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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

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

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COLOMBIA

U.S. debates free trade agreement with Colombia: The United States House of Representatives voted April 10 to delay passage of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Colombia. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi planned to block the agreement and asserted that President George W. Bush had gone against protocol by sending the agreement to Congress despite her recommendations. Pelosi expressed the view that the U.S. should deal first with the ailing domestic economy before attempting to aid others. In addition to the vote, 63 members of the U.S. Congress have signed a letter stating their opposition to violence against labor unionists in Colombia. The letter, released Tuesday, April 15, specifically highlighted Jose Obdulio Gaviria, advisor to President Álvaro Uribe, who implied that guerrillas had organized a March 6 rally against right-wing violence. The letter explained, "Gaviria's remarks contribute to the threatening climate in which the physical safety and work of a broad spectrum of human rights defenders, trade unionists and civic leaders have been put at risk." The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) has also expressed its disapproval of the trade agreement, stating that control over trade is one of the few points of leverage the U.S. can use against the violence in Colombia. Vicki Gass, WOLA's Senior Associate for Rights and Development remarked, "The Uribe government makes concerned noises about human rights but does not act like it recognizes the seriousness of the problem or the damage that has been done. We have concerns that passage of the agreement would be followed by a surge in attacks against critics of the free trade agreement in Colombia." In response to such criticisms, the Colombian government has cited improvements in the statistics, specifically the fact that since Uribe took office in 2002, there have been 400 union members killed, a decline from years prior to his presidency. The Colombian government has designated funds to protect unionists against assassination and has expressed its disapproval of such killings. Vice President Francisco Santos said in an interview, "We must remember that these killings are not a matter of state policy. On the contrary, we abhor these acts and are doing everything we can to bring the number down as low as possible." Nonetheless, members of Congress have consistently shown opposition to the free trade agreement. The agreement, signed by President Bush in 2006, awaits congressional approval. Supporters see the deal as an important step in maintaining the significant alliance between the U.S. and Colombia and as an ideal way to boost both economies. (The International Herald Tribune, April 11; The New York Times, April 14; Reuters, April 15, 2008).

Betancourt's kidnapper expresses remorse: Nolberto Uni Vega, currently serving 34 years for the kidnapping of Senator Ingrid Betancourt, sent a letter of apology to Betancourt's family and to French President Nicolas Sarkozy Tuesday, April 15. Uni explained the details of the kidnapping and his role in the abduction to reporters. As a member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Uni was responsible for guarding a roadblock and was present when Betancourt and her assistant were captured. He recalled that his FARC bloc held Betancourt for eight or nine months, in which time the hostage attempted to escape and subsequently had her feet chained together. Uni himself deserted the FARC in 2003 and attempted to start a new life in Bogotá. Once Colombian officials discovered that he was responsible for the kidnappings, he was sentenced to serve in a maximum-security prison in Cómbita, a town in the Department of Boyacá in central Colombia. In regards to Betancourt's abduction, Uni said, "I do feel remorse ... The family – her mother, her children, her husband – a lot of people are suffering." This letter and interview came days after a failed French rescue mission attempted to negotiate Betancourt's release from the FARC. Betancourt, who holds French and Colombian citizenship, has been held in remote Colombian jungles since she was captured in 2002. She is one of about forty high-profile hostages currently being held by the FARC. (Associated Press, April 16, 2008).

