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

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The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego.

The interns during the fall 2011 term are:

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COLOMBIA

Former leftist guerilla wins mayor’s race in Bogota

Gustavo Petro, a former leftist guerilla with the M-19 movement, won the mayoral elections of Bogota October 30, while centering his campaign on the ideal of “zero corruption.” He won 32 percent of the vote, beating his opponent, Enrique Penalosa, who was also the candidate favored by Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos.

The M-19, or Movimiento 19 de Abril, was founded in the wake of the fraudulent presidential elections of April 19, 1970. The group believed in populism and nationalistic revolutionary socialism and was known for setting up guerilla units in large cities of Colombia.

Petro entered into the M-19 guerilla group at the age of 17 and subsequently was jailed and tortured by the government, during which time the group demobilized and reached a peace agreement with the Colombian government in 1989. He was given amnesty after serving two years in jail for his involvement with M-19.

As a senator, Petro helped to uncover links between right-wing paramilitary groups and members of Congress, which led to the detention of many. He has been called the harshest critic of Álvaro Uribe, the former president and also uncovered a scandal involving the previous mayor, Samuel Moreno, who is currently in jail facing corruption charges.

Petro remarked that his win “showed that reconciliation was possible in Colombia,” and added that “Colombia is saying yes to reconciliation, yes to peace.” The mayor of Bogotá is the second most important elected position in Colombia, the first being that of the President.

Petro supporters noted that they were unconcerned about Petro’s rebel past, and others stated that “it’s an advantage and a message to the FARC that they can reach power the democratic way without murdering and kidnapping.”

The Washington Office on Latin America reports that the election results reflected “two different countries,” one of the independent voters and one of the rural voters. It states that the independent voters didn’t fall victim to the traditional candidates, while rural voters were heavily influenced by the big-money campaigns that “bought votes.”

The local elections have marked one of the bloodiest election periods in many years for Colombia. During the course of the campaigns, more than 41 candidates were killed, deaths believed to have taken place at the hands of the FARC. More than 1,300 candidates ran for local positions including governors, mayors, and city council members throughout Colombia.
GUATEMALA

Four generals indicted for genocide, prosecution may be limited

After 29 years of impunity, four former members of the Guatemalan military have been arrested and charged with crimes against humanity perpetrated during the civil war which lasted from 1960-1996.

Former General Héctor López Fuentes was the first arrested in connection with genocide in Guatemala in June of this year, followed in October by the detention of former military intelligence officials José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez and Luis Enrique Mendoza García, now in prison, and former President Óscar Mejía Victores, who is under hospital arrest. Guatemala has never before charged anyone with genocide in connection with its brutal civil war.

Mejía Victores recently underwent medical evaluations to determine if he was healthy enough to stand trial and was declared “unfit” October 31. According to the National Institute of Forensic Science, Mejía Victores was unable to express himself verbally and had limited cognition. However, he will remain in the hospital where his health will be monitored to see if he improves or deteriorates until the Public Ministry makes its final determination whether or not to continue with the prosecution.

Illnesses have plagued these trials from the beginning: Judge Carol Flores has already postponed four hearings to determine if Gen. López Fuentes was fit enough to stand trial due to complications with his health. The advanced age of the defendants in the case make prosecution difficult as health and mental problems often delay the trials and hearings and they may even be declared unfit to stand trial at all.

The four defendants all have been charged with genocide and murder. General López Fuentes was detained in June on charges that he planned and ordered approximately 300 massacres while chief of staff of the Guatemalan military between 1982 and 1983. His lawyers requested the charges be dismissed due to his advanced prostate cancer, depression, and claims that he is no longer coherent. However, the judge refused to dismiss the charges despite postponing the trial numerous times.

Mejía Victores was arrested in Guatemala City earlier this month on charges of genocide. He served as an army general and defense minister during the long civil war, and later ruled Guatemala from 1983-86 after seizing power in a coup. He is accused of overseeing a series of massacres in
indigenous villages. His trial is scheduled to begin January 29, 2012 (pending approval from the Public Ministry).

