



Peace & Justice Update
July 1, 2005
(Volume 12, Number 2)

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.

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 and include the word "subscribe" in the subject line.

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

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

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

UPDATE SUMMARY

BURUNDI

Government soldier kills six, commits suicide; Journalist jailed for criticizing president released

COLOMBIA

FARC steps up efforts to undermine Uribe's presidency; Uribe to launch military strike against FARC

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

MONUC uses force to counter renewed fighting in Ituri; Opposition party riots against voter registration, killing four

GENDER AND PEACE

Egyptian village signs declaration to end Female Genital Mutilation; Indian Parliament allows introduction of Domestic Violence Bill; Domestic Relations Bill suspended in Uganda; Penalty for abortion increased for Colombian women

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Zimbabwe's president defends house demolition campaign; Doctors accused of violating medical ethics at Guantánamo Bay; Ivorian factions reach agreement at South African summit; Argentine Supreme Court abolishes amnesty laws; Pakistan's Supreme Court suspends acquittals of fourteen men in gang-rape case

NEPAL

High-ranking U.S. official terms Nepal's current state a "digression"; Indian Maoists slip into Nepal; Party leader states parliament restoration impossible under Article 127; Maoists bomb private school in Salyan district

RWANDA

Fifteen hundred seek refugee in Uganda; EU sanctions military force against FDLR rebels in DRC

SRI LANKA

Parties concerned about representation in Tsunami Relief Council; Donor governments express support for Tsunami Relief Council

SUDAN

Rebels claim government has been bombing eastern regions, endangering Beja population; Sudanese court challenges ICC over Darfur crimes; Second opposition newspaper closed down in Sudan; Divisions within two rebel groups hamper Darfur peace talks

UGANDA

Museveni's third term approved by MPs, opposition rises in Kampala; LRA rebels attack refugees and steal food; Ugandan government troops brutalizing IDPs ; Cholera rampant in IDP camps

BURUNDI

Journalist jailed for criticizing president released: Etienne Ndikuriyo, a radio and online journalist arrested June 14 for reporting that President Domitien Ndayizeye was depressed, was released on bail June 23. Ndikuriyo was held for more than a week on charges of “violating the honor and privacy of the head of state.” Ndikuriyo had reported June 9 that the president was depressed after his party lost seats in the June 3 municipal elections. Ndikuriyo still faced criminal charges and was required to check in with the judge weekly until his trial. He was the first journalist to be imprisoned since 2001, and the first since Ndayizeye was elected in 2003. (AllAfrica, June 23, 2005)

Government soldier kills six, commits suicide: After being caught attempting to rape a baby-sitter in the house of President Domitien Ndayizeye, a government soldier shot six people dead before killing himself June 23. An army spokesman attributed the violence to prolonged exposure to the atrocities of war. In an allusion to the larger problems which Burundi faces in demobilizing and reintegrating its armed forces, the spokesperson stated, “This tragic act would be the effect of many years of war... I think the military needs to go through psychological healing after being traumatized by many years of war.” The civil war which began in 1993 and lasted for nearly 12 years has left approximately 300,000 people dead. (Reuters, June 23, 2005)

COLOMBIA

FARC steps up efforts to undermine Uribe’s presidency: Colombia’s leftist guerrilla army, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), launched several attacks this week in efforts to undermine President Alvaro Uribe’s “democratic security policy.” In two separate attacks June 26, FARC rebels killed 25 soldiers in Putumayo province. The following day, FARC rebels bombed two electricity towers in northern Colombia, killing more than 30 policemen and soldiers and leaving many towns without electricity. The FARC has been battling the government since establishing itself as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party in 1964. These recent attacks were the worst since President Uribe was elected in 2002 and indicate the FARC’s increased efforts to weaken the popularity and support of the president, who is seeking re-election next year. More than 120 members of the security forces have been killed by insurgents since February. (BBC, Reuters, June 27, 2005)

