



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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*The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Spring 2008 interns at the
Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the
University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
The interns are Andrew Chua (University of California, San Diego);
Justine Darling (University of San Diego); and Andrea Lovano (University of San Diego).*

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

The Age	=	The Age (www.theage.com.au)
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/eastafrican/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)
Library of Congress	=	The Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/index.html)
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

Debate continues over release of hostage;
Ecuador sues Colombia over coca-spraying.

GUATEMALA

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Government approves US\$100 million loan.

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Parties agree to end election violence;
Mosque bombed in southeast city.

UGANDA

Kony agrees to sign final peace deal April 10;
LRA Abducts 150 people in Central African Republic.

COLOMBIA

Debate continues over release of hostage: Hostage Ingrid Betancourt is believed to be in critical condition and in need of an emergency blood transfusion, her son Lorenzo Delloye told reporters Wednesday, April 2. Betancourt, at the time a member of the Senate, was captured in 2002 by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) while campaigning for the presidency and has since been held captive in the Colombian jungle. She has Hepatitis B and a skin disease and her health is quickly fading according to Wolmar Pérez, the Colombian human rights ombudsman, and Luis Eladio Pérez, a former FARC prisoner. A March 1 cross-border raid by the Colombian armed forces on a FARC camp in Ecuador may have further slowed the release process. A member of the FARC's seven-member secretariat, Iván Márquez, issued a statement March 20 to Venezuelan media stating, "There will no longer be a meeting with the French delegation over the release of Ingrid." He reiterated the belief of FARC leader Manuel Marulanda who argued that the killing of Raúl Reyes in the raid gravely harmed the possible efforts to free the hostage. This statement was followed by announcements by the French and Colombian governments that concessions would be made in exchange for Betancourt's release. Because Betancourt is a dual French-Colombian national, the French government has been fighting for her release for years. On March 30 French Prime Minister Francois Fillon said France was willing to take in ex-Colombian rebels in exchange for Betancourt's release. President Nicolas Sarkozy has arranged for a medically-equipped aircraft to be ready at all times in case necessary. Colombian President Álvaro Uribe has announced his support for the medical mission. He also announced last week that cash rewards and reduced jail times would be offered to the FARC in exchange for the ailing prisoner. The FARC are currently holding almost 40 high-profile hostages whom they want exchanged for the 500 guerrillas currently in Colombian prisons. It is estimated that the FARC is holding an additional 700 hostages for ransom. Colombia has been fighting the FARC and other rebel groups for more than 40 years. (Associated Press, March 30; Reuters, April 1; BBC, April 2, 2008).

Ecuador sues Colombia over coca-spraying: On Monday, March 31, Ecuador filed a lawsuit against Colombia in the International Court of Justice in The Hague to halt Colombia's anti-coca aerial spraying along its border with Ecuador. Ecuador claims that the spraying, intended to destroy the coca plants used to make cocaine, is also destroying legitimate crops and sickening people who live along the border. Foreign Minister María Salvador announced to reporters, "Ecuador asks the court to declare Colombia's air fumigation a violation of Ecuador's sovereignty." The lawsuit also calls for Colombia to pay reparations for crops destroyed over the past seven years. Colombia responded to the lawsuit by expressing that it has already stopped aerial fumigation and has instead begun using manual eradication to destroy the coca crop. The crops, which the government has explained are usually maintained by the FARC rebels, have helped support the guerrilla group for more than forty years. The lawsuit is the most recent development in a series of skirmishes between Ecuador and Colombia. Following a cross-border raid into Ecuador March 1, tensions rose in the region as Colombia's neighbors cut some diplomatic ties and moved troops to their respective borders. On March 30, Colombia intercepted an Ecuadoran army helicopter which it argued had violated its airspace. After forcing the helicopter to land, Colombia allowed it to return to Ecuador. A statement from the Ecuadoran government called the incident "completely accidental" and apologized for the incursion. These recent tensions between Colombia and Ecuador have amounted to the worst regional crisis in years. (Reuters, March 31; BBC, April 1, 2008).