The fourth defendant, Mendoza García, a graduate of the School of the Americas, is also charged with crimes of murder and crimes against humanity. He was declared a fugitive of the law until his arrest earlier this week. He has now been detained, although he also suffers from health problems that might limit his ability to stand trial.

A UN-sponsored truth commission found that 200,000 people were killed in Guatemala’s 36-year civil war, 93 percent of them by state forces and paramilitary groups. Few army commanders have ever faced trial for the deaths, but in recent months the government has begun attempts to bring suspected war criminals to justice.

While some families of the victims applauded the arrests, others opposed the prosecution of the army, arguing that the country should dedicate efforts to solving current violence and that forgiveness and reconciliation should be the mandate for dealing the past.

Sources: Guatemala Times, Oct. 31; Global Voices Online, Oct. 27; BBC, Oct. 25; Prensa Libre, Oct. 18; School of the Americas Watch, Oct. 17, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

Thousands protest violence

Thousands of Guatemalans marched through the streets of Guatemala City October 22 to protest the rising violence that causes an estimated 17 deaths in the country every day. The march, known as the “Walk for Life and Peace” was organized by the Catholic Church and attracted about 20,000 demonstrators.

The groups of peaceful protesters converged in the central square of the city, Plaza de la Constitución, in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral where the Archbishop of Guatemala City, Oscar Julio Vian Morales, held the Eucharist for peace. In his message, the Archbishop said that all citizens of Guatemala must work to reduce insecurity and malnutrition. “To ensure the rights of health and home, to have better job offers, are another way of fighting for peace,” he stated.

The demonstration and mass were also attended by the Vice President of Guatemala, Rafael Espada, and the President of Congress, Roberto Alejos.

President plans to restore national army

President Michel Martelly announced October 13 that he planned to reinstate the national army, moving forward with a plan to reconstitute the Haitian military as a kind of national guard or civil defense force to supplement the weak national police.

His $95 million proposal called for an initial force of 3,500 troops to patrol the border with the Dominican Republic, help control civil unrest, and provide desperately needed employment to thousands of young people. It also designated $15 million to compensate former soldiers who have long complained they are owed a pension.

A draft of the plan was leaked last month, a possible sign of the concern among many who recall the former military’s use of violence and involvement in coups. The military was disbanded in 1995 by Jean-Bertrand Aristide because of human rights abuses, making Haiti one of the few countries without an army.

The plan to restore the army faces hurdles abroad as well. The head of the UN Mission in Haiti, Mariano Fernández, said the existing agreement has no provision to allow peacekeepers to work with a Haitian military. If the army is reinstated, Fernández said that a new agreement would need to be drafted and the mandate changed.

Ironically, it was the relationship with the UN mission that was a leading motivator in Martelly’s draft of the project. The Haitian government’s plan explicitly indicates that the new force is necessary to replace the UN mission in Haiti when its mandate expires. For many Haitians, who blame the peacekeepers for the cholera outbreak and widespread abuse, the UN can’t leave soon enough.

Martelly is expected to release the official order November 18. Government officials and civil society organizations seem split on the initiative, some agreeing that the nation needs a defense force while others believe an army is far from the priority at the moment and question where the funds would come from. Many have also questioned the manner in which Martelly has proposed the plan: vowing to instate it with or without parliamentary approval and already establishing training camps in the Port-au-Prince area.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

IRAQ

Controversies surround alleged coup tip

In the week following the alleged discovery of a document indicating an impending coup in Iraq, over 600 Iraqis have been arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Critics and skeptics have begun to weigh in, saying the government had been using the information as a pretext for arresting political opponents.

October 26 reports revealed that rebel fighters in Libya had discovered secret intelligence documents linking Colonel Muammar Qaddafi to a plot by former members of Saddam Hussein’s military and Baath Party to overthrow the Iraqi government. Iraq’s deputy interior minister, Hussein Kamal announced on television that the plot included agitators spread throughout the country’s south and just north Baghdad who had been planning “terrorist operations and sabotage” after the withdrawal of the United States military at the end of this year.