Uribe to launch military strike against FARC: After the guerrilla attacks of June 26 and 27, President Alvaro Uribe traveled to Putumayo province to meet with soldiers planning a massive counter-strike against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). President Uribe vowed to take a hard line against the left-wing guerrillas and noted, “To make concessions to terrorism or to bow to terrorism undermines democracy.” President Uribe has sanctioned the army’s use of all necessary force to prevent the guerrillas from launching further attacks, and approximately 1,000 troops have mustered in Putumayo to pursue FARC rebels. Army commanders fear the rebels may have already retreated into Ecuador. (BBC, June 27, 2005)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

MONUC uses force to counter renewed fighting in Ituri: After reporting the regrouping and re-arming of ex-combatants in the DRC's northern district of Ituri, the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) decided to take action. Despite the successful efforts of UN peacekeepers in disarming 15,000 former combatants in the province, militias have recently begun to join forces across ethnic lines. William Swing, the head of MONUC, noted June 23 the urgent need to confront the situation: "We need to do more and do it very fast to ensure that [more] militiamen don't go back to the bush and start fighting again." The UN troops in the DRC operate under a mandate which allows them to use necessary force to prevent conflicts, and have been dismantling military camps, seizing arms, and arresting fighters in the northern provinces of the country. After receiving much criticism for failing to take action to protect civilians and prevent further conflict, 200 UN peacekeepers launched a military operation June 27 in Ituri, one of the DRC's most troubled areas. Using a helicopter gunship, the peacekeepers directly targeted militia fighters whom they knew to be in the area. While the DRC's nation-wide war came to an end in 2003, ethnic clashes and border disputes in the eastern district of Ituri and the provinces of North and South Kivu have continued. More than 50,000 people have been killed since 1999. (IRIN, June 23; Reuters, June 27, 2005)

Opposition party riots against voter registration, killing four: The Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UPDS) began organizing people to boycott the voter registration drives taking place in Kinshasa as an expression of their discontent with election delays. The UPDS called the entire voting process a "masquerade." UPDS spokesman Jean-Baptiste Bumanza stated June 24, "We want the deadline to be respected or UPDS will call its militants to boycott electoral registration." UPDS is led by political icon Etienne Tshisekedi, who led the opposition under former DRC ruler Mobutu Sese Seko. Elections were originally scheduled to take place June 30, but were postponed by the parliament until next year. Despite tightening of security around Kinshasa to prevent potential riots, four people were killed in an eruption of violence between the UPDS and police June 26. Authorities feared these deaths were a prelude to what might occur later in the month as the election deadline approached. The army planned to stage military parades in the capital this week. (Saudi Press Agency, June 26; BBC, June 24, 26, 2005)

GENDER & PEACE

Egyptian village signs declaration to end Female Genital Mutilation: In a small village outside Aswan in southern Egypt, religious leaders and gender activists joined together to denounce the widespread practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). Under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the two groups signed an anti-FGM declaration. These actions were part of "The FGM-free Village Model," a campaign begun in 2003 to train and educate villages all over Egypt. This program was formed by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), UNDP, and others. FGM is legally prohibited, but is rampant in various forms around the country, especially in rural areas. The Egyptian government has made efforts since the mid-1990s to end the tradition of genital cutting which is not called for in the Koran yet is practiced by many Muslim communities. A 2000 study conducted by the United States Agency for International Development found that 97 percent of all Egyptian women had undergone some form of FGM. (IRIN, June 26, 2005)

Indian Parliament allows introduction of Domestic Violence Bill: The parliament approved the introduction of the Protection from Domestic Violence Bill after ten years of pressure from women's groups. The proposed bill strongly condemned any form of abuse—physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; dowry harassment; and even verbal threats—all of which would be grounds for punishment. “The challenge now is for the bill to be passed, and then to see how the rules are framed and operationalized,” said Anuradha Rajan, director of the India office of the International Center for Research on Women. If passed, the projected law stipulates the use of “protection orders,” “residence orders,” and “protection officers” to provide women safety, legal aid, shelter, and the right for the abused to remain in their matrimonial home. Oxfam reports that in India each year 15,000 brides are burned to death. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) records that 40 percent of India's sexual abuse cases are incest, and 94 percent of India's cases of violence against women have been committed by a family member. (OneWorld, June 24, 2005)

