



Peace & Justice Update
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The countries for the Peace & 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. The Gender and Peace section highlights events in peace-building that pertain to gender and human rights.

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UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

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)
Angola Press	=	Angola Press (www.angolapress-angop.ao)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/)
CNN	=	Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
Colombo Page	=	Sri Lankan Online News (www.colombopage.com)
Daily News	=	Sri Lanka Daily News (www.dailynews.lk)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
FT	=	Financial Times (www.ft.com)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch News (www.hrw.org)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
ICTR	=	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (www.ictt.org)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
Kansas City Infozine	=	Kansas City Infozine (www.infozine.com)
Kantipur	=	Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Korea Times	=	The Korea Times (http://times.hankooki.com)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
MONUC	=	MONUC (www.monuc.org)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News.Com (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
News 24	=	News 24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.allafrica.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald (www.smh.com)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.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/index.htm)
WP	=	Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)

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BURUNDI

Government approves truth commission: Burundi's government approved a UN plan for a "truth and reconciliation" commission to investigate the roots of the ethnic conflict that has plagued the country for four decades. The proposal reflected a newfound willingness to address the origins of ethnic discrimination, and to calm current tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. The UN and the Burundian government would work together in the establishment and proceedings of the commission, which was to have five members, two of them Burundians. The commissioners would work to determine what happened during the conflict and punish those found guilty. Justice Minister Didace Kiganaha welcomed the proposal as a positive step toward the reconciliation of the 12-year conflict between the majority Hutus and the politically dominant minority Tutsis in which an estimated 300,000 people have died. (BBC, June 16, 2005)

Violence threatens upcoming elections: Campaigns for the upcoming legislative elections turned violent June 20 when three people, including two candidates from the Front for Democracy in Burundi party (FRODEBU), were killed in a grenade blast in the capital city of Bujumbura. FRODEBU's secretary general stated his party had been the recent target of intimidation and violence, but declined to state the source of that violence. Tense relations prevail between FRODEBU, which gained the second greatest number of seats in the June 3 communal elections, and the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-National Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), the new majority party. FRODEBU has recently accused the CNDD-FDD of using terrorism and intimidation to get votes and of attempting to install a Tutsi regime in Burundi with the help of Rwanda. Despite the end of the civil war and the progress made through communal elections, violent attacks and protests are still commonplace in Burundi. (AllAfrica, June 20, 2005)

COLOMBIA

Government to allow paramilitary structures to remain intact: The Colombian Congress is currently debating and expected to approve a draft law regarding the demobilization of paramilitary groups. The bill, backed by President Alvaro Uribe, would require all paramilitary groups to disarm but would leave the underlying structures and networks of those groups intact. The bill would significantly limit the timeframe for investigation of the crimes of paramilitary leaders, making it difficult to construct a legal framework for prosecution and virtually impossible to hold paramilitaries accountable for all their crimes. The bill would not penalize ex-paramilitaries for lying about past illegal activities and would also dramatically reduce sentencing and prison terms, leaving little chance of extradition to the U.S. for drug trafficking and kidnapping. If convicted, these leaders could serve as few as two years in prison and would be able to leave with clean records. José Miguel Vivanco, director of Human Rights Watch-Americas, stated of the draft law, "It's a bad deal both for Colombians and the international community, and it sets a disastrous precedent for future negotiations with other armed groups." Over the past decade, nearly three million Colombians have been forced to leave their homes and more than 35,000 have been killed. (HRW, June 15; ICG, June 16, 2005)

Congress to evaluate President Uribe's re-election proposal: The Colombian Congress is currently evaluating President Alvaro Uribe's proposal to amend the constitution to allow the

incumbent president to run for re-election. President Uribe's substantive military record has lent him unprecedented popularity and his supporters strongly advocate the need for a second four-year term to carry out a "democratic security policy," the cornerstone of the president's domestic and foreign policy. Uribe's critics complain that he has devoted too much time to crafting this re-election bill and not enough to reevaluating social programs and tax reforms. Outside analysts warn that the amendment could weaken democratic institutions and the president's willingness to deal firmly with paramilitary groups, since if it passed he would be eager to gain their votes at election time. (ICG, June 16, 2005)

