



Peace & Justice Update

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The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

ADNKI	=	ADNKI (www.adnki.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
B92	=	B92 Net (www.b92.net/eng/)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kantipur Online	=	The Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times (www.khaleejtimes.com)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (http://jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Makfax	=	Macedonian Independent News Agency (www.makfax.com)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
New Zealand Herald	=	The New Zealand Herald (www.nzherald.co.nz)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrikan News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald (www.smh.com)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.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)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)

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AFGHANISTAN

War crime immunity bill strongly divisive: The lower house of Congress (Wolesi Jirga) approved a bill January 31 that granted amnesty to all Afghans involved in war crimes over the past 25 years. Proponents of the draft law claimed that it would bring peace and reconciliation to Afghan society, allowing the country to move forward. Since the bill's passage, 58 civil rights and international groups, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), have spoken out against the blanket immunity. They stated that it would fail to properly implement the Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, which called for an investigation of the country's violent past. Many demanded a debate about Afghanistan's past that would acknowledge mistakes and force criminals to take responsibility for their actions. Protesters claimed that the bill was passed by the warlord-dominated chamber in an effort to exonerate militia leaders from their crimes. Most of these atrocities were perpetrated during the Russian occupation from 1979-1989, the civil war that followed until 1996 and finally the repressive Taliban regime of 1996-2001. These 30 years claimed over 1 million lives and over 69 percent of Afghans suffered human rights violations. ([EurasiaInsight](#), February 2; [Reuters](#), February 6; [IRIN](#) February 4, 2007)

New reformist movement taking shape in Afghanistan: Hamed Wardak, son of the current defense minister of Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Wardak, launched a new pro-Western and pan-ethnic movement called Fedayeen-e-Sul, or Sacrificers for Peace. Wardak hoped to provide an ideological alternative to the Taliban by creating a movement that supported women's rights and denounced al Qaeda actions. Fedayeen-e-Sul would also support free markets and low taxes and would seek to reduce the influence of drug traffickers and militia leaders. Wardak has spoken out against current president Hamid Karzai for cooperating with old warlords and drug traffickers and accused the parliament of disorganization and inefficiency. Wardak supported U.S. and allied presence in Afghanistan in order to provide stability to the area. Afghanistan created a new government in 2001 after a U.S. and British-led intervention that ousted the repressive Taliban regime. ([EurasiaInsight](#), February 8, 2007)

GUATEMALA

Nobel Laureate announces presidential candidacy: Native Quiché Mayan Rigoberta Menchú announced on February 9 that she would run for president in the September elections. A new indigenous-led movement called Winaq, translated from Quiché Mayan as "wholeness of the human being," has pledged its support to the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner. Due to the proximity of the elections date, the movement would not have time to register as an official party. Instead Winaq would give its support to either the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) or the Together for Guatemala coalition depending on which of the two parties Menchú would endorse. Menchú would be running against one of her civil-war foes, army commander General Otto Pérez Molina of the Patriot Party, who led many military massacres in Menchú's native Quiché region. Should Menchú win, she would become Latin America's second indigenous president. Guatemala's 36 year-long civil war claimed over 200,000 lives, mostly those of indigenous civilians, and ended in 1996. ([LATimes](#), February 12; [TMCnet](#), February 12, 2007)

Women's groups petition U.S. Congress to condemn acceptance of violence against women: The U.S.-based groups Women without Borders, Women's Funding Network, and Women's Edge Coalition started a petition in the U.S. Congress and to the U.S. Secretary of State to condemn what they termed the institutional acceptance of violence against women in Guatemala. The organizations received support from U.S. Congresswoman Hilda L. Solís who reintroduced a petition to investigate the deaths of almost 2,200 women in Guatemala over the past six years. The resolution (H. Res. 100) was initially proposed in the House International Relations Committee in November 2005; it was reintroduced on January 24 and sought to elaborate a more ambitious plan to combat the growing problem of violence

against Guatemalan women by improving procedures for investigating and prosecuting such crimes. Since 2001, numerous women have been victimized and murdered, with only 17 of the 2,300 murder cases having been resolved. The groups maintained that the official indifference to the femicides was an outgrowth of government impunity for human rights abuses that prevailed during the 36 years of civil war that ended in 1996. (PrensaLibre, January 26; Women without Borders, 2007)