Domestic Relations Bill suspended in Uganda: The Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) was withdrawn from parliament May 16 under pressure from the Joint Christian Council and the Muslim community. The law would criminalize marital rape; force men to seek permission from their first wife prior to taking a second wife; and grant women more equality in marriage, divorce, and property rights. The parliament was to reconsider the bill June 16, but the Ugandan government has now decided to suspend the proposal indefinitely, with President Yoweri Museveni stating that the DRB is “not urgently needed.” The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) welcomed the decision on behalf of the Muslim community. A few months ago militant Muslims protesting in the streets threatened a jihad against all proponents of the bill. (AllAfrica, June 7, 24, 2005)

Penalty for abortions increased for Colombian women: A recent amendment to the penal code has increased the punishment for women who have abortions, up to four and a half years in prison. The amendment does not address penalties for those performing the abortions, nor include exceptions for cases of rape or incest. According to the United Nations Development Program, Colombia's maternal mortality rate for 2000, at 130 deaths to 100,000 live births, was high due to medical complications that accompany the illegal and thus typically unsafe procedure. Human Rights Watch and various UN bodies have been urging the Colombian government to declare the punishment for abortion unconstitutional and a violation of human rights. Pressure is coming from within the country as well where a Colombian lawyer from Women's Link Worldwide asked the court to review the abortion law. A few months following this request, her office was broken into and confidential files taken, putting the safety of those working on the case into question. An estimated 450,000 abortions take place annually in Colombia. (HRW, June 27, 2005)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Zimbabwe's president defends house demolition campaign: On June 24 President Robert Mugabe defended his government's demolition and eviction campaign, which has left more than 250,000 people homeless. Mugabe characterized the removal of illegal market stalls and houses as a “clear construction and reconstruction program,” and promised delivery of 1.2 million housing units by 2008. However Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing with the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), asserted the Zimbabwean

government had taken “grossly inadequate measures” to provide any sort of interim settlement, even advising those evicted to return to rural areas. Kothari further stated: “Until recently there was no acknowledgement from the government that there was a grave crisis – there was this humanitarian disaster unfolding – and that they needed any support.” Opposition groups have described the campaign as Mugabe’s retaliation against those who did not support him in March’s controversial presidential elections. Western governments and the human rights community have appealed to the African Union (AU) to intervene, but AU spokesman Desmond Orjiako has rejected these proposals, stating it would not be proper for African leaders to intervene with an elected government. In Zimbabwe’s post-independence years, large numbers of people in informal settlements suffered from lack of housing, health and employment. Many newly-evicted persons have lived in urban centers for decades. (BBC, June 24; Reuters, June 27, 2005)

Doctors accused of violating medical ethics at Guantánamo Bay: In separate reports released last week, the New York Times and the New England Journal of Medicine found that military doctors have helped interrogators develop and refine techniques that “increase stress and exploit fears” of detainees in order to obtain intelligence information. The reports have come amid a larger debate on whether prison camp doctors have acted in violation of professional ethics codes. In response to these claims, senior Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman suggested that doctors at the Guantánamo Bay prison camp were not subject to ethics codes because they advised interrogators as “behavioral scientists” instead of directly treating patients. In related news, a four-member team of UN human rights experts released a statement June 23 accusing the U.S. of delaying responses to requests by UN officials to visit detainees at Guantánamo Bay. “Such requests were based on information from reliable sources of serious allegations of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees, arbitrary detention, violations of their right to health and their due process rights,” said the team. In the absence of American cooperation, the UN human rights experts said they would begin their own independent investigation. (BBC, June 23, 24; NYT, June 23, 24, 2005)