GUATEMALA

Guatemala passes law punishing femicide: Amid a chorus of applause, representatives from various women's groups gathered around a balcony of the legislative council April 9 to welcome passage of a law that mandates stiff penalties for those who commit femicide. "This law is a historic achievement. It will be a tool to facilitate the application of justice in cases of violence against women," said Rosa María de Frade, of the Congressional Commission of Women. She added that the government would have to undertake information campaigns to ensure the law's efficacy. The initiative passed after the parties reached a consensus to make it less subjective. The law defined femicide as "the murder of a woman in the context of unequal power relations between men and women." This is to be punishable with imprisonment of between 25 and 50 years without the right to parole. Those who commit any sexual or other physical violence are to be punished with imprisonment between five and 12 years. Sexual violence was defined as including denying the use of contraceptives or family planning. Psychological and economic violence are to be punished with imprisonment between five and eight years. Economic violence included anything concerning women's property. Myrna Ponce, a former deputy and representative of the women's movement, said, "It's a victory for all women in Guatemala. After many years, the deputies understood what they should legislate on the issue of violence; many years passed in order to understand the gravity of the case in which 3,610 women had to die since 2000." Femicide has been an ongoing issue in Guatemala where women face social injustice at the hands of perpetrators who enjoy impunity for their actions. In 2007, around 590 women died in Guatemala including at least 100 who died violently. (Prensa Libre, April 10, 2008).

Committee of Peasant Unity organizes four-day march: Beginning April 12, more than a thousand peasants, farmers, and indigenous people set out from the village of Los Encuentros, in the Department of Sololá, 127 kilometers east of Guatemala City, on a four-day march to the capital to denounce discrimination, marginalization and poverty and to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC). The purpose of the protest, CUC leader Daniel Pascual explained, was "to denounce Guatemalan society, and the world in general, due to the conditions of poverty in which the majority of peasants and indigenous peoples of Guatemala live, who have been abandoned by the State." Under the slogan "For the Defense of Mother Nature," the march protested the difficult conditions many impoverished people live with. These conditions include "the accumulation of land in a few hands, discrimination, unemployment, child abuse, miserable conditions on farms and starvation wages," said Pascual. After four days and 127 kilometers, the march arrived April 15 outside the Presidential House. Before arriving, about three thousand farmers raised their voices before the Supreme Court and the Congress to demand respect for their rights. Farmers asserted they would not accept any act of Congress on rural development that did not provide comprehensive agrarian reform and food security. Organizers and others involved in the march were upset because they were not received by anyone upon their arrival at the Presidential House. During the civil war, the CUC was a social movement affiliated with one of the four armies that eventually coalesced into the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG); as such, CUC members suffered massive repression at the hands of the Guatemalan army. In 1996, the government and the URNG signed peace accords ending the civil war. According to official figures, more than 50 percent of the 13 million inhabitants in Guatemala live in poverty, and it is more pronounced among indigenous peoples, among whom seven out of every ten live in poverty. Indigenous peoples represent 42 percent of the population. (Prensa Libre, April 11, 12, 13, 13, 15, 2008).

NEPAL

Peaceful elections take place in Nepal: The Constituent Assembly election took place peacefully Thursday, April 10, with the international community praising its success. Many feared the vote would ignite violence throughout the country, especially because of unrest in the weeks leading up to the election. On the contrary, reports stated that the elections were more peaceful than expected, with only three reported killings in the Tarai region, no more than the average. Of the 17.6 million registered voters, it was estimated that 60 percent cast their votes in this historic election. The Election Commission has announced that re-polling will be necessary in only 98 of the 20,000 polling stations throughout the nation. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon congratulated Nepal on carrying out the elections "in a generally orderly and peaceful atmosphere," and commended its people for taking an active role towards achieving a successful democracy. Other members of the international community, including representatives of the European Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom, also expressed their congratulations. In a statement, the U.S. embassy said, "This represents an historic achievement and is a tribute to the courage of the Nepali people and the conduct of the Election Commission." Some violence was expected to continue as election results continued to be tallied. Full results were expected within the month. The election constitutes one of the final cornerstones in the government's peace agreement with the Maoists and was expected to bring an end to the 240-year-old monarchy. (AFP, April 11; UN News, April 10, 14; Nepal News, April 15, 2008).

