



**Peace & Justice Update**  
**February 25, 2005**  
*(Volume 11, Number 1)*

The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute. The International Human Rights section is intended to focus on aspects of international law. For information on specific cases of human rights abuses, please visit [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org) or [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org). The Gender and Peace section highlights events in peace-building that pertain to gender and human rights.

**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 bibliographical 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.

**Update subscriptions:** Electronic subscriptions to the Peace & Justice Updates are free; simply send an email to [updates@sandiego.edu](mailto:updates@sandiego.edu) and include the word "subscribe" in the subject line.

*The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Spring 2005 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Nicholas Frampton (University of Nottingham), Stacey Olson (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Rowena Paz (University of California, San Diego), and Annie Vikengren (Alliant University).*

## UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus ( <a href="http://www.africafocus.org">www.africafocus.org</a> )
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )
AI	=	Amnesty International ( <a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a> )
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allAfrica.com">www.allAfrica.com</a> )
Angola Press	=	Angola Press ( <a href="http://www.angolapress-angop.ao">www.angolapress-angop.ao</a> )
AP	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">http://news.bbc.co.uk</a> )
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports ( <a href="http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/">www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/</a> )
Colombo Page	=	Sri Lankan Online News ( <a href="http://www.colombopage.com">www.colombopage.com</a> )
Daily News	=	Sri Lanka Daily News ( <a href="http://www.dailynews.lk">www.dailynews.lk</a> )
EU	=	European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network ( <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk">www.guardian.co.uk</a> )
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch News ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )
ICC	=	International Criminal Court ( <a href="http://www.icc-cpi.int">www.icc-cpi.int</a> )
ICG	=	International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisweb.org">www.crisisweb.org</a> )
ICTR	=	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ( <a href="http://www.ictt.org">www.ictt.org</a> )
Independent	=	The Independent ( <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk">www.independent.co.uk</a> )
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network ( <a href="http://www.irinnews.org">www.irinnews.org</a> )
Kansas City Infozine	=	Kansas City Infozine ( <a href="http://www.infozine.com">www.infozine.com</a> )
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com.np">www.nepalnews.com.np</a> )
La Hora	=	La Hora ( <a href="http://www.lahora.com">www.lahora.com</a> )
Prensa Libre	=	La Prensa Libre ( <a href="http://www.prensalibre.com">www.prensalibre.com</a> )
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times ( <a href="http://www.latimes.com">www.latimes.com</a> )
Monitor	=	The Monitor ( <a href="http://www.monitor.co.ug">www.monitor.co.ug</a> )
MONUC	=	MONUC ( <a href="http://www.monuc.org">www.monuc.org</a> )
Nepal News	=	Nepal News.Com ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com">www.nepalnews.com</a> )
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times ( <a href="http://www.nepalitimes.com">www.nepalitimes.com</a> )
NYT	=	The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com">www.allafrica.com</a> )
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a> )
Reuters	=	Reuters ( <a href="http://www.reuters.com">www.reuters.com</a> )
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald ( <a href="http://www.smh.com">www.smh.com</a> )
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage ( <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a> )
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ( <a href="http://www.unhcr.ch">www.unhcr.ch</a> )
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund ( <a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> )
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women ( <a href="http://www.unifem.org">www.unifem.org</a> )
VOA	=	Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm">www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm</a> )
WP	=	Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )

## **UPDATE SUMMARY**

### **BURUNDI**

Tutsi parties push “no” vote in referendum

### **COTE D’IVOIRE**

President Gbagbo seeks new mediator

### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Government makes efforts to stop violence; Critics doubt elections will take place

### **GENDER AND PEACE**

Iraqi women living in fear; Kuwait to discuss women’s rights

### **GUATEMALA**

Warrant issued to arrest ex-dictator Romeo Lucas García

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

Sri Lanka rejects human rights report

### **LIBERIA**

Corruption threatens industries; U.S. subcontractor seeks to exploit West Africans in Iraq

### **NEPAL**

Britain and India stop military aid; King terminates efforts for Democracy Day protest; Maoist attack kills one; King appoints anti-corruption panel

