



Peace & Justice Update
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The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Summer 2005 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Sophie Besancenot (Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris), Merav Kweskin (Clark University, Massachusetts), Kathryn Marshall (University of California, Berkeley), and Sanaz Meshkinpour (University of California, Berkeley).

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africanfocus.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/)
Bread for the World	=	Bread for the World (www.bread.org)
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)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
Gulf Times	=	Gulf Times (www.gulf-times.com)
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.icttr.org)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
InterAction	=	InterAction (www.interaction.org)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
Jubilee USA	=	Jubilee USA (www.jubileeusa.org)
Kansas City Infozine	=	Kansas City Infozine (www.infozine.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
MCC	=	Millennium Challenge Corporation (www.mca.gov)
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)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.allafrica.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam (www.oxfam.org.uk)
ReliefWeb	=	ReliefWeb (www.reliefweb.int)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
TamilNet	=	TamilNet (www.tamilnet.com)
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald (www.smh.com)
The Hindu	=	The Hindu (www.hindu.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

FNL involved in deadly clashes in Muramya: Burundi's only remaining rebel group, the Hutu Forces for National Liberation (FNL), has staged an attack in central areas of the country. The FNL had previously only attacked areas around the capital and along the western border of Burundi. FNL representatives have reported that they were responding to attacks by government soldiers. While the deaths have not been officially confirmed, it was reported that five rebels, one policeman, and three soldiers were killed in the attacks in Muramya province in the central region of DRC. An army source reported that 45 people have now been killed in the two weeks since the parliamentary elections began. The FNL has been fighting the Tutsi-led army since 1993. (Reuters, July 13, 2005)

CNDD-FDD to negotiate with FNL rebels: After winning the majority in Burundi's July 4 legislative elections, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) has agreed to enter into peace talks with the country's sole surviving rebel group, the Forces for National Liberation (FNL). CNDD-FDD spokesman Jeremie Ngendakumana stated, "We will negotiate immediately with the FNL." The CNDD-FDD was one of Burundi's main rebel forces during the 12-year civil war. Ngendakumana expressed optimism about the potential peace talks, "The CNDD-FDD had previously been in the bush and then agreed to take part in the government; now the FNL could do the same." UN Secretary General Kofi Annan congratulated Burundi on its UN-monitored election process, "[Burundi has] shown a high level of civic responsibility and political maturity." (All Africa, IRIN, July 6, 2005)

Ruling party retreats from presidential race: The party of President Domitien Ndayizeye, Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), announced July 12 it would no longer seek the presidency. After a weak showing against the Hutu Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) in the July 4 legislative elections, FRODEBU party spokesman Jean de Dieu Mutabazi stated that a presidential campaign would be a "waste of time." Mutabazi further explained, "The last polls have been a clear indicator people have shown their confidence in [the] FDD." The withdrawal of FRODEBU from presidential elections almost assuredly guarantees that the FDD's candidate, Pierre Nkurunziza, will be elected president. That election, set to take place next month, would mark the culmination of Burundi's emergence from 12 years of civil war which pitted the majority Hutu population against the politically dominant Tutsi minority. (Reuters, July 12, 2005)

COLOMBIA

Congress passes controversial paramilitary bill: Despite pressure from the international community and numerous human rights groups, the Colombian Congress passed a much debated paramilitary disarmament bill July 8. The bill restricts the time allowed for investigation into the crimes of paramilitaries and limits sentencing to a maximum of eight years. Human rights groups have pointed out that the bill would protect paramilitary leaders from serving time for war crimes and other human rights atrocities and would not penalize them for lying to investigators. Critics also maintain that the bill lacks substance and that it has been designed to keep paramilitary structures intact. Jose Miguel Vivanco, director of Human Rights Watch-Americas Division, stated, "The law has nothing to do with peace or justice, and it's not going to ensure the dismantlement of the criminal structures of these mafia that are deeply engaged in drug trafficking." Despite the criticism, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William Wood remained optimistic and expressed his hope that members of paramilitary groups would "turn themselves in." (USOfficeonColombia, July 8, 2005)

