



Peace & Justice Update
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The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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ADNKI	=	ADNKI (www.adnki.com)
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)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
B92	=	B92 Net (www.b92.net/eng/)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency (http://ipsnews.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kantipur Online	=	The Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times (www.khaleejtimes.com)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (http://jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
New Zealand Herald	=	The New Zealand Herald (www.nzherald.co.nz)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre (www.prensalibre.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald (www.smh.com)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.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)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)

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CAMEROON

Commitment to ELECAM reaffirmed: Prime Minister Ephraim Inoni affirmed Cameroon's dedication in establishing Elections Cameroon, an independent electoral body, in a meeting July 4 with the Secretary-General of Commonwealth Kamalesh Sharma. About the situation, Sharma insisted that "elections are the fulcrum of democracy and the independent electoral commission is the body to ensure that there is credibility about the process. We hope a functional independent electoral body can be in place soon." Prime Minister Inoni's affirmation comes after the deadline to establish Elections Cameroon, also referred to as ELECAM, was extended. The law which encoded ELECAM prescribed a June 30, 2008 deadline for establishing the body. On June 27 a bill was presented before the constitutional laws committee which proposed to extend the deadline six additional months. The bill was reported as submitted by 4 p.m. and reviewed and adopted by 6 p.m. despite objections to the amendments by the frontline opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). The absence of the ruling SDF member in the constitutional laws committee, Joseph Mbah Ndam, was noted in the proceedings. (Commonwealth News and Information Service, July 7; The Post, June 30, 2008)

Ban lifted on Equinoxe Radio and Television and Magic FM: At the July 4 National Assembly the Communication Minister Jean Pierre Biyiti Bi Essam lifted the ban on Equinoxe Radio and Television and Magic FM. The Communication Minister originally placed the ban on these stations in February, citing a disregard for national regulations such as license fees. The Post published a statement by the Minister regarding the lifting of the ban. According to The Post, the Minister's view was that the media should not "mistake government's act of magnanimity as a blank check to continue to strive in anarchy." The ban was enacted shortly after the occurrence of massive protests over the constitutional amendment that allowed President Biya to run for another term. In this context, Communication Minister Essam was accused by observers of imposing the ban because of the stations' censorious editorials. Members of Parliament have strongly criticized the Communication Minister, linking the ban with attempts at press censorship. Adding to the criticism were the US Embassy and the British High Commission. The High Commission in particular called it "a blunt affront to Cameroon's democratization process." (The Post, July 7, 2008)

COLOMBIA

Colombian military frees 15 hostages held by FARC: In a significant victory over the rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the Colombian military freed 15 hostages in Guaviare, a jungle region of south-central Colombia, on Wednesday July 2. Among those hostages rescued was Senator and former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt. As a dual citizen of Colombia and France, she has become a *cause célèbre* in Europe. Betancourt, 46, was campaigning against President Uribe in Colombia's interior in 2002 when she ignored government and military counsel to avoid a recently demilitarized zone where FARC presence remained strong. The chief of the operation reported that the under-cover rescue mission was impeccable, with not a single shot fired. Though Betancourt appeared gaunt and unwell in photographs earlier released by FARC, leading many to believe her on the verge of death, the hostages were all recovered in relatively good health. Three Americans were also rescued, Northrop Grumman employees who in 2003 were captured after their plane crashed in the jungle during an anti-narcotics mission. According to the US embassy in Bogotá, it was the longest any American had been held hostage. This will help bolster President Uribe's "hard-line" policy against the leftist rebel group, an effort backed by US financial and military aid. It also serves as a happy coincidence for Senator John McCain's three-day stint in Colombia to promote a free trade deal, press for stronger attention to human rights, and encourage Uribe in the fight against narcotics trafficking and guerrilla violence. US Army Rangers recently

returning home from Iraq have been training an elite force of police units called Junglas, specializing in hostage rescue missions. However, it is not clear whether these forces were involved in this most recent operation. (The National Post, The Los Angeles Times, July 3, 2008)