### **RWANDA**

Ministers meet to discuss regional stability pact for Great Lakes; European Union grants \$68 million for rural development

### **SIERRA LEONE**

Government improves control of diamond exports

**SOMALIA**

Government relocation delayed

**SRI LANKA**

Bush, Sr., Clinton witness tsunami damage; Violence threatens cease-fire

**SUDAN**

Humanitarian crisis set to worsen with millions at risk of starvation in Darfur

**UGANDA**

Peace process on hold as latest cease-fire expires

## **BURUNDI**

**Tutsi parties push “no” vote in referendum:** Three Tutsi-dominated parties, the Union pour le Progrès National (UPRONA), the Rally for Democracy and Economic Development, and the Party for National Recovery, claimed that Burundi’s proposed post-transitional constitution was exclusive and dictatorial. They encouraged Burundians to vote “no” during the referendum on the constitution planned for February 28. UPRONA said that the constitution was drafted and adopted by Hutu-dominated parties to the exclusion of Tutsi-dominated parties. Presidential elections have been scheduled for April 2005 following the referendum. The April election would be the second in Burundi, a country plagued by tension and conflict between its Hutu majority and the dominant Tutsi minority. Within months of the first democratic election in 1993, the first Hutu head of state, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated, setting the scene for an 11-year civil war between the Hutus and Tutsis in which approximately 300,000 people lost their lives. ([BBC](#), [IRIN](#), February 21, 2005)

## **COTE D’IVOIRE**

**President Gbagbo seeks new mediator:** President Laurent Gbagbo has denied asking Morocco to take part in peace talks. The Moroccan government reported receiving a request from Côte d’Ivoire authorities to become involved in the talks. After Côte d’Ivoire publicly denied issuing this request, the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation formally declined saying they did not want to undermine the efforts of the South African mediators. The African Union (AU) had assigned President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to mediate the peace talks between the Côte d’Ivoire government and the rebels on behalf of the AU. The main issue of contention comes from the refusal of Gbagbo to allow leeway on Article 35 of the Constitution, which mandates that candidates who run for office not only must have been born in Côte d’Ivoire but also that their parents must have been born there. About a quarter of the population in Côte d’Ivoire is of immigrant descent. ([AllAfrica](#), February 18, 23, 2005)

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

**Government makes efforts to stop violence:** Fighting and village raids have killed at least 55 people and displaced nearly 80,000 people in Ituri district in northeastern DRC since January 2005. At least three people were killed in Baliba village February 18, the day before Interior Minister Théophile Mbemba visited the village. The government of the DRC planned to deploy a police brigade in Ituri to protect civilians from violent militia, and the purpose of Mbemba’s visit was to prepare the deployment of this brigade. The police brigade was to support the UN Mission in the DRC, which has problems preventing the militias from looting villages. In further attempts to quell the violence in Ituri a sixth disarmament transit center was opened in Bunia, the capital of Ituri. According to the UN Development Programme at least 3,300 ex-combatants have been disarmed, demobilized, and prepared for reintegration into the national army. Many of those demobilized were women and children while it is only the men who will be reintegrated into the army. The Ituri conflict between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups came amid a larger, seven-nation war in the DRC that killed almost 4 million people between 1998 and 2003. ([AllAfrica](#), February 22, 23; [CNN](#), February 21, 2005)

Critics doubt elections will take place: In 2002, conflicting parties in the DRC formed a two-year transitional government that was to lead to the country's first democratic election, planned for June 2005. However, rebel groups that had not joined the transitional process have used violence to challenge the authority of the transitional government. Consequently, many critics have doubted that the election would take place this year. Bene M'Poko, DRC's ambassador to South Africa said that fear of what was to happen after the elections had led to mistrust among politicians. M'Poko also claimed that the country needed a system that ensured the political leaders had a role to play in restructuring the DRC, even those not elected. Following the elections anyone who was to win any votes was encouraged to form a government of national unity. The upcoming DRC elections would be the largest UN-assisted polls ever with an electorate of approximately 28 million. The war in the DRC started in 1998 with an attempt to overthrow then-President Laurent Kabila. At its height seven foreign nations were involved in the conflict that left approximately 4 million people dead. (AllAfrica, February 18, 2005)

