



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**March 11, 2005**  
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The countries for the Peace & 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). The Gender and Peace section highlights events in peace-building that pertain to gender and human rights.

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## UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	=	Agence France-Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus ( <a href="http://www.africafocus.org">www.africafocus.org</a> )
AI	=	Amnesty International ( <a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a> )
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allAfrica.com">www.allAfrica.com</a> )
Americas	=	Americas ( <a href="http://www.americas.org">www.americas.org</a> )
AP	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
B92	=	B92 ( <a href="http://www.b92.com">www.b92.com</a> )
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">http://news.bbc.co.uk</a> )
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports ( <a href="http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/">www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/</a> )
Colombo Page	=	Sri Lankan Online News ( <a href="http://www.colombopage.com">www.colombopage.com</a> )
Daily News	=	Sri Lanka Daily News ( <a href="http://www.dailynews.lk">www.dailynews.lk</a> )
El Periódico	=	El Periódico ( <a href="http://www.elperiodico.es">www.elperiodico.es</a> )
EU	=	European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network ( <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk">www.guardian.co.uk</a> )
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch News ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )
IANS	=	Indo-Asian News Service ( <a href="http://www.eians.com">www.eians.com</a> )
ICC	=	International Criminal Court ( <a href="http://www.icc-cpi.int">www.icc-cpi.int</a> )
ICG	=	International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisweb.org">www.crisisweb.org</a> )
ICTR	=	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ( <a href="http://www.ictr.org">www.ictr.org</a> )
Independent	=	The Independent ( <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk">www.independent.co.uk</a> )
IPS	=	Inter Press Agency ( <a href="http://www.ipsnew.net">www.ipsnew.net</a> )
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network ( <a href="http://www.irinnews.org">www.irinnews.org</a> )
Kansas City Star	=	Kansas City Star ( <a href="http://www.kansascity.com">www.kansascity.com</a> )
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com.np">www.nepalnews.com.np</a> )
La Hora	=	La Hora ( <a href="http://www.lahora.com">www.lahora.com</a> )
Prensa Libre	=	La Prensa Libre ( <a href="http://www.prensalibre.com">www.prensalibre.com</a> )
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times ( <a href="http://www.latimes.com">www.latimes.com</a> )
Monitor	=	The Monitor ( <a href="http://www.monitor.co.ug">www.monitor.co.ug</a> )
MONUC	=	MONUC ( <a href="http://www.monuc.org">www.monuc.org</a> )
Nepal News	=	Nepal News.Com ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com">www.nepalnews.com</a> )
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times ( <a href="http://www.nepalitimes.com">www.nepalitimes.com</a> )
NYT	=	The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com">www.allafrica.com</a> )
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a> )
Reuters	=	Reuters ( <a href="http://www.reuters.com">www.reuters.com</a> )
Real Cities	=	Real Cities ( <a href="http://www.realcities.com">www.realcities.com</a> )
Relief Web	=	Relief Web ( <a href="http://www.reliefweb.com">www.reliefweb.com</a> )
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald ( <a href="http://www.smh.com">www.smh.com</a> )
Terra	=	Terra ( <a href="http://www.terra.com">www.terra.com</a> )
Turkish Press	=	Turkish Press ( <a href="http://www.turkishpress.com">www.turkishpress.com</a> )
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage ( <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a> )
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ( <a href="http://www.unhcr.ch">www.unhcr.ch</a> )
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund ( <a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> )
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women ( <a href="http://www.unifem.org">www.unifem.org</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> )
WP	=	Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )

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## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia request transfer of war criminals: Bosnia and Serbia have both asked the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), for the transfer of the same four Bosnian Serbs: Zeljko Meakic, Dusko Knezevic, Dusan Fustar, and Momcilo Gruban. All four have been accused of war crimes in the Omarska and Kerater camps in 1992. Most of the war crimes have been tried by the ICTY but lower-profile cases have begun to be transferred to national courts. The ICTY filed a request for the case of the four indictees to be transferred to Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of last year but the Serbian government, at the request of the defense team, asked to transfer the trial to Belgrade courts. Although some argue that the Serbian courts are adequately prepared to handle war crimes trials, Medzida Kreso, a Bosnian national judge, said the Bosnian courts had the most success bringing about legal reforms in the Balkans and that the courts are up to international standards. Some have been concerned that the Bosnian court will be biased, but many Bosnian Serbs already argue that the Hague is biased against them. The 1992-95 Bosnian war, which saw the worst war crimes in Europe since World War II, claimed 200,000 lives. (B92, Reuters, March 4, 2005 )