Ivorian factions reach agreement in South African summit: In a summit held this week in Pretoria, South Africa, President Laurent Gbagbo and Ivorian rebel factions agreed that the over 42,000 rebels would disarm in time for elections in October. Rebel factions and the army agreed to begin disarmament at the end of July, while the pro-government militias agreed to be fully dismantled by August 20; all parties face sanctions by the African Union if the process is further delayed. The rebels, known as the New Forces, apparently refused to disarm until the government-backed militias of President Gbagbo have disarmed. The successful summit agreement, mediated by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, took place just days after the UN Security Council unanimously voted to increase peacekeeping troops by 850 to reinforce the 6,000 troops already on the ground. The head of the UN mission in Côte d’Ivoire, Peter Schori, who had initially requested an increase of 2,000 troops, expressed disappointment with the small addition. Fresh violence broke out earlier this month in Duekoue, in western Côte d’Ivoire, killing 100 people. Côte d’Ivoire has been divided into a government-controlled south and a rebel-controlled north for three years. Tensions continued to remain high after a cease-fire ended a seven-month period of civil war. (IRIN, June 24; BBC, June 29, 2005)

Argentine Supreme Court abolishes amnesty laws: The Supreme Court found June 14 that two amnesty laws were unconstitutional, including the dismissal clause for lack of evidence that previously protected officers from charges related to Argentina's "dirty war" in the 1970s. The nine-member panel, voting seven to one with one abstention, attributed its decision to the international law principle that crimes against humanity cannot be protected by amnesty. The decision received immediate praise from President Nestor Kirchner and human rights groups, who announced they have been requesting open proceedings against 400 officers, 20 to 30 of whom are still in office. In the 1970s government troops fought against left-wing guerrilla groups, trade unionists, intellectuals and human rights activists; over 10,000 people were abducted by military and paramilitary groups. Analysts said Argentina's Supreme Court decision may encourage other South American countries to reform impunity laws passed to protect those involved in the military juntas of the 1960s to 1980s. (International Justice Tribune, June 27, 2005)

Pakistan's Supreme Court suspends acquittals of fourteen men in gang-rape case: One day after the Supreme Court accepted the appeals case of Mukhtaran Mai and the Pakistani government against her attackers in a 2002 gang-rape, the court ordered June 28 the men be detained until the end of the appeal hearings. The Supreme Court's order included the eight men acquitted in the original trial in August 2002, the five men acquitted by the Lahore High Court in March 2005, and one man whose death sentence was changed to life imprisonment at the Lahore trial. The controversial case took a turn in the past month when Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf attempted to prevent Mukhtaran from traveling to the U.S. to speak of her experience and work since the rape. Pakistani authorities limited Mukhtaran's movements through virtual house arrest, placed her on Pakistan's "Exit Control List," and temporarily confiscated her passport. The Supreme Court has not yet set a date for formally hearing Mukhtaran and the government's case. (BBC, June 24, 28, 2005)

NEPAL

High-ranking U.S. official terms Nepal's current state a "digression:" In a visit to Nepal this week, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Donald Camp said King Gyanendra's seizure of power February 1 has been a "big step backward for democracy." Camp criticized the king's restrictions on political freedoms and civil liberties, stating that the U.S. would find a return to pre-1990 Nepal "unacceptable." Camp affirmed the U.S. government's decision to delay a shipment of 4,000 M-16 rifles as a means to encourage restoration of civil liberties, but denied that there would be any major change in U.S. policy towards Nepal, citing Maoist "violence and terrorism" as the most serious threats to a democratic Nepal. During his visit, Camp met with cabinet ministers; party leaders of the opposition seven-party alliance; and student leaders, journalists and human rights activists. While the U.S. government has apparently halted military aid to Nepal since the king's seizure of power, it has sent non-lethal military aid and assisted the Royal Nepal Army in human rights training. After mass protests in 1990, Nepal underwent a transition from the previous system of *panchayats* (local and district councils appointed by the king) to a constitutional monarchy. During February of this year, the king dismissed the government and declared a state of emergency, asserting that the government had failed to curb the 9-year Maoist insurgency. (Kantipur, June 28, 29, 2005)