### **GENDER and PEACE**

Iraqi women living in fear: Amnesty International (AI) issued a report February 22 which said that two years after the ousting of Saddam Hussein, women in Iraq were no better off and still lived in fear of physical and sexual violence. The report declared that although women were no longer systematically oppressed under the dictatorship, the numbers of killings, abuses, and rapes of women had increased. AI noted that women have been subjected to sexual threats by U.S. armed forces and that some women detained by U.S. forces had been beaten, sexually abused and possibly raped. The Pentagon responded to the report by asserting that it took any allegations of abuse seriously. AI also reported that gender discrimination within Iraqi law was still prominent and contributed to continued violence against women including "honor crimes" in which husbands could legally beat their wives if the women were accused of dishonoring their family. However, the report also noted positive changes in Iraqi women's rights. Many women's rights groups have been formed including one that focuses specifically on the protection of women from violence. (AI, February 22; SMH, February 22, WP, February 22, 2005)

Kuwait to discuss women's rights: The Kuwaiti parliament planned to debate in March of 2005 a bill granting disenfranchised women full political rights including the right to vote and be elected into office. A previous attempt to grant greater political power to women was rejected in 1999 by an Islamist-tribal alliance which opposed women's rights on religious and social grounds. However, Kuwait's Islamist Umma Party backs the franchise efforts, becoming the first Sunni Muslim group to support women's suffrage. To pass, the bill requires a simple majority of the 49 parliament members and 16 ministers. There has been widespread encouragement by both international and domestic sources for Kuwait to broaden its political freedoms since the end of the 1991 Gulf War. (BBC, February 22; Khaleej Times, February 22, 2005)

### **GUATEMALA**

Warrant issued to arrest ex-dictator Romeo Lucas García: The Spanish High Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Romeo Lucas García, the dictator of Guatemala during the 1980 burning

of the Spanish Embassy that killed 37 people. The building was attacked by the Guatemalan military in search of leftist insurgents after a group of Mayan Indians had taken refuge inside. García is sought for extradition from Venezuela where he has been residing. He has been charged with one count of torture, 7 counts of murder and one count of intent to murder as a result of a complaint lodged by the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation. The Foundation was founded after Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel peace prize for her fight against the exploitation and oppression of Mayan Indians by the Guatemalan government. (Prensa Libre, February 22, 23, 2005)

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

Sri Lanka rejects human rights report: Sri Lanka rejected a UN report declaring that the Tamil Tigers rebel group had recruited 4,700 child soldiers since 2001. The denial came in the face of a UN meeting which was to be held next Wednesday proposing sanctions against groups using child soldiers. The proposed sanctions are restrictions on the flow of military and financial assistance to the group, and on the travel of the group's leaders. Although the report concluded that the majority of children had been returned to their families, UNICEF recently reported 1,000 new recruits. (BBC, February 21, 2005)

### **LIBERIA**

Corruption threatens industries: In recent months Liberia has been exploring options with international companies to privatize many of the country's industries. With elections coming in October this may be the companies' last chance to make money if the members of the current administration are not reelected for office. The Supreme Court in Liberia issued a court order to prevent, or determine the legality of, the sales of these industries, but Liberian human rights lawyer Samuel Kofi Woods said it had been ignored. Liberia's Transitional Government has granted Firestone Company 36 more years to continue manufacturing rubber. The deal has been criticized by some Liberians because it will outlast the current administration's mandate. Others have argued it is a sign that Liberia is stable enough to bring back foreign investment after a 14-year civil war destroyed the economy. Rubber is one of the few commodities still legally exported out of the country. Another plantation owned by Guthrie Rubber is still not producing rubber, but locals have been complaining that demobilized fighters of the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy are illegally producing rubber and selling it to an exporter in Monrovia. On Monday a group of concerned citizens stormed the Liberian parliament building to demand these rebels be evacuated from the plantation. (IRIN, February 22, 2005)