U.S. considering whether to renew funding for Plan Colombia: With U.S. funding for Plan Colombia, the government's anti-drug strategy, due to expire this year, U.S. Congress has been debating the amount and type of future aid to Colombia. The vote to allot funding for a "new" Plan Colombia could take place as early as June 27 and the Bush administration has formally requested nearly \$750 million to be set aside for 2006, roughly \$600 million of which would go to military and police aid. Outside organizations have expressed their opposition to a renewal of funds to Colombia, citing ineffectiveness of military aid and corruption of authorities as barriers to progress, and have called for a re-evaluation of U.S. policy in Colombia. Since the launch of Plan Colombia in 2000, the U.S. has given \$4 billion in aid to Colombia, but the plan has largely failed to achieve its objectives of curbing drug production. Analysts estimate that nearly 80 percent of this aid has gone to the notoriously corrupt Colombian military and police. (peaceincolombia.org, June 20, 2005)

Demobilization efforts cause boost in drug trade: The Colombian House of Representatives voted June 17 to approve the granting of political status to paramilitaries from the far-right United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) who agreed to demobilize. Approximately 400 paramilitaries from the AUC have agreed to disarm in accordance with amnesty talks that began December 2002. However, the Colombian Navy Chief Administration reported that the AUC recently increased their cocaine shipments to the U.S. in an attempt to amass wealth before giving up arms. The AUC uses its funds to perpetuate its war with the far left rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). José Miguel Vivanco, director of Human Rights Watch-Americas, stated he was not surprised at the AUC's efforts to sell off their cocaine supplies because the amnesty draft bill, set to be approved this month, would allow paramilitary leaders to retain their wealth and status even if convicted. (LexisNexis, June 16, 17, 18, 20, 2005)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Elections delayed: The Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo voted June 17 to postpone national elections, initially scheduled for June 30, by six months. Father Apollinaire Malu Malu, the head of the DRC's Electoral Commission, said it would not be possible to hold the elections before next year. Malu Malu reported that the extension was necessary in order to educate and register the population, and recruit and train electoral officials. The Electoral Commission also cited conflict between former insurgents and the transitional government, fighting and massacres in the east, and a lack of infrastructure and communication in the country as reasons for the delay. Many people have expressed their anger over the delay and believe that politicians are using postponements to remain in power. There is concern that riots and protests will break out around Kinshasa and other cities across the country as they did in January when

the elections were initially postponed. The elections, which would be the country's first in 40 years, were an essential component of a 2003 peace deal drafted to bring an end to the five-year long civil war in the DRC during which approximately four million people were killed. ([BBC](#), June 17, 2005; [Reuters](#), June 17, 19, 2005)

Despite election delays, voter registration underway: Registration of the 3.5 million potential voters in Kinshasa began June 20. The registration process is expected to continue for three weeks within the capital city and then move on to other regions throughout the country during the next 45 days. An estimated 9,000 voter registration centers are expected to open during the next few weeks. Residents of the Kinshasa region welcomed the process as a necessary step toward reaching stabilization and democracy in the DRC. An estimated 20-30 million DRC citizens of the 53 million total population are expected to vote in the elections, which have been postponed until next year. ([VOA](#) June 20; [IRIN](#), June 21, 2005)

UNHCR begins to repatriate Congolese in Angola: The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR) aided in the return of 42 Congolese citizens from Angola June 20. Some of these refugees had been living there since 1996, while others fled recently to avoid the fighting in border areas near Katanga province. The UNHCR's effort was the first stage of a three-year plan to help repatriate the 377,000 Congolese refugees currently living in 10 different countries. Approximately 13,000 Congolese remain in Angola. ([IRIN](#), June 20, 2005)

GENDER & PEACE:

Girl domestic workers in Indonesia suffer exploitation: Indonesian child domestic workers face an array of emotional, physical, and sexual abuses according to a recently-released Human Rights Watch report. Many of these workers are as young as 11 years and typically work between 14 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week earning less than five cents per hour. The report detailed that they are often forbidden to speak with their families or leave their place of work. The few laws developed for the protection of domestic laborers have not been enforced by authorities. Although many children and families seek these jobs as an escape from poverty, many domestics report being deprived of food and wages. Others turn to this work because they lack funds to pay school fees for completing the nine years of compulsory education. Human Rights Watch has been pressuring the Indonesian government to protect domestic laborers under labor laws and to enforce the 15-year age minimum for any worker. The Indonesian government has responded that it is unfeasible to legally protect maids because they work in the informal sector, within private homes where they are "treated as family." Alwi Dhihab, Indonesia's senior welfare minister, defended the practice of hiring child maids as a chance for rich people to help poorer children. The International Labor Organization reports that there are 640,000 female child domestic workers in Indonesia. ([HRW](#), June 20; [Guardian Unlimited](#), June 21, 2005)

Honor killings in Pakistan persist: The latest in a spate of honor killings reported in Pakistan occurred last week when a man tied his wife and daughter to their wooden beds as they slept, poured kerosene on them and, with the help of a neighbor, set them on fire. The murders were carried out because the 20-year old daughter had been caught by her uncle having sex. The mother was killed for "not discouraging her daughter." Nearly 4,000 Pakistani women have been killed in the name of honor in the past four years. A law was recently passed in Pakistan to invoke the death penalty for honor killings. ([News24](#), June 20, 2005)

Women included in North Korean delegation to inter-Korean ministerial meeting: Three women in a 33-member delegation were to take part in the inter-Korean ministerial meeting in Seoul, held to discuss relations between the two Koreas, as well as the nuclear issue. This occasion was to be the first time women have been represented in Cabinet-level talks between the two nations. However, experts were skeptical of claims that the inclusion of women shows signs of female empowerment within the communist government. By comparison, South Korea has only one female delegate. (The Korea Times, June 22, 2005)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Pakistani president speaks on disappeared gang-rape victim: President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan told reporters June 17 that he had placed Mukhtaran Mai on a government blacklist preventing overseas travel. Musharraf proceeded to explain his actions stating, "I don't want to project a bad image of Pakistan." Following an international outcry and pressure from the U.S. State Department, Mukhtaran was released June 14 after having been disappeared for nearly one week. Invited by a human rights body to speak of her accomplishments, Mukhtaran had been preparing to depart for a U.S. speaking tour. In June 2002, Mukhtaran was gang-raped on the orders of a traditional village council as punishment for an offense committed by her 12-year-old brother. The human rights community has since praised Mukhtaran for bringing her attackers to court and challenging Pakistani rural law. With voluntary contributions, she started two elementary schools and a women's abuse shelter in her village. While Pakistani authorities maintain that Mukhtaran has been lifted from the "exit control list" and is free to travel, Mukhtaran states that her passport is still in the possession of authorities. (Reuters, June 15; New York Times, June 16, 19, 2005)

U.S. House of Representatives votes to halve funds to UN: In a largely partisan vote of 221-184, the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives voted June 17 to halve contributions to the UN unless major reforms are achieved. The bill, sponsored by House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Illinois) calls on the UN to implement 39 reforms within a period of two years or face losing approximately 10 percent of its total operating budget; U.S. contributions currently comprise 20 percent of that budget. The required reforms include streamlining budgets with redundant missions; introducing an independent oversight board to investigate wrongdoing; and employing a uniform code of conduct for peacekeeping forces. While the bill must first pass in the Senate before being considered by the president, the Bush administration has already implied that it will not support such "threats." A spokesman for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated, "[Mr. Annan] believes that U.S. engagement and leadership in this process is very important, but does not feel that withholding dues is a productive route to achieving reform." The support for the bill was driven by general dissatisfaction with the speed of UN reform and the controversy surrounding the oil-for-food program. (BBC, June 17; CNN, June 18, 2005)

