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The countries for the Peace and 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

Source information: Information presented in this update is condensed from wire and newspaper reports from Lexis/Nexis and from electronic sites on the World Wide Web. Complete biographical information is unavailable from these services, but every attempt has been made to properly cite information and give credit to source materials. This update is intended for use by IPJ staff and associates for informational purposes only. As the material in this update is condensed, and does not directly quote the primary source, information from the update should not be quoted.

The Peace & Justice updates are written by the Summer 2003 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Greg Anglea (University of California, San Diego), Carolina Cometto (Pomona College), and Abigail Ross (University of Southern California).

This will be the last Peace & Justice update of the Summer 2003 term. Updates will resume in late September, 2003.

UPDATE SUMMARY

BURMA/MYANMAR

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MACEDONIA

Government offers reward for information on kidnapped persons

NEPAL

Peace talks begin and end with little progress; Violent clashes continue, worst yet

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
AFP	=	Agence France Presse (www.afp.com)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allAfrica.com)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
CDC News	=	Center for Disease Control News (www.thebody.com)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
HRW News	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org) (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: (www.unog.ch))
NCN	=	New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
PANA	=	Pan African News Agency (www.panapress.com)
TASS	=	ITAR-TASS News Agency (www.itar-tass.com/english/)
UPI	=	United Press International (www.upi.com)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
WPS	=	What the Papers Say (www.wps.ru:8101)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)

BURMA/MYANMAR¹

Thailand plans Burmese road map: Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra announced August 13 that he planned to discuss a road map proposed by the Thai government for democratic reforms in neighboring Burma with members of the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN). Burma's military junta has ignored international criticism of its May 30 crackdown on democracy activists and detention of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. ASEAN broke with its traditional policy of noninterference June 16 when it issued a joint statement criticizing the Burmese government for its detention of Suu Kyi. Burma's military junta, however, continued to resist pressure to release her even after the U.S. imposed economic sanctions on July 28. Thailand, which is particularly concerned about a flood of illegal immigrants from Burma as the sanctions begin to affect the Burmese economy, has proposed the road map as a way out of the crisis. UN envoy to Burma Razali Ismail stated August 11 that he would do anything he could to persuade Burma's generals to accept Thailand's road map proposal. He also stated that the UN would cooperate with Thailand on the proposal. The details of the proposal have not yet been worked out, but an international forum was to be held to brainstorm solutions for Burma. The Burmese military has been in control since 1962, despite Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy's victory in the 1990 elections. Suu Kyi has been placed under house arrest periodically for the last ten years. (AFP, August 11, 14, 2003)

Burma favors euros over dollars: Burma's military government has decreed that the euro and other currencies should be used instead of the dollar for international business transactions, including for import and export. At a meeting held August 9 with several Cabinet ministers, a group of top Burmese businessmen were told to use the euro for business transactions with the exception that Japanese yen or Singapore dollars could be used if both trading partners agreed to it. The decision came a little less than a month after the U.S. imposed economic sanctions on Burma, making it practically impossible to continue trading in dollars. The U.S. sanctions were imposed in response to the Burmese military junta's continued detention of opposition leader Suu Kyi. (AP, BBC, August 15)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Ituri militias hold peace talks: Representatives of numerous militias from the northeastern Ituri district met with the transition government and members of MONUC (the UN Organization Mission in the DRC) August 18 in Kinshasa in an effort to promote peace and incorporate the militiamen into the national army. Representatives from five regional militias—the Front des Nationalistes Intégrationnistes, the Front Populaire pour la Démocratie au Congo, the Forces Armées Populaires du Congo, the Parti pour l'Unité et la Sauvegarde de l'Intégrité du Congo and the Union des Patriotes Congolais—participated in the talks. None of the Ituri militias were parties to the power-sharing agreement that ended a five-year war in the DRC and installed a two-year national transition government on June 30. The majority of the armed groups at the meeting wanted to be integrated into the new unified army and to participate in the management of the transition. In the latest violence in Ituri, witnesses said Lendu militiamen killed 30