Four paramilitaries promise to lay down arms: Four of Colombia's most feared paramilitary leaders announced June 8 that they and their militias would disarm. Ramone Isaza, Ramiro Vanoy, Pablo Mejia, and Jorge "40" stated that their 4,000 fighters would disarm as a part of ongoing peace talks with the government and the far-right paramilitary group the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). To date, approximately 5,000 members of the AUC have turned over their weapons to the government and 7,000 more have announced their willingness to disarm. The warlords' announcement followed the Colombian Congress' approval of a controversial disarmament bill which drastically limits sentencing for paramilitaries who agree to disarm. The AUC was formed in the 1980s by cattle-ranchers and drug traffickers as a counter-force against the country's Marxist guerrillas. (Reuters, July 9, 2005)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

UN troops force out Rwandan rebels: The approximately 1,000 UN troops deployed last week under "Operation Iron Fist" were somewhat successful in driving out Rwandan Hutu rebels from the eastern regions of the DRC. The UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC) did not release details about how many rebels were expelled but maintained that operations would continue until every rebel fighter has left. Sylvie van den Wildenberg, a UN spokeswoman in the area, stated, "Our message is that they can put down their weapons immediately and accept the offer to return to Rwanda in a dignified manner." The majority of the rebels currently living in the DRC are Hutus accused of participating in the 1994 genocide during which 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. (IRIN, July 6, 2005)

UN investigates massacre: UN troops confirmed a report that 39 people were killed June 9 in an attack in Mtulumamba, a remote village in South Kivu province. The reports were confirmed when survivors of the attack revealed two mass graves believed to contain the remains of the victims, most of them women and children. Kemal Saiki, MONUC spokesman, reported that the victims were burned alive after being locked inside their huts. UN troops in the area seemed to believe that Rwandan rebels from the Democratic Forces for Rwandan Liberation (FDLR) were responsible for the attack. FDLR members have denied the accusation and have blamed the Rastas, a breakaway dissident FDLR group. Many locals believe the attack was intended as punishment for supporting the efforts of UN peacekeepers who have recently stepped up their efforts to combat rebel forces in the area. A government official reported that "during the attack, the bandits told [the victims] to call on their UN saviors." (IRIN, News24, July 11; Reuters, July 11, 13 2005)

Anti-government protest continues: Approximately 20,000 Congolese students and activists rallied July 9 in Kinshasa to protest delays of elections originally scheduled for June 30. The protestors carried anti-government banners and chanted against President Joseph Kabila. The rally was apparently led by Etienne Tshisekedi, head of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), who has staged a number of rallies and protests against the transitional government. Demonstrations last week ended in violence, and riot police closely monitored the protests. Many believe that the election delays were simply a ploy to keep the transitional government in power as long as possible. Elections were a key component of a 2003 peace deal designed to end years of warfare during which as many as four million people died. Since the postponement, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has opened 946 of the expected 9,000 voter registration centers nation-wide and has successfully registered one million people in Kinshasa.

Approximately 20-30 million of the country's total population of 53 million are expected to vote next year. (AllAfrica, July 8; Reuters, July 9, 2005)

NGO suspends aid to IDP camp: The nongovernmental organization Atlas Logistic announced July 8 it has suspended all aid to internally displaced people (IDP) at Camp Aèro, one of the troubled Ituri district's numerous IDP camps, until August 31. Hellène Robin, head of the NGO in Bunia, explained the organization's reasons: "We think that for the moment there has been considerable progress in efforts to restore the socioeconomic and security situation in Bunia and in the rest of Ituri District so we prefer, right now, to encourage people to return to their homes." Camp Aèro, established in May 2003, has been home to approximately 20,000 people who have been forced to flee their homes because of fighting between armed groups. Because UN troops have recently begun to confront armed groups in the area, many IDPs have returned home. However, others feel that returning home at this point is nearly impossible. Ngona Busu, who has lived at the camp for nearly two years, stated, "Before the war, I rented a home for my entire family, but now I do not have any money. Where will I sleep?" Faustin Malobi, another IDP, expressed concern regarding the still very present danger in the DRC, "I come from Djugu Territory... where militiamen are still present; we will leave only when the army is deployed there." Some residents of Bunia believe that many of the IDPs have remained because they have free access to clean drinking water, food, electricity, and shelter. Simbiliyo Duka, head of the town of Bunia, stated, "When the humanitarian organizations leave the camp, we apply the law to force the IDPs to leave." (IRIN, July 8, 2005)

