



Peace & Justice Update
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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 or 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

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AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africanfocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
Air Force Times	=	Air Force Times (http://www.airforcetimes.com)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allAfrica.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/)
Colombo Page	=	Sri Lankan Online News (www.colombopage.com)
Daily News	=	Sri Lanka Daily News (www.dailynews.lk)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
EU Business	=	EU Business (www.eubusiness.com)
Fena	=	Fena (www.fena.ba)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
ICTR	=	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (www.icttr.org)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
La Hora	=	La Hora (www.lahora.com)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
MONUC	=	MONUC (www.monuc.org)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News.Com (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (http://www.newvision.co.ug)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.allAfrica.com)
Prensa Libre	=	La Prensa Libre (www.prensalibre.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
Relief Web	=	Relief Web (www.reliefweb.com)
RMF	=	Rigoberta Menchú Foundation (http://www.frmt.org)
The Nation	=	The Nation (www.thenation.com)
Times of India	=	Times of India (www.timesofindia.com)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (www.unhcr.ch)
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)
WP	=	Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ashdown demands president resign: Lord Ashdown, chief international overseer for the Dayton peace accords that ended the 1992-95 Bosnian War, has required that Dragan Covic step down from his position in Bosnia's tripartite joint presidency. Covic has been charged with customs evasion, corruption, and abuse of office more specifically, giving tax breaks to business associates between the years 2000 and 2003. Despite Ashdown's demand to step down, Covic said last week he would not resign without first being found guilty. If he leaves he will be the third member of the Bosnian presidency forced out by international pressure since the formation of the Office of the High Representative in December 1995. (BBC; FENA March 29, 2005)

GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING

Women work for political rights in Liberia: Women from multiple political parties joined together in the Coalition of Political Parties for Women in Liberia (COPPWIL) to advocate greater political rights in the public sector, and participated in a 4-day conference beginning March 28 entitled "Breaking the Barriers and Empowering Women for Political Participation." Speaking at the conference opening, chief facilitator Dr. Nematta Eshun urged Liberian women to be more proactive in the search for equality and to continue the struggle for full participation in all aspects of society. Delegate Madina Wesseh of Liberia Transitional Initiative, a USAID supported (NGO), also noted that high illiteracy levels also hamper women's political empowerment, and called for "civilized and peaceful" initiatives to demand political, social, and economic rights. (All Africa, March 28, 2005)

Laura Bush visits Afghanistan to promote education for women: U.S. first lady Laura Bush visited Kabul March 30 to show support for Afghani women, focusing on women's education. Speaking at Kabul University, Bush reiterated women's essential role in building Afghanistan's democracy in light of the success of October's presidential election, saying, "Democracy is more than just elections. The survival of a free society ultimately depends on the participation of all its citizens, both men and women." Bush also announced grants of \$17.7 million to create an American University of Afghanistan and a second grant of \$3.5 million for an International School of Afghanistan for children to receive a U.S.- style education. Washington has allocated \$80 million for education in Afghanistan but the sum is small in comparison to \$140 million pledged for economic and military assistance. Currently, about 60 percent of girls are not educated but this figure is considered an improvement over conditions under Taliban rule when all women were prohibited from going to school. (BBC, March 30; Reuters, March 30, 2005)

Kenyan women bring rape cases to UN: Hundreds of Kenyan women who assert they were raped by British forces in the 1980s and 1990s have been taking their cases to the UN, seeking millions of pounds in compensation and accusing the Kenyan and UK governments of not making sufficient efforts to help them. The women's lawyer, Joyce Majiwa, said that investigations into the alleged rapes did not occur in Kenya and that the Kenyan government did not pressure the UK for compensation, adding, "We want to

bring this matter to the international fore because it involves several nations.” However, the British High Commission said that all known written reports of alleged rape by British Army soldiers were forgeries. (BBC, March 30, 2005)

GUATEMALA

Protests against CAFTA continue while the government plans for its implementation:

March 29 protestors filled the streets to show their continued disapproval of the government’s March 14 signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) agreement which requires Guatemala to join a free trade zone in Central America. Their goal was to prevent CAFTA’s enforcement, and they planned to present their case in front of the Constitutional Court. The government planned to proceed with CAFTA implementation despite the protests. This week the executive branch was to discuss rural development in light of the changes that CAFTA will bring. (Prensa Libre, March 28, 29, 2005)

