

**Conflict Update**  
**Countries of Focus for the Institute's Dedicatory Conference**  
**September 28, 2001**  
*(Volume 2, Number 1)*

**Choice of countries for updates:** The countries for the conflict updates are the countries that have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute's dedicatory conference, "Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," December 5-7, 2001.

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

*The conflict updates are written by the fall 2001 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Hany Besada (Alliance University), Scott Huntley (University of North Carolina), Brook Mangin-Hinkley (University of California San Diego), Bree Peterson (University of San Diego), Leila Shifteh (McGill University), and Tom Weismann (San Diego State University).*

## UPDATE SUMMARY

### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

Namibian troops have withdrawn; Rwandan Hutu rebels disarm; Inter-Congolese Dialogue; Government Gives UN Over 3,000 Disarmed Hutu Rebels; “Inter-Kivu Dialogue”; RCD-Goma and Mugabe Meet; “Warring Groups Call For More UN Troops”; “Malawi Has Called For Immediate Peace in the DRC”

### **GUATEMALA**

Starvation in Central America; Journalist’s Murder Protested; Abusive government spy ring seeking funds; CIA involvement in Guatemala recounted; Egyptian immigrants arrested; U.S. trade bill being pushed

### **MACEDONIA**

NATO continues to disarm rebels; Church explosion deepens ethnic divide; Parliament convenes as NATO completes mission

### **NEPAL**

Government and Maoists hold talks; Maoist mass meeting stirs concern; Public meeting ban lifted; Maoist threats continue; Leftist groups working to form separate coalitions; India opposes Maoist terrorism

## UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>AP</b>   | = | Associated Press  |
| <b>AFP</b>  | = | Agence France Presse  |
| <b>BBC</b>  | = | British Broadcasting Corporation  |
| <b>CNN</b>  | = | Cable News Network  |
| <b>EFE</b>  | = | Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)  |
| <b>IRIN</b> | = | Integrated Regional Information Network (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: <a href="http://www.unog.ch">www.unog.ch</a> ) |
| <b>JED</b>  | = | Journaliste En Danger   |
| <b>NCN</b>  | = | New Congo Net   |
| <b>PANA</b> | = | Pan African News Agency   |

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)**

Namibia withdraws troops: Namibian Ambassador to the DRC Eddy Amkongo reported to AP that Namibian troops have returned home. The 2000 troops were the smallest foreign contingent involved in the Congolese civil war. A few dozen have remained in the DRC capitol of Kinshasa until further notice. Under the 1999 Lusaka agreement, all foreign forces were to withdraw from the Congo within nine months. This was according to a timetable worked out by the UN, the Organization of African Unity, and the Joint Military Council. While the Namibian pullout is minimal compared to the scale of other countries' troops stationed in the DRC, this action is hoped to motivate others to follow suit. Officially Namibia, like Zimbabwe and Angola, intervened at the request of the Congo against the rebels in the eastern part of the country who were supported by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Since the start of the conflict in August 1998, an estimated 2.5 million people have lost their lives due to the violence, starvation, and disease. (IRIN, September 3, 2001)

Rwandan Hutu rebels disarm: The Democratic Liberation Front Rwanda (FDLR) has announced that three thousand of its troops in the DRC have been disarmed. This was a sign of goodwill on their part to help end the conflict. President of the FDLR, Ignace Murwanashyana indicated that this disarmament would hold as long as their political demands were met. A spokesman for the group, Alexis Nshimiyimana, warned, "that the return of peace is the necessary

condition. Otherwise we will be forced to reactivate our troops to fight along the Congolese population.” The Rwandan government announced that this was a step in the right direction towards lasting peace in the region. Rwanda entered the conflict in 1998 due to the fear that Hutu Interahamwe militias, previously blamed for the 1994 genocide of 800,000 moderate Hutus and Tutsis, were using the DRC as a base from which to attack Rwanda. The FDLR has proclaimed that it had nothing to do with the Rwandan genocide. The present conflict in the DRC has rebel groups backed by Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda pitted against Congolese government forces aided by Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola. (Reuters Limited, September 4, 10)