¹ The updates refer to Burma/Myanmar in recognition of the country prior to the military takeover and name change to Myanmar.

people and wounded approximately 100 in raids on several villages August 8-9. Economically fueled ethnic fighting between the minority Hema and the Lendu has claimed the lives of an estimated 50,000 people and the displacement of half a million others since 1998. The conflict in the DRC began in 1998 when then-President Laurent Desire Kabila's main political sponsors, Rwanda and Uganda, turned against him and began supporting an anti-government rebellion. ([AFP](#), August 15; [IRIN](#), August 18, 2003)

Prisoners begin hunger strike: Human rights groups reported August 18 that 95 people convicted for the January 2001 assassination of Laurant Desire Kabila began a hunger strike August 16 to demand a general amnesty and to protest prison conditions. The prisoners decided they would not eat until prison conditions improved and the amnesty declared March 2003 by President Joseph Kabila was applied to them as well. The former Kinshasa government stated that the amnesty was intended to allow members of former rebel movements to take part in government institutions, but it did not pertain to anyone believed to have participated in the Kabila assassination. Phil Kompani, a human rights activist with the NGO Groupe Jeremie, stated that the 30 prisoners condemned to death had been wrongly convicted and that they deserved a retrial. The original trial was conducted by the Cour d'ordre militaire (COM), which was instituted in August 1998 when war began between the Kinshasa government and rebel movements supported by Rwanda and Uganda. It was abolished in April after facing widespread criticism that it failed to meet international fair court standards or to allow appeals to a higher or independent jurisdiction. ([IRIN](#), August 18, 2003)

Health workers held hostage: MONUC (the UN Organization Mission in the DRC) reported August 11 that Mayi-Mayi militiamen had been holding 25 health workers hostage for nearly two weeks in Maniema Province, located in eastern DRC. One health worker who escaped stated the Mayi-Mayi suspected them of being spies for the former rebel group Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD-Goma). The health workers were captured in the village of Ngongokema, one of several zones targeted by a national vaccination campaign against polio that was launched July 25. At the launching of the campaign, the UN Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and local health and political authorities appealed to armed factions to ensure safe passage for health workers charged with vaccinating against polio so that they might reach all children in eastern DRC where violence has escalated in recent months. ([BBC](#), August 13; [IRIN](#), August 12, 2003)

MONUC trains policemen: A UN spokesperson announced August 13 that MONUC aimed to train 1,200 policemen before the end of 2003 to create an integrated national police force and facilitate political transition in the country. Since July 2002, the civilian police arm of MONUC has trained 630 policemen. Once an integrated national police force is in place, it will replace the neutral MONUC force, consisting of approximately 1000 Tunisian and Ghanaian military officers. The UN neutral force is currently in charge of the personal security of transition leaders in the capital, especially former rebel leaders. UN Envoy Ambassador, William Swing, also announced August 11 that MONUC had signed a cooperation agreement with the Ugandan government to establish

an office in Kampala. Meanwhile, a contingent of 250 Bangladeshi troops arrived in Ituri bringing the total number of MONUC force to 730. MONUC troops were scheduled to take over peacekeeping duties from the French-led multinational force September 1. (AFP, August 11, 13; IRIN, August 12, 14, 2003)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Ex-Guatemalan dictator attempts political return: Efraim Rios Montt, a former dictator accused of genocidal war crimes, registered July 31 as a candidate for the November 9 presidential elections. He overcame a constitutional mandate preventing former coup leaders from becoming elected presidents. The Supreme Court he has helped to reshape as speaker of Congress reinterpreted the 1985 constitution as not being able to apply retroactively to Montt's 1983 coup. Montt held power for only 17 months before being toppled by another coup. His scorched earth policy allegedly murdered more than 17,000 political opponents, mostly Guatemala's indigenous population which represents forty percent of the population. The constitutional law that courts ruled inapplicable had kept Montt, 77, from running for President in 1990 and 1995. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed "serious reservations" about Montt's candidacy, and even as Montt ranked third in opinion polls, human rights groups have expressed worries over his possible resumption of power. The United States has said it cannot maintain normal relations with a Montt-led Guatemalan government. The former dictator's rule has been remembered as a particularly brutal chapter in the country's 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. (AFP, August 14, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, August 5; Political Risk Services, August 15, 2003)