GENDER AND PEACE

Millennium Challenge Corporation aids girls' education in Burkina Faso: The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has agreed to provide Burkina Faso with up to \$12.9 million to assist the country's current initiatives to increase the number of girls who complete primary school education. The MCC is a U.S. government agency whose stated goal is to reward some of the poorest countries if they prove to be successfully combating corruption, improving health care and education, and reforming their economies. Efforts to improve girls' primary education completion rates and women's role in society are among the indicators determining eligibility in the program, which provides aid through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The MCC has a threshold program through which countries that do not fully qualify for MCA assistance can still receive aid if they prove to be making substantial effort on MCA eligibility criteria. Burkina Faso's threshold program aims to increase access to and improve the quality of girls' education in 10 out of 45 provinces. The money will go towards building new "girl-friendly" schools; building day care programs into the schools; providing food aid to girls who attain a 90 percent attendance rate; training teachers; and installing mentoring services. Overall, the U.S. Congress has funded the MCC with \$1.5 billion for the 2005 fiscal year, and the president has requested \$3 billion for the 2006 fiscal year. In 2004 the MCC named 16 countries eligible to apply for aid from the MCA, of which four countries—Cape Verde, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Madagascar—thus far have signed compacts. (AllAfrica, MCC, July 8, 2005)

Law being drafted to protect Namibian women and children's inheritance rights: From July 6 to 8 Namibia hosted a National Conference on Women's Land Rights and Livelihoods, at which participants discussed a new inheritance bill designed to protect widows and their children from losing their land and assets when their husbands die. According to tradition in the northern rural parts of Namibia, when a woman's husband dies, all that the couple had owned can be taken over

by the widow's in-laws. Although laws exist to protect women's inheritance rights, there are gray areas which have allowed chiefs to ignore women's eligibility for inheritance. The proposed law also aims to provide land rights to children who have lost both parents. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization has reported that 44 percent of widows and orphans surveyed had livestock taken from them by the deceased husband's family. Often times a widow will be passed on as a wife to a family member of the late husband. Rosa Namises of the non-governmental organization Women Solidarity Namibia expressed the need for the current laws protecting women and children to be better enforced, especially in tribal areas. ([IRIN](#), July 11, 2005)

Djibouti women fight genital mutilation: Women activists in Djibouti have been staging campaigns against the widespread tradition of female genital mutilation (FGM) for the past 26 years. Djibouti has the largest percentage of circumcised women in the world, currently at 98 percent. Activists are engaged in door to door operations, and seeking to dispel myths about FGM through radio and television programs. However, dismantling the belief that girls must be circumcised in order to get married and avoid becoming prostitutes has proven very difficult, and increased public condemnation of FGM in Djibouti has led mothers to take their daughters to Ethiopia or Somaliland for the procedure. Imams have conceded that the Koran does not call for female circumcision. Although FGM has been illegal in Djibouti since 1994 no one was prosecuted until recently. Djibouti signed the Maputo Protocol of the African Charter of Rights in December of 2003 stating that FGM must be forbidden and denounced. ([IRIN](#), July 12, 2005)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

War criminals still at large while thousands commemorate tenth anniversary of Srebrenica: An estimated 50,000 people gathered Monday July 11 in commemoration of the massacre in which 8,000 Bosnian Muslims died at the hands of Bosnian Serb forces after the fall of Srebrenica, which was supposed to have been a UN "safe area." In a move condemned by Serbian hardliners, a Serbian delegation led by President Boris Tadic attended the commemoration. Ten years after the massacre, war criminals including Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, and military generals Ratko Mladic and Zdravko Tolimir, have yet to be arrested and tried for war crimes. While some war criminals have been prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and many indictees have recently surrendered, 10 indicted suspects are believed to be free in Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in Serbia and Montenegro. "So far not a single person indicted by the Tribunal has been arrested by the Republika Srpska authorities. Some of the suspects at large are believed to enjoy their protection," said Nicola Duckworth, director for Europe and Central Asia at Amnesty International (AI). While Republika Srpska authorities created the Srebrenica Commission January 2004 to investigate issues related to the massacre, Duckworth asserted that Republika Srpska's lack of cooperation has remained a major obstacle. "Serbia's failure to arrest Mladic is a stain on its reputation," affirmed Holly Cartner, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch, "It's time for Belgrade to send him to The Hague." Carla del Ponte, The Hague tribunal's chief prosecutor, boycotted Monday's ceremony in protest over the failure to arrest Karadzic and Mladic. In honor of those killed, 500 Muslim survivors marched to Srebrenica from the Crni Vrh mass grave, where 600 bodies were found last year. In the town of Potocari, near the commemoration site, authorities began removing bodies July 8 from a newly-found mass gravesite; the bodies have yet to be identified. Thus far, 1,300 bodies have been laid to rest after DNA identification testing. ([AI](#), July 8; [BBC](#), June 9, July 8, 10, 12, 2005)