## **BURUNDI**

Population flees tension and hunger: Hundreds of Burundians fled into neighboring Rwanda to escape persecution and hunger, and e people were killed in a rebel attack in Burundi as tension in that country increased in the aftermath of a referendum supporting the new constitution. Forces for National Liberation (FNL), the only rebel group that had not signed Burundi's peace accord to end the 12-year civil war, was blamed for the atrocities. Even though the referendum was a success there had been continued tensions and people had fled in anticipation of new clashes and attacks. The latest group of refugees included hundreds of Batwa (also known as pygmies) who fled after being intimidated by ethnic Hutus, as the Hutus anticipated the Batwa to vote "no" during the referendum. The continued flight of refugees was also attributed to an imminent food shortage in Burundi's northeastern provinces, due to low crop yields following decreased rainfall. Burundi, like neighboring Rwanda, has been torn apart by years of conflict between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi elite, with a civil war in 1993 killing an estimated 300,000. However, February 28 the nation approved a new power-sharing constitution designed to end 12 years of ethnic conflict. (BBC, February 27, March 2, 8; IRIN, February 24, March 3, 9, 2005)

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

UN peacekeepers kill 50: UN Nepalese, Pakistani, and South African peacekeeping troops killed at least 50 militiamen when they came under attack while carrying out a routine operation March 1. "While on operation we were fired upon, so we immediately responded," said Col. Dominique Demange, a spokesman for UN forces in the DRC. Helicopter gunships and armored vehicles were used in the operation against the militia, believed to be from the ethnic Lendu Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI). FNI's leader Floribert Ndjabu had been arrested following the killing of 9 Bangladeshi peacekeepers February 25, and the March 1 clash happened in Loga in the DRC's

northeastern district of Ituri, near where the peacekeepers were killed. A local Lendu leader accused the UN of wreaking indiscriminate revenge. But UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) “had the right to protect itself when shot at.” Dujarric also noted that the operation was part of MONUC’s more robust approach to normalize the situation in Ituri and to protect the civilian population. After years of criticism for being ineffective and being labeled “tourists in a war zone,” MONUC sent out a new message “it will get tough on ethnic militias.” In Ituri militia conflicts between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups had resulted in the deaths of approximately 50,000 people since 1999 in a conflict over economic control of land rich in diamonds, gold, and other natural resources. ([AllAfrica](#), March 2; [BBC](#); [CNN](#), March 2, 3; [IRIN](#), March 4; [NYT](#), March 3; [Xinhua](#), March 2, 2005)

Judicial reform needed to bring justice to rape victims: In the conflict in eastern DRC government troops and rebel fighters have raped tens of thousands of women and girls, but fewer than a dozen perpetrators have been prosecuted for their crimes, said Human Rights Watch (HRW) in the report, “Seeking Justice: Prosecution of Sexual Violence in the Congo War” released March 7. HRW reported the current national laws on rape and war crimes were inadequate and inconsistent with the requirements of international humanitarian and human rights law, and that the DRC government had taken insufficient steps to prosecute those responsible for wartime rape. The DRC’s judicial system was judged to be in disarray and judges and prosecutors often failed to treat sexual violence as a serious crime. However, an increasing number of victims demanded justice and the HRW called on the DRC government and international donors to make judicial reform a priority. A peace agreement following a six-year war was signed in 2002, but despite this soldiers of the national army and armed groups continued to use sexual violence as a method of war in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Orientale. ([AllAfrica](#), March 8; [HRW](#), March 7, 2005)

## **GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING**

“Challenges and obstacles still remain” for women’s rights says Beijing+10 Conference: Delegates from 191 member states and about 6,000 representatives from women’s advocacy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) gathered February 28 to March 11 to discuss the promotion of equality for women and girls, and found that though progress had been made towards achieving gender equality, many challenges still remained. The conference stressed that “the full and effective implementation” of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) of 1995 was necessary to accomplish specific goals such as cutting poverty in half by 2015 and eliminating laws that discriminate against women. While countries have made strides in the recognition of rape and sexual violence as war crimes, a new report by the NGO, Women’s Environment and Development Organization, concluded that women today are worse off than they were 10 years ago and accused governments of failing to make efforts to achieve greater equality. The report concluded that trends of increased poverty, inequality, and militarization were harming women worldwide. In addition, trafficking in women has increased and women still comprise 70 percent of the world’s poor, said the Beijing+10 declaration. The adoption of the Beijing+10 declaration was slowed down by U.S. efforts to promote an amendment

stating that abortion was an issue of national sovereignty and not new a human right delineated by the conference. However, the U.S. later said that the new amendment was not necessary and withdrew the motion. ([AllAfrica](#), March 6; [Daily News](#), March 7; [Reuters](#), March 5)