GUATEMALA

Drug traffickers linked to land invasions: Lawmakers expressed their concern after authorities established that drug traffickers who used farmers to load and unload large quantities of narcotics

were sponsoring invading groups in private and protected lands. Pedro Tobar, chief of the Anti-narcotics Analysis and Information Service, said that not only land offers, but also payments by drug traffickers, motivated invasions. "These people are used by drug traffickers for surveillance, and as figureheads in the properties they purchase; they become the custodians and labor of the drug shipments," said Tobar. In addition, he asserted that they are accomplices of bodyguards and members of drug cartels. As a result of the increased drug trafficking and related land invasions, deputies urged the government during a March 27 meeting to regain control of usurped areas in the departments of Petén, Zacapa and Izabal. They claimed that organized crime has burgeoned in these areas and demanded a greater police presence in the regions to curtail drug trafficking. Local authorities and environmentalists alleged that trucks brought in farmers and farmers received food aid from the drug traffickers because no land was sown in the usurped protected areas, evidence of outside involvement. Yuri Melini of the non-governmental organization Center for Environmental and Social Legal Action stated, "This [land invasion] is an issue that involves the power and parallel activities that are outside the law." Local authorities and environmentalists have criticized government reactions, which tend to emphasize negotiations with alleged land invaders sponsored by drug traffickers, rather than ensuring justice. Critics maintain that these negotiations promote more land invasions. In Petén, the vice minister of governance is to create a subdepartment of the National Civil Police in the region. But police officials have had trouble evicting farmers from protected areas in the past. "These farmers have weapons, expropriate large tracts of land and have radios for communication," said Melini. In response to the increasing violent activity in the departments of Petén, Izabal, Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz, the measure will be launched within two weeks. The connection between drug trafficking and land invasions touches upon sensitive issues in Guatemala that have precluded full reconciliation in the country and have perpetuated corruption. Drug shipments through Guatemala have grown recently, leading to more border violence and corruption, while land invasions helped catalyze the country's 36-year civil war. (Prensa Libre, March 26, 27, 2008)

Government approves US\$100 million loan: President Álvaro Colom and leader of the opposition Patriot Party Otto Pérez Molina agreed March 30 to approve a US\$100 million loan, part of which was to be earmarked for security concerns. Pérez, a former presidential candidate, was invited to a meeting with Colom to discuss the loan, awarded by the World Bank to help finance broad-based economic policies, among others. On April 1, all the parties in Congress approved the loan unanimously with 119 votes. Pérez described the invitation by Colom as a sign of political maturity. "We saw the willingness of the president to [negotiate], he wants to maintain good governance, and we support it when we consider that the proposals are of national interest," said Pérez Molina. He added that security concerns were discussed at the meeting, in which he recommended strengthening the institutions of civil and military intelligence, and the early implementation of the law against organized crime. The loan was to be allocated with US\$26 million going to the National Institute of Forensic Sciences, and US\$6.5 million each going to the Public Minister and National Registry of Persons. The remainder was to be distributed among various social programs including reparation payments to the victims of the country's armed conflict. "The population is desperate because of the wave of violence affecting the country, but the State cannot guarantee security if it does not have the resources to do so. That is why we feel it is important that if we are going put the country in debt, it is for something," stated Gudy Rivera of the Patriot Party. During the presidential elections, Colom promised to improve security, the lack of which remains a severe problem despite the 1996 Peace Accords. The loan is intended to increase government resources to combat violence as well as help modernize the management of public finances and augment social programs. (Prensa Libre, April 1, 2, 2, 2008)

NEPAL

Parties agree to end election violence: Leaders of the three main political parties in Nepal met Tuesday, April 1 in Baluwatar, the Prime Minister's official residence, to discuss the recent election-related violence occurring throughout the country. Prime Minister and Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala, Communist Party of Nepal (UML) General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) Chairman Prachanda met to draft a 10-point pact to ensure a free and fair environment for Constituent Assembly elections scheduled for April 10. The understanding reaffirmed that members of these parties would not intervene in each other's campaigns and would not intentionally threaten or harm the voters. The meeting comes at a time of great uncertainty as the nation awaits the upcoming election. Many political parties have accused the Maoists in particular of attacking their activists and interfering with the organization of their campaign rallies. Amrit Kumar Bohara, a senior leader of the UML explained, "We have reached a consensus and signed a 10-point commitment . . . No provocative statements will be made during the campaign and acts of intimidation and threat to voters will be stopped immediately." In the week before the election, the government has announced a public holiday from April 7 through April 10 in order to ensure a high level of participation in the polls, as voting is not compulsory. It has also suspended all public and private schools for two weeks in order to use the schools as polling places and the teachers as election workers. This election is expected to result in the establishment of a new constitution for Nepal and the end of its 240-year-old monarchy. (International Herald Tribune, April 1; Kantipur Online, April 1, 2008).