G8 summit at Gleneagles concludes: Officials left the 2005 Group of Eight (G8) summit at Gleneagles satisfied with the results, which they hailed as the most substantial of any previous G8 meeting. British Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged, “We do not, simply by this communiqué, make poverty history,” but stated that the G8 members demonstrated the political will to end global poverty. During the summit, G8 leaders agreed to cancel 100 percent of the debts of the 18 poorest countries; attain universal access to anti-HIV drugs in Africa by 2010; and double aid to Africa to \$50 billion by 2010. There was, however, no agreement made on a date for ending farm export subsidies in wealthy countries, a major demand of the African nations who assert that wealthy countries force their farmers out of business. After the summit, Blair repeated his promise to continue to push the G8 leaders to accept a 2010 target date at the ministerial meeting at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December. (BBC, July 8, 9; Reuters, July 11, 13, 2005)

Aid agencies and advocates react to the G8 summit’s outcome: A number of aid agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) expressed their disappointment at the results of last week’s Group of Eight (G8) summit at Gleneagles. “The people have roared but the G8 has whispered,” said Kumi Naidoo, chair of the Global Call to Action against Poverty. The G8 leaders pledged an additional \$25 billion to make a total aid package of \$50 billion to Africa. The additional aid of \$50 billion pledged for all countries did not meet the UN request of \$180 billion for the Millennium Development Goals. Although President Bush promised to double U.S. aid to Africa last week, the U.S. did not pledge any new money at the summit; the Senate Appropriations Committee had already voted to cut 60% of Bush’s proposed aid for the next year. While the promised debt relief package falls far short of full cancellation requested by African countries, many advocates criticize that the package will come with attached conditions such as liberalization and privatization of African economies. “It’s not debt relief at all,” said Julius Okara, head of the Kenya Debt Relief Network, “It’s simply enslaving Africans more.” War on Want campaign director John Hilary explained, “To qualify for debt relief and have the opportunity to tackle poverty, countries have to do these sometimes very damaging things like privatizing their water or education systems.” Further complicating matters is the issue of “good governance.” After the summit, Blair stated that the implementation of the summit's decisions ultimately depend on the actions of African governments. While some advocates believe that African leaders should be required to focus on issues of corruption and leadership in order to receive aid, others believe that statements like that of Blair simply allow room for G8 leaders to later deny aid. (AP, July 8; BBC, July 7, 8, 9; Bread for the World, InterAction, Jubilee USA, July 8; Reuters, July 11, 13, 2005)

Indonesia should have six months to try East Timor crimes, UN legal experts recommend: A report submitted by the UN Commission of Experts to the UN Security Council has demanded that Indonesia be given six months to prosecute security forces and militia responsible for crimes against humanity. If the Indonesian government fails to comply, the report has recommended that the Security Council establish an international tribunal, or refer the case to the International Criminal Court. In some cases, the Jakarta government would have to re-try those individuals dealt with by an ad-hoc tribunal, in which all but one of 21 indictees were acquitted or freed on appeal. The UN legal experts stated that these trials were “manifestly inadequate,” due to the prosecution’s lack of commitment. The Indonesian government dismissed the report’s suggestions as “preposterous,” and Indonesia’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Rezlan Ishar Jenie, stated that the chances of the Security Council enforcing such recommendations were

unlikely. The crimes occurred during East Timor's 1999 post-referendum chaos when Indonesian soldiers and militia loyal to Indonesia killed 1,500 and displaced over 250,000 East Timorese. An international peacekeeping force led by Australia halted the violence and allowed for a UN mission that remained in the country until May of this year. The UN mission that helped stabilize East Timor is considered as one of the organization's most successful. During the 25-year Indonesian occupation, a quarter of the population is thought to have died. (BBC, July 2; Guardian, July 1, 2005)