Republicans join in call to close Guantánamo Bay: Despite calls from both Republicans and Democrats to close down the holding facility at Guantánamo Bay because in their view it perpetuates a bad image of the U.S. and poses a subsequent danger to U.S. soldiers abroad, the Bush administration has stated there are no such plans to close the facility. In separate interviews, Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld both stated that Guantánamo had a vital role in fighting the war on terror, and dismissed allegations of torture as

not representative of normal procedure. Senator Mel Martinez, followed by Senator Chuck Hagel June 12, became the first Republican to discuss the possibility of closing Guantánamo Bay. A number of Republicans, however, asserted that reforming the facility would be more effective than closing it down. Senator John McCain stated, “The key to this is to move the judicial process forward so that these individuals will be brought to trial for any crime that they are accused of rather than residing in Guantánamo facility in perpetuity.” Last month, Amnesty International released a report referring to the military detention center as “the gulag of our time.” The London-based human rights body reiterated its message June 17 and called on the administration to close down the prison and allow an independent investigation into U.S. policies of detention and interrogation. Guantánamo Bay currently holds an estimated 540 detainees, including some who have not faced charges in three years. ([AI](#); [BBC](#), June 13; [AI](#), June 17; [CNN](#), June 19, 2005)

New law expected to improve Afghan prisons: Legal experts hope a newly ratified law in Afghanistan will bring basic rights to thousands of inmates across the country. The 54-article law, passed May 31 after two years of work by Afghani and international law experts, is meant to bring Afghan jails up to minimum international standards. The new law's goals include prisoner rehabilitation and the return of the prisoner to society as a law-abiding individual. Although the law is a milestone achievement for the legislature, a major lack of resources has led lawmakers to doubt genuine improvements will be made in prisons. The law was drafted with the support of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes and the Italian government, which has been continuously working to improve the Afghan justice system. ([IRIN](#), June 16, 2005)

NEPAL

Maoist leader calls halt to violence, offers to join political alliance: Maoist leader Prachanda, who uses one name, declared Sunday June 19 a halt to civilian violence, offering to join a seven-party coalition of Nepal's mainstream parties, in efforts to revive the multi-party political process. He did not say his cadres will lay down arms. Prachanda expressed regret for the widely condemned June 6 Chitwan bus attack that killed 38 and wounded 72, calling it a “grave mistake,” and continued his attempts to engage Nepalese political parties and Indian officials in unity talks. When Nepali Congress leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, returned from India June 15, he called on the seven-party alliance and the international community to create an “ambiance of peace” in order to promote talks with the Maoists, while reiterating the alliance's firm demand that the Maoists abandon violence. Minister for Information and Communication Tanka Dhakal stated Monday June 20 that if political parties join with Maoists, the government would be obligated to treat the parties as terrorists. During the nearly 10 years since the Maoist insurgency began, an estimated 12,000 people have died. King Gyanendra has taken control over parliament through a state of emergency twice since assuming his position in 2001, most recently starting February 1 of this year. ([Himalayan Times](#), June 15, 19; [BBC](#), June 17, 19; [Kantipur](#), June 20, 2005)

Opposition parties plan to boycott municipal elections: The seven-party opposition coalition announced June 19 it would not take part in the government's municipal elections scheduled for next April. The seven-party alliance, which held a combined 190 seats in the now-dissolved 205-seat parliament, released a joint statement saying, “It is clear that any election without an all-party accountable government to supervise will only give continuity to the autocratic regime

of the king.” King Gyanendra has enforced restrictions on civil liberties and political freedoms since declaring a state of emergency in February. Under intense international condemnation, the king lifted the state of emergency in late April and promised to hold municipal elections in 58 districts by April 2006. The king has not mentioned the possibility of national elections, which have been deferred since his initial seizure of power in 2002. In recent attempts to cooperate with mainstream political parties, Maoist leader Prachanda has praised the seven party alliance's election boycott as a “positive development.” ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#), June 19, 2005)

Nepal government appeals to China and private manufacturers for arms: The Nepalese newspaper [Himalayan Times](#) reported June 16 the delivery of five Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) from China. The APCs had apparently been bought by the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA). In related news, the Nepal government placed an advertisement June 18 in the government newspaper [The Rising Nepal](#) for international arms manufacturers to sell arms and military equipment to Nepal. RNA spokesperson Brigadier General Dipak Gurung stated the RNA is in the process of enlisting international suppliers for the new fiscal year. The U.S., the UK, and India suspended military aid to Nepal following King Gyanendra's seizure of power in February. Soon after the King lifted the state of emergency April 29, India, Nepal's neighbor to the south and biggest supplier of arms, agreed to release military-related supplies that had been “in the pipeline” before February. Some analysts have speculated that the Indian government has been increasingly worried about China's growing influence with the now isolated Nepalese government. ([AI](#); [BBC](#), May 10; [Kantipur](#), June 16, 17, 19; [BBC](#), June 17, 2005)

