



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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AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
American Chronicle	=	American Chronicle (www.americanchronicle.com)
Amnesty International	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
Christian Monitor	=	Christian Monitor (www.christianmonitor.org)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
Concord Times	=	The Concord Times (www.concordtimesl.com)
Crisis Group	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
The East African	=	The East African (www.nationmedia.com/estafrican/current)
eKantipur	=	Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
eng24.kg	=	News Agency 24 (http://eng.24.kg)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Financial Times	=	Financial Times News (www.ft.com)
FMM	=	Free Media Movement (www.freemediasrilanka.org)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
The Hindu	=	The Hindu Newspaper (www.hinduonnet.com)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
Herald Tribune	=	Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
ICTY	=	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (www.un.org/icty)
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency (ipsnews.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
ISN	=	International Relations and Security Network (www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm)
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.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)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Peace Africa	=	Peace Africa (www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica)
PDO	=	People's Daily Online (english.peopledaily.com.cn)
Prensa Latina	=	Prensa Latina, Latin America News Agency (www.plenglish.com)
Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre (www.prensalibre.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
RadioFreeEurope	=	RadioFreeEurope, Radio Liberty (www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007)
ReliefWeb	=	Relief Web (www.reliefweb.int)

Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
The Rising Nepal	=	The Rising Nepal (www.gorkhapatra.org)
SDUT	=	San Diego Union Tribune (www.signonsandiego.com)
The Star	=	The Star.com (www.thestar.com)
Transparency Int.	=	Transparency International (transparency.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNFPA	=	United Nations Population Fund (www.unfpa.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)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)

UPDATE SUMMARY

COLOMBIA

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COLOMBIA

Colombian rebel leader killed in army incursion into Ecuador: The second-in-command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), Raúl Reyes, and 16 other guerrillas were killed by Colombian military forces Saturday, March 1. Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos said in a news conference Saturday in Bogotá that the Colombian forces received intelligence of Reyes' location and began bombing a FARC camp in a border village called Granada late Friday evening. The troops moved further across the Ecuadorean border after they came under attack from FARC camps across the Putumayo River. The bodies of Reyes and other FARC rebels, including Guillermo Enrique Torres, a FARC commander, were found in Ecuador and brought to Colombia on Saturday. Santos said the incident was "the greatest blow to FARC to date." Reyes was one of seven members of the secretariat, the leading body of the FARC. He served as one of the main spokespersons for the FARC, often acting as the group's representative to national and international journalists as well as a negotiator in peace talks and hostage releases. In March 2006, the United States indicted Reyes and 49 other FARC leaders on drug and terrorism charges and offered a \$5 million reward for information regarding Reyes' whereabouts. The Colombian government expressed hope that Reyes' death would further weaken the FARC and bring about a final peace. Opponents of the Colombian government, such as Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro, believed the killing represented the "stubborn conduct of those who favor military options and armed conflict over a negotiated political settlement, without regard to the grave consequences." The Colombian government and rebel groups have been at war for over 40 years. Today, the total number of rebels is an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 people, down from its peak of about 16,000 in 2001. Reyes was the FARC's first secretariat member to be killed by Colombian forces. (New York Times, Los Angeles Times, BBC News, March 2, 2008).

Nations react to cross-border raid: Following the killing of FARC leader Raúl Reyes on Saturday, March 1, many nations expressed dismay at the Colombian government's advances and tactics. Ecuador and Venezuela in particular, two of Colombia's border nations, cut diplomatic ties with the country and deployed troops to their shared borders. Ecuadorean president Rafael Correa denounced Colombia's incursion into Ecuador on Saturday and denied Colombia's claims that Ecuador was affiliated with the FARC. Correa remarked in a cabinet meeting, "They said we had a pact with terrorists, and that is completely false ... We are dealing with an extremely cynical government." In response, Colombia's foreign minister, Fernando Araujo said, "The Colombian government has never wanted to disrespect or violate the sovereignty or integrity of the sister republic of Ecuador." The incident on Saturday raised much discussion in the region and caused polarization as nations expressed their stances. The United States has expressed support for the Colombian government's need to tackle the FARC leaders and has encouraged other countries including Venezuela to stay out of the conflict. U.S. State Department spokesman Tom Casey told reporters that the U.S. would support dialogue and mediation through the Organization of American States (OAS), rather than military action. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez called Colombia the "Israel of Latin America," as both countries bomb and invade their neighbors in the name of self-defense. Álvaro Uribe, president of Colombia, announced that a laptop found in the FARC campsite where Reyes was killed showed that Venezuela had given \$300 million to help support the guerrilla group. In response to this finding, Uribe threatened to file charges against Chávez in the International Criminal Court. Venezuela dismissed the allegations. An emergency meeting of the OAS in Washington

