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), and Tiffany Santos (University of California at Berkeley).
UPDATE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)
Government accuses Rwanda and Uganda of violations; Opposition parties select representatives for dialogue

GUATEMALA
Archbishop organizes reconciliation forum; Former dictator files charges against human rights protesters

MACEDONIA

NEPAL
Prime Minister receives support for negotiations; Maoist call for a ban on alcohol; Parliament passes bills to control conflict

UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AP = Associated Press
AFP = Agence France Presse
BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN = Cable News Network
EFE = Agencia EFE (Spanish New Agency)
IRIN = Integrated Regional Information Network
JED = Journaliste En Danger
NCN = New Congo Net
PANA = Pan African News Agency
Ananova = www.ananova.com
DRC

Government accuses Rwanda and Uganda of violations: The DRC commissioner for relations with the UN mission in the DRC, Leonard Ntwaremba, accused Rwanda and Uganda of trying to restart the war and partition the country. He said that both countries have deployed troops and arms to strategic positions along the front lines. Ntwaremba said since July 16 Uganda had been supplying the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) in the Equateur province with several boatloads of weapons and ammunition. He said that in the Kivu and Katanga regions, Rwandan soldiers have occupied positions that the Congolese Armed Forces have abandoned in accordance with disengagement plans, and that Rwandan aircraft are continually supplying the forces with weapons, ammunition and equipment. Both Uganda and Rwanda have expressed concern over attempts by DRC supported rebel groups to reenter both countries in attempts to evade the disarmament mandated under the 1999 Lusaka Peace Accord. (BBC, August 9; IRIN, August 10, 2001)

Opposition parties select representatives for dialogue: The main opposition parties in the DRC reached an agreement the weekend of August 11 on a list of 14 delegates to attend the preparatory meeting of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. The four-day meeting scheduled to begin August 20, in Gaborone, Botswana, will address issues and the date, venue, agenda, and rules of procedure for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. The Dialogue, facilitated by former President of Botswana, Ketumile Masire, was supposed to have been held two years ago, in accordance with the calendar of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement signed in 1999. A meeting scheduled for June 2000 was cancelled after the government of Laurent-Desire Kabila refused to participate and banned the unarmed opposition from attending. The peace process has gained more momentum through the Presidency of Joseph Kabila, who came to power after his father, Laurent Kabila, was assassinated in January. (IRIN, August 15, 2001)

GUATEMALA

Archbishop organizes reconciliation forum: Archbishop Rodolfo Quezada established a national reconciliation forum aimed at finding solutions to the country’s ongoing crisis, in response to protests over a nation-wide tax increase. The forum, sponsored by the Casa de la Reconciliacion and the Grand Alliance for Peace, met in an effort to strengthen the country’s institutions, support the consolidation of peace and democracy, uphold the law, and promote dialogue. More than 70 Guatemalans attended the August 9 forum in which they agreed to establish a committee to coordinate activities and suggest solutions to overcome the hostility, mistrust, and alienation among various sectors. Quezada served as a mediator between 1990 and 1994 in the peace process between the government and the leftist rebels to end Guatemala’s 36-year civil war. (EFE, August 10, 2001)

Former dictator files charges against human rights protesters: Fernando Linares, a lawyer for former Guatemalan dictator Oscar Mejia Victores, filed criminal charges on behalf of Mejia against human rights protesters who attacked the former dictator. The protestors
smashed the windows of Mejía’s car and pelted him with stones as he left the courthouse after answering questions about human rights abuses allegedly committed by his government between 1983 and 1986. Mejía came to power August 3, 1983 after toppling the government of Gen. Jose Efraín Rios Montt. Rios headed the “scorched earth” policy of racial extermination during Guatemala’s civil war. (EFE, August 9; Anaova, August 14, 2001)