Police and military forces unite: The Civil National Police (PNC) was awaiting the installment of 583 military officers that were to join their forces to combat common crime. The Department of the Interior has set out to install the military personnel in response to a lack of resources on part of the PNC. Despite claims that the new task force would be organized more like a police force than a military body, human rights ombudsman Sergio Morales insisted that it violates the 1996 Peace Accords creating a combined military and police power. The signing of the Peace Accords concluded 36 years of civil war in which according to the UN-sponsored Truth Commission the Guatemalan army committed 93 percent of the war crimes. (El Periódico, March 29, 2005)

NEPAL

India increases troops at Nepal border: India announced March 28 that 20,000 soldiers would be sent to the India/Nepal border within two years to prevent spillover from the nine-year conflict between the Nepalese monarchy and Maoist rebels. Twenty new battalions were to be placed on the border and the budget of the paramilitary group Sashastra Seema Bal that patrols the border was to be increased by 47 percent Indian home minister Shivraj Patil declared, “For long, the two unmanned borders have presented opportunity to forces inimical to the country’s interest to further their nefarious designs through subversion, militant and fundamentalist activities.” Maoist-inspired Naxalite rebels active in the Indian state of Bihar and Nepalese rebels have been able to easily cross the 1,110 mile border into India. India has condemned King Gyanendra’s takeover of Nepal’s multiparty democracy and has terminated all military aid. (BBC, March 28; Reuters, March 28, 2005)

Pakistan-Nepal economic talks begin: Discussions between Pakistan and Nepal resumed March 29 regarding economic cooperation after a 10-year hiatus. A delegation led by Pakistani Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar was to focus on strengthening bilateral trade between the two countries. Khar announced, “I have come

here to ensure that we do whatever we can do to ensure a healthy economic relation.” Khar also said that Pakistani military assistance to Nepal would come in the form of a 35-million rupee soft loan. Pakistan is the first country to send an official delegation to Nepal since the King’s February 1 takeover. In addition, Pakistan voiced its support for the King’s takeover, describing the royal coup as an internal affair. (Kantipur Online, March 28; Times of India, March 29, 2005)

Journalists protest royal censorship: Hundreds of protesters held demonstrations insisting on the restoration of press freedoms throughout the country. Since his February 1 coup, the King has installed censors at the offices of numerous media and communication outlets. The International Federation of Journalists said that about half of Nepal’s newspapers stopped publishing because of the government’s censorship. In addition, several journalists have been arrested for protesting and hundreds have lost their jobs. The government asserted that press curbs would be loosened once the security situation improved. (BBC, March 29, 2005)

Amnesty reiterates need for Special Rapporteur: Amnesty International (AI) has called on the UN Commission of Human Rights (UNCHR) to adopt a resolution establishing a Special Rapporteur on Nepal and guaranteeing a strong international human rights monitoring presence. AI Secretary General Irene Khan declared, “The Commission on Human Rights must act forcefully and decisively to reverse the human rights catastrophe unfolding in Nepal.” (Kantipur Online, March 30, 2005).

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Kosovo governor meets with Serbian officials: UN Special Representative of the Secretary General and head of the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) Jessen Peterson visited Belgrade March 27 and 28, and met with Serbian government officials to discuss cooperation between the Belgrade and Pristina governments. Dialogue between the governments was halted last year when riots broke out in Kosovo, and resumed after a meeting in which a Kosovo missing persons group brought together officials from Belgrade and Pristina. Foreign Affairs minister Vuk Draskovic responded to queries about his meeting with Peterson March 27 saying that he insisted on maintaining the borders of Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo authorities, on the other hand, advocate the separation of Kosovo from Serbia and Montenegro. Talks on Kosovo’s final status are expected to begin after the first half of this year and only if the Kosovo government meets the UN-set standards of democracy. Kosovo’s status has been an issue of contention since 1912 when Serbia regained control of Kosovo in the First Balkan war ended Ottoman Turkish rule in south-eastern Europe. In 1998 Kosovo attempted to secede and war erupted leading to a NATO air bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999 and UN administered government. (B92, March 27, 28, 2005)