Some have said that the discovery of the coup information was a fiction spread by the government only to allow for the arrests of Sunnis, intended to score political points by playing to people’s fears. In Iraq, the memories of the Baath Party (which was dominated by Sunnis and ruled ruthlessly over the Shiite majority for decades) remain strong, even nine years after the American invasion removed the party from power. The Americans disbanded the army and barred most party members from government jobs, a decision many have said has contributed to the subsequent insurgency and sectarian civil war.

The recent arrests of high-ranking Baathists (who are majority Sunnis) by the Shiite-controlled government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki occurred within the continuing de-Baathification process in government and higher education. These movements are fanning sectarian tensions, just weeks before the withdrawal of the U.S. military. Former Baathists have said they are deeply concerned by the turn of events, particularly now that the American military can no longer guarantee their safety.

Protests have erupted in predominately Sunni regions, with government officials vowing to seek greater independence and autonomy if the detainees were not freed. As tensions rise and political threats are made, the future of Iraq remains uncertain. “The danger is not outside – it’s internal,” a senior Iraqi official said. “The most serious challenge is the fall of political consensus.”

PALESTINE

UNESCO grants Palestine full membership

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, best known for its World Heritage Sites, granted Palestine full membership to its organization October 31. Palestine, now the 195th member state of UNESCO, was preceded by South Sudan’s approval as the 194th state just a few days prior.

Despite threats by the United States to cut funding to any UN affiliate organization if Palestine was approved, UNESCO granted membership with a vote of 107 in favor to 14 not in favor, with 52 member nations abstaining.

The U.S. quickly followed through with its promise by retracting $60 million USD of funding, approximately 20 percent of UNESCO’s entire budget, shortly after Palestine’s acceptance into the organization. Due to a law established in the 1990s, the U.S. has reserved itself the right to slash funding to any UN affiliate that recognized Palestine as a state. Israel also dropped its UNESCO funding, which had been three percent of the organization’s total.

In support of the U.S. move, former House Republicans’ campaign committee chair Tom Cole said, “Congress must send a powerful message that everything is done to block full membership of the Palestinian Authority to UNESCO, the UN Security Council and other UN agencies. Such a move would be detrimental to Israel, our greatest ally in the Middle East, as well as UN programs around the globe.”

The United States and Israel are not the only ones who are frustrated following Palestine’s UNESCO approval. Various members of the UN have revealed their concerns related to the function of critical UN affiliate organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) should Palestine gain recognition through a vote followed by a similar U.S. response.

While the U.S. and Israel made clear their joint disappointment with UNESCO’s decision, Palestinians are still hopeful. Riad Al-Malki, the Palestinian foreign minister, remarked that the vote “…will help erase a tiny part of the injustice done to the Palestinian people… [and] this membership will be the best step toward peace and stability.”

Palestine is still not a member of the United Nations however; votes are scheduled to take place next month at the United Nations Security Council to decide whether full membership will be granted. Although the US has promised to veto any move to make Palestine a recognized member state,
many Palestinians and non-Palestinians alike have demonstrated hope and happiness, and have seen the acceptance into UNESCO as a first step on the way to statehood.

Sources: New York Times; BBC; UNESCO; Politico, Oct. 31; Bloomberg; Al Jazeera, Nov. 1, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

SYRIA

Arab League peace proposal endorsed, action still awaited

In a November 2 meeting in Cairo, the Syrian government accepted a plan put forth by the Arab League to end the violence that has been escalating amid six months of protesting and unrest against President Bashir Al-Assad’s twelve-year rule in which more than 3,000 people have been killed and hundreds of others disappeared.

Despite not having personally ruled for the length of time as other Middle Eastern and North African autocrats such as Colonel Moammar Gaddafi of Libya and President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, Al-Assad has inherited the legacy of his father, Hafez Al-Assad, who ruled for 30 years. Many Syrians have deemed their current president as oppressive and have mounted both peaceful and violent resistance against him.

It was on these grounds that the Arab League agreement required Al Assad’s government to remove tanks and troops from the streets, the release of prisoners, and the beginning of meaningful dialogue with the opposition. Additionally, journalists and activist groups will be granted access to the country to document what will likely be a transition.

While Syria agreed to the plan as put forth by the Arab League, it has yet to begin implementing it, although members of the League made it clear that the timeliness of its implementation is of the upmost importance.