Leader of right-wing paramilitary organization pleads guilty to narcotics trafficking charge: Diego Fernando Murillo-Bejarano has pleaded guilty to conspiring to import cocaine to the United States. Murillo-Bejarano served as the Inspector General to the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, a former right-wing parliamentary group named by the US as a foreign terrorist organization. As Inspector General, Murillo-Bejarano was the de facto leader of the organization, and organized and oversaw all the transportation of cocaine and financial operations. He pled guilty before US District Judge Richard M. Berman to the first indictment, conspiring to import a multi-ton shipment of cocaine to the United States, with the knowledge and intent to distribute the cocaine in the United States. The million-dollar narcotics trafficking helped fund the parliamentary group's terrorist activities, as well as engaging in warfare with the left-wing Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Colombia's largest guerrilla group. Murillo-Bejarano was sentenced to a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison, and a maximum life sentence. US Attorney for the Southern District of New York Michael J. Garcia made the announcement, published in Drug Week's July 4 edition. In the announcement in part with the US Department of Justice, he also highlighted the efforts of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), specifically the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force and their investigation. The task force is a cooperative effort including the New York City and State Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, The US Marshals Service, the Colombian National Police, and the DEA's office in Colombia and Mexico. "The extradition and guilty plea of Diego Murillo-Bejarano represent a monumental defeat to the leadership of the AUC," said DEA Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart. "It further demonstrates the strength in partnership between the DEA and Colombian law enforcement. American and Colombian communities are safer with the removal of this notorious drug kingpin." (Drug Week, July 4, 2008)

GUATEMALA

Twenty year sentence upheld in 1998 murder of Bishop Gerardi: The Constitutional Court notified the accused parties last Thursday, July 3 of the May 9 decision to uphold a 20-year jail sentence for the 1998 murder of Bishop Juan José Gerardi Conedera. Gerardi had led the Recovery of Historical Memory project (REHMI) and written the introduction to the resulting report "Guatemala: Never Again." The project ran parallel to the UN-sponsored Truth Commission — the UN report was published one year later. "Guatemala: Never Again" contained statements from the victims of the 36-year civil war and assigned specific responsibility for the abuses to figures in the government and the army. On April 26, 1998, two days after the report's release, the Bishop was brutally murdered in his place of residence, the San Sebastian Parish House. The 20-year jail sentence applies to the accused Mario Orantes, a priest serving in the parish house, and former soldiers Captain Byron Lima Oliva and his father Byron Disrael Lima Estrada. Moisés Galindo, Lima Oliva's lawyer, affirmed that with regard to his client there is no pending recourse and that the resolution of the Constitutional Court will be complied with. The decision comes after a long legal battle. In the original trial in 2001 Colonel Lima Estrada, Captain Byron Lima, and Sergeant Major Obdulio Villanueva were each sentenced to thirty years in prison while Father Orantes was sentenced to twenty years. This trial set precedent as it was the first time military members were being tried before a civilian court. In 2003 the Supreme Court reinstated the verdicts which had been overturned in 2002 and ordered a new hearing of the appeal. In 2005, the Appellate court upheld the verdicts, but lessened the Limas'

sentence to 20 years with Mario Orantes' sentence remaining the same. Villanueva had been killed in a prison riot in 2003. (The Art of Political Murder, 2007; Prensa Libre, July 3, 2008)

New Interior Minister makes changes: The new Interior minister, formerly the director-general of non-military intelligence (DGIC), was sworn into office under President Colom July 2, alongside a new deputy minister with previous guerrilla affiliations. Colom assured that the new appointees represent continuity with the previous minister's policies. Nevertheless, the new minister, Francisco Jiménez, is taking an active role in making changes specifically directed towards the Civil National Police (PNC). Jiménez proposes to create two subdivisions, one for planning and one for inspecting. The planning subdivision will help clarify PNC strategy and generate information, resulting in better coordination and more effective plans. The inspecting division will strengthen the internal mechanisms of PNC. One way in which Jiménez aims to do this is through decentralization. The previous Interior Minister Vinicio Gómez and deputy minister Edgar Hernández died Friday, June 27 in a helicopter crash after participating in an official act in Petén in which they added 82 new agents to the PNC. (Latinnews Daily, July 3; Prensa Libre, July 5, 2008)

NEPAL

UNMIN requested to remain past due date: The Nepali government will ask the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to remain for an additional six month period, an official reported July 4. Transport Minister Ramesh Lekhak said on Friday that while a formal request has not yet been made to the UN Security Council, all major political parties agreed to seek the extension. According to Lekhak, the government will ask for a reduced mission to stay in Nepal. The mission was established in part to observe the conduct of Nepal's first open elections and to ensure these were carried out in a free and fair manner. UNMIN's one-year mandate, originally set to expire in January 2008, had already been extended for six months due to delays in this year's Constituent Assembly elections. Voting finally took place in April. In a May interview at radio station Kantipur FM, UNMIN chief Ian Martin indicated that the UN would continue its support of the Nepalese peace process, regardless of whether the mission remained in country. The UN team is currently monitoring thousands of former rebels whose weapons are locked up in the camps where the fighters are staying. Ex-rebels won the largest number of seats in the CA elections and are set to lead a coalition government, once agreement can be reached on who is to hold the posts of president and prime minister. (NepalNews, July 2; AP, July 4; UNMIN, July 7, 2008)