## **GUATEMALA**

**Landmark discrimination trial begins:** Tuesday marked the beginning of Guatemala's first discrimination trial, put in motion when Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú filed a complaint against five members of the Guatemalan Republican Front, accusing them of racial discrimination. Menchú says she was the target of racial slurs while being pushed and shoved during a 2003 Constitutional Court hearing related to the presidential re-election of retired Gen. Ríos Montt. While the defense has also been charged with aggression and disturbance of the peace they only have admitted to the racial slurs claiming these are not a criminal offense. Guatemala had no legislation protecting citizens from discrimination until 2002 when new legislation was passed holding discrimination offenders accountable with jail terms for up to 3 years. The prosecution hopes to have a judgment in the case by Friday. ([Reuters](#), March 8, 2005)

**Guatemala ratifies Central American Free Trade Agreement:** March 8 saw the reemergence of protests against the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in the capital as the Guatemalan Congress prepared to ratify the agreement. The protesters feared the agreement would disadvantage industries vulnerable to tough competition from cheap imports. The CAFTA agreement proposes to set up a free-trade area among all signatory countries in the next decade, and was set up by the U.S. in hopes of accelerating the Free Trade Agreement of Americas that aims to create a free-trade region stretching from Alaska to Chile. CAFTA remains to be ratified by the U.S. Congress and currently only Honduras and El Salvador have ratified it. ([El Periódico](#), March 8, 2005)

**U.S. Catholic bishops urge protection for Bishop:** Catholic bishops and other church leaders made an appeal to protect Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri, an indigenous people's advocate and human rights defender, after the discovery of an attempt on his life. The Guatemalan government had blamed Ramazzini for the violence that occurred January 11 when several indigenous people protested the building of a mine in San Marcos province, home to a large indigenous population. Many of the Mayan indigenous peoples see the mine as a sign of foreign intervention and destruction of the environment. The mine is to be financed by the World Bank with a \$ 45 million loan to Glamis Gold, a U.S.-Canadian company. ([Americas](#), March 4, 2005)

## **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Human Rights Groups alert International Criminal Court to situation in Nepal:** Fourteen human rights and academic groups have alerted the International Criminal Court (ICC) to human rights violations in Nepal. February 1 King Gyanendra dissolved the government putting the country under emergency rule while claiming he was responding to Maoist

rebels. The human rights groups are concerned about rising reports of attacks, arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, rape, and forced disappearances. They also called on the United Nations to do whatever is in its power to prevent the escalation of human rights violations into crimes against humanity. Specifically they requested a UN envoy be sent to Nepal to facilitate the return to democracy. (Relief Web, March 7, 2005)

## **KOSOVO**

Ethnic Albanians agree to form part of a coordination body: Ethnic Albanians have agreed to take part in a coordination body that will oversee the Preservo Valley area, a troubled region since fighting broke out in 2000 and 2001 when ethnic Albanians took up arms to demand better rights for minorities. The agreement was signed in Belgrade in the presence of U.S. and EU representatives in the office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has tried to mediate talks in the past. Not all Albanians approved of the move as demonstrated by Albanian Democratic Party leader Ragmi Mustafa's refusal to sign. He represents a large portion of ethnic Albanians in the Southern region who have boycotted Serbian institutions for several years. (Turkish Press, March 4, 2005)

Prime Minister of Kosovo surrenders to The Hague: After resigning March 8 Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, surrendered to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Upon resignation Haradinaj, who has been charged with war crimes in the 1998-99 Kosovo conflict, claimed his innocence and urged ethnic Albanians to remain peaceful. In the event of protests NATO has deployed 1,000 troops in the province to bolster the NATO-led Kosovo Protection Force. Kosovo has been administered by the UN since NATO drove out Serb forces with bombs in 1999. Haradinaj's deputy, Adem Salih, will take over as acting prime minister until a permanent replacement is elected. (B92, March 8, 2005; BBC, March 9, 2005)

## **NEPAL**

India boosts patrols on border: Fears that political unrest from Nepal could spill over influenced India to increase its military presence on the Indian/Nepalese border. Armed patrols were asked to "step up vigilance and patrolling along the border" said Indian junior foreign Minister Edappakath Ahamed. Analysts said that violence will increase as the Nepalese army cracks down on Maoist rebels, with 200 people already killed since King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency February 1. India feared that Maoist rebels could work with leftist militant groups along the border, inciting unrest with India itself. India has led international condemnation of Gyanendra's military takeover and withdrew aid last week. (Reuters, March 9, 2005)