“Killing civilians must stop immediately in Syria,” United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said earlier in the day from the Libyan capital of Tripoli. “People have suffered too much for too long and it's an unacceptable situation.” With the urgency of transition a common theme, the United States reiterated its stance that “Assad has lost his legitimacy to rule and should step down,” as White House Press Secretary Jay Carny stated.

Critics believe that Al-Assad signed the agreement to buy himself more time as he attempts to hold onto power. Burhan Ghalioun, a senior member in the Syrian National Council expressed the “acceptance [by Al-Assad’s government of the Arab League agreement] does not mean it will respect its clauses.”
The Syrian government has been cracking down heavy-handedly on the protest movement; therefore their agreement to the Arab League plan has come as a bit of a surprise. Due to Assad’s continuation in office some have taken up arms particularly Kfar Laha, located in the Houla region, and activists reported that violent clashes in which government security forces opened fire November 3 in the district of Homs just a day after the signing of the agreement.

Sources: Al Jazeera; BBC, Nov. 2; BBC, Nov. 3, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDIA

Pakistan grants India “Most Favored Nation” trade status

Pakistan’s cabinet voted November 2 to normalize trade with India in what is seen as a positive first step in stabilizing diplomatic relations between the two rivals.

India was granted “Most Favored Nation” status, a designation that will allow Pakistan and India to trade on equal terms, giving each other low tariffs and high import quotas. India had already extended this status to Pakistan in 1996 and in October the two countries agreed to double their trade to $6 billion in the next three years.

The agreement was seen as a goodwill gesture from Pakistan to India and there is hope that the increased trade ties will help bolster a fragile peace process which the two countries resumed in February. The discussions have been broadened to focus on issues such as trade and the disputed Kashmir region, which India had previously said it was unwilling to discuss until Pakistan cracked down on militants that threatened India.

“It’s a very powerful step,” Indian Trade Secretary Rahul Khullar told Reuters. “It’s good for business, it’s good for commerce, and most importantly, it increased confidence on the economic front that both Pakistan and India are committed to moving the social and trade agenda forward.”

Visa restrictions, which have long been a source of frustration for business leaders in both countries, are also expected to be relaxed in the coming weeks.

Sources: NPR; Reuters; Wall Street Journal, Nov. 2, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.
NEPAL

Seven-point agreement made; peace closer than ever

The government of current Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai came forward November 2 with a seven-point agreement to concede the transfer of power across Nepal’s major political parties. This is the most comprehensive peace deal the country has seen since the formation of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 following the conclusion of a violent conflict between Maoists and the monarchy that continued until Nepal became a republic in 2008.

The lead up to the seven-point agreement has been tumultuous to say the least. The Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (Maoist) party of the Prime Minister, the Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist Leninists (UCPN-ML), the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) among other factions, have all been engaged in a long and arduous political standoff.

In addition to being a compromise between Nepal’s major political parties, the seven-point agreement is also aimed at the rehabilitation and reintegration of roughly 19,000 former Maoist combatants, putting 6,500 into the directorate Nepali Army (NA) with some carrying on armed military roles others into “non-combative” state security forces that would protect forests and respond to natural disasters. The remaining 12,500 are to receive compensation pay between Rs 500,000 and Rs 700,000, roughly between 6,000 and 8,000 USD. While there has been some bickering as to the amount of state funds that should be allocated to the rehabilitation project, the agreement was made nonetheless.

Some other key points of the plan are aimed at providing relief packages for combat victims and a truth and reconciliation commission, dissolving of the Young Communist League and other paramilitary groups, a return of “private and public properties” seized by the Maoists during the transition and the drafting of a constitution that represents all political parties.

Not only have all the parties come together to sign the agreement, prominent Madhesi parties such as the UDMF who have operated on the basis of representation of the subjugated populations of southern Nepal's Terai region have given up on the call for an autonomous Terai. “We would be blamed for derailing the constitution drafting process if we stick to our one Madhes-one state stance,” said a Madhesi leader who preferred not to be named.