was called Tuesday, March 4 to help settle these disputes. The OAS drafted a resolution between Ecuador and Colombia calling the raid a violation of Ecuador's sovereignty. At the meeting, Chávez and Correa accused Uribe of instigating war and killing Reyes so that no further hostage releases could take place. Tensions in the region have grown considerably over the years, especially as the leadership of Colombia and Venezuela continue to represent conflicting political ideologies. The FARC and other guerrilla groups have contributed to the disagreements in the area as the Colombian government and its allies, most notably the United States, refer to the FARC as a terrorist group, while Venezuela wants the group recognized as a real army and political force. (Reuters, BBC News, March 3; BBC News, March 4; New York Times, March 5, 2008).

GUATEMALA

Military personnel to remain at current size: On February 29, President Álvaro Colom announced that his government did not intend to increase military personnel from 15,000 troops to 30,000 troops. The announcement came after Vice President Rafael Espada spoke last Wednesday about the possibility of doubling the size of the military in order to more effectively combat violence and organized crime. "There will not be an increase in Army troops. Everything was a misunderstanding, I spoke with him [Espada] and he told me that was not what he meant," assured Colom. Many social groups had reacted to Espada's statement last week as it evoked memories of the army's participation in human rights violations during the country's civil war. Colom explained that if the need to increase the military ever presented itself "it would increase to 21,000 troops as stipulated by the Peace Accords," although the current situation does not necessitate it. Lawmaker and former guerrilla member Hector Nuila added that an increase in military personnel would violate the accords and that the National Civil Police is in charge of fighting organized crime under the agreement. The army was downsized from 45,000 troops to its present size of 15,000 troops as a result of the 1996 Peace Accords. And prior to 1986, the country had been ruled under a succession of military dictatorships for more than 30 years. (Prensa Latina, Prensa Libre, February 29, 2008).

Landless peasant farmers invade Petén: The first weekend of March, 30 people invaded Yaxhá National Park, Petén in what authorities believe was part of a massive occupation by some 200 families. The invasion was one of a series of occupations that threatened the Mayan Biosphere Reserve. The invading group, called El Toro, was from a community in La Libertad, Petén. Environmental groups, requesting anonymity in fear of reprisals, said that the group situated itself in the central zone of the park, where the most treasured archaeological sites such as Mayan temples and pyramids are located. Workers from the National Council for Protected Areas said that these invasions jeopardize the archaeological structures. Last month, similar takeovers occurred in the Aguateca and Dos Pilas archaeological sites in Sayaxché, Petén. At each site, approximately one hundred families cleared large tracts of land to burn and convert into areas for cultivation. In Tiger Lagoon National Park, at a place called Candelaria Triangle, authorities failed to dislodge 200 peasants who had illegally occupied local ranchers' lands. The most serious case occurred January 15 at La Colorada, one of the forest concession areas in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve, where authorities captured machinery that was to be used to build an illegal road into these reservations. Director of the Center for Legal Environmental and Social Action Yuri Melini expressed the need to increase personnel and resources to protect the reserved areas of Petén. Many landless peasants who rely on subsistence farming have

encroached on lands in response to the government's failures to address their land rights. Landlessness was one of the root causes of the country's 36-year civil war, which ended with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996. (Prensa Libre, March 4, 2008).