KOSOVO

U.N. talks delayed: After presenting a proposal for limited autonomy for Kosovo, U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari agreed to Serbia's request to delay future talks on the province's status. Presented February 2, Ahtisaari's proposal would allow Kosovo to establish its own constitution, flag, and national anthem and to apply for membership in international organizations, but not to have full independence. Serbia has rejected the proposal but Serbian president Boris Tadić asserts that a Serbian delegation will nonetheless attend upcoming talks on the status of Kosovo to be held in Vienna, Austria. Having just won national elections, Tadić requested the delay so that he could have time to form a government and a position on Kosovo to present at the talks. The decision has received mixed reactions, with Serbian ally Russia lobbying for an extended timetable for the talks and Kosovo warning against delaying them much longer. Kosovo has been administered by the U.N. since NATO air strikes ended the 1999 conflict that claimed over 10,000 lives. (BBC, February 9, 2007)

Demonstrations lead to violence and Interior Minister's resignation: Demonstrations February 10 by ethnic Albanians resulted in deaths, police raids, and the resignation of Kosovo's Interior Minister, Fatmir Rexhepi. The protestors marched in opposition to a U.N. proposal for limited autonomy for Kosovo that fell short of granting long-desired independence for the region. The protestors clashed with Kosovo police, who dispersed the crowd with tear gas and rubber bullets and later raided the headquarters of a local pro-independence movement held responsible for the protests. Rexhepi announced his resignation February 12 over the news that two protestors had been killed in the clashes and one put into a coma. The protests followed February 9 demonstrations against the U.N. proposal by over 1,000 Kosovo Serbs in the ethnically divided town of Mitrovica. Kosovo has been governed under U.N. mandate since the end of interethnic conflict between minority Serbs and majority Albanians in 1999. (BBC, February 9, 13, 2007; WP, February 12, 2007)

NEPAL

Maoist leader fears sabotage of mid-June elections: Thousands of Maoists attended their leader's first public address in 25 years, timed to mark the 12th anniversary of the launch of the armed insurgency. Prachanda, who uses one name, stated that "regressive forces" were engaged in a "massive conspiracy" to prevent the Constituent Assembly elections in mid-June from being held by the predetermined time. Prachanda continued, "There is no alternative but to set up a democratic republic through constituent assembly elections." When asked during an interview with the BBC what would happen if the people of Nepal voted to keep the monarchy in place, Prachanda stated his belief that with "the election of a Constituent Assembly, a democratic republic would be formed in Nepal," which would set the country on a more "progressive path." He also stated that the Maoists were prepared to follow whatever the verdict of the people might be. Since January 15, the Maoists have been serving together with a seven party alliance in an interim legislature under the new Interim Constitution of Nepal and are awaiting elections to a Constituent Assembly. (Kantipur, February 13, 2007; The New York Times, February 12, 2007)

Splinter Maoist faction leader prepares to discuss the problems of Madhesis with the government: The Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-Maoist) splinter faction Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) said it would accept the government's offer for dialogue to resolve the ethnic unrest taking place in the southern plains of Nepal, known as the Terai. Violence in the Terai broke out on the last week of January when the Madhesi people took issue with the way voting districts had been drawn for the

