Choice of countries for updates: The countries for the conflict updates are the countries that have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute’s dedicatory conference, “Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century,” December 5-7, 2001.

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

The conflict updates are written by the summer 2001 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Jennifer Fullerton (University of San Diego), Scott Huntley (University of North Carolina), Sarah Laubach (University of San Diego), and Tiffany Santos (University of California at Berkeley)
UPDATE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
US military operated secretly in DRC; UN extends mandate of military observers; Kabila orders demobilization of child soldiers; Peace talks postponed

GUATEMALA
Human rights groups challenge state of alarm; Paramilitaries attack rural village

MACEDONIA
Milosevic extradited, sparks controversy; Macedonians riot, call for harsher treatment of Albanian rebels; Macedonian army breaks cease-fire

NEPAL
Public security regulation causes protests; Human Rights Commission concerned over re-arrest of Asha Khanal

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation
DPA = Deutsche Presse-Agentur
EFE = Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)
IRIN = Integrated Regional Information Network (UN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: www.unog.ch)
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

US military operated secretly in DRC: Intelligence specialist Wayne Madison, appearing before the US House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, said the US military has been covertly involved in the wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Madison stated that the US military supported the overthrow of Mobutu and later worked to undermine the rule of Laurent Kabila because “by 1998, the Kabila regime had become an irritant to the United States, North American mining interests, and Kabila’s Ugandan and Rwandan patrons.” According to his testimony, US Special Operations were involved in training troops on all sides of the war in the DRC. He also said American companies, including one linked to former President George Bush Sr., have been stoking the conflict for monetary gain. Madison, an investigative journalist, authored Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999. The war in the DRC, which erupted after Laurent Kabila came to power May 1997, has pitted the pro-government forces of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, and the DRC against rebel factions supported by the government armies of Rwanda and Uganda. The UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), created through the 1999 Lusaka Peace accords, was dispatched in an effort to stabilize the situation and monitor the implementation of the accords. (New Vision, June 17, 2001)

UN extends mandate of military observers: The UN Security Council voted unanimously to extend the mandate for MONUC until June 15, 2002. Resolution 1355 adopted Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s recommendations for a revised concept of operations, including the creation of a civilian police component and a civilian/military planning section. The latter would aid in the disarmament of rebel forces operating within the DRC and facilitate the reintegration of the troops in their countries of origin. The resolution included the reinforcement of MONUC’s presence in the strategically important town of Kisangani, located in the northeastern Orientale province, and would increase its contingent of military observers and supporting troops to 5,537 from the current strength of 2,366. (DPA, June 15; IRIN, June 18, 22, 2001)

Kabila orders demobilization of child soldiers: DRC President Joseph Kabila, addressing a UNICEF seminar on child soldiers June 14, ordered his country’s military forces to demobilize child soldiers and stop recruiting minors. DRC became the fifth country in the world to ratify an amendment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child June 2, which calls for an end to the use of children under the age of 18 in any purely military task. Martin Mogwanja, UNICEF director in DRC’s capital Kinshasa, said that in the coming weeks a commission of military officials and civic groups was set to visit all units of the government’s Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC) to identify children to be demobilized. Laurent Kabila’s forces recruited underage boys in the campaign that brought him to power in May 1997, and these forces have been used to fight Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebels since 1998. UNICEF has estimated that there are between 8,000 and 12,000 child soldiers in the various forces fighting in the DRC. (IRIN, June 15; The New York Times, June 14, 2001)
Peace talks postponed: The first-ever meeting between DRC President Joseph Kabila and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, scheduled for June 27, was postponed at the request of the Kinshasa government. The meeting, arranged through the mediation of Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, was aimed at bringing the two leaders together with the goal of ending the war in the DRC. The meeting was expected to endorse the Security Council’s recommended relocation of the Joint Military Council (JMC) from Lusaka, Zambia to Kinshasa, where it could coordinate its efforts with MONUC. The JMC, composed of two officers from each signatory to the Lusaka accords, is responsible for implementing the cease-fire and the disengagement of forces operating within DRC. The JMC and MONUC have been developing plans for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Congolese territory and the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement of the armed groups identified in the Lusaka Agreement. (The East African, IRIN, New Vision, June 18, 2001)

GUATEMALA

Human rights groups challenge state of alarm: Human rights groups filed a lawsuit June 21 in Guatemala’s Constitutional Court to challenge the declaration of a national state of alarm after 90 inmates escaped from prison. Human rights officials declared that the state of alarm restricted the inalienable constitutional rights of the people, which, according to the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, cannot be waived. The 30-day state of alarm, declared by President Alfonso Portillo and ratified by Congress June 20, includes measures that allow “reactionary forces” to act against organizations opposed to the government. (EFE, June 20; Times of India, June 20, 21, 2001)