NEPAL

Maoist leader asks for a delegation from parties to hold talks: Maoist leader Prachanda requested July 11 that the seven-party opposition coalition bring forth an authorized team to hold talks in order to end the country's current political crisis; he also reiterated earlier calls on the UN to mediate Nepal's conflict. Prachanda's statement, released one day after the UN Secretary-General's three-member team led by Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Kathmandu, cited Nepali Congress President Girja Prasad Koirala's call for dialogue as the decisive factor in the Maoists' decision. Nepali Congress Spokesman Arjun Narsingh K.C. stated, "[Prachanda's call for talks] is certainly a positive step but the climate of trust is still lacking," also emphasizing that Maoists must abandon violence. At a protest Sunday July 10, the leaders of the seven mainstream political parties called on the Maoists to abandon activities they see as destructive, also reiterating their promise to hold a constituent assembly in order to address the Maoists' concerns. Once considered a mainstream political party, the Communist Party Nepal-Maoist broke away and established themselves as an armed rebel group in 1995. Since they began waging the insurgency, an estimated 12,000 people have died and 350,000 to 400,000 have been displaced. (Kantipur, July 11, 2005)

Nepali people should decide on the monarchy, says Koirala: In a statement released July 9, Nepali Congress President Girja Prasad Koirala declared that the opposition alliance would decide "how to view the institution of the monarchy" at a general convention scheduled for late August. "If the King says that he doesn't need the people, the people will always have the right to say that they don't want the King either," Koirala said. Koirala's claims marked a shift in the seven-party alliance's stance towards the monarchy. Since the formation of the opposition coalition last year, the group had consistently asserted their willingness to cooperate with the monarchy. At a protest July 10, leaders of the seven-party alliance spoke to a crowd in Kathmandu, asking the king to reverse the executive order that has "curtailed the rights of the people." Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel asserted that even with absolute power the king has failed to resolve Nepal's problems, stating, "Whether it is the matter of restoration of peace or controlling corruption, the King has failed to attain the desired goals." King Gyanendra staged a coup February 1, claiming reasons of rampant corruption and failure to resolve the ten-year Maoist insurgency to dismiss the government. In recent months, the seven-party alliance has launched a campaign to revitalize multi-party democracy and bring the Maoists into the political mainstream. (Kantipur, July 9, 10, 2005)

UN Special Advisor meets with Council of Ministers and political parties: During a six-day visit to Nepal, UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor Lakhdar Brahimi has met with members of the Council of Ministers and leaders of the seven mainstream political parties in order to assess how the UN can help resolve Nepal's political crisis. In a meeting with Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala, the two men discussed the importance of including all major political actors

in attempts to resolve the situation. “If the Maoist problem cannot be resolved through military solution, the political parties should move ahead taking initiative to resolve it,” Koirala told journalists after meeting with Brahimi adding, “the political parties need international cooperation and support...including [that of] India.” However, the chairman of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Pashupati Shumsher Rana, reportedly told Brahimi that the country's problem should only be resolved by Nepalis. Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers Kirtinidhi Bista asserted, “We have been saying that we don’t need the UN’s mediations or that of India to resolve our problems.” Brahimi has been scheduled to meet with King Gyanendra later this week. Since the king dissolved the government February 1, he has pursued a strictly military strategy against the Maoist rebels. (Kantipur, July 12, 13, 2005)

The political situation in Nepal is “unsatisfactory” say Indian officials: The government in New Delhi expressed discontent July 11 over the lack of movement towards democracy in Nepal, stating that further shipments of non-lethal military aid would be under review. The Indian government’s change of opinion came one day after the return of Indian envoy to Nepal Shiv Shanker Mukharjee from his third consultation trip to Nepal since King Gyanendra’s coup February 1. Mukharjee reportedly told Indian officials that while some political dissidents have been released in recent weeks, the situation is one of “unsatisfactory stalemate” where the king is not doing enough to fulfill his promises to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of restoring democracy. There was no indication of how Mukharjee’s most recent visit would shape India’s actions towards Nepal. The Indian government sent Nepal its first shipment of non-lethal military aid last week, after having promised to resume military aid following King Gyanendra and Prime Minister Singh’s meeting in Jakarta in May for the Asian-African summit. While the king lifted the state of emergency April 29, he has yet to ease restrictions on civil liberties. (Kantipur, July 10, 2005)