Indian Maoists slip into Nepal: A group of 50 heavily armed Maoists slipped into Nepal June 26 from the Indian state of Bihar, triggering an alert for security forces along the India-Nepal border. An estimated 500 Maoist rebels surrounded a town in the Champaran district of Bihar state, raiding the bank and key government buildings. Indian police authorities initially suspected the involvement of Nepali Maoists in the raid, but after investigating the evidence, retracted their claim June 30. As India's "Number 1 national security threat," Indian Maoists have affected 160 districts in 12 states. Officials from both India and Nepal agreed Monday June 27 to share information regarding criminal and Maoist activities along the Indian-Nepali border. An estimated 12,000 people have died as a result of the violence between the Royal Nepal Army and Maoists who launched an insurgency in 1996. (Himalayan Times, June 27; Kantipur, June 27, 30 2005)

Party leader states parliament restoration impossible under Article 127: Communist Party of Nepal (CPM- UML) General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal stated June 23 that the seven-party opposition coalition would reject any proposal to reinstate parliament carried out under Article 127 of the Constitution. The seven-party alliance, comprised of Nepal's mainstream political parties, has organized a joint movement to revive Nepal's multi-party political process. General Secretary Nepal stated that Article 127 allows the king the "power to remove difficulties" from parliament, and he explained that in the past, King Gyanendra's interpretation of the article has included dissolving parliament, maintaining executive power for extended periods of time, and elevating unelected officials under "executive appointments." The king has employed Article 127 twice in order to claim his executive power, first in October 2002 when he dissolved parliament, and again in February 2005 when he dismissed the government of Sher Bahadur Deuba, himself appointed by the king in June 2004; parliamentary elections have been deferred since 2002. (Kantipur, June 23, 2005)

Maoists bomb private school in Salyan district: On June 25, Maoists bombed the only private school in Khalanga, Salyan district. The explosion occurred during nighttime, inflicting some property damage to the school, but causing in no injuries. "The Maoists bombed our school to intimidate us and close down the school, since we defied their previous warnings," said Mohan Singh Thapa, the principal of the 250-student primary school. School administrators announced Sunday that the school will re-open only after they consult with the students' parents. The Maoists' student wing has been known to bomb private schools in the past in order to close them down for the new academic term. Nepal has been facing a Maoist insurgency for almost 10 years, and in February of this year, King Gyanendra dismissed the government on the grounds of corruption and failure to control the insurgency. (Kantipur, June 26, 2005)

RWANDA

Fifteen hundred seek refugee in Uganda: More than 1,500 Rwandans, mostly Hutu women and children, have crossed the Ugandan border and settled in Kibati village outside a refugee resettlement camp in the Mbarara district. Reports have stated that the majority of the refugees fled from the Omutara, Gitarama, Vyumba, and Kibungo provinces. The refugees claimed they left because Tutsi soldiers were kidnapping their relatives while they slept. A refugee protection officer in the Prime Minister's office, Douglas Asiimwe, stated, "We are doing as much as possible to get the facts so those eligible can be granted asylum." An agent from the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) described the camp conditions as “horrible.” ([AllAfrica](#), June 23, 2005)

EU sanctions military force against FDLR rebels in DRC: A European Union (EU) spokesperson stated June 24 that Rwandan Hutu rebels hiding in the DRC must disarm and return home or face military action. During peace negotiations in Rome in March of this year, the Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) announced that it would end its war with Rwanda and denounced the 1994 genocide during which many of its members are suspected of participating in the murders of approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. However, EU officials have reported that FDLR promises to disarm have been largely unmet, as many of the rebels are refusing to give up arms and return home without guarantees of amnesty in their homeland. The FDLR is the largest Hutu rebel group in Rwanda and many have been living in the DRC to avoid justice in Rwanda’s Gacaca courts, which are being used to try those accused of genocide. President Paul Kagame dismissed requests for amnesty, insisting that all those suspected of involvement in the genocide will be tried for their crimes. ([Reuters](#), June 24, 2005)