elections. The fighting has since claimed at least twenty-three lives, resulted in countless injuries, and destroyed property. In a televised address Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who has been suffering from Hepatitis E for the past two weeks, said, "Given my age and my health, it could be very well my last message I make an appeal to all to stop all strikes and agitations that have been launched in some parts of the country, and resolve the crisis through dialogue, and maintain peace and harmony in the country." Jwala Singh, the JTMM leader, said that the Prime Minister's address was "incomplete," adding that the government was still afraid of declaring Terai an independent state. However, Singh stated "because table talks [are] also a form of revolution, we are ready to hold talks with the government to resolve the problems of Terai." Although the Madhesis comprise almost 50 percent of Nepal's population, they occupy 15 percent of the seats in Parliament and have long been excluded from Nepal's politics by the majority ethnic communities from the hills. Until late last year they were denied citizenship rights for not being able to prove Nepali nationality. (BBC, February 13, 2007; Kantipur, February 13, 2007; The New York Times, February 1, 2007; U.N. News Service, February 7, 2007)

SOMALIA

Fresh wave of violence rocks capital: A series of explosions in Mogadishu have killed three and injured several in the latest round of violence in the country since Ethiopian and Somali forces overthrew the Union of Islamic Courts in late December 2006. The February 12 explosions were the heaviest since the Courts' ouster, and followed one day after a series of explosions that killed four in the southern town of Kismayu. Violence has been mounting since the Ethiopian army and the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces took control of the country, and dozens have been killed in attacks by unknown assailants in the past weeks. The government has attributed the violence to remnant forces of the Courts, whose members belong to clans that are traditional adversaries of the clans comprising the TFG and still retain widespread support in many parts of the country. Prior to their December 26 ouster, the Courts had governed Somalia for six months and had attempted to implement Islamic Sharia law. (BBC, February 12, 2007; ICG, January 26, 2007; WP, February 12, 2007)

Uganda to send troops to Somalia: The Ugandan parliament voted to commit 1,500 troops to an African Union (A.U.) mission in Somalia meant to stabilize the country in the wake of the military ouster of Islamists from government in December 2006. After making a firm commitment to provide troops, and spending several weeks preparing its military for the upcoming intervention effort, Uganda announced February 13 that it might deploy troops to Somalia as early as the following week. The Ugandan troops would be part of the larger, A.U.-led intervention in Somalia meant to replace the Ethiopian forces that have occupied the country since December. While Ethiopia has been supporting the Transitional Federal Government in the face of escalating violence over the past weeks, it has also been withdrawing its troops since January 23 and planning to shift peacekeeping responsibility to the A.U. mission. However, some have voiced concerns with the A.U. force, which still lacks the 8,000 troops it would need to contribute meaningfully to stabilization efforts and draws its support from countries that may have ulterior motives for intervention. Ethiopian forces have occupied Somalia since the December 26 overthrow of the Union of Islamic Courts, which had attempted to implement Islamic Sharia law in the country. (ICG, January 26, 2007; Somaliland Times, February 5, 2007; WP, February 13, 2007)

SRI LANKA

Children are allegedly abducted and made soldiers with government complicity: A Human Rights Watch report published January 24 stated that rebels had been abducting children and forcing them into combat under government oversight. The group began as a faction led by Karuna (who uses one name) that broke away from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2004 and has since been linked to the Sri Lankan government in its fight against the LTTE. Karuna has denied allegations of abducting children as well as any formal alliance with government forces. Human Rights Watch has

issued several pieces of evidence tying Karuna to these abductions and has urged all parties involved—the Karuna faction, the government and the LTTE—to work with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in returning the children to their families. The government and the LTTE have been engaged in a civil war that has claimed 75,000 lives since 1983. (BBC, January 24; HRW, January 24, 2007)

President claims war will not be halted by threat of losing financial support from donor countries:

After the completion of a foreign donor review, President Mahinda Rajapakse was faced with the option of resuming peace talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or losing a potential \$4.5 billion of aid. The donors’ stated aim was to prevent donor money from funding the civil war. Rajapakse was unresponsive to the high level of pressure from the donor committee and asserted that donor funds would be used to support economic development and not war. Rajapakse also argued that foreign aid was necessary to combat terrorism and achieve a sustainable peace. Donors were hesitant to concede the point and rebutted by saying that lasting economic progress would only come from an already established peace. Nevertheless, the donor meeting ultimately resulted in an offer of \$4.5 billion to the Sri Lankan government. This year marks the 59th anniversary of independence from colonial rule. Sri Lanka has endured a bitter civil war between the Tamil minority and Sinhala majority since 1983. (Inter Press Service News Agency, February 6, 2007)

