pre-selected at an informal committee meeting March 24 and was expected to become the first chief prosecutor for the ICC at its headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. Ocampo has gained

prominence in Argentina as a prosecutor, in addition to his current position as president of Transparency International for Latin America, which has campaigned to end business corruption. The ICC, mandated to try cases of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, has formally existed since July 1, 2002. (AFP, AP, April 21, 2003)

Burundi passes genocide law: With a vote of 99 to three and 26 abstentions, the Burundi transitional parliament passed a law April 15 to prevent genocide and other crimes of war. The genocide law was one of the conditions of a three-year transitional government established through the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement reached in Arusha, Tanzania in 2000 that called for a law against genocide before handing over power May 1 by Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya to Hutu Vice-President Domitien Ndayizeye. In addition to the genocide law, parliament passed a law April 16 on the formation of a truth and reconciliation commission to examine crimes committed at the start of the country's independence July 1, 1962 through the date of the commission's promulgation. Burundi's civil war began in 1993 when a Hutu, and first democratically elected president, Melchoir Ndadaye, was killed by a Tutsi insurgent. The subsequent conflict between the army and Hutu rebels resulted in approximately 200,000 deaths. (AFP, Xinhua, April 17; United Nations, April 16, 2003)

Uganda requests case to be dropped by DRC: Uganda asked the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) April 21 to drop the case filed June 23, 1999 at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, the Netherlands. The late President Laurent Kabila accused Uganda of armed aggression, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and human rights violations. The DRC since their 1998 charge has demanded the ICJ order Uganda to withdraw troops from the DRC. Current President Joseph Kabila demanded in early April at a meeting with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni a complete withdrawal of Ugandan troops by April 24. Museveni ordered the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) April 23 to begin withdrawing from the Ituri region of the DRC. Under a UN mandate, the UPDF would be replaced by 2,000 Uruguayan troops and later be assisted by other peacekeeping forces. The conflict in the DRC began in August 1998 when President Laurent Kabila's main sponsors, Rwanda and Uganda, turned against him and began supporting anti-government rebellion, which Kabila countered with the assistance of troops from Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. (Financial Times, New Vision, Xinhua, April 21; Monitor, April 23, 2003)

## **MACEDONIA**

Justice minister releases prisoners: Justice Minister Ismail Darlista announced April 8 that all remaining ethnic Albanian rebels imprisoned after the end of the 2001 conflict would soon be released. The announcement followed demonstrations by ethnic Albanians demanding full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement that ended the conflict and called for amnesty agreements. In addition to the release of prisoners, all charges would be dropped against former rebel group, National Liberation Army members. Ethnic Albanian rebels took up arms against the Macedonian government to fight for the rights of the ethnic Albanian minority in February 2001. The seven-month conflict ended with the signing of the Ohrid Agreement. (DPA, April 8, 2003)

## **NEPAL**

Government, Maoists hold talks: Minister for Physical Planning and Construction and chief coordinator of the government negotiation team, Narayan Singh Pun, met for informal talks April 13 at the office of Karnali Airlines in the capital of Kathmandu with the five-member Maoist negotiating team including team leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. According to Pun the talks included discussion on the future implementation of a code of conduct to be used for official talks as well as the gradual release of arrested rebels. Since February 1996 approximately 8,000 people have died from the conflict between the government and Maoist rebels. Since an announced ceasefire January 29, 2003, the government and Maoists have attempted to ensure peace through ongoing dialogue. (DPA, April 14; Financial Times, Xinhua, April 13, 2003)

Government appoints negotiating team: A six-member government negotiating team, mandated to pursue formal peace talks with the Maoists, was formed April 16 by the King's cabinet. Since the January 29 ceasefire the Maoists have accused the government of delaying the peace process by failing to form a negotiating team when the Maoists have had a negotiating team since February 2. Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Badri Prasad Mandal replaced Chief Government Coordinator Colonel Narayan Singh Pun as head of the team, however Pun has remained a member of the team. The other four members include Information and Communication General Administration Ramesh Nath Pandey, Health, Science, and Technology Minister Dr. Upendra Devkota, Minister of Labor and Transport Management Population and Environment Kamal Prasad Chaulagai, and Assistant Minister of Women, Children, and Social Welfare Anuradha Koirala. (AFP, DPA, Financial Times, April 16, 2003)