Crisis Group releases companion reports on Nepal: The International Crisis Group (ICG) released dual reports on July 3 analyzing the political situation faced by the world's newest republic. "Nepal's Election: A Peaceful Revolution?" examines this year's April 10 vote and the events surrounding Nepal's first-ever parliamentary elections, in which Maoists garnered the largest number of legislative seats. The report credits the elections with being "peaceful and well-managed," but observes that since April the political process has devolved into round after round of stalled negotiations among the major parties. Despite these difficulties, the report finds that the Constituent Assembly is "a remarkably inclusive body" made up of different parties, ethnicities and castes. Women hold one-third of the seats in parliament, a boost to gender-balanced representation in the region. "Nepal's New Political Landscape" goes on to analyze the current political climate and offer recommendations to the Maoist leadership and other governmental bodies on how to move forward while continuing to effect positive change. The report expresses the view that "the old parties have not woken up to the new realities" of cooperation needed to run the republic. The Maoists, it says, must learn to abandon old practices of intimidation, and leverage the political strength of numbers to their advantage. The report also identifies a critical problem within the security sector—the

continued existence of dual armies—and urges that these be integrated and pulled under democratic control. The two reports are available at <http://www.icg.org>. (International Crisis Group, 3 July 2008)

SIERRA LEONE

Local elections proceed smoothly

The top United Nations envoy to Sierra Leone has congratulated the people of Sierra Leone for the completion of successful local elections. The Secretary-General's Acting Executive Representative Michael Schulenburg stated that he was “pleased to observe that polling for the elections of Saturday 5 July were generally conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner,” while in the capital of Freetown. Police forces were out on high alert in order to make sure things went smoothly and that there were no problems. However, it seems that although the elections were peaceful, few actually turned up to vote. Human rights organizations have blamed violence and intimidation before the elections as the cause for the low turnout. Martin Thomas of Civic Rights, a human rights organization, told the Associated Free Press that, “From our investigations, some voters said they feared a possible clash among political supporters so they simply stayed home and followed the proceedings on state and independent radio stations.” In addition, a significant number of candidates actually pulled out of the elections the week before voting took place. The National Electoral Commission has said that vote counting would begin on Sunday and that results could be expected on July 23rd. (UN News, July 6; Associated Free Press, July 5, July 3)

Vietnamese farmers help Sierra Leone double crops

Experienced farmers from Vietnam have helped Sierra Leone to double its annual rice crops and almost quadruple their rice yield in just one year. The farmers, led by Prof. Dr. Vo Tong Zuan, arrived in Sierra Leone in 2007 through the project “Exporting Mekong Delta farmers to Sierra Leone.” The project has aims to not only boost rice production, but also vegetables, thus taking advantage of the regions rich soil and helping to alleviate famine. The program has turned out to be a success, and has helped local farmers in Sierra Leone to overcome shortages of farming machinery as well as poor irrigation systems. This accomplishment has led to investments from the Britain – based T4M Company. Under contract, Prof. Dr. Vo Tong Xuan will conduct similar programs in Nigeria and Ghana. (Fresh Plaza, July 8)

SRI LANKA

Army general optimistic regarding prospects for victory over the LTTE: Sri Lanka’s Army Chief has stated he expects military victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to occur within the year. “We have already defeated them [as a conventional army]. They have lost that capability. Although they are fighting with us, it is not in the same manner.” Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka has said that although the Tigers are still fighting back, it is only a matter of time until the Sri Lankan Security Forces capture the entire northern area of Sri Lanka. This news comes after nearly nine months of almost daily operations in the north-western side of the island, at the cost of 170 government troops and at least 2,000 Tamil Tigers, according to Fonseka. However, it has not been possible to verify these numbers because journalists are banned from the front lines in the north; furthermore, the Tigers still possess a number of fixed-wing planes and a naval force, and attacks on Sri Lankan government controlled areas have also increased. Although the LTTE may be weakened militarily, there is a strong possibility that it may live on as an insurgency. In an interesting twist, ex Irish Republican Army (IRA) fighter Martin McGuinness had this to say regarding the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka: “Both the government and the Tamil Tigers believe that they can have

more victories over each other possibly in advance of peace negotiations. I have to say, I think both the government and the Tamil Tigers are foolish if they believe that." The conflict in Sri Lanka has claimed more than 70,000 lives since 1983. (Associated Free Press, June 30, July 3; BBC, July 7)

