



Peace & Justice Update
April 22, 2005
(Volume 11, Number 9)

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

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UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus - www.africanfocus.org
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse - www.afp.com
AI	=	Amnesty International - www.amnesty.org
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media - www.allAfrica.com
AP	=	Associated Press - www.ap.org
B92	=	B92 - www.freeb92.net/english
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation - http://news.bbc.co.uk
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports - www.monitor.bbc.co.uk
Boston Herald	=	Boston Herald - www.bostonherald.com
Colombo Page	=	Sri Lankan Online News - www.colombopage.com
Daily News	=	Sri Lanka Daily News - www.dailynews.lk
Daily Times	=	DailyTimes - www.dailytimes.com
EAS	=	East African Standard - www.eastandard.net
EU	=	European Union - www.europa.eu.int
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network - www.guardian.co.uk
GAO	=	General Accountability Office - www.gao.gov/
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.ictr.org
Independent	=	The Independent - www.independent.co.uk
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network - www.irinnews.org
Kansas City	=	Kansas City - www.kansascity.com
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post - www.nepalnews.com.np
Kazinform	=	Kazinform - www.kasinform.org
La Hora	=	La Hora - www.lahora.com
Prensa Libre	=	La Prensa Libre - www.prensalibre.com
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times - www.latimes.com
Monitor	=	The Monitor - www.monitor.co.ug
MONUC	=	MONUC - www.monuc.org
Nepal News	=	Nepal News.Com - www.nepalnews.com
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times - www.nepalitimes.com
News.com.au	=	News.com.au - www.news.com.au
New Vision	=	New Vision - www.newvision.co.ug
News 24	=	News 24 - www.news24.com
NYT	=	The New York Times - www.nytimes.com
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam - www.oxfam.org.uk
Prensa Libre	=	La Prensa Libre - www.prensalibre.com
ReliefWeb	=	ReliefWeb - www.reliefweb.int
Reuters	=	Reuters - www.reuters.com
Siglo XXI	=	Siglo XXI - www.sigloxxi.com
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald - www.smh.com
Terra	=	Terra - www.terra.com.gt
UN News	=	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
Worldnews	=	World News - www.worldnews.com

UPDATE SUMMARY

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Soldiers from Republika Srpska refuse allegiance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

BURUNDI

African leaders meet about Burundi's peace process

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

UN Security Council issues weapons ban; Militias disarm in Ituri

GENDER AND PEACE

Kuwaiti women near voting rights; UN denounces violence against women and children in DRC

GUATEMALA

Kofi Annan praises UN mission in Guatemala

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

UN High Commissioner for Refugees criticizes Sudan refugee problem; UN sets out to create mandate protecting human rights in counterterrorism efforts

NEPAL

Schools close after rebel threat; King begins nine-day foreign tour

RWANDA

Rwandans flee Gacaca courts; Government destroys weapons; Former president begins Supreme Court appeal

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Human remains discovered in Kosovo

SOMALIA

MPs returning to Mogadishu

SRI LANKA

Tsunami aid deal still elusive

SUDAN

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State meets with government

UGANDA

ICC investigations could be suspended

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Soldiers from Republika Srpska refuse allegiance to Bosnia and Herzegovina: On Saturday a group of more than 500 soldiers from Republika Srpska refused to swear allegiance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and booed and jeered as the anthem of Bosnia and Herzegovina played. The incidents were not taken lightly. In a joint statement, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Paddy Ashdown, European Union and NATO officials, and the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo all condemned the soldiers' actions. Ashdown said that Republika Srpska is an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina and does not exist outside of that state. He also expressed his concern that the events may lead to a much deeper problem and need to be taken seriously. The issue has its roots in the Bosnian civil war that lasted from 1992-1995 and ended with a set of peace accords establishing the autonomous Republika Srpska under Bosnia and Herzegovina. Last year the soldiers of Republika Srpska were joined with the soldiers of Bosnia and Herzegovina to form a united defense ministry that ordered the soldiers to swear allegiance to Bosnia-Herzegovina. (B92; BBC April 18, 2005)