NEPAL

Prime Minister receives support for negotiations: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba received support in a meeting of delegates from all of Nepal’s major political parties August 10 for proposed negotiations with Maoists rebels. The parties agreed unanimously to grant the government mandate to hold negotiations with the rebels. Deuba came into power in July when his predecessor, Girija Prasad Koirala, was pressured into resignation due to his inability to quell the rebel violence. More than 1,800 people have been killed since 1996 when the Maoist rebels began “The People’s War” to overthrow Nepal’s constitutional monarchy. (BBC, August 10, 2001)

Maoist call for a ban on alcohol: The All Nepal Women’s Association, a Maoist women’s organization, asked dealers, shops, hotels, and restaurants across the country to discontinue liquor sales as of August 18. The women warned, that if businesses ignored their request they could be subject to attacks. The women have called for the ban, arguing “alcohol causes family tensions and social evils.” Business leaders were alarmed by the call and said that private investment in the industry is worth over $133.62 million and employs over 50,000 people. Officials expressed concerns that the ban may ward off potential tourists whose numbers have declined since the increase in violence following the massacre of the royal family June 1. The government is reported to have invited the women’s group for talks to resolve the issue. (BBC, CNN, August 14, 2001)

Parliament passes bills to control conflict: Both houses of Nepalese Parliament passed bills August 12 aimed at controlling the Maoist insurgency and enforcing law and order. The first bill allows for the creation of a well-equipped and well-trained Armed Police Force of 15,500 to fight the rebels. This bill was only passed after gaining approval from the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) opposition party. The second bill will give five government officials the power to mobilize the army and police without orders from the prime minister. (Channel NewsAsia, August 13; Japan Economic Newswire, August 12; Kathmandu Post, August 13, 2001)
ERITREA

Government cracks down on student unrest: Eritrean police arrested 500 students from the University of Asmara August 10 for failing to report to a government summer work program. The students were taken as they gathered outside the court in anticipation of a hearing for the president of the student union, Semere Kesete, who has been held by government officials without charge since July 31. Kesete was taken from his home July 31 by two plain-clothed security officers, following a speech he gave at a student gathering in protest of government wage proposals for an obligatory summer work program. Eritrean students are exempt from military service as long as they are enrolled either in the university or the summer work program. Presidential spokesman Yemane Ghebremeskel said, “The students have been detained to remind them that they are not above the law and that there are consequences for not fulfilling their obligation.” Ghebremeskel would not confirm reports that the arrested students had been taken to a military detention center outside Asmara. (AFP, August 4, 11, 12; Awate.com, August 1, 7, 9, 2001)

Government sacks critical officials: The head of Eritrea’s Inland Revenue Department, Brigadier General Estifanos Seyoum has been replaced by Gabriel Fassil, Economic Advisor in the President’s Office, according to an August 6 briefing by Ghebremeskel. As head of Eritrea’s tax revenue department, Mr. Seyoum had accused the Red Sea Corporation, a business conglomerate owned by the ruling party, People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), of evading its tax obligations, and was preparing a suit to force compliance. Seyoum was among 15 members of the PFDJ who signed a letter to President Isaias Afwerki accusing him of operating in an “illegal and unconstitutional” manner by failing to hold regular meetings with government members, as provided under the constitution. Other signatories who have been dismissed include Fisheries Minister Petros Soloman and Trade and Industry Minister Haile Woldetensae, who were both founding members of Eritrea’s liberation movement. Eritrea’s Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Teame Beyene, was dismissed from his post August 9. Teame had been outspoken against the Eritrean government, and accused the President’s office of intruding into the affairs of the Court at a July 23 conference of Eritrean scholars, academics, and politicians. Justice Minister Fozia Hashim ordered Teame to hand over all documents in his office and to immediately relinquish his position. These moves come in response to the first visible signs of dissent, initiated with the March letter, in the 10 years of Isaias’ leadership. (AFP, August 7; Awate.com, August 4, 10; IRIN, August 11, 13, 2001)