FM radio stations must cover news says international media mission: In a statement to Nepali press, Marcelo Solervicens, secretary general of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, stated it would be difficult to imagine FM radio without the ability to broadcast news. Solervicens spoke at a press conference organized July 9 for the International Advocacy Mission for Press Freedom in Nepal, which was visiting the country to assess the situation of press freedoms. Despite a strict government ban on broadcasting news through FM radio stations, Rainbow FM 91.8 began airing news twice a day from Kathmandu starting Thursday July 7; there have been no reports yet of a government response. Because of the accessibility of FM radio broadcasts throughout the country, the ban on news broadcasts has been contentious. Although the Supreme Court, acting independently of the king, asserted that the ban on broadcasting news is unconstitutional, there is no body to enforce the decisions of the court. The Save Independent Radio Movement unsuccessfully appealed to the king July 2 to lift the restrictions imposed on FM stations. The restrictions on press freedoms were put into effect following King Gyanendra’s February 1 coup. (Kantipur, July 2, 7, 9, 2005)

Indian authorities destroy joint Nepalese and Indian Maoist training center: During a nighttime raid July 11, Indian security forces attacked and destroyed a joint Maoist training camp in the Indian border district of Bagaha, connected to the Nepali districts of Chitwan and Parsa. Security forces believe the Maoists at the camp could have escaped to any one of the three districts. Authorities recovered a satellite telephone, computer, printer, documents, clothes, medicine, bullets and explosives. While Maoists have been active in both Nepal and India, the two sides

have yet to collaborate on a joint operation. In recent weeks, however, 50 Indian Maoists reportedly escaped across the border to Nepal following a raid. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal has continued for nearly ten years, and has killed 12,000 Nepalese while displacing 350,000 to 400,000. (Kantipur, July 12, 2005)

RWANDA

Government denies arms trafficking report: The government of Rwanda has refuted the claims of a recent Amnesty International (AI) report which accused it and the Ugandan government of trafficking arms into the eastern regions of Democratic Republic of Congo. Rwanda's Regional Minister, Protais Mitali, said the reports "lacked factual evidence," and expressed his anger at the accusation. The AI report indicated that despite a 2002 UN arms embargo, "international arms flows into the region have been channeled by powerful agents close to the governments of the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, to various armed groups and militia in eastern DRC who practice banditry and show little or no respect for human rights." The Ugandan government has denied all claims of supplying arms to rebels living in the DRC. The AI report also implicated Russian officials suspected of smuggling arms into the DRC and other parts of Africa. Foreign involvement, particularly that of Rwanda has greatly contributed to eruptions of violence in the eastern regions of DRC. (IRIN, July 7, 2005)

ADF to provide \$224 million in debt relief: The African Development Fund (ADF) announced July 6 that it would provide Rwanda with \$224 million in debt relief. The ADF stated that Rwanda had made the reforms required of it under the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). These reforms included implementing a poverty reduction strategy, maintaining economic stability, and improving social indicators in the areas of education, gender equality, and health. The ADF also reported that Rwanda had made "substantial progress" in agriculture, education, governance, health care, and infrastructure development. In April of this year, the IMF and World Bank announced that Rwanda was also eligible to receive debt relief of approximately \$1.4 billion. (IRIN, July 7, 2005)

SRI LANKA

Thousands conclude a 10-day march calling for early elections: A 10-day march from southern Sri Lanka to the capital city of Colombo culminated Tuesday July 12, with an estimated 200,000 protestors led by United National Party leader and former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Event organizers claimed that nearly one million demonstrators marched. The marchers' outrage stemmed from the president's inability to end ethnic tensions, and from the rising cost of living. President Chandrika Kumaratunga invoked the Prevention of Terrorism Act to prevent the opposition supporters from reaching her home. Wickremesinghe demanded that either general elections be held before the end of the year, or "snap" parliamentary polls take place, but President Kumaratunga argues that elections are not due until 2006. In 2001 UNP led a similar march protesting Kumaratunga's suspension of parliament after losing majority support. Clashes with police during the 2001 march caused two deaths and 70 injuries from rubber bullets. (AP, BBC, July 12, 2005)