Sri Lankan journalists demand protection: Sri Lankan media organizations have staged a country-wide protest, urging the president and government of the country to increase steps to protect journalists. Poddala Jayantha, the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association told Reuters, "This campaign is to ask the President to immediately stop violence and suppression against media and to ensure security of the families of journalists." The protests come just a week after a journalist from the Sri Lanka Press Institute, as well as a British High Commission official, were assaulted. The assailants have yet to be apprehended, prompting Sri Lankan media owners to offer cash rewards to those who find the culprits. Media activists are also planning to boycott the upcoming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Summit in Sri Lanka due to increased security concerns with regards to media personnel. A cabinet sub-committee has been set up to look into the ongoing violence that has plagued journalists in the region. However, those involved say results would offer better proof that the government is actually doing all that they can to ensure the safety of media personnel. According to the World Association of Newspapers, Sri Lanka is ranked the world's third deadliest place for journalists. (Reuters, July 7; India Times, July 6; BBC, July 4)

SUDAN

Forces begin Abyei withdrawal: Government and rebel troops began to redeploy out of the Abyei region in southern Sudan last week after missing a deadline to have soldiers out by the end of June. In an agreement reached last month by both sides, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Khartoum government-backed forces were to exit the region by 30 June. The SPLA was first to begin moving troops out, and on Thursday head of operations Pieng Deng Kuol claimed their withdrawal was almost complete. There was some tension over the perceived delay of northern troops in removing themselves, but a spokesman announced July 4 that the northern army had also begun its withdrawal. The move accompanies a decision by officials on both sides to turn a longstanding border dispute over to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, following years of failed negotiation talks. A peace deal signed in 2005 ended 22 years of civil war between the northern government in Khartoum and rebel factions in the south. The agreement states that the semi-autonomous South should receive 50 percent of revenues from oil fields in its territory. At issue is whether or not Abyei is considered a part of the south, even though its residents will vote in the 2011 referendum on whether to secede from the north. Contention over border lines has never been resolved, and tensions in Abyei have continued to spark violence in the years since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005. A May outburst of fighting in the area left an estimated 50,000 residents displaced and almost 90 dead. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), both nongovernmental organizations and displaced residents are hesitant to return, citing safety concerns. (AP, June 18, BBC, June 22; Reuters, July 3; OCHA, July 4, 2008)

General elections law passed: On Monday the Sudanese legislature took a crucial step forward in the process leading up to planned elections, passing a bill to organize the 2009 vote. The National Elections Act of 2008 lays the groundwork for Sudan's first free elections to be held in 23 years. The law allows for 60 percent of members of parliament to be chosen by majority vote and guarantees 25 percent of seats to women through proportional representation. It also divides the elections process into three separate stages – selection of the northern and southern presidents and a

combined vote for local and federal legislators. Other issues addressed by the act are age limits for voters and candidates, minimum percentage requirements for entry into parliament, and the necessary endorsements for presidential selection. After announcing the passing of the law, the current majority leader, Ghazi Salaheddin, expressed his belief that such a step would provide the Sudanese people with a sense of hope and belief in the continuing peace process. Former southern rebels, however, said they only accepted the law as a means to seeing the election through in a timely fashion. Although they feel that the bill could give an unfair advantage to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's National Congress Party, they do not want to see any delays in voting. Presently, parliament is made up of appointed members following the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. (Reuters, Sudan Tribune, July 7, 2008)

UGANDA

Museveni blames EU and World Bank for infrastructural and investment failings: Africa News reported on June 27, at the first ever East African Investment Conference held in Rwanda, that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni lashed out at both the World Bank and the European Union for what he termed as failed production of a dam in eastern Uganda and for constructing sub-standard roadways, respectively. His opening remarks warned other states against reliance on international donors. In response to the perceived donors' failure, the Ugandan government established a 215 million dollar "Energy Fund." Construction on the long-awaited Bujagali dam has now resumed and upon completion is expected to yield 250 megawatts. Museveni further claims that with these dams Uganda will never face an energy deficit again. Museveni also directed his anger at the European Union for its construction of roads which allegedly last only as long as fifteen years, and require repairs and maintenance as early as the seventh year. The conference boasted 700 delegates from the East African states and 200 investors from beyond the region. (Africa News, June 27)

Seven LRA negotiators resign from peace talks. Ugandan online news source The Daily Monitor reports that seven negotiators have quit the talks in protest against their leader for persuading rebel leader Joseph Kony not to sign the final peace treaty between the LRA and the Ugandan Government. Those resigning have named David Nyekorach Matsanga, leader of the negotiation collective, "a self confessed consummate liar, an opportunist, a fraudster and a reckless individual who has somehow conned his way into the Juba peace process." Santa Okot and rebel legal counsel Caleb Alaka led the walkout. Matsanga has told the Monitor that these allegations are false, and that Kony himself issued the dismissal of the seven members from the team. Meanwhile, Kony has also requested the peace talks be moved from Juba in South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ugandan State Minister of Defense Ruth Nankabirwa, when asked about the request, reported that such a move was unnecessary. She stated that work has concluded, and all that remains is for Kony to sign the comprehensive and final agreement. (BBC Monitoring Africa, June 27, July 7, 2008)