Japan to send foreign aid: Japan signed two separate agreements with Nepal March 7 to provide \$31 million for development assistance. Of this, \$14 million was to be used for economic adjustment and \$17 million for socioeconomic development including the buying of machinery and equipment. Japan's decision was focused on "addressing issues at the core of the Maoist insurgency such as poverty alleviation and redressing social

inequality,” declared the Japanese Embassy. Japan was the first country to send foreign aid to Nepal since King Gyanendra’s takeover in early February 2005, and has urged the King to release political prisoners and restore democracy. Many other countries, including India and the UK withdrew their military aid to Nepal February 2005 in protest against the King’s takeover. (IANS, Kansas City Star, March 7, 2005)

Police end anti-King rallies: Police arrested more than 180 activists March 8 protesting the King’s takeover of the government. The protesters, about half of whom were women and who included former lawmakers and ministers, formed the largest demonstration since the takeover. The protesters gathered in Kathmandu shouting slogans such as “Down with the royal move! Long live democracy,” defying royal bans on free association and public meetings instituted February 1. Police used tear gas and batons to arrest protesters who were then taken away to undisclosed locations. King Gyanendra said he seized power because of the corruption of political parties and the government’s inability to stop the Maoist insurgency that has killed more than 10,000 people since 1996. (Kansas City Star, Reuters, March 8, 2005)

## **RWANDA**

High women’s participation in government: Rwanda was the country in the world with the highest percentage of female political representation, according to the *World Map of Women in Politics 2005*. With 48.8 percent women in Parliament, gender parity was not too far away. This was not achieved through political will only, but through a legislated quota for women in the country’s new Constitution, which mandated that women held a minimum of 30 percent of all positions in government. Six other developing countries – Cuba, Costa Rica, Mozambique, Argentina, South Africa, and Guyana – also had more than 30 percent women parliamentarians, ranking them among the 17 top performers on gender equality in politics. Anne Gahongayire, Rwanda’s Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Gender and Promotion of the Family, said it was not only a matter of numbers, but that women in Rwanda also head important ministries like Economic Planning, Education, the Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Environment and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Justice. However, the New York Times maintained that the numbers were merely a reflection of the demographics resulting from the 1994 genocide, which killed 800,000 people. As a result of the killing of so many men and the escape of the men responsible for the genocide women greatly outnumbered men; some estimated the ratio at seven to one. (AllAfrica, March 4, 7; NYT, February 26, 2005)

## **SOMALIA**

President and Prime Minister return from tour: President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi returned this week from a nine-day tour of Somalia. The purpose of the trip was to assess the situation in preparation for the return of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) currently exiled in neighboring Kenya. The TFG, formed in October 2004, has been unable to establish itself in Somalia, devastated by years of anarchy and clan warfare. The trip was considered a success as the two leaders were warmly welcomed by many Somalis. However difficulties occurred

when the President and Prime Minister boarded their plane and attempted to leave, with the plane surrounded by local armed militia who refused to allow the aircraft to take off until a payment was made. While on tour the President and Prime Minister were unable to visit the capital of Mogadishu, as the divided city, which has seen recent outbreaks of violence, was considered not safe enough. Prime Minister Ghedi seemed to have reverted from his original plan to relocate to Mogadishu and instead has suggested looking for a temporary transitional location. He pointed out that although alternatives are being looked at, Mogadishu will remain the capital. (BBC 4,8 March; IRIN 3,9 March 2005)

President committed to troop deployment despite opposition: Amid new accounts of clashes between rival groups President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed has reiterated his call for the deployment of peacekeeping troops in Somalia to disarm the various clans and militias. The African Union (AU) was to meet on Monday to further address this issue. However it has already authorized the deployment of troops from many of Somalia's neighbors, who in turn have expressed their readiness to carry out the mission. There is large opposition in Somalia to any peacekeeping troops from neighboring countries, and groups have vowed to meet the deployment with resistance. They maintain that many of the countries, particularly Ethiopia, have a history of in meddling in Somali affairs. This view was backed by the U.S., which recently issued a statement opposing deployment of troops from those frontline states. (BBC 4,8 March; IRIN 3,9 March 2005)