RWANDA

Government denies claims of forced repatriation of refugees: Rwandan officials dismissed as “baseless” claims made by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.S. that the approximately 10,000 Rwandan asylum seekers returned home from Burundi early last week were returned against their will. Protais Musoni, Rwanda's Minister for local government, claimed that these asylum seekers were not refugees but fugitives fleeing justice in the Gacaca courts. However, Musoni also stated that the government would not question the returnees and would help them resettle in their homes and communities. The UNHCR has repeatedly criticized both the Rwandan and Burundian governments for ignoring the 1951 UN Convention on refugees and has urged both governments to cease all forced repatriations. The majority of those seeking asylum in Burundi were in fact Hutus who feared they would be tried and convicted of war crimes. These charges relate to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda during which approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. ([IRIN](#), June 15; [Reuters](#), June 16, 2005)

SRI LANKA

Joint Mechanism could create bridge to wider peace process: The political leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), S. P. Thamilselvan, reaffirmed President Chandrika Kumaratunga's statement that the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) is an administrative arrangement and not a political agreement. Although the P-TOMS, also known as the Joint Mechanism (JM) or the Tsunami Relief Council (TRC), is not part of the Norwegian sponsored peace plan, supporters hope that the successful distribution of aid will help build confidence between the opposing sides. People's Peace Front, a coalition of more than 200 peace groups, has written a letter commending the President for her actions towards uniting with the LTTE for the purpose of aiding tsunami victims. The letter states that the P-TOMS will

“pave the way for progress in the peace process on the understanding and trust built among these communities.” President Kumaratunga faces strong opposition to signing the JM agreement due to fears that power-sharing could eventually lead to the formation of a Tamil state. In 1957 her father made efforts to end the ethnic conflict through the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact which fell through in the midst of adamant protesting by the Buddhist clergy and government officials. (Dailynews.lk, June 20-21, 2005)

Muslims presently excluded from Post-Tsunami Operations Structure: Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen told Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader Rauff Hakeem that the proposed Tsunami Relief Council (TRC) has been finalized and only needs to be signed. The statement has disappointed the Muslim community, the most significantly affected by the tsunami, who appear to have been given no representation in the P-TOMS. Responding to these concerns, President Kumaratunga has vowed to grant recognition to Muslims in the TRC, although the timing of this remained unclear. (Colombopage.com, June 21, 22, 2005)

SUDAN

Government drops charges against MSF personnel: The Sudanese government has dismissed a recent report by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), accusing it of “undermining Sudanese society” and has arrested two MSF senior officials on charges of slander. The report, entitled “The Crushing Burden of Rape” was based on evidence that MSF collected on 500 rapes which occurred in four and a half months in the Darfur region. Victims often reported they were attacked by soldiers and government-backed militias. The MSF officials have since been released and MSF has stated that it is determined “to stand by the people of Darfur”. Over 2.4 million people are affected by the present conflict. (Reuters, June 20, 2005)

Agreement reached with Southern rebels: The Sudanese government signed an agreement in Cairo with ex-southern rebels over power-sharing issues. President Mubarak, his Sudanese counterpart, Omar el-Bashir, and John Garang, the leader of the former rebel group, the Sudanese’s People Liberation Army, all attended the meeting. The newly-created opposition party, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will include some of Sudan’s oldest parties such as the Democratic Unionists, the Communists, as well as trade unions and professional groups. “This latest agreement. . . will be the backbone of Sudanese unity,” said President Bashir. However, key details such as seat distribution have yet to be agreed upon. The conflict in Darfur, the biggest obstacle to peace, was not included in the deal. President Mubarak expressed his hope that this agreement will serve as an example in the Darfur crisis. (BBC, June 18, 2005)