Dates scheduled for four-day Inter-Congolese Dialogue: The pre-dialogue meeting began August 20 and ended with an agreement over the date and location of the Inter-Congolese dialogue that is hoped to resolve the current conflict in the DRC. President Joseph Kabila presided over the beginning of the meeting, while members of the Kinshasa government, the civilian opposition, rebel and civil society organizations remained to negotiate terms for the upcoming talk. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was chosen as the site for the October 15 talks, mandated in the 1999 Lusaka agreement. The 50-day dialogue has been designed to create a new government, a unified army, begin humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation, and plan for future elections. Many have expressed concerns over the participants still exist, as the rebel groups have approximately twice as many delegates as the government. The DRC diaspora fear that those in power will postpone elections to maintain power while women’s groups continue to lobby for greater representation in the talks. One group, the Mayi-Mayi rebels, have recently been recognized as future participants by DRC government officials. The civil war which began in the DRC in

1998 was initially an effort to remove then president Laurent Kabila from power and the fighting has now claimed approximately 2.5 million lives. (IRIN, August 21, 24; SouthScan, September 10; TOMRIC News Agency, September 3; Xinhua News Agency, September 10, 2001)

Government Gives UN Over 3,000 Disarmed Hutu Rebels: Representatives of the DRC government stated that they had handed over 3,000 disarmed Rwandan Hutu rebels to the UN mission in the DRC (MONUC). However, the government stated that these rebels were not the same as those who had perpetrated the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. Security Minister for the DRC Mwenze Kongolo said that these rebels had fought alongside the DRC military and were members of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR). Kongolo was quoted, “There are no longer any armed Rwandans on DRC territory under government control, and the disarmament of the FDLR is an important step in our quest for peace. Rwanda has used the presence of armed rebels in DRC as an excuse to justify its occupation of part of our country.” Even with the conferment of the rebels, Rwandan officials expressed skepticism that the remainder of the estimated 40,000 militiamen are outside the territory controlled by the DRC. The DRC has stated that it is prepared to hand over an additional 6,000 Hutus under the terms of the 1999 Lusaka accords. (AFP, September 16; IRIN, September 13, 14, 20, 2001)

“Inter-Kivu Dialogue”: Last week’s four-day talk on the problems the North and South Kivu regions face ended in the face of vocal opposition. Both civil society groups and the Catholic church boycotted the meetings due to opposition to the Rassemblement

congolais pour la democratie (RCD-Goma) which is supported by Rwanda. Included in the opposition to the dialogue were the Mayi-Mayi, as spokesperson Anselme Enerunga stated, “we [the Mayi-Mayi] are not represented and will never be represented in such a meeting so long as the inter-Congolese dialogue, which we will all attend, does not endorse the need for such a forum, as Kivu is not a separate state and the Kivu people are not a separate people. The conclusions of the so-called inter-Kivu dialogue will only be binding upon its participants.” However, the RCD-Goma justified their decision to hold the talks because ethnic divisions and fears were “more acute” in the Kivus than anywhere else in the conflict, stated RCD-Goma Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Mudumbi. Among those who did attend were a militia of the Bashi people known as the Mudundo quarante, who oppose the presence of Rwandan soldiers. Rwanda is one of three nations who have participated in the war to remove the Kabila government from office. (UNIN, September 25, 2001)

RCD-Goma and Mugabe Meet: The Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD-Goma) and the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, met for the first time to discuss the situation in the DRC. The RCD-Goma stated that it trusted the sincerity of Mugabe to work towards peace but cautioned that the increased fighting by Rwandan forces and the Mayi-Mayi militia threatened future peace. The RCD-Goma wants DRC President Kabila to stop funding the Rwandan rebel militia Interahamwe, who the Rwandan government holds responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Not only was the future Intra-Congolese Dialogue was discussed, but also the belief by the RCD-Goma that a transitional government should be established after the

talks rather than holding elections immediately following the dialogue. Zimbabwe, along with Angola and Namibia, has supported the Kabala presidency. (UNIN, September 25, 2000)

“Warring Groups Call For More UN Troops”: The UN was asked by the main warring groups in the DRC to accelerate the deployment of peacekeepers to disarm the different militia groups fighting in the conflict. The decision was made following a meeting between rebel representatives and government officials. A presidential spokesman, Patrick Mazimhaka called on the acceleration of phase three of the UN mission in the DRC. This would involve the deployment of thousands of more troops to oversee the disarmament of rebel groups that includes the Interhamwe militias, ex-FAR (Forces Armees Rwandaises, the former Rwandan military), and the Mayi-Mayi faction. Rwandan militias seeking to escape demobilization, and disarmament have intensified their military campaigns in eastern DRC. As a result, the Political Committee has renewed their call for an immediate deployment of UN peacekeepers to the east of the country. (IRIN, September 19, 2001)