Violence increases between LTTE, rivals, and government: On July 10 four members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were killed when grenades were thrown into their office in Trincomalee. The unknown attackers were thought to have been a rebel faction that split from

the LTTE in March of 2004. The LTTE blamed the government for aiding the rivals in the attack but the military has denied the accusation. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the first parliamentary alliance formed by the Tamils after a 29-year lapse, asked the government to take immediate action to end the killings. On July 12 fourteen policemen and one soldier were injured in a grenade attack carried out by the LTTE. This violence came one day after Tamils claimed that they were being provoked to restart the separatist war. In a letter sent to the head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, LTTE leader S.P. Thamilselvan warned that he “cannot exercise patience while our cadres and civilians are being killed,” and believes that the government has been purposely breaking the cease-fire agreement to “force a war on our nation.” The government and LTTE agreed upon a cease-fire in 2002, but peace negotiations mediated by Norway have been halted since April 2003. (ColomboPage, July 11, 12; Gulf Times, July 11; The Hindu, July 12, 2005)

LTTE issues ultimatum, government responds: The government declared July 11 that they would continue offering armed escort to LTTE cadres under specified conditions. This came in response to a June 20 ultimatum from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), demanding that the government properly guard LTTE members when they travel to the east. This declaration came after a landmine attack on an LTTE convoy that was supposedly being protected by the Sri Lanka Army. Sri Lankan military intelligence has been accused by the LTTE of planning the attack, but has denied any involvement. The LTTE threatened that if they were not given an acceptable response within two weeks, they would use their own armed escort. LTTE leader S.P. Thamilselvan claimed the cease-fire agreement (CFA) requires that the government provide protection to the LTTE when the LTTE travels through military-controlled areas. The Sri Lankan government emphasized in their response the fact that such protection is not stipulated for under the CFA, but rather is a “confidence building measure.” (ReliefWeb, July 11; TamilNet, June 30, 2005)

SUDAN

New government of national unity formed amid high hopes: Last Saturday millions of people gathered in Khartoum to see the chief of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), John Garang, appointed vice-president, with Omar Al-Bashir as remaining President of the new national unity government. “Today, 9 July 2005, is Sudan’s day,” Garang said. However, conflict in the western region of Darfur, and more recently in the east, has prevented complete stabilization. Opposition groups are also proliferating in the north. Additionally, the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF), a pro-government southern militia group has not yet disarmed. Lazaro Sumbeiywo, mediator of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the agency that monitored the January Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), stated that showing “peace dividends” by investing in infrastructure had to be a top priority for the government. The improvement of social and economic conditions is necessary to achieve demobilization and disarmament. Sumbeiywo said that “a lot of groundwork has been done already. Many people will be happy to hand in their arms, but the new government must give them something to do in their community.” Poverty in Sudan remains a serious challenge. According to World Bank figures in 2001, 25 percent of the people were living below minimum dietary energy consumption level. (IRIN, July 11, 2005)

Basic agreement reached in Darfur, talks postponed until August: The Sudanese government and the two main rebel groups – the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese

Liberation army (SLA) – agreed on a broad declaration of principles, leaving details for further negotiations to start August 24. This agreement, mainly dealing with security for the Darfuri refugees and IDPs, was the result of four weeks of peace talks in Abuja monitored by the African Union. It also agreed on the federal solution as a fair arrangement to share resources and decision-making power. Both the government and the SLA representatives expressed their satisfaction with the three-page document and their optimism for the continued negotiations. However, the JEM warned that what mattered was the agreement’s implementation, alluding to last week’s division within the rebel movements: some factions in the field thought they were not represented well in the Abuja talks. The rebellion in Darfur erupted in February 2003, with rebel attacks on military garrisons, followed by a violent campaign against civilians by the government-backed Janjaweed militias. ([IRIN](#), June 6, 2005)

New ICG report calls for reinforcement of AMID with NATO troops: On July 6, the International Crisis Group released a new report entitled, “The Military Mission in Darfur: Bridging the Gaps,” calling for new solutions to improve the efficiency of civilian protection. The African Union has asserted it is unable to cover the whole of Darfur, a region the size of France, and stated it faced a shortfall of \$200 million for its peacekeeping operations. “Our partners should realize we have a financial gap”, said Said Djinnit, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. But he confirmed that by the end of September of this year the peacekeeping force will be extended to 7,731 troops. The AU has been trying to obtain funding from Canada and has received \$298.6 million from a European Union peace fund set up last year. However, according to the ICG’s evaluations, even this solution is far from adequate, and the ICG urges the AU, NATO, the EU, the UN and the to re-think the African Mission in Sudan’s (AMIS) mandate. The ICG report said at least 12,000 to 15,000 well-trained soldiers would be required to protect civilians and it called for the deployment of NATO troops to back the AU. “Darfur should not be treated solely as some capacity-building exercise for the emerging AU,” stated John Prendergast, special advisor to the ICG president. He denounced the hypocrisy of Europe and the U.S. calling for “African solutions for African problems,” while failing to provide the needed support. However, the African Union, which has not yet given an official statement on the report, has said that the Sudanese government would not accept NATO troops on its soil. ([ICG](#), July 6; [IRIN](#), July 6, 8, 2005)