Government, Maoists postpone peace talks: The first round of official peace talks due to be held April 21 were cancelled after an April 20 meeting between Pun and Bhattarai. Maoist spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara stated that talks were postponed until the government could fully prepare a concrete political agenda for the talks. The five-member Maoist negotiating team left Kathmandu for Dhangadhi, a Maoist stronghold in southwestern Kathmandu, for a public rally. The rescheduling of peace talks would take place after the return of Maoist negotiating leaders to Kathmandu. (AFP, BBC, Financial Times, April 21, 2003)

King ousts three ministers: King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev ousted three senior ministers April 11 following four days of protests by students in Kathmandu Valley regarding high oil prices and the death of a student protestor April 8 in Butwal in western Nepal. Based on the recommendation of Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Home Minister Dharam Bahadur Thapa, Education Minister Devi Prasad Ojha, and Minister for Industry and Supplies Mahesh Lal Shrestha were ousted. The king reassigned the post of Home Minister to Deputy Prime Minister Badri Prasad Mandal, and the Ministries for Education and Industry and Supplies to Chand. Former Home Minister Thapa said his dismissal by the King was due to his inability to maintain law and order based on his unpopular decision to raise prices on petroleum products. (BBC, Xinhua, April 12; DPA, April 11, 2003)

Student strike paralyzes Kathmandu: Seven student organizations including the Nepali Congress-affiliated Nepal Students' Union and the Nepal National Free Students Union held a general strike April 20 that paralyzed Kathmandu and the adjoining cities of Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. All shops, colleges, and business establishments were closed and streets were deserted. Since April 8 students have protested increased petroleum prices as well as the death of a student leader April 8 in Butwal. Students pledged April 20 to launch a movement to fight against the current monarch-appointed government. (AFP, DPA, April 20; Xinhua, April 21, 2003)

## **PHILIPPINES**

Bombing suspects are arrested: Police arrested two men in connection with the April 2 and April 12 bombings in the southern city of Davao that killed 32 people and the airport bombing that killed 22 people March 4. The government has alleged that the suspects are linked to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, who denied the allegations. President Gloria Arroyo stated April 8 that there was reliable intelligence that implicated Indonesian nationals in the attacks. Davao, the largest city on the island of Mindanao, has a mostly Christian population. Mindanao has experienced factional fighting between government troops and Muslim separatists for more than two decades. (BBC, April 8; Washington Post, April 9, 2003)

MILF, government clash: Government troops increased attacks on Abu Sayyaf rebels in the southern Philippines. Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim group known for its tactics in kidnapping for ransom, was an extreme fragment of the main rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the south. The army stated April 15 that they had killed at least six Abu Sayyaf rebels in attacks. The government also continued attacks on MILF forces and killed approximately 30 members the week of April 7. Renewed hostilities began in the Mindanao region February 8 and have left more than 200 people dead and displaced approximately 100,000. Peace talks initially began in January 1997 but were repeatedly delayed by hostilities between the government and the MILF. The MILF launched an offensive against the government in 1978 in order to create an independent Muslim state. (BBC, April 7, 15; Xinhua News, April 8, 2003)

Government, NPA clash: During the week of April 7 four people were killed and nine others injured in separate battles between the government and the National People's Army (NPA) in the central Philippines. The fighting caused approximately 200 people to flee their homes. Six armed NPA rebels burned a bus April 8 that was owned by the Philippine Rabbit Bus Line. The NPA rebels allowed the bus conductor and passengers to unload and gather their belongings before setting it ablaze. They told the passengers that the motivation for the burning was to teach the Rabbit Bus Line a lesson, because the bus line had refused to pay revolutionary taxes, fees used to fund NPA activities. The NPA's civilian support has decreased according to Philippine army officials. Government officials also claimed that the NPA had been taking a 10 percent share of teachers' and other workers' salaries in the areas they control. The NPA has been fighting against the government since the late 1960s, making the movement one of the longest running leftist insurgencies in Asia. (BBC, April 7, 9; Philippine Daily Inquirer, April 8, 2003)