BURUNDI

African leaders to meet about Burundi's peace process: Leaders from the Great Lakes region were to hold an emergency summit in Uganda April 22 to discuss the uncertain peace process in Burundi. The goal of the summit was to discuss the extension of the transitional period that was to end April 22 with national elections. All indications were that the elections would be pushed to a later date; therefore the regional leaders needed to give the transitional government extended legitimacy. Burundi has been torn apart by years of conflict between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi elite, and the national elections were expected to provide for peace in the country after 11 years of civil war. (News24, April 20, 2005)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

UN Security Council issues weapons ban: On April 18 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1596, which condemned the illegal flow of weapons into eastern DRC. The resolution extended an embargo on arms and military financing, including a travel ban on violators and the freezing of their assets. The only ones exempt from the ban were the police; soldiers in the DRC's national army; and peacekeepers employed by the UN peacekeeping mission to the DRC (MONUC). According to the resolution neighboring countries must also monitor aircraft and their pilots, especially in the eastern districts of Ituri and North and South Kivu. However, Henri Boshoff, a military analyst with the research institution, Institute for Security Studies, said that unless regional governments backed the embargo and peacekeepers were given the means to enforce it, the embargo would fail. Ethnic warfare has killed tens of thousands of civilians in the east and has been often fueled by the ready access to weapons. The ban follows a recent push by MONUC to disarm militias in the east. MONUC has more than 15,000 peacekeepers in the DRC, but has had problems controlling the situation in the east, especially in Ituri where more than 50,000 people have been killed since 1999. (AllAfrica, April 18, 19; BBC, April 18, Relief Web, April 19, 2005)

Militias disarm in Ituri: On April 13 the UN peacekeeping mission to the DRC (MONUC) announced 10,022 militia fighters had been disarmed and had entered the transit sites protected by MONUC. The same day, one of the major militia groups in the northeastern district of Ituri, the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) announced an end to its armed conflict at the same time as the remaining 416 militia fighters of another militia group, People's Armed Forces of Congo (FAPC), turned in their weapons to UN troops. After militia killed nine UN peacekeepers in Ituri, MONUC and the Congolese army stepped up efforts to disarm militia in the area. At least 50,000 civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands displaced in the six years of conflict between ethnic Hema and Lendu militia in Ituri. (IRIN, April 14; MONUC, April 13, 2005)

GENDER and PEACE

Kuwaiti women near voting rights: The Kuwaiti parliament gave its support for a bill permitting women to vote and compete in municipal council elections. The bill passed on a vote of 26-20 with three abstentions. In the past, women's advocacy groups have faced strong opposition from the parliament to women's suffrage. Representatives of Kuwaiti tribes led the resistance, challenging that allowing women to have a greater role in politics would be against Islamic principles and would destabilize their domestic roles. According to conservatives who oppose the bill, political rights for women would lead to family breakdown and children straying from Islamic teachings. Women's rights activist Rola Sashti described the bill as a first step saying, "I hope women will run in these municipal elections, and we hope that the big step will be participation in parliament." Under present Kuwaiti law, only men over the age of 21 who are not in the military or police can vote. (BBC; Guardian Unlimited; April 19, 2005)

UN denounces by violence against women and children in DRC: In a speech to the UN Human Rights Commission, UN Monitor Titinga Frederic Pacere said that he was extremely disturbed by "humanitarian catastrophe" in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pacere urges authorities to do more to defend women and children saying that he was "outraged by the crimes committed against Congolese women and children... by all foreign and Congolese forces and armed groups." During his visit last year to the DRC, he said he witnessed women who had been mutilated and raped and children as young as four who had been sexually assaulted. DRC ambassador to the UN Antoine Mindua Keisa-Mbe welcomed Pacere's report but said that he could not accept the monitor's "humiliating allegations about the place of women in Congolese society." Since 1998, over 4 million people have died in the violent conflict between the Congolese rebels and government. (Reuters, April 19, 2005)