Early poll results see Maoist victory: The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has seen an unpredicted victory in many districts after the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly election April 10. Although at press time the poll results were still being calculated, the Maoists had secured 116 seats, the Nepali Congress, 35, and the United Marxist-Leninists (UML), 31. It is now expected that the Maoists will win an absolute majority. In the days following the election, top Maoist leaders have begun expressing their plans of action once they take office. Baburam Bhattarai, the Maoist second-in-command, announced, "In the first meeting of the constituent assembly we will declare the country a republic, then we will notify the king to leave the palace." Maoist Chairman Prachanda expressed his desire to use the party's new political power for the good of the people and with the intention of economic development. As the election results thus far have been unfavorable to it, the UML decided to resign from the coalition government. UML General Secretary Madhab Kumar Nepal expressed his party's understanding of the election results as a statement of the people's desire for change. He said, "We have concluded that it is morally inappropriate to continue in the government." The election marked a milestone for the Maoists, who prior to becoming a legitimate political party in January 2007, fought in a brutal civil war against the government, resulting in the death of at least 13,000 people. This rebel group-turned-political force now vows to use diplomacy to achieve its goals. Bhattarai explained, "Given a choice we would like peace. Our form of struggle has changed." (AFP, April 12; Nepal News, April 13; Kantipur Online, BBC News, April 16).

UGANDA

Joseph Kony kills ICC indicted rebel leader and eight commanders: Leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Joseph Kony has reportedly killed LRA deputy, Okot Odhiambo. Eight other commanders were also killed during the internal revolt in Garamba, located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Odhiambo was one of five leaders of the LRA indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Two other indicted LRA leaders have been killed: Vincent Otti by Kony, October 2007 and Raska Lukwiya by the Ugandan military in August, 2006. Odhiambo replaced Otti

in November, 2007 after Otti's death. With Odhiambo dead, only two indicted LRA rebels remain, Joseph Kony and Dominic Ongwen. The ICC warrants were issued in 2005 and have been a major point of contention in the peace negotiations in Juba, Sudan. LRA rebel sources said that the violence that occurred on April 13, which killed nine people, was due to disputes among the LRA top commanders over the proposed peace deal. Due to Odhiambo's death, the signing of the final peace agreement has been postponed to a further unspecified date. Hopes of an end to one of Africa's longest wars were dashed after Kony failed to attend a signing ceremony on the remote Sudan-Congo border, stalling nearly two years of tortuous negotiations. (The Monitor, April 14, 2008).

Joseph Kony fires lead LRA negotiator: Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony has fired his lead negotiator, David Matsanga, accusing him of betraying him was accused of betraying Kony by hiding the latest developments of the peace process. Simon Oyet of Noya County of Gulu accused Matsanga of not being in communication during the last seven days of the peace process because he wanted to sign the final peace agreement for Kony, without Kony's knowledge. Oyet also alleged that Matsanga had been on the government's payroll and was not looking out for the best interests of the LRA, but the minister of internal affairs and team leader of the government delegation, Ruhakana Rugunda, denied the allegations. On April 11 a press conference was held in which Matsanga explained that he resigned because Kony was not willing to sign the final peace deal with the government. Matsanga asked Sudan and the international community to pressure Kony to sign the final peace agreement and to cut off any aid to the LRA. The government accused Kony of not being serious about peace talks and signing the final peace agreement after three final signing dates had been set and he failed to attend a signing ceremony April 10. President Museveni thanked the government of Southern Sudan for its mediation efforts, saying, "Thank you for what you have gone through with this Kony who is very unreasonable. You have persisted and it is now clear that he is not serious." An LRA spokesman said Kony remains ready to sign, but wants guarantees of his safety and financial security. Guarantees cannot be made without the creation of Ugandan courts set up to prosecute Kony, and these courts are in the first stages of creation. Even if Kony does sign a peace agreement, the LRA says it will not disarm until the indictments are dropped. The government has said it will only call for the warrants to be lifted after a final agreement has been signed. The world court says its warrants remain active, and expects the government to arrest the indictees. (BBC Monitoring, New Vision, April 14, 2008).