## **SRI LANKA**

EU says that government must share tsunami aid with LTTE-controlled areas: EU External Relations Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner visited Sri Lanka March 8 to meet with tsunami survivors. After assessing some of the damage, Ferrero-Waldner declared the necessity of a mechanism to guarantee aid was distributed fairly, including to Tamil-controlled regions, declaring, "The aid has to go where it is needed and it has to be fair and balanced distribution." The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government have been deadlocked for weeks over the distribution of foreign aid. Senior LTTE negotiator S. Pulleedevan has said, "The aid is not going to the northeast," where the Tigers control most of the countryside. Ferrero Waldner was planning talk to the LTTE during her trip but logistical circumstances prevented it. Peace talks between the Tigers and the government have been hampered not only by controversy over aid distribution but by violence from both parties. Six villagers killed March 6 in Eastern Sri Lanka add to the already 65,000 casualties caused since the civil war began in 1983. (Reuters, March 8; The Star, March 6, 2005)

## **SUDAN**

International community failing to support peace: The fragile peace between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) of the South and the government of the North was in danger of falling apart if the international community failed to lend its support, said UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland. In January 2005, a peace was agreed with the help of

the international community, in particular the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). However Egeland, recently returned from a tour of Sudan, reported that the international community was failing to provide the aid required to sustain the peace and rebuild a country ravaged by years of fighting. Sudan originally requested \$500 million and so far only \$25 million had been received and another \$25 million promised. With millions of displaced southern Sudanese beginning to return home, and infrastructure almost completely wiped out, support was needed immediately. The impending May raining season further underscored the urgency of the situation, with a donors' meeting in Norway scheduled for April likely to be of little use. Egeland pointed out the "tragic paradox" between southern Sudan and Darfur, with the latter region receiving a significant amount of international humanitarian support but lacking political stability and security and the former receiving security and political support but lacking humanitarian aid. Egeland stated "I fear the world is making an historic mistake here in Southern Sudan." In 22 years of conflict in Sudan two million lives were lost and up to four million people displaced. ([BBC](#) 6 March; [IRIN](#) 3, 8 March 2005)

Security Council to have resolution on Darfur within a week: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with the Security Council this week to once again express the urgency of the situation in Darfur, the western region of Sudan. As reports of killing, rape and the burning of villages continued, Annan warned that the Security Council could not afford to stall any longer. A UN report earlier this month recommended those responsible for the atrocities be tried by the International Criminal Court (ICC), and provided a list of 50 individuals responsible. However, this proposal has so far been blocked by the U.S. due to its outright rejection of the ICC. A further proposal has been to impose sanctions on the government of Sudan, in particular on oil exports. This move, supported by the majority of the council, has been blocked by China and Russia, both big importers of Sudanese oil. The Security Council stated its aim to reach an agreement by the end of the week. ([AllAfrica](#) 3 March; [BBC](#) 3, 8 March; [HRW](#) 3 March; [IRIN](#) 3, 8 March)

Janjaweed leader implicates government: The release this week of a Human Rights Watch (HRW) interview with top Janjaweed leader Musa Hilal has brought the matter of justice and accountability further to the fore. In the interview Hilal claimed the actions of the militia were ordered from above by the Sudanese government, clearly contradicting the prevailing government stance that it had no connection with the Janjaweed. The conflict began in Darfur when rebels from the region attacked government targets in 2003 claiming they had been neglected by Khartoum. The counter-attack led by the government and the Janjaweed has resulted in the deaths of more than 100,000 people and the displacement a further two million. The U.S has referred to the situation as genocide, while the UN has stopped short of using this term but agrees that war crimes have been committed and considers the situation to be the world's worst humanitarian crisis. ([AllAfrica](#) 3 March; [BBC](#) 3, 8 March; [HRW](#) 3 March; [IRIN](#) 3, 8 March)

## UGANDA

International criticism voiced against presidential third term: The controversial proposal by President Yoweri Museveni to change the Ugandan constitution and lift presidential

term limits has been attacked by international actors, with a group of 27 MPs from the UK House of Commons signing a motion against the proposal. This lent support to the recent concern raised by Dutch Minister Agnes Van Ardenne following her trip to Uganda to meet with Museveni. Ardenne told Museveni that the constitution should not be amended, stressing that the President should not “press his people to align with his ideas.” President Museveni’s second term is set to expire next year and lifting the term limit would allow him to continue as president for a third term and even indefinitely. Museveni criticized international actors as having no right to meddle in Uganda’s sovereignty, while others pointed to Uganda’s heavy reliance on donor aid as justifying donor comments. The lifting of the term limits has been coupled with the proposal to return to a multi-party system. A single amendment encompassing both proposals was to be put to Ugandan people as an ‘all or nothing’ decision. The BBC argued that with “plenty of support on his side within the government and plenty of cash flying around” it is likely Museveni will get his way. Museveni has been Uganda’s leader State for nearly 20 years. ([AllAfrica](#) 1,7 March; [BBC](#) 25 February 2005)