Rebellion erupts in eastern Sudan: The Beja people launched a rebellion June 19 in Port Sudan, when two rebel groups, the Beja Congress and the Rashaida Free Lions, reportedly captured government posts. The groups are technically part of the National Democratic Alliance, but were not included in the agreement signed in Cairo last week. Observers believe they are backed by the Justice and Equality Movement and by Eritrea, but Eritrea rejects the allegation. Former southern rebel John Garang declared that he was sympathetic to the eastern uprising, and that he would reserve a seat for them in the newly-formed opposition movement. According to the Financial Times, “[the new rebellion] showed that ‘everyone wants to take up arms’ to get a share of the national cake.” The groups reproached the government for having marginalized the

Beja people. Similar claims issued by the Southern and Western rebels had caused bloody conflicts. ([Reuters](#), June 20; [AFP](#), [FT](#), June 22, 2005)

Darfur talks moving slowly: At peace talks on the conflict in Darfur, monitored by the African Union, Nigeria intervened over the dispute on Chad's participation in the mediation process, a dispute that divides the two major rebel movements. The Sudanese Liberation Army agreed on Chad's involvement, but the Justice and Equality Movement, which accuses Chad of partiality, distributed an 11-point document opposing that country's participation in the mediation. A Chadian delegation at the peace talks accused the rebels of making Chad a scapegoat. ([Reuters](#), June, 20; [AFP](#), June 22, 2005)

UGANDA

LRA attacks in reprisal against the Ugandan army : Lord's Resistance Army rebels killed four and injured many others in an attack against villagers in the northern district of Pader. Relief agencies based in Gulu confirmed the attack had taken place. Army spokesman Lieutenant Kiconco Tabaro declared that the attack was planned as a reprisal after six combatants were killed by government forces and arms were confiscated. Despite the army's declaration that the LRA was weakened, the group continued to terrorize populations in northern Uganda. Uganda has been wracked by this rebellion for 19 years, ever since President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement took power. ([AFP](#), June 20, 2005)

New UN Commissioner visits refugee camps for the World Refugee Day : On Monday, June 20, UN newly-installed Commissioner Antonio Guterres visited refugees in northern Uganda and praised their courage for having faced persecution and for having set up a self-reliant farming system. The UN Commissioner declared that Uganda "offers refugee lessons," alluding to Ugandan generosity towards Sudanese refugees. He expressed concern over some current attitudes that regard refugees as dangerous. Uganda currently hosts some 220,000 Sudanese refugees and, some 7,000 of whom have fled from Sudan in recent months, despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January. He insisted that they be considered refugees and not free migrants. Sudanese refugees asked for utilities to be provided in Sudan before they could return home. Commissioner Guterres expressed regret that the UNHCR has no mandate to help the Ugandan Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Since the beginning of the LRA rebellion, 1.6 million people have been forced to leave their homes and villages for precarious camps. Guterres was to meet President Museveni on Wednesday June 22. ([Reuters](#), [CNN](#), June, 20, 2005 ; [IRIN](#), June, 21, 2005)

Women and girls at great risk in IDP camps : A publication by UN Children's fund (UNICEF) entitled "Suffering in silence" reported that at least 60 percent of the women in the largest IDP camp of northern Uganda had suffered sexual or domestic violence. UNICEF expressed concern that in the Pabbo camp, the victims were as young as four years old. Afraid of the stigma associated with rape, victims often do not report their abuse. Moreover, they are sometimes unaware that such assaults constitute crimes. The roots for these crimes are multiple and range from cultural practices such as marital rape to the overwhelming insecurity prevailing in the camps. UNICEF and its partners stated they would implement a new system to prevent sexual crimes and to facilitate their reporting. ([IRIN](#), June 17, 2005).

Pressure rising against proposed third presidential term: Museveni's prospects of serving a third term in 2006 remain unclear. While Uganda has been dominated by his party, the National Resistance Movement, for 19 years, pressure for the democratization of Uganda is growing and Western governments have begun to withdraw aid. In particular, the UK decided to cut \$10 million in aid to protest the absence of multi-party politics. Rwandan President, Paul Kagame, who was set to visit his Ugandan counterpart, went to speak with Ugandan MPs, saying that "MPs should make themselves relevant" and prepare their country's future. MPs were debating the Constitution Amendment Bill, which includes the proposal to lift presidential term limits. MPs of the war-torn northern regions said that another term of President Museveni would bring more suffering in the IDP camps. ([BBC](#), June 21; [AllAfrica](#), June 20, 21, 2005)