“Malawi Has Called For Immediate Peace in the DRC”: Peace talks have begun in Blantyre, Malawi between the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame and his counterpart in the DRC, Joseph Kabila on ending the Congolese war. In the three year conflict, Rwandan have send troops as well as aiding one of the Congolese rebel group in the east of the country. The talks were sponsored under the mediation of Malawi’s president Bakili Muluzi who is currently the chairman of the Southern African Deployment Community. Meanwhile, the UN has already stationed more than 2,000 peacekeepers to monitor the ceasefire as well as the withdrawal of foreign armies in the Congo. Later on the week, Mr Muluzi is expected to meet Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in Malawi. He plans to brief him on the progress of the talks he had earlier with the other leaders in the conflict. Uganda is also involved in the Congolese conflict. It has aided a rival rebel group as well as sent thousand of troops in eastern DRC to help fight Kabila’s government troops. In recent weeks, diplomatic efforts to end Africa’s largest war have

intensified with Mr Muluzi taking a more active mediation role. (BBC, September 26, 2001)

## **GUATEMALA**

Starvation in Central America: Due to a recent drought, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras have a combined 1.6 million people facing starvation. The drought compounds the devastating effects of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and a series of recent earthquakes. The drought has been described by the World Food Program (WFP) as “one of the worst natural catastrophes to hit Central America in years”, according to the Inter Press Service. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stated that the famine would worsen if hurricanes further destroy crops and no crop-sustaining rainfall arrives soon. Venezuelan troops have been distributing food and medical supplies flown from their country into Guatemala by military aircraft.

(Inter Press Service, September 7, Lexis-Nexis, September 7; BBC, September 9)

Journalist’s Murder Protested: The International Press Institute (IPI) has vigorously protested the murder of Guatemalan radio journalist Jorge Mynor Alegria. Alegria was shot and killed on September 5 near his home. The IPI sent a letter to President Alfonso Portillo Cabrera complaining that his government was not taking death threats issued to journalists seriously. Threats have often preceded murders of journalists in Guatemala, which include the case of Larry Lee, an American reporter whose 1999 killing remains unsolved.

(The Gleaner, September 12, Global News Wire, September 13)

Drought ends too late to save crops: The UN's World Food Program (WFP) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stated that torrential rains have arrived after most crops in Guatemala had already been destroyed by a three-month long drought. The USDA estimated that rains were 30 to 50 per cent below normal during the crop-growing season. The WFP said that as a result, famine is now affecting 1.6 million people throughout Central America. The organization has been able to get food to only 360,000 of the affected population so far, and estimated that their current reserves will last only four more weeks. The U.S. has donated \$2.1 million dollars in response to a WFP request for \$7.5 million, while France and Germany have also considered making a contribution. Most other nations have not responded to the emergency request. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also began assisting farmers with seed corn and fertilizer, but the famine has reached such proportions that this corn is being consumed for food. The county director of Honduras, Barbara Jackson, stated, "That's definitely happening. It's just another sign that the situation is deteriorating, because by eating the seed they will prolong the situation into next year." Meanwhile, the distended bellies of children have been seen regularly on news reports. The president of Guatemala, Alfonso Portillo, has primarily tried to avoid the political fallout of this situation, saying, "Some eighty per cent of that population is in misery and that's no secret. One can't say that this is the fault of the government." Jackson responded by stating, "You've got these elected leaders afraid to declare their countries disaster areas, and as a result the help that is needed doesn't kick in, especially from countries abroad." This famine has

followed earthquakes that hit this area in the past year and Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Guatemala has also endured years of government-sponsored genocide that ended with an agreement in 1996, although problems persist and have increased recently in the human rights arena. (The Times-Picayune, September 24)

Abusive government spy ring seeking funds: The Presidential Chief of Staff, the name of a group that had been accused of political assassinations and spying within Guatemala during the civil war, has lobbied for a 40 per cent budget increase. This body was supposed to have been disbanded following the peace accords signed in 1996. It has requested \$15.2 million for 2002. Political threats and murders have once more been on the increase, resulting in judges and prosecutors fleeing the country in fear for their lives. (AP, September 27)

CIA involvement in Guatemala recounted: In an article that discussed the active recruiting of members of terrorist organizations into U.S. intelligence, the AP recounted the 1996 allegations against the CIA regarding human rights abuses. These allegations included assassination and were found to be credible by the Intelligence Oversight Board. As a result of these findings, then-CIA director John Deutch dismissed the chief of the Latin American Division of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, and the CIA station chief in Guatemala was asked to retire. (AP, September 27)