Peace accord signed in Liberia: Rebel leaders and government representatives signed an agreement to end the three-year insurgency led by Liberians for Reconciliations and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia. All sides pledged August 17 to allow aid workers into the country starved and ruined by 14 years of war. Both the post-Taylor government and the rebel groups agreed to waive eligibility for top spots within the interim government, leaving participation open to non-combatants only. Charles Taylor resigned August 11 and within hours flew into exile in Nigeria, where authorities have refused to extradite him for war crimes. His successor, Moses Blah, will resign in October to make way for the power-sharing government, set to last two years and help create stability. Liberia's civil war began in 1989, claiming over 150,000 lives. Since a June 17 ceasefire, further violence has erupted, killing thousands and displacing over half the population – 1.3 million people. (Calgary Herald, August 19; Deutsche; Gazette, The (Montreal), August 19; Presse-Agentur, August 18;; 2003)

MACEDONIA

Government offers reward for information on kidnapped persons: The government announced August 18 an increase from \$28,000 to \$56,000 for an award for any relevant information helpful in revealing the fate of people kidnapped during the armed conflict of 2001. The government also announced that it received a loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development amounting to \$165 million for the period June 2003-June 2006. The money was intended to go to programs enhancing the efficiency of public resource management, combating corruption, creating new jobs in the private

sector, and facilitating judicial reforms. It was also expected to help finance projects in the fields of education, health, social protection, finance, and energy. Ethnic Albanians took up arms against the government in February 2001 beginning a seven-month struggle for the rights of the ethnic Albanian minority that ended with the signing of the Ohrid Agreement in August 2001. (Macedonia Information Agency, August 18, 2003)

NEPAL

Peace talks begin and end with little progress: The third round of peace talks between Maoist and government officials began August 17 and ended August 19 after failing to reach a compromise on the issue of constitutional restructuring. Negotiators agreed August 17 to include the rebels in an interim government, and to convene a conference of political parties to look at the conflict. However, government negotiators refused key Maoist requests for a new constitution and redefinition of the King's role. Chief Maoist negotiator, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai rejected the government's policy papers presented August 17, saying the Maoists were not fighting a war for constitutional amendments, but for a new constitution itself. CPN-UML leaders asked the Maoists to clarify what the contents of their proposed constituent assembly would be, saying otherwise they would still support amendments over a drastic redrafting of the constitution. Increased violence, as well as widespread disappointment concerning the government's policy proposals have, according to Dr. Bhattarai, created "dark clouds" over the negotiations. After the August 19 session, negotiators left the talks to redraft their proposals. Both sides have said they are committed to the negotiations, with Dr. Bhattarai flatly demanding further government compromises. The Maoists began "The People's War" in 1996, destroying infrastructure, and claiming more than 7,000 lives. (AFP, August 19; Himalayan Times, August 10; Nepalnews, August 18, 19, 2003)

Violent clashes continue, worst yet: Fights between Maoist rebels and government officials only got worse as peace talks began, with the latest incident killing 17 Maoists. An attempted ambush in Doramba village August 17 was detected by patrolling Royal Nepalese Army members, and five Maoists were killed. Upon the patrolling unit's return, an ambush was again attempted, resulting in 12 more dead Maoists. These incidents were the bloodiest since the signing of a ceasefire in January 2003. In the second round of peace talks in May 2003, Maoists claimed both sides agreed to limit army movement to a five-kilometer zone around their barracks. Government officials have since denied any agreement was ever made. Maoists have routinely attacked army patrols that leave the five-kilometer area. Negotiations to end the current civil-war began August 17, and the government has publicly committed to a lasting peace. (ABC Radio Australia News, August 18; Nepalnews, August 18,19, 2003)