GUATEMALA

Kofi Annan praises UN mission in Guatemala: In a final report on the UN Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), Kofi Annan detailed the successes of the mission in implementing the 1996 peace accords, which ended 36 years of civil war in Guatemala. He said the mission, which officially ended December 2004, served as a successful example of multidimensional peace building. He also cited reform of the legislative processes; laws protecting citizens, especially minorities; and decline in human rights abuses as some of the mission's major accomplishments. Overall he focused largely on initiatives in legislation and programs developed

to secure accountability. The report was issued at a time when the Guatemalan government continues to face criticism for its shortcomings in the legislative and enforcement processes. Many Guatemalans see the March 10 ratification of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) as an example of the weakness of their legislative system. The ratification was completed with little to no input from the citizens it will affect the most. They continue this week to protest the CAFTA ratification that initiated the creation of a large free trade zone among Central American countries and the U.S. Furthermore, Amnesty International released a report April 20 detailing human rights abuses in Guatemala and calling upon the Guatemalan authorities to “take concrete steps to end impunity and improve respect for human rights in the country.” (AI, April 20; Prensa Libre, UN, April 14, 2005)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

UN High Commissioner for Refugees criticizes Sudan refugee problem: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Wendy Chamberlain criticized the Sudan government’s lack of protection of refugees after visiting a squatter camp in Shikan near the capital, Khartoum on Wednesday. She proposed, using UN and international pressure, to hold the government accountable for the protection and assistance of internally displaced people. At the end of December the Sudan government had demolished the camp of about 30,000 southerners and since then about 5,000 have made their way back to the site, living in makeshift houses. Although internally displaced people are a problem in many parts of Sudan the government has failed to recognize their plight. (All Africa, April 2005)

UN creates mandate protecting human rights in counter terrorism efforts: The international community established a special UN rapporteur on protecting human rights in counterterrorism efforts April 21. A group of leading human rights organizations, which includes Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, and the International Service for Human Rights, called attention to the need for such a post after sponsoring a report on counterterrorism. Some of the major concerns of the report include the prolonged detention of terrorist suspects without access to a court; violation of human rights during interrogation; use of military courts to try civilians, and the transfer of suspects to other countries which routinely practice torture. The initiative established an investigator to monitor human rights violations resulting from counterterrorism measures and provide technical assistance to states. The goal of the new position is to ensure the compliance of counterterrorism laws with international human rights laws. (San Diego Union Tribune, April 21, 2005)

NEPAL

Schools close after rebel threat: The Maoist All Nepal National Free Students’ Union told the 8,500 private schools in Nepal that educate about 1.5 million children to shut down or face violence. Many schools have complied with the Maoists’ demands, fearing bomb threats by the rebel organization. Principal Raju Gurung said, “There is no security. We can’t take the risk,” explaining his decision to close school April 15. However, other schools have disobeyed the Maoists’ order, vowing to hold classes. Umesh Shrestha, head of the Private and Boarding Schools Association of Nepal said, “We defy the call and are committed to open the schools... They are using children for political purposes.” The Maoists targeted private schools, asserting

that these attract children from wealthier families who exploit the destitute Nepalese people. In the past, Maoists demanded school closures to support their efforts to obtain lower tuition and the nationalization of education, and bombed schools when children were not present. The UN called for both sides to ensure that schools were not disturbed, saying in an April 14 statement, “All schools should remain free of weapons and explosive devices and free of any political or military activity.” The violent conflict between the Maoists and the government has killed over 11,000 people since it began in 1996. (Reuters, April 15, 2005)

King begins nine-day foreign tour: King Gyanendra was to have toured Asia beginning April 21, in his first trip outside Nepal since his February 1st takeover of the government and imposition of a state of emergency on the country. The King planned to visit Indonesia to participate in the Asia-Africa summit April 23-24. He planned to subsequently travel to China to contribute to the Boao Forum for Asia, regarded by some analysts as the Asian counterpart to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland. A top Nepalese foreign ministry official said, “The king will hold bilateral meetings with foreign leaders and explain the situation in the country.” Gyanendra was expected to meet with Chinese president Hu Jintao during his trip. In contrast to its other border neighbor, India, which condemned of the King’s actions and cut military aid, China has declared the King’s takeover an “internal matter.” (Reuters, April 19, 2005)