U.S. subcontractor seeks to exploit West Africans in Iraq: A Liberian-based company planned to employ West Africans in Iraq as cleaners and kitchen hands on U.S. military bases. They intended to recruit from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria at wages of 40 U.S. dollars a week, compared to an average of between 5,000 to 30,000 dollars a month for Western civil servants. The company intended to recruit 750 workers from Sierra Leone where 70 percent of the population lives in poverty, making it a huge source for cheap labor. (AllAfrica, February 14, 2005)

## NEPAL

Britain and India stop military aid: Following consultations with their respective ambassadors, Britain and India terminated the delivery of all military supplies. Their actions came in response to King Gyanendra's takeover of power February 1. India had been one of Nepal's largest military suppliers, providing rifles, helicopters, mine-protecting vehicles and other equipment. Britain, before the takeover, was to provide Nepal with non-lethal equipment worth \$1.34 million. India and Britain have been concerned with human rights and civil liberties abuses since the takeover, including the preventing of political leaders and activists from leaving Kathmandu. India called for the restoration of the multiparty democracy, the release of political detainees, and the lifting of media censorship, specifically referring to the blocking of Indian news channels and targeting of Indian joint ventures. However, Finance Minister Madhukar Shumsher Rana declared February 22 that international mediation would not be used to resolve the Maoist insurgency. Rana said that Nepal is able meet its security needs unilaterally, as 70 percent of defense spending is financed internally. Gyanendra originally asserted that it was necessary to seize power because Nepal's democracy was at "grave risk" from the Maoist revolt and political instability. ([BBC](#), [Kantipur Online](#), [Reuters](#), February 22, 2005)

King terminates efforts for Democracy Day protest: Political personnel were placed under arrest and telephone lines were cut February 18, the traditional Nepalese National Democracy Day, by King Gyanendra to "protect democracy from Maoist rebels and stop corrupt politicians." The Nepali Congress party had planned to stage demonstrations that day protesting Gyanendra's assumption of power and suspension of civil liberties. At least twenty demonstrators were taken into custody, shouting pro-democracy slogans as the riot police took them away. Democracy Day commemorates the anniversary of the origin of Nepal's democratic efforts with the ousting of the Rana oligarchy by King Tribhuvan, the current king's grandfather. Gyanendra celebrated Democracy Day with school children bussed to the capital and reasserted the need to "take steps to extricate the country and multi-party democracy from this morass." King Gyanendra took over the democratic government and declared a state of emergency February 1, with the stated intent of stopping Maoist rebel attacks and ending corruption. ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#), February 18, 2005)

Maoist attack kills one: An Indian national driving his truck was killed in a Maoist rebel attack on a convoy fifty miles west of Kathmandu. The driver's death was the first fatality of the rebels' national transportation blockade implemented to protest King Gyanendra's seizure of power. At least 7 others were injured in the convoy. It is believed that the group was assaulted by the Maoists for defying the blockade. Military troops were rushed to the city of Dhading where the attacks occurred and highway patrols were increased to protect vehicles carrying essential goods to Kathmandu. The continuous fighting between the Maoist rebels and the Nepalese government beginning in 1996 has resulted in more than 10,000 deaths. ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#), February 21, 2005)

King appoints anti-corruption panel: King Gyanendra announced February 17 the creation of a 6-member anti-graft commission that would crack down on smuggling, tax evasion, illegal contracts, and corruption in general. The commission would have all the powers of a court including the authority to confiscate property, impose a fine of up to \$150, and impose jail

sentences as long as six months on those who impede its efforts. The anti-corruption commission was another extension of Gyanendra's assumption of power. On February 1 King Gyanendra put a halt to the Nepalese democracy by dismissing his cabinet, instituting press censorship, and limiting other constitutional liberties. ([AFP](#), [AP](#), [BBC](#), February 17, 2005)