Mosque bombed in southeast city: The Choti mosque in Biratnagar, the second largest city in Nepal, was bombed March 29 during evening prayers. The bombing killed two people and wounded two others, and the government has set up an indefinite curfew for the area. A group called the Nepal Defense Army took responsibility for the attack and announced in a statement that it "would continue such attacks until Nepal is reinstated as a Hindu nation." The Nepal Defense Army is a small, armed group that formed more than a year ago. Its main objective is to pressure the government to reinstate Nepal as a Hindu nation after it was declared a secular state in 2006, and it is generally believed to support the monarchy in Nepal. In response to the bombing, a general strike by Muslims living in the area was called and schools, stores and transportation were shut down. Hassan Ansari, chairman of the Nepal Muslim Civil Society remarked in a press conference on April 1, "The attack on the mosque by the regressive elements, who don't want the CA [Constituent Assembly] poll to happen, has not only targeted the Muslim community, but is against humanity." The bombing is one of the latest acts of violence in the days leading up to the April 10 election. Only about 4 percent of Nepal is Muslim, with the majority living in the southeastern region near Biratnagar. (BBC, March 30; International Herald Tribune, March 31; Kantipur Online, March 31, 2008).

UGANDA

Kony agrees to sign final peace deal April 10: The leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Joseph Kony, postponed for the second time the signing of a final peace agreement. Kony was scheduled to sign the comprehensive peace agreement in Ri-Kwang-ba on April 3, two days before the signing ceremony on March 5, which was to be attended by President Yoweri Museveni. On April 1 the LRA announced that based on illness in their camps, the final signing date with the government would have to be postponed until April 10. The government insisted that Kony come to Juba for the final signing and government chief negotiator Ruhakana Rugunda explained, "We agreed on Juba as the venue. Kony is scheduled to sign for the LRA, while President Yoweri

Museveni will sign for the government. We would like to see Kony personally present. He will be safe and protected." Kony was not willing to attend the ceremony for fear of being arrested, and was still demanding that International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments be dropped. However, the government can ask the ICC to lift the indictments only if the LRA and government have signed a final peace deal. Lead LRA negotiator David Matsanga declared, "Kony will not disarm if the ICC has not dropped those indictments, he has sworn on that." The government and ICC held firm that if the LRA rebels continue abducting, killing and not assembling, there could be no basis for the indictments to be lifted. The South Sudan government was providing a battalion of soldiers to guard Kony and his fighters at Ri-Kwang-ba during disarmament. Kony would have to come to Uganda and be subjected to the legal and traditional justice systems. The government is in the advanced stages of creating a special division in the High Court to handle the LRA cases. (BBC Monitoring Africa, March 28, 29; The Monitor, April 2, 2008)

LRA Abducts 150 people in Central African Republic: An estimated 150 civilians were abducted in the Central African Republic (CAR) and government officials blamed the abductions on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The majority of abductees were women and children, and some who escaped reported being gang raped and beaten. Member of Parliament for Obo in southeastern CAR, Mboli Nani said, "The style they used is the style of the LRA, they attack in the night slowly and quietly - they take people and they steal goods." He also said that the abductors spoke English, Arabic and Lingala, which is of the Bantu family and spoken mostly in the northern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. More than 50 adults remain in captivity and none of the 55 abducted children have been released. The CAR government recently confirmed that Kony had moved to the CAR from his Garamba hideout, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. A team of UN investigators, which visited the area where the abductions occurred, could not confirm whether the armed group responsible for the abduction was the LRA. The head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in CAR, Jean-Sebastien Munier, explained that the area where the kidnappings occurred was extremely remote and difficult to access. The LRA leaders have denied involvement in the abductions. Lead negotiator for the LRA, David Matsanga explained that the LRA would not be involved in abductions at this time because of the delicate state of the peace process in Uganda. (New Vision, March 29; The Monitor, March 31, 2008)