Paramilitaries attack rural village: An armed group of more than thirty men invaded the remote village of Los Cimientos, a Quiche Indian community approximately 200 miles from the capital, Guatemala City, June 25 and destroyed more than 82 homes. The unidentified attackers, believed to be former members of the disbanded Civilian Self-Defense Patrols (PAC), kidnapped seven children and three adults, and raped three women. In 1982, the army killed two leaders of Los Cimientos causing residents to flee during army offensives against guerrilla bases in the area. The army then handed the land over to PAC, its civilian collaborators, in 1983. Los Cimientos, located inside the Triangulo Ixil, and Ixcan were the principal battleground of the country’s 36-year civil war that ended with the signing of a 1996 peace agreement. (EFE, New York Times, June 27, 2001)

MACEDONIA

Milosevic extradited, sparks controversy: Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was delivered June 28 to the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague to face charges of crimes against humanity, including planning and ordering a “campaign of terror” and persecution of Kosovo Albanians. He has become the first head of state to be prosecuted for war crimes. War crimes tribunal chief prosecutor Carla del Ponte announced that charges against Milosevic regarding the wars in Bosnia and Croatia were also being prepared. The extradition process began June 25 upon the request of the
Serbian government. Yugoslav officials have denounced the extradition as illegal and unconstitutional, and Prime Minister Zoran Zizic announced his resignation from his post in protest June 29. Approximately one thousand Milosevic supporters took to the streets of Belgrade, condemning the extradition and attacking journalists. Milosevic’s departure came less than 24 hours before a key Yugoslavia donors conference in Brussels, at which Belgrade hoped to secure $1 billion in reconstruction funds and a rescheduling of $12 million in foreign debt. Milosevic was arrested in Belgrade April 1 on charges of abuses of power and corruption and was transferred to The Hague June 28. He was the president of Serbia from 1989-1997, served as Yugoslav president from 1997-2000, and has been held responsible for four Balkan wars in the past decade. (CNN, June 25; BBC, June 28, 29, 2001)

Macedonians riot, call for harsher treatment of Albanian rebels: Protesters took to the streets of Macedonia’s capital city Skopje June 25 calling for the resignation of President Boris Trajkovski and expressing anger over the government’s perceived leniency towards the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA). Approximately five thousand demonstrators stormed the parliament building, ransacked several offices, and burned the flag of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and pictures of European Union (EU) foreign policy official Javier Solana. The protest emerged in response to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and EU-brokered deal that implemented a new cease-fire and allowed members of the NLA to leave the village of Aracinovo, located on the outskirts of Skopje, with their weapons and under NATO escort. Macedonian protesters also expressed disapproval of the EU’s June 25 decision to withhold further economic aid to Macedonia until a political settlement between the government and the ethnic Albanian political parties is reached. Tension between the Macedonian army and the NLA escalated to open conflict in February, with the NLA insisting upon greater rights for ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and an end to what they call “official discrimination” in the government and constitution. (BBC, June 26; New York Times, June 27, 2001)

Macedonian army breaks cease-fire: Government forces mounted an offensive against NLA strongholds June 22, bringing to a halt an eleven-day cease-fire between government and NLA troops. According to analysts, the attack was a government attempt to gain leverage at the bargaining table. A representative of the Macedonian government told Reuters that the attack on Aracinovo was designed to force Albanian politicians to compromise in stalled peace talks. A government official called the assault “an operation to eliminate the terrorists in Aracinovo.” The shelling of Aracinovo began just hours after EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said he was optimistic that a peace accord could be agreed upon. (BBC, Reuters, June 22, 2001)

NEPAL

Public security regulation causes protests: Nepal’s government implemented a Public Security Regulation the week of June 23 that gives officials the power to curb strikes and other forms of protest. Maoist rebels have threatened to call a nationwide strike July 12 to protest the regulation. In the meantime, at least two police officers were killed and
three injured June 26 when rebels attacked a police post in Dang district, 400km west of the capital Katmandu. Rebels also exploded devices in two cities June 26 and June 27 in protest of the regulation. Secretary-General of the Communist Party Comrade Prachanda, said the new regulation would cancel out the gains of the 1990 popular movement. Maoist rebels launched a revolt in 1996 to install a one-party communist republic; since then more than 1,500 people have been killed. (Katmandu Post, June 23; NepalNews.com, June 23, 24, 27, 2001)

Human Rights Commission concerned over re-arrest: Asha Khanal, a central member of the All Nepal Women’s Association (ANWA), a sister organization to the Communist Party of Nepal, was arrested without warrant June 17 on charges of posting anti-government posters and pamphlets. Khanal finished a two-year jail sentence May 16, and since her release has been arrested six times. The National Human Rights Commission expressed concern over the unwarranted arrest and issued a press release June 26 asking the government to make public the situation. Police have also arrested Pushkar Sharma who is suspected of being part of the Maoist movement, and mistreated journalists appearing in court for reporting against the government. (Katmandu Post, June 17, 26, 2001)