## **RWANDA**

Ministers meet to discuss regional stability pact for Great Lakes: Eleven cabinet ministers from countries in the Great Lakes region met in Kigali, Rwanda, February 17 and 18 to discuss the implementation of a regional pact on security, stability, and development. The regional pact had been organized by the UN and the African Union, and formalized by a declaration signed in November 2004 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the site of the first regional Great Lakes summit. During the two-day meeting, the ministers were expected to agree on protocols of action on the four themes of the international conference on the Great Lakes: peace and security; democracy and good governance; economic development and regional integration; and humanitarian and social issues. Rwanda's Foreign Minister, Charles Muligande, said, "This conference is of paramount importance as it will determine the course of action for the region and provide the region with a road map to ensure conflict is prevented, managed, and resolved effectively." The Great Lakes region, an area bordered by Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda, has a history of conflict. The region has been very unstable since the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which approximately 800,000 people, mainly from the dominant Tutsi minority, were killed by the Hutu majority. Rwanda and Burundi, along with Uganda have invaded the DRC twice since the genocide, claiming that Hutus responsible for the killings had fled to the DRC. The invasions sparked a war in the DRC that involved seven African countries and killed nearly 4 million people. The conflict in the DRC also aggravated the 11-year civil war in Burundi. ([AP](#), February 17; [IRIN](#), February 18, 2005)

European Union grants \$68 million for rural development: Rwanda received a \$68 million grant from the European Union February 15, to fund projects aimed at raising standards of living in rural areas. The grant was to be used to support the national budget, implement poverty reduction strategies, modernize the agricultural sector, and support Vision 2020. Vision 2020 is a program designed to increase the GDP from \$230 to \$900, reduce the poverty rate from 60 to 25 percent, and increase literacy from 48 to 90 percent of the population. However, Rwanda is still recovering from the 1994 genocide in which the Hutu majority killed 800,000 people from the Tutsi minority as well as moderate Hutus. ([IRIN](#), February 17, 2005)

## **SIERRA LEONE**

Government improves control of diamond exports: Sierra Leone has made significant improvements in diverting diamond revenues from funding rebel groups. Legal exports were recorded at 5 million dollars in 1999 compared to 75.9 million dollars in 2003 and 126 million in 2004. The success has been attributed to the Kimberley Process which set higher penalties and made the illegal diamond trade more difficult. ([Rapaport News](#), February 23, 2005)

## **SOMALIA**

**Government relocation delayed:** The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) has been unable to return to the capital of Mogadishu on February 21 as planned. The capital saw daily demonstrations and outbursts of violence including a bomb explosion that resulted in one person dead and six others injured. The mounting opposition is a response to the proposed arrival of African Union (AU) peacekeeping troops requested by President Abdulallahi Yusuf Ahmed. The troops have been considered essential in securing Mogadishu for the TFG's relocation. However many Somalis, including members of the new government, argued that the involvement of Somalia's neighbors, who were set to make up the peacekeeping forces, would be an unwanted interference. Countries such as Ethiopia, who already expressed a willingness to send troops, have in the past pursued their own strategic interests in Somalia. Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Ghedi was due to leave for Somalia on Wednesday to continue to assess the situation and attempt to begin the process of relocation. His trip plans build upon the recent visit by 40 members of the new government to various regions in Somalia. The purpose of the visit was to explain the new government's policies and establish its presence there. The TFG has been exiled in neighboring Kenya since its formation in October 2004. Recent international pressure has set the process moving forward for the government to return to Somalia where lawlessness and clan warfare have prevailed since the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991. (AllAfrica, February 21; BBC, February 17, 22; IRIN, February 16, 18, 2005)

## **SRI LANKA**

**Bush, Sr., Clinton witness tsunami damage:** Former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush, Sr. visited Sri Lanka February 21 to lead U.S. fundraising efforts to aid the tsunami-hit countries. Clinton asserted that the "U.S. will do at least its fair share if not more in the long run." The U.S. has pledged an initial \$350 million to the tsunami aid effort. The former presidents traveled along the southern coastline of Sri Lanka where 40,000 were killed by the tsunami. They also visited the southern district of Matara to assess a U.S.-funded water purification project. However, the duo did not visit the areas in the north and east held by the Tamil Tiger rebels. The Clinton administration declared the Tigers a terrorist group in 1997. The two men began their tour February 19 in Thailand visiting tsunami hit villages. (BBC, Reuters, February 21, 2005)