Egyptian immigrants arrested: Following a growing trend, ten Egyptians were arrested at the American border after having transited from Guatemala. They had paid \$7,000 each to be smuggled through Mexico into the U.S. (AP, September 27)

U.S. trade bill being pushed: The Bush administration has begun attempts to pass a western hemisphere-wide free trade bill through Congress. The Assistant U.S. Trade Representative, Regina Vargo, went to Managua, Nicaragua and discussed trade liberalization with Guatemala and the other Central American states. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick had similar discussions with Mercosur, the world's third largest trading block. Mercosur is composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The Bush administration argued that this agreement would help fight terrorism. The authority to enter into trade agreements was previously denied to President Clinton by Democrats concerned about the negative effects this type of agreement could have on U.S. labor. (AP, September 27)

## **MACEDONIA**

NATO continues to disarm rebels: Approximately 4,500 NATO soldiers were deployed August 27 in order to disarm ethnic Albanian rebels, following an August 13<sup>th</sup> agreement between the Slavic majority and the Albanian minority politicians. All of the rebels' arsenal has been scheduled to be confiscated by September 26. German Foreign minister Joschka Fischer voiced support for a continued UN-mandated military presence after the completion of the disarmament in order to avoid a relapse into civil war and to oversee the return of

refugees. Fighting between government forces and Albanian rebels began on 26 February 2001 and has led to the displacement of 70,000 refugees from their homes. Arrangements have been made to continue talks between Macedonian and ethnic Albanian politicians to discuss language rights and public service jobs for the Albanian minority. (BBC, September 12; CNN, September 9; New York Times, September 13, 19, 2001)

Church explosion deepens ethnic divide: The Macedonian government accused Albanian rebels of the August 21 attack against the Slavic St. Atanasius monastery in Lesok, a small village located in a rebel-held region. If the National Liberation Army (NLA) were to be found responsible, it would be their first attack on a religious site in Macedonia said Harald Schenker, spokesman for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission to Macedonia. The majority of religious sites struck during the six-month conflict have belonged to ethnic Albanians, including a mosque that was set on fire in the southern town of Prilep in early August. Despite a ceasefire set in place since July fifth, the Macedonians have interpreted the destruction of the church as an attack on their religion, identity, and culture and many have consequently fled the region. (BBC, CNN, August 22; NATO, August 10, 2001)

Parliament convenes as NATO completes mission: The 4500 NATO troops began moving out September 27 as they had met their month-long target to disarm ethnic Albanian rebels of war weapons, while the Parliament initiated its

end of the Peace accord to make preliminary reforms to the Constitution. NATO's Secretary-General George Robertson asserted that the 3,875 weapons that were confiscated, successfully exceeded the target of 3,300 and that consequently, the Macedonian parliament must no longer delay its part of the peace deal to broaden the education, language and employment rights of the Albanian minority. Legislators that convened in Parliament September 21 approved three of the 15 preliminary amendments to the Constitution that increase the rights of the Albanian minority, as brokered in the August 13 Peace agreement between the government and Albanian spokespersons. Many Macedonians oppose the compliance to Albanian demands and are calling for referenda on the amendments. Lord Robertson insists that the political process must move forth so that ratification of the amendments can take place, in fear that a delay would incite a backlash by Albanian guerillas at a particularly sensitive time when international security forces will have concluded their mission. (Balkan Information Exchange, September 27; BBC, CNN, September 26; New York Times, September 24, 2001).

## **Nepal**

Government and Maoists hold talks: Nepali officials and Maoist leaders held the first ever talks since the violent insurgency began 66 months ago. Talks were held Thursday, August 30 at the Godavari Village Resort in the Lapitpur district near Kathmandu. The Maoists' demands included a call for the creation of an interim government, the drafting of a new constitution and the institutionalization

of a republican state, along with the release of their cadres from detainment. The government insisted that the use of all force and extortion be stopped immediately. The mood was surprisingly conciliatory and the talks ended with issue of a joint statement in which both parties pledged to continue dialogue and find peaceful resolution. Skeptics suggested that the talks were merely a political diversion by the Maoists to buy time, rearm, and organize for their final attack. In light of the planned Maoist mass meeting in Kathmandu scheduled for September 21, it seemed the rebel group was gearing up, not settling down for talks. These skeptics also found little practical use in the discussions because the positions of each side seem nearly irreconcilable. In spite of this, confidence in the talks remained, because both sides know that public opinion favors a peaceful end to the conflict. (Spotlight Weekly, September 7, Nepali Times, September 7, 2001)