SRI LANKA

Parties concerned about representation in the Tsunami Relief Council: The political coalition, National Unity Alliance (NUA), has threatened to withdraw from the government if revisions are not made to the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) so that Muslims are more fairly represented. The NUA has submitted a number of proposed amendments which President Kumaratunga agreed to review. At the same time, the government’s coalition party, United People’s Front (UNP), has criticized the agreement for not guaranteeing Sinhalese representation. The ten-member Tsunami Relief Council (TRC) will have five Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members, one of whom will hold the position of president of the council; three Muslim nominees; and two spots to be filled by government appointees. One of these two government appointees is to be vice president, and neither of the two is required to be Sinhalese. After expressing distress over the arrangement, the Sinhalese group, the People’s Liberation Front (JVP), filed a case against the P-TOMS June 27, requesting that the court immediately halt development funds. Four Muslim parties have united with the JVP in a Common National Front against the TRC, and JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe has urged the Buddhist clergy to join this new alliance. Tens of thousands are still living in relief camps awaiting aid since the tsunami disaster of December 2004. ([Colombopage](#), June 27, 28, 2005)

International support for the Tsunami Relief Council expressed: The United States made public its support for the recently signed Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) agreement, with State Department spokesman Sean McCormack stating the U.S. hopes that the LTTE and government working side by side will “help to build confidence and lead to progress in the broader peace process.” The United States also encouraged strengthening the current cease-fire agreement which has been broached a number of times since its inception in 2002. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recently expressed his pleasure with the P-TOMS agreement. The Indian government felt that the agreement would “strengthen democratic processes and uphold pluralism” in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka while joining efforts towards peace and development. ([Dailynews.lk](#), June 28, 2005)

SUDAN

Rebels claim government has been bombing eastern region, endangering Beja population: Eastern Sudanese rebels accused Khartoum of using planes to bomb civilians' houses.

"Whenever they see a crowd of people, they just release their bombs - which invariably fall on civilians," stated Taisier Ali, secretary-general of the Sudan Alliance Forces, a Sudanese opposition group. The eastern rebels urged international media to come and see the damage. However, Sudanese Minister of Information and Communication, Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat, stated that the government had not carried out any air raid in the eastern part of the country. Officials have only confirmed aerial "search operations." Suna, the official Sudanese news agency, confirmed that the government would not target civilians; but the International Rescue Committee alerted the international community that the Beja population was at risk. The Eastern Front said that the attack was in retaliation for the capture of government posts by its rebels. Analysts fear the eastern region, poor but crucial for the oil industry because Port Sudan is located there, could become a major conflict zone in the country. (Reuters, June, 24, 25; IRIN, June 25, 2005)

Sudanese court challenges ICC over Darfur crimes: The legal relationship between the newly-installed Sudanese Court for Darfur and the International Criminal Court (ICC) poses judicial challenges. While Sudanese Justice Minister Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin considers the Sudanese Court for Darfur a "substitute to the International Criminal Court," Christian Palme, public information adviser for the office of the prosecutor at the ICC, explained that the ICC's work would complement the Sudanese court's hearings. Yassin disapproves of what he characterizes as the ICC incursion into Sudan's judicial affairs, and President Omar Bashir also stated his opposition to the indictment of Sudanese by the ICC. "ICC article 17 stipulates that it can refuse to look into any case if investigations and trials can be carried out in the countries concerned except if they are unwilling to carry out the prosecutions," a ministry official stated. However, the Sudanese court has as yet only tried ten small-time criminals and no decision-maker. On March 31, the UN Security council referred the names of 51 top decision-makers suspected of war crimes to the ICC prosecutor in The Hague. (IRIN, June 24, 2005)

Second opposition newspaper closed down in Sudan: Sudanese authorities have closed down the English-language weekly, the Juba Post, which was the first southern independent newspaper and the second to be shut down this month. Three journalists were arrested on Wednesday June 21 in Khartoum, jailed for 24 hours, and released on bail of \$4,000. The reason given for their arrest was that they had not personally registered with the national press council in Khartoum, but the arrested journalists said the paper had been registered with the local southern government. The Khartoum Monitor, another English-language opposition newspaper, was suspended and had its license revoked after publishing articles on clashes between the police and southern and Darfuri refugees in a refugee camp. Reporters Without Borders urged the UN to denounce the upsurge in censorship. "I deplore that the government, not for the first time, has taken the decision to close down the Khartoum Monitor," the top UN envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk, told reporters. The Juba Post had also criticized the closure of the Khartoum Monitor. Freedom of press has been guaranteed in a peace agreement signed this January between the government and the rebels to end two decades of civil war. However, emergency law in Sudan still has not been lifted. (Reuters, June 22, 25, 2005)