**Violence threatens cease-fire:** Senior Tamil Tiger leaders cautioned that the cease-fire between the Tigers and the Sri Lankan government was rapidly deteriorating. Peace efforts led by Norwegian peace envoys have only led to discussions about tsunami aid, not a permanent peace process. February 22 marked the cease-fire's third anniversary amid a strained environment following the assassination of former eastern political leader E. Kousalyan and four other rebels. The government asserts that a rival political faction of the Tigers committed the murders. However, the Tigers claim that it was the Sri Lankan government who ordered the attacks, to crush Tamil efforts for self-rule. The Tigers' political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan accused the government of waging a "secret war." The cease-fire was further strained by the killing of a Sri Lankan soldier February 23 by the Tigers, according to the Sri Lankan government. More than 60,000 people have died in the conflict. (BBC February 23, Reuters February 22, 2005)

## SUDAN

Humanitarian crisis set to worsen with millions at risk of starvation in Darfur: Over four million people living in Darfur, the Western region of Sudan, are at risk of starvation according to Jan Egeland, the UN emergency relief coordinator. Despite efforts from the humanitarian community, the continued violence made it hard for aid to reach those affected. Egeland stated, "Aid workers have been killed, our helicopters have been shot at and our trucks have been looted." Mass displacement of people in Darfur has led to communities previously holding populations of around 10,000, now having to provide for up to 90,000. Matters are likely to be further exacerbated by the pending rainy season, during which large areas of land become inaccessible and the prevalence of waterborne diseases increases. Against this backdrop there has been increased pressure on the UN Security Council to resolve its differences in dealing with Darfur. Louise Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed the council February 16. Arbour, with a file of 51 suspects in her possession, strongly recommended that those responsible for the atrocities in Darfur be taken before the International Criminal Court (ICC). However the U.S., fearing politically motivated trials against its nationals, has refused to endorse the ICC. Instead it proposes the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal sharing the infrastructure of the Rwanda tribunal in Arusha. Critics have been quick to point out this would only further prolong the situation that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has described as "Hell on Earth." The conflict in Darfur broke out two years ago when rebels from the region, claiming marginalization and discrimination, launched attacks against the government. The following counter-insurgency attacks by the government and its allied militias have resulted in the deaths of up to 100,000 and the displacement of 2 million people. ([AllAfrica](#), [BBC](#), February 17; [IRIN](#), February 16, 17, 21, 2005)

## UGANDA

Peace process on hold as latest cease-fire expires: The current cease-fire between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) ended February 22. Little in the way of solid progress had been made despite President Yoweri Museveni's extension of the initial 18-day period. Chief peace negotiator Betty Bigombe urged the LRA to take action and show their commitment to peace. She stated, "Don't let the community lose hope and don't let the government and the international community think you are not interested in dialogue." The cease-fire saw some progress with the surrender of key LRA rebel Brigadier Sam Kolo. Emerging from the bush last week, Kolo took advantage of the current amnesty offered by the government to LRA rebels. His surrender can be seen as a reflection of the continued weakening of the LRA. Further, some analysts believe that many of the LRA are weary of fighting after 19 years and little substantive progress. However others have been quick to point to the negative implications of Kolo's surrender, drawing attention to the fact that he was considered one of the more rational members of the LRA. Also, as key peace negotiator for the rebel army, he leaves a gap behind him, which if left unfilled by the LRA will only further hinder talks. The International Crisis Group has called on Museveni to extend the cease-fire an extra month in order to give the LRA more time. However in a recent comment to a BBC journalist the President indicated that he might be committed to further militaristic approaches: "It is not the cease-fire which paid off, it the military pressure that forced Kolo to surrender." The war in

Northern Uganda has left tens of thousands dead and has led to the abduction of over 20,000 children. Led by Joseph Kony, the LRA seeks revenge against the government for past transgressions and targets all who are believed to collaborate with it. (AllAfrica, February 21; BBC, February 17, 22; ICG, February 21; IRIN, February 17; New Vision, February 18, 19; The Monitor, February 18, 21, 22, 2005)