Although other separatist groups may not give up so easily, sources have said that parties who had once stood for one-state politics in the Terai will likely support the formation of two states. While Madhesis have been vocal for autonomy since 2008, the Tharu population of western Terai has not and delineating new borders has the potential to satisfy both groups. However, this could also be problematic for obvious reasons.
Despite its complexities, India’s Minister of External Affairs praised the seven-point agreement: “This agreement provides a firm basis for successfully concluding the remaining aspects of Nepal's peace process. We congratulate the people and the political parties in Nepal for their commitment to peacefully resolving outstanding issues in a spirit of consensus and for displaying enlightened leadership.”

The seven-point agreement has served as the preeminent document composed by the Nepali government to conclude the peace process and assemble a new federation.

Sources: My Republicá; BBC Nov. 1; Ekantipur; Ekantipur; My Republicá, Nov. 2, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

PHILIPPINES

Military claims win over “lawless elements”

After a three-day air and ground assault in the southern province of Zamboanga Sibugay, Lieutenant General Raymundo Ferrer, commander of the Phillippine military’s Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), claimed victory and that Westmincom has now taken possession of enemy territory. The region was thought to be the hideout of Waning Abdulsalem, a renegade commander of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

However the main target of the attack, Abdulsalem, believed responsible for the kidnapping of numerous persons including an Italian missionary in 2010, remained unaccounted for. Military commanders insisted the rebel leader had been wounded in the fighting and could still be in the town.

The military troops seized a heavily fortified camp said to belong to the MILF breakaway group, which was defended by land mines and machine guns. Two soldiers and at least 15 rebels were killed in the fighting. The violence and aerial bombing resulted in the displacement of over 30,000 civilians in the regions of Basilan and Zamboanga.

The military’s attack is widely seen as an act of retaliation after clashes October 18 between government forces and members of the separatist group left 19 soldiers dead. Although both incidents were linked to Muslim rebels, a military spokesman denied any connection between the two assaults.

The recent violence contravened the ceasefire agreement signed by both sides in 2003. The incidents have led some to call for the retraction of the agreement and the abandonment of peace negotiations. However, President Benigno Aquino III resisted the idea saying, “It is so easy, out of
frustration, to close the door on negotiations at this time. If we go down this path, more innocent civilians will be put in harm’s way. We will not pursue all-out war. We will instead pursue all-out justice.”

Just a few months ago, hopes were high that both sides would reach a peace agreement. The Liberation Front proposed a sub-state where they would have adequate powers to govern themselves, but matters of national defense, foreign relations, currency, and postal services would be left to the national government. However, the Philippines government has yet to agree to these demands and the rising violence jeopardizes further negotiations.


Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

SRI LANKA

War report being prepared for approval

Responding to a United Nations mandate, Sri Lanka’s Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) is preparing its final report to be approved by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, at which point he will determine whether it is ready for public release. The document had originally been scheduled to be readied for the UN and the general public by November 15.

Lakshman Wickremasinghe, the LLRC spokesman, asserted that the document would be ready by the scheduled deadline. He also reported that “people of varying status have recorded their submissions with us and we have given more chances to people from the north and east.” Submissions have included 1,000 oral and 5,000 written testimonies.

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the UN, had commissioned an investigatory committee in May of this year to examine human rights violations that happened on behalf of Rajapaksa’s government during its final push against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in 2009. Ban made the September 12 decision to officially submit his committee’s report to the UN based on the committee’s findings.

Sri Lanka’s track record in human rights was most recently brought into question during the October 28 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (COHOG) in Perth, Australia. Arunachalam Jegatheeswaran, a Tamil Australian citizen who was born in Sri Lanka brought direct legal action against Rajapaksa through the use of the Australian legal system in hopes of holding him accountable for war crimes. As Commonwealth member states, Canada and New Zealand raised the issue of accountability, a responsibility they would like to see Sri Lanka’s government follow through with for actions that happened during the war with the LTTE.
The LLRC report has been anticipated by some as an act of good faith on behalf of Rajapaksa’s government to properly address widespread grievances about the way his government handled events during and after the conflict with the LTTE. However, skepticism still remains a popular sentiment and some feel that the Sri Lankan government will not properly address accountability and reconciliation.