UUGANDA

LRA rebels lead two ambushes in Northern Uganda: Monday July 11, about seven LRA members ambushed a truck driving traders to market 35 miles north of the provincial capital of Kitgum, looting and burning the truck. Army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Shaban Bantariza confirmed the ambush, saying 14 were killed and 10 injured. Mohammed Syrion, official of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Kitgum stated that the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) was to send troops to pursue the rebels and that district officials were to conduct an investigation on Monday. On July 7, outgoing UN representative Daouda Touré encouraged the government and the rebels to restart peace talks. “I hope that the government keeps the door open for a peaceful solution and that the LRA realizes that the people of Acholi and the north have suffered enough and it is high time they bring peace back in northern Uganda,” he said. Daouda Touré also spoke about the loss of economic potential created by the conflict. Despite efforts to restart the peace process, several attacks have taken place in the last month. On July 14, at least two soldiers were killed in another ambush in the Pader district. The LRA has been fighting the Ugandan government since 1986, committing atrocities towards

civilians of the northern regions. As a result of the rebellion, tens of thousands have died and 1.6 million have been displaced. ([AFP](#), July 11; [IRIN](#), July 9; [Reuters](#), July 14, 2005)

LRA chief and rebel leader's son killed: The Ugandan army reported that LRA chief Lakati and Joseph Kony's son Ali died of injuries inflicted by government officials during a battle three weeks ago in the town of Beyogoya-Palabek in Kitgum district. The news of their deaths came through former rebels who surrendered this week. Ugandan army spokesman Bantariza reported that since a battle in June this year, Lakati, who had been appointed chief for two years, was no longer giving orders on the radio. While the specific role of Ali in the rebellion is not known, Lakati was dubbed "the butcher" and ranked fourth in the LRA. He headed the attacks in 1996 and 1997 in which hundreds were killed and thousands of children were abducted. ([AFP](#), [AllAfrica](#); [BBC](#), July 8, 2005)

U.S. envoy advocates term limit on Ugandan radio station: U.S. Ambassador in Uganda Jimmy Kolker said on Thursday he suspected the Ugandan parliament had been pressured into lifting the ban on a third term, citing the case of two MPs who allegedly changed their minds. In Uganda, a transition has never been handled peacefully, he pointed out. He advocated the advantages of term limits, underlining the importance of stability and of the continuity of institutions independently of their leaders. He discussed the nature of a democratic system, with candidates standing up for or opposing a certain policy legacy. As for the referendum about the new constitution, set to take place by the end of July, the U.S. representative expressed his disappointment in the boycott led by the opposition. Kolker's diplomatic tenure in Uganda ends in September. ([BBC](#), July 9, 2005)

Constitutional amendments raise concern: While public debate concentrated on the term limits, the Ugandan parliament approved other amendments, including the banning of homosexual marriages; the granting of special status to the capital, Kampala; the adoption of Swahili as the second official language; and the authorization of dual citizenship. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Uganda already sentences homosexuals to harsh prison terms, as British colonial law against sodomy still applies in the Ugandan penal code. On July 6, a writer in newspaper [New Vision](#) called on the government to repress homosexuality, saying that "The police should visit the holes mentioned in the press, spy on the perverts, arrest and prosecute them. Relevant government departments must outlaw or restrict websites, magazines, newspapers and television channels promoting immorality-including homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, etc." In October, the information minister declared he would "take action against" a gay association in Makerere university. Observers believe that the new amendment stating that "marriage is lawful only if entered into between a man and a woman" is likely to reinforce discrimination against gay couples. As to the special status granted to Kampala, designed to enhance the modernity of the city, critics fear it would facilitate the government's control over the municipality. The package of amendments is expected to pass a third and last examination in the next two weeks without much opposition. ([AllAfrica](#), July 11; [HRW](#), July 12, 2005)