Divisions within the two rebel groups hampers Darfur peace talks: International mediators in Abuja, Nigeria expressed their concern over the validity of any peace agreement. The legitimacy of the President of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), Abdel Wahed Mohamed al-Nur, was contested by his rival Minni Arcua Minnawi. The division reflects a gap between field commanders, and negotiators who had been away from their base for a long time. The other rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), has not been immune from these kinds of internal disputes, with Khalil Ibrahim's leadership in the peace talks rejected in April by JEM field commanders. However, the African Union (AU) has stated it is not ready to change negotiating partners. (Reuters, June 28, 2005)

UGANDA

Museveni's third term approved by MPs, opposition rises in Kampala: Ugandan MPs have voted overwhelmingly in favor of the constitutional amendment allowing Museveni to serve a third term. Hundreds of demonstrators massing in Constitutional Square changed their plans when police blocked off the square, and began instead to march towards the parliament, chanting anti-Museveni slogans, as police fired teargas. The opposition claims that the constitutional changes must be confirmed by a referendum. Museveni came to power in 1986, with a "no-party" program to ease ethnic tensions called the "Movement." Although other parties exist, their candidates must run as individuals and the government has been dominated by Museveni's party. Five years ago, a referendum approved the continuation of the "Movement." (BBC, June 28, 2005)

LRA rebels attack refugees and steal food: In an unusually large raid early June 25, more than 100 Ugandan rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) crossed the border from Sudan and attacked a refugee camp in Kitgum district, stealing food supplies. Humanitarian workers reported three deaths, including a baby. "They took the army by surprise as they momentarily withdrew, but some SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) fighters. . . engaged the attackers," said Mohammed Siryon, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Kitgum. Siryon stated that the food stolen during the raid was from the UN World Food Program. Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) spokesman, Lieutenant Kiconco Tabaro, assured that the army was pursuing the rebels and that the LRA was weakened. The LRA has waged a 19-year war against the government of President Yoweri Museveni and is notorious for its violent attacks against the civilian population. In 2004, the worst attack of the LRA killed 250. On June 23 the International Crisis Group issued a briefing paper examining the possibility of establishing peace in the north and recommending, among other things, that the Ugandan government implement "a military strategy that maximizes civilian protection and the ability of the army to prevent further attacks and abductions." (ICG, June 23; Reuters, June 25; IRIN, June 27, 2005)

Ugandan government troops brutalizing refugees: Members of the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) are allegedly the perpetrators of rapes in the IDP camps. A report entitled "Suffering in silence," conducted in Pabbo camp and published by UNICEF, stated, "Attacks [against women and children] also come from soldiers whose task it is to protect camp residents [...]." The UPDF spokesman in Gulu, Lieutenant Kiconco Tabaro, denied the accusation. According to the report, 60 percent of the women in the camp have been sexually assaulted. Since the creation of the camp in 1986, the number of refugees has more than doubled, reaching

64,000 persons. The Ugandan war has forced more than 1.4 million people into IDP camps which the UPDF is tasked with keeping secure. (AllAfrica, June 27, 2005)

Cholera rampant in IDP camps: Poor sanitation in internally-displaced person (IDP) camps was causing a spike in cholera cases, killing five and infecting 449 others, according to a statement by health officials June 27. The UN World Health Organization (WHO), along with local authorities, was trying to control the epidemic by sponsoring a water-treatment program and a hygiene education program. Congestion in the IDP camps complicated these efforts, as water was scarce and little space remained to build pit latrines. Although the army has agreed to secure new places, the lack of proper infrastructure has prevented people from relocating. (IRIN, June 28, 2005)