RWANDA

Rwandans flee Gacaca courts: Approximately 2,000 Rwandan Hutus fled to Burundi to escape the traditional justice system known as Gacaca. On April 18 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began relocating the refugees from the border to places deeper within Burundi, for greater ease in assisting them. In return, Rwanda condemned Burundi for moving the refugees, who Rwanda claimed are fugitives from justice. Many of the refugees came from Rwanda’s Butare province where more than 300,000 people were killed in the genocide. Governor Philippe Njoni of Kirundo province said, “Among those who have been received in Kirundo Province, some claim they are afraid of Tutsis who are threatening to denounce them as criminals without distinction.” Others claim they fled Rwanda because new ethnic massacres were imminent. However, refugees from Rwanda to Burundi had increased since the opening of the nationwide Gacaca trials March 2005. The Gacaca courts were established to speed up genocide trials after authorities realized that regular courts would take over 100 years to prosecute all suspects of the 1994 genocide, in which approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu militias. (AllAfrica, April 18; BBC, April 19; IRIN, April 13; NYT, April 10; Xinhua, April 12, 2005)

Government destroys weapons: In April 2004, 11 countries from the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa signed an agreement to fight the problem of illegal manufacturing, trafficking, and use of small weapons in the region. As a part of the regional initiative the Rwandan government destroyed 6,000 small weapons for the first time April 14. The weapons were taken from former militia, from armed robbers, and from a stock left behind by the pre-1994 genocide government. The proliferation of weapons has caused the death and displacement of millions in Africa and around the world. In 1994, a conflict between ethnic Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda left

approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus dead, most of them killed with machetes and small guns. (IRIN, April 14, 2005)

Former president begins Supreme Court appeal: On June 20 Rwanda's Supreme Court began hearing appeals in the case of Rwanda's first post-genocide president. Former President Pasteur Bizimungu was convicted by a Kigali court on three charges of possession of illegal firearms, association with criminals and embezzlement of state funds. In June 2004, he was sentenced to 15 years in jail and his lawyer has since argued that the jail term should be reduced, while the prosecutor argued for it to be changed to a life sentence. Bizimungu was one of very few Hutus who joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the rebel movement formed by Tutsi exiles in Uganda. After the RPF took control of Rwanda in July 1994, ending the genocide that cost an estimated 800,000 lives, Bizimungu became president. But in March 2000 Bizimungu resigned and Rwanda's current president, Paul Kagame, was elected by members of parliament to replace him. As Bizimungu resigned, he became a critic of the RPF-led government at the same time as he founded a new political party, the Democratic Party for Renewal (PDR). The PDR was declared illegal by the Kagame government and Bizimungu faced trials together with the other seven people who founded the new party. (AllAfrica, April 20; BBC, April 18, 2005)

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Human remains discovered in Kosovo: On April 8, United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) professionals of the Office of Missing Persons and Serbian forensic experts found human remains in a cave in Klina, about 34 miles west of the province's capital, Pristina. The remains are reportedly believed to be related to missing persons cases of non-Albanians, possibly Serbs, who disappeared from Kosovo in the late 1990s. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have long struggled to secede from Serbia and Montenegro, while Serbia and Montenegro has sought to keep Kosovo as a province. Tensions between the two rose in the late 1990s as Slobodan Milosevic attempted to expand his territory, eventually leading to the NATO bombing in 1999. (B92, April 18; UN, April 19, 2005)

SOMALIA

MPs returning to Mogadishu: Members of the transitional federal parliament have returned to the capital, Mogadishu. The MPs held a series of meetings including an inspection of the proposed parliament building that once housed former President Siad Barre. Another group is expected to arrive later this week in an attempt to prove that the capital is safe for the relocation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Mogadishu warlord Mohamed Qanyare Afrax indicated that he was ready to move his militias out when the TFG moved in. MP, Dr. Qamar Aden Ali, argued that unlike in previous attempts to restore order to the capital, this time clanism has been adequately accommodated and therefore he believed the transition could be peaceful. However President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Ghedi continued to cite security concerns, preferring a move to smaller towns outside Mogadishu. Those in support of their view argued a return to the capital would be suicide. The TFG has been exiled in neighboring Kenya since its formation in 2004; moves to relocate have consistently suffered setbacks due to divisions within the government. (EAS, April 15, 2005)