SUDAN

Government forces attack rebel positions prior to arrival of peace envoys: Leading up to a visit from African Union (A.U.) and United Nations (U.N.) peace envoys, Darfur rebels from the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) reported attacks from the government-affiliated Janjaweed militia. Civilians were killed and livestock destroyed according to rebel commander Osman al-Bushra. However, the deaths have not been confirmed, and Khartoum has denied any recent army operations in the area. The peace envoys, Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson, were appointed to facilitate and revitalize peace talks at a rebel conference that was postponed until February 19. Salim and Eliasson were also to have obtained permission from Khartoum for the deployment of U.N. troops upon their visit. Since 2003, the Darfur region has seen the death of at least 200,000 and the displacement of more than 2.5 million. (BBC, February 11; Reuters, February 13, 2007)

Visit by U.N. Rights Team to Sudan is canceled: A United Nations team of human rights investigators has canceled its trip to Darfur due to Sudanese officials’ demands to remove former U.N. Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Bertrand Ramcharan from his position. The team was organized in December as a result of international disputes over who is responsible for the violence and atrocities being committed in Sudan. A source from the Sudanese Foreign Ministry alleged that Ramcharan had made comments accusing Khartoum of being accountable for genocide, thus causing official Sudanese resentment toward Ramcharan. This resentment prompted the human rights team to continue its work outside Sudan, according to a UNHCHR statement made from Geneva. The tensions erupted concurrently with the scheduled visit of A.U. and U.N. peace envoys and have further contributed to the hindrances posed to international peacekeepers by Sudanese officials. These peace initiatives have arisen in response to the civil war and genocide that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in Darfur since 2003. (Reuters, February 14, 2007)

UGANDA

New hope for crumbling Juba peace talks: Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) spokesman Godfrey Ayoo said during a teleconference February 9, “the people should be assured the LRA will not go back to war, and [we] will do everything in our powers to deliver peace.” The announcement came after the rebels walked out of talks in the south Sudanese capital Juba last month, citing security fears after Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir vowed to “get rid of the LRA.” The peace talks seemed to be eroding February 6 after Deputy Commander of the LRA Vincent Otti told Reuters that the Ugandan

government had left him no choice but to resume the war. Otti's statement was in reaction to the Ugandan government's dismissal of the LRA's demand to switch venues for the peace talks to either Kenya or South Africa. Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister of Internal Affairs and head of the government negotiating team said on Monday, "The issue of change of venue can be considered if it is for peace. The peace process is very precious and we have now reached a point of no return. The Government will do everything possible to ensure that the peace talks resume." Since July 2006, the government of Uganda and the LRA have been holding peace talks seeking to end a war that has persisted for 20 years. ([IRIN](#), February 9, 2007; [New Vision](#), February 12, 2007; [Reuters](#), February 9, 13, 2007)

Opposition leader Besigye accuses Museveni of "state terrorism": Opposition leader Kizza Besigye, leader of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party said in an interview last week that although Uganda's 20-year one-party rule ended in 2005, the government's repression of political parties has intensified. Besigye charged President Yoweri Museveni with "state terrorism" against political rivals. The FDC leader alleged, "There has been intensified abuse of individual rights, especially the rights of opposition leaders or known supporters of the opposition, or even suspected supporters," adding that there have been "many cases of torture, arrest and detention in [undisclosed] places." Besigye maintains that the elections were stained by pervasive electoral malpractices and violence against the opposition. Museveni, who defeated Besigye in the 2006 elections, did so after passing a constitutional amendment in July 2005 repealing presidential term limits. ([The East African](#), February 13, 2007)