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EAST AFRICA

KENYA

Accuses that arms are being sent into Somalia for al-Shabab use

The Kenyan military claims that two planes landed in Baidoa, a Somali town under al-Shabab control November 1. The planes were allegedly filled with weapons meant to be used by al-Shabab fighters in their conflict with Kenya.

In response to the illicit flight, Kenyan military spokesman Major Emmanuel Chirchir stated that military planes would target and attack the weapons November 2 so that they couldn’t be used by al-Shabab. He also noted that Kenyan intelligence showed that the weapons have been transported to a militant camp.

Mohamud Abdulahi Wehelie, a member of the Somali Parliament, added that he had spoken to three other sources, all of whom said a white plane had landed that contained weapons. Witnesses described members of al-Shabab hurriedly unloading the plane and noted that what appeared to be bombs or grenades fell out the plane door.

A UN arms monitoring group on Somalia and Eritrea has been actively documenting the money, fighters and weapons that have been given to al-Shabab forces in Somalia. A July report noted that al-Shabab may be capable of receiving deliveries by aircraft because it controls two airports. It also states that illicit flights of weapons could possibly come from Eritrea, Yemen or the United Arab Emirates.

The report goes on to say that new information “confirms many previous allegations of Eritrean military involvement, and offers firm grounds to believe that Eritrea still retains active linkages to Somali armed groups.” The report also alleges that Eritrea supplies more than $80,000 U.S. dollars a month to al-Shabab forces. On November 2, the U.N. accused the Eritrean government of “posing a threat to the East African region, partly by financing Somalia’s anti-government fighters.”
The government of Eritrea responded to the accusations by saying, “These accusations are pure fabrications and outright lies as Eritrea has not sent any arms into Somalia.” It also turned the tables by accusing Ethiopia of providing arms to al-Shabab. Eritrea fought for independence from Ethiopia from 1961 until 1991 and engaged in war once again from 1998 until 2000.

Al-Shabab fighters also denied any ties to Eritrea, noting that they “take their weapons from the African Union.”


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SOMALIA

Civilians killed in an air strike carried out by Kenyan military forces

Military aircraft searching for al-Shabab militants struck an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Jilib, a region in southern Somalia, killing more than five civilians and injuring more than 50, most of whom were women and children. According to Doctors without Borders, the IDP camp hosts around 7,500 Somali refugees from famine.

The airstrike occurred October 30 when the Kenyan military said it received information that a high-level al-Shabab meeting was taking place in a location near the IDP camp. As a result, the military launched airstrikes, which caused a vehicle carrying high explosives to catch fire. When the driver tried to escape the burning car, he drove directly into the IDP camp, where the vehicle exploded, causing civilian casualties.

The Kenyan military admitted to carrying out an attack on the same day of the incident in the town of Jilib. However, Kenyan forces have stated that while the attack occurred in the same area, it was an attack that targeted al-Shabab fighters, not civilians. Emmanuel Chirchir, a Kenyan army spokesman stated, “we bombed an al-Shabab camp, killed 10 and wounded forty-seven. We are sure about this assessment, no collateral damage, no women, no children.” Peter Greste, an Al-Jazeera reporter also added that the civilian casualties weren’t a “direct result” of the Kenyan military’s aerial attack.

Somali Prime Minister Abidiwelli Mohammed Ali stated that he didn’t believe that the Kenyans were behind the attack. He added, “The Kenyans wouldn’t target IDPs. But if that happened, it’s an unfortunate incident. But the fight is not towards the IDPs; the fight was towards the al-Shabab who are a common enemy for both of us.”
Airstrikes by the Kenyan military have become common practice and the military has confirmed the killings of more than 100 al-Shabab fighters through attacks on cities such as Ras Kamboni and Anole, since the initial invasion two weeks ago.

Currently, the Kenyan and Somali governments are working to make the attack on al-Shabab an allied intervention. Though the African Union and Kenya are the only forces trying to remove al-Shabab from southern Somalia, it is believed that other African countries will soon follow. In a meeting in Nairobi, spokesmen from both Kenya and Somalia noted that they would like to form a naval blockade of Kismayo, a spot vital to the financial income of al-Shabab forces inside of Somalia. They would also like to request that other countries ally themselves with Kenya’s invasion, including the United States and countries from the European Union (EU).


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