NEPAL

Madhesi end strike and establish eight-point pact: The Nepalese government and the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) came to an agreement to bring an end to the strikes in the Terai region February 28. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala announced that the pact was a step forward for Nepalese society and declared, "Let there be no difference between us Nepalis." He further emphasized the importance of the upcoming April Constituent Assembly election to solve many of the problems the country faces, including ethnic conflicts. The eight points of the deal are as follows: The government would take responsibility for those who died during the Madhesi strikes and would pay compensation to survivors; the government would grant the Madhesi their own autonomous state; the 20 percent legal provision described in the Constituent Assembly Member Election Act would be increased to 30 percent; the government would see to it that marginalized groups, including Madhesi, women, Dalits, and other minorities, are given proportional participation in security bodies; Madhesi would be included in the Nepal Army; the UDMF and the government would encourage peaceful political processes, especially the April 10 elections; the government would implement the agreement reached with the Madhesi People's Rights Forum last August; the UDMF would immediately stop all "agitations." The agreement was signed by the three leaders of the UDMF, Rajendra Mahato, Upendra Yadav, and Mahantha Thakur, as well as Prime Minister Koirala. The United Nations, the United States, and the European Union welcomed the accord. The eight-point pact was finally agreed upon after sixteen days of strikes, which created fuel and food shortages throughout the country. In February, the Madhesi community had called the strike in the southern region of Terai in order to gain more attention to their demands for autonomy and greater representation in the government. With the signing of the accord, commerce and transportation have returned to their previous state. (Kantipur Online, Nepal News, BBC News, February 28, 2008).

Chinese delegation visits Nepal: The Chinese Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ha Yafei, along with a delegation of nine other members arrived in Nepal Sunday, March 2 for a three-day visit. Yafei expressed China's continued efforts for bilateral cooperation with Nepal and its desire to help bring stability to the nation. Yafei stated that economic development would be one of the most important ways to establish such stability. In a meeting with Yafei at Baluwatar, his official residence, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala expressed his belief that cooperation with China would be a necessary step to increase the peace and progress of Nepal. The leaders also discussed the possibility of creating a railway link between Kathmandu and Tibet. The visit marked the first official Chinese delegation to Nepal in two years. The visit served as a symbol of Nepal's recovery and a step toward more bilateral cooperation between the countries. China and Nepal have celebrated positive relations over the past decades, especially since the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries in Kathmandu in 1960. Because of their proximity and shared border, the nations have held a consistent trade of goods and labor between them. (Kantipur Online, March 2; Nepal News, March 3; The Rising Nepal, March 4, 2008).

UGANDA

Government and LRA sign last agreement of 5-point agenda: On February 29 an agreement was signed for the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels into Ugandan society; DDR is to begin after a one month transitional period. Chief mediator Riek Machar insisted on a date for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement to be signed by both parties, but lead negotiator for the LRA, David Matsanga, said March 6 would be too soon. Matsanga demanded more time and gave March 28 as a final signing date. The main concern of LRA leader Joseph Kony was to be granted immunity from international prosecution before a final deal was signed. Time is of the essence because funds from the European Commission and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are running low. A diplomat who preferred to remain unnamed said, "We will not be funding any further negotiations. The money that is there is for implementation of the permanent ceasefire and DDR." The donors were more interested in the practical aspects of the five-phase peace process rather than paying the delegates' allowances. This five-phase agreement began with the Cessation of Hostilities August 2006, followed by the Comprehensive Solutions May 2007, Accountability and Reconciliation June 2007, and permanent ceasefire February 23; and ended with the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration agreement February 29. The five agreements listed above paved the way for a final agreement, which should be signed by the end of March. (BBC Monitoring Africa, February 29; Africa News, March 1, 2008).

Kony demands that ICC indictments be dropped: Before signing a final peace agreement, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Joseph Kony, demanded a guarantee that International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments against him and his top commanders be dropped in the final peace agreement. Kony and his two commanders were charged with 33 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity from the ICC. The government rejected Kony's demand and team spokesperson, Chris Magezi, explained that "The situation has not changed such that we can ask the indictments to be dropped. They are still out of reach of the Uganda government. They should first assemble, disarm and demobilize so that we can try them." Kony's location is not known but he is thought to be hiding in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's deep forests. The pre-trial chamber of the ICC could only seriously consider Kony's request to have charges lifted if he were in custody of the Ugandan government. Based on the Rome Statute of the ICC, Uganda, which is a state party to the ICC, would not be able to request suspension of arrest warrants even if it withdrew its ratification. According to the Rome Statute, "A State shall not be discharged, by reason of its withdrawal, from the obligations arising from this Statute while it was a Party to the Statute." To end the civil war, which has persisted for over two decades, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement must be signed by President Yoweri Museveni of The Republic of Uganda and Joseph Kony of the LRA. March 28 has been agreed upon as the final signing date by both parties. (BBC Monitoring Africa, February 28, March 4, 2008).