SRI LANKA

Tsunami aid deal still elusive: Agreement between the Sri Lankan rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government concerning the distribution of tsunami aid resources is still a long way off according to the LTTE. The rebels accuse the government of withholding about \$2 billion in aid to reconstruct communities in the LTTE-controlled north and east. Senior rebel negotiator S. Puleedevan asserted that only Norway's mediation efforts could resolve the aid gridlock that rebels claim has distributed long-term peace efforts. Puleedevan said, "The Sri Lankan government has their own internal problems. We are relying on the Norwegian facilitators to arrange the joint mechanism... There are no other options." Norway was first asked to negotiate peace talks in the 1990s to end the conflict that has killed more than 64,000 people. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christine Rocca reiterated the need for cooperation during her visit to Sri Lanka this week saying, "We hope the government and the LTTE will agree soon on a joint mechanism for tsunami relief to ensure that assistance finds its way to the people who need it." (Reuters, April 18, 19, 2005)

SUDAN

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State meets with government: In the first trip by a senior-level U.S. official since the situation in Darfur was labeled genocide by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell last September, Robert Zoellick met with members of the Sudanese government, the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and tribal representatives from Darfur. The meeting came in the wake of a statement made by Zoellick at last week's donor conference, held in Oslo, Norway, that if the Sudanese government was unable to end the violence in Darfur the U.S. would be unable to continue in its support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). At the meeting Zoellick expressed in optimistic rhetoric his belief that the CPA could potentially be an historic accord bringing peace to the whole of Sudan. However at the same time he reprimanded the government for its delay in dealing with the problems in Darfur and passing off responsibility. He stated, "I think the government can and should do a lot; I think the basic formula here is the government should take every effort to stop the militias." Other groups did not share Zoellick's optimism for Darfur and the CPA. Africa Action released a statement condemning his meeting with Sudanese officials, calling it "morally repugnant." John Ashworth, an independent analyst on Sudan, warned that both the government and the SPLM/A have a bad track record on consulting other parties and argued there is a danger the two parties will entrench their power, keeping representatives from Darfur out of a new constitution. The signing of the CPA by the government and the SPLM/A January 2005 ended 21 years of civil war in Sudan. However the government has since been accused of backing attacks in Darfur, the western region of Sudan, where rebels took up arms February 2003 against the government claiming marginalization and discrimination. (AllAfrica April 15; IRIN, April 15, 19 2005)

UGANDA

ICC investigations could be suspended: Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Luis Moreno-Ocampo announced April 16 that investigations into war atrocities committed by the leadership of the Lord's Resistance Army could be postponed to serve the interests of peace. Referring to recent efforts to broker a peace between the LRA and the government Moreno-Ocampo announced, "If there is a solution to end the violence and if the prosecution is not serving the interest of justice then it is my duty to stop investigating the prosecution." The announcement came following the visit by two delegations of Ugandan representatives to The Hague this week. One group, comprised of MPs, sought to rebuke calls for the suspension of ICC prosecution requested by last month's delegation, led by Acholi Chief Rwot David Onen-Acana, and reinforce the government calls for the court to prosecute. The other set out to emphasize the significance of the peace process and the detrimental consequences of ICC involvement. Moreno-Ocampo, who seemingly endorsed the second group's view, did however warn that a delay would not mean an end to ICC prosecution of LRA members, saying, "I will stop but I will not close, timing is possible but immunity is not possible." The LRA has waged a 19-year war against the government of Uganda and has been responsible for mutilation, rape, abduction, torture and killing of the Acholi people of the north. In July 2004 Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni requested an ICC investigation into the crimes carried out by the LRA leaders. ([BBC](#), April 15; [IRIN](#), [NewVision](#), April 18; [The Monitor](#), April 14)