SOMALIA

Militia clash further delays relocation: Fighting in the town of Baidoa between rival militias led to 14 dead and jeopardized the Transitional Federal Government’s (TFG)

plan to relocate. MPs recently voted to delay the government's return to the capital, Mogadishu, due to security concerns, and proposed the town of Baidoa as a temporary alternative. This news was greeted by celebrations on the streets of Baidoa. However violence erupted when one warlord, also an MP, ordered his militia to open fire on those taking part in the celebrations. A rival militia, also led by a member of the transitional parliament, retaliated and the resulting gunfight continued for two days before coming to a halt early this week. Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi was quick to condemn the violence and urged the warlords to observe a ceasefire. It is thought that this recent outbreak of fighting will only further hinder the government's efforts to relocate. Somalia was plunged into anarchy with the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991. The TFG, currently exiled in Kenya, has been under increasing international pressure to return to Somalia and restore order, but security issues have so far prevented this. (BBC, March 28, 2005)

SRI LANKA

Attacks on LLTE office cause injuries: Three people were injured when attackers threw a grenade at the political office of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the northeastern city of Vavuniya. Two of the three injured were workers in the office and no one has taken responsibility for the attacks. Attacks such as this have further strained the uneasy peace talks between the Tigers and the government. (BBC, March 28, 2005)

SUDAN

Security Council to vote on ICC: In light of a recent French draft resolution the UN Security Council was due to meet 24 April to vote on the standing proposal to refer crimes in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, hours before the vote was due to take place French ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sablière agreed to a delay for what he described the need for some delegates to reflect and consult with their governments. It is now expected that the vote will take place early next week. The French resolution appeared to have overwhelming support in the 15-member Security Council but represents a dilemma for the U.S. Despite the U.S. having been at the forefront of the campaign to address the situation in Darfur, its rejection of the ICC is well known. The Bush administration is now faced with the difficult decision whether to abstain or use its veto power to block the proposal. Richard Dicker of Human Rights Watch stated "it would be shameful for the Americans if they opposed the resolution." In an effort to solve its quandary the U.S. has responded by proposing its own three-pronged resolution which would send UN peacekeepers to southern Sudan, impose a travel ban and an asset freeze on members of the Sudanese government, and include a broad proposal of accountability hinting toward the Nigerian and US proposals for a special tribunal. A previous UN commission of inquiry concluded that the ICC was the "single best mechanism" to ensure justice in Darfur. The conflict in the region, which began February 2003, has led to an estimated 10,000 people dead each month due to attacks by the government backed Janjaweed militia. (AllAfrica, March 24, 25; BBC, March 24; HRW, March 25, 2005)

Government makes arrests over Darfur crimes: Sudanese Justice Minister Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin announced that 15 men had been arrested and would stand trial for alleged killing, raping and burning of villages in Darfur. The move marked the first time the Khartoum government has acted to hold those accountable for the atrocities carried out in the region and came just days before a vote was due to be taken in the UN Security Council to refer those responsible to the ICC. Yassin stated “now it is high time for us to prove ourselves and to prove how genuine we are and how seriously the Sudanese judiciary can do the job.” He indicated that the arrests marked only the beginning of the process. The move has been dismissed by the U.S. State Department, which has pointed to the repeated failure of the Sudanese government to hold perpetrators responsible and its continued refusal to disarm the Janjaweed militias. ([BBC](#), March 28; [CNN](#), March 29, 2005)

UGANDA

LRA attacks continue to escalate: The scaling up of violence by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), which began with the collapse of peace talks last month, has continued this week. Once again women and children have been targeted. In an attack that resembled many of those recently carried out by the LRA, three women in the northern district of Kitgum were severely mutilated. A further 13 people were abducted from a village in the Adjumani district. Army spokesman Major Shaban Bantariza stated, “There is no logical reason for the attacks, except perhaps they want to show that they are still here despite the surrender of many of their top commanders.” In a further effort to end the violent conflict, chief peace negotiator Betty Bigombe, has returned to Uganda and re-established her connections with the rebels. However hopes of achieving peace have been dampened by reports that Joseph Kony, leader of the LRA, has fled from northern Uganda into Ethiopia. His move has been followed by appeals from the Ugandan People’s Defense Force to seek permission from Sudan and Ethiopia to pursue him. Kony and the LRA’s professed aim is to overthrow the current government and establish rule by the Ten Commandments. More than 20,000 children have been abducted to boost the rebel ranks since the war began 19 years ago. ([IRIN](#), March 28; [NewVision](#), March 24, 26, 29; [The Monitor](#), March 28, 2005)