Maoist mass meeting stirs concern: An estimated three to four hundred thousand Maoist supporters are scheduled to converge on Nepal's capital of Kathmandu September 21. Concern over the size and intentions of this crowd are widespread, as it would be the largest support rally Maoist rebel leaders have ever organized. Threats and extortion exercised by Maoists to forcibly recruit support for the rally have been reported. Maoists denied these allegations and have continued to maintain their intentions for a peaceful meeting. It is also thought that a rally of this magnitude in the capital sends a mixed message, with the potential of derailing the talks. The Maoists have used the month-long truce period to hold

mass rallies and garner further support for their six year long battle against the government.

([Nepalnews.com](#), September 11, [The Kathmandu Post](#), September 7, 2001)

Public meeting ban lifted: The government lifted its month long ban on mass meetings and public gatherings in Kathmandu Valley effective September 18. Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka announced the decision in the House of Representatives saying, “The ban on public meetings and gatherings will not be necessary anymore since the situation of law and order has been improved.” The ban, originally imposed on September 15, was aimed to prevent the Maoist mass meetings scheduled for September 17 and 21 in the capital. The Nepalese government was concerned both about the size of the meetings and the potential for violence and had pressured the Maoists to call it off. The Maoists expected approximately 300,000 people to attend the rally September 21, but cancelled the meeting after the ban was imposed. The management of mass meetings and other public gatherings is another attempt by government officials to control the six-year-long violent Maoist insurgency.

([BBC Online](#), September 17; [Kathmandu Post](#), September 18; [Nepalnews.com](#), September 18, 2001)

Maoist threats continue: Despite the nearly two-month old truce between Maoist rebels and the Nepalese government, rebels continue to use forceful tactics to promote their movement. The Minister for Information and Communication

Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta cited Maoist involvement in 206 incidents since the declaration of 'no action'. These incidences included "pressurizing local representatives to resign, collecting donations and arms from general public, manhandling innocent people, misbehaving on women and children, forcing people to eat cow meat and launching anti-religious activities." Most schools in the Kathmandu Valley have closed fearing Maoist violence against police and government officials who have conducted campus searches for hidden arms. Former Prime Minister and President of the Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, implored the Maoists to lay down their arms, "They continue to intimidate people even as the talks continue. Peace talks will have no meaning if they do not lay down their arms." So far, the violent Maoist campaign has claimed more than 1,800 lives. ([Nepalnews.com](#), September 19; [The Rising Nepal](#), September 13, 2001)

Leftist groups working to form separate coalitions: The Maoists and the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (UML) are currently competing to attract other, smaller Left Parties to unify with their respective groups. Both of these Left forces are trying to become the largest communist party in Nepal, 'uniting the fragmented and therefore weakened communists.' Bharat Mohan Adhikari, politburo member of the CPN-UML stated, "All parties are free to talk with one another and we are not concerned about any other party other than ours sitting in dialogue with anyone. We are happy that they are exercising their rights as we are." Though no coalition is near formation, the pragmatic UML has had the upper hand in attracting other left parties to discuss a

working alliance. Many of the smaller Left parties cited a ‘difference in principle’ with the Maoists, openly disagreeing with the Maoists’ ‘People’s War.’ Lila Mani Pokharel, general secretary of the United People’s Front Nepal, added that despite the differences in the Left parties, the unification efforts have brought the parties closer together. “This process is a competition between the left parties to come up with the best communist theory and it is not going to end in the short run. This process will only end with a classless society.” (Kathmandu Post, September 23, 2001)

India opposes Maoist terrorism: Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told an Indian television today that India is opposed to the Maoist terrorism. “Wherever there is terrorism, we oppose it. In Nepal, we openly opposed the Maoists...We support the King of Nepal and the Nepal government of Sher Bahadur D. We are with them in fighting against the Maoists.” This statement came a day after India deployed 10,000 troops to the Indo-Nepal border to secure it against what Indian government calls, ‘terrorists, criminals, and other undesirable elements across the border.’ Many Indian parliament members saw the move as unfriendly, although a government statement pledged support and close co-operation with Nepalese government and authorities on both sides ‘to ensure peace and security along the border.’ (NepalNews.com, September 25, 26, 2001)

