The countries for the Peace and 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 and human rights that pertain to gender.

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.
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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Government launches unity campaign: The Ministry of National Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs organized and promoted a month of solidarity in the DRC. The program, launched November 19, aimed to collect financial contributions that would be used to assist approximately 2.7 million people affected by the civil war and natural disasters. The UN recently released figures outlining the humanitarian crisis in the DRC. According to the UN, less than 30% of the Congolese population had access to primary health care, an estimated 74% lived in “severely food insecure” regions, while more than one million children suffered from malnutrition. The DRC had been afflicted by a humanitarian crisis since the outbreak of civil war in 1998. Although the Lusaka Accords were signed two years later, peace and stability had yet to return to the country. The civil war in the DRC involved more than five foreign countries and claimed the lives of more than three million people. (AllAfrica, November 20, 2003)

ERITREA/ETHIOPIA

Eritrea’s ambassador leaves the African Union: The government of Eritrea removed Ambassador Salah Omer from the African Union (AU) November 20 because the international body had failed to take punitive measures against Ethiopia for refusing to comply with the border ruling of the Boundary Commission. The Eritrean government was angered that the AU, a guarantor of the Algiers Peace Agreement, had not disciplined nor reprimanded Ethiopia for continually delaying the border demarcation process. Ambassador Salah Omer stated that other guarantors of the peace agreement, such as the European Union and the United Nations, had publicly admonished Ethiopia for its actions. The Algiers Peace Agreement was signed in 2000 after the conclusion of a two-year border war between the two countries. The Algiers Agreement stated that each side would regard the ruling of the Boundary Commission as “final and binding.” However, since the ruling was released in 2002, Ethiopia delayed border demarcation three times. As a guarantor of the Algiers Agreement, it was the responsibility of the AU and other international bodies to ensure that the ruling was implemented. Diplomatic sources close to the conflict stated that Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya might be asked to assist in ending the stalemate between the two countries because he had good relations with both President Isayas Afwerki of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia. (AllAfrica, November 20, 21, 24; BBC, November 20, 2003)

GENDER AND PEACE

Women peacemakers meet at Harvard: The non-governmental organization, Women Waging Peace (WWP) released information regarding the conference for women peacemakers earlier this month. The conference, which was attended by women from 40 global conflict zones, was conducted at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. The goal of WWP was to provide women with an arena to network, and to promote women’s roles in peacebuilding, diplomatic relations, and conflict resolution. While attending the forum, women leaders from Guatemala, Iraq, Rwanda, Kosovo, Fiji, and other nations, listened to speeches from Ambassador George F. Ward Jr., director of the United States Institute of Peace, U.S. Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky, and Ambassador Pierre Schori, the permanent representative of Sweden to the United
Nations. At several roundtables, female leaders from Rwanda, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Tibet met with senior diplomatic officials from the U.S. and foreign governments for seminars on diplomatic strategy, disarmament, demobilization, and security. (Womensenews, November 20, 2003)

Liberian women march for peace: Approximately 800 women took part in a march through the Liberian capital of Monrovia November 20. The women shouted slogans demanding swift disarmament of fighters and waved placards with slogans calling for peace. Many of the women wore white to symbolize their hope for peace. The women also protested against widespread rape committed by both sides in the conflict. Aid groups were unable to estimate how many women in Liberia had been raped, but some women said they believed all women in Liberia had been raped. The head of the transitional government, Gyude Bryant, watched the march and nodded to many of the slogans shouted by the protestors. Approximately 4,500 UN peacekeepers had been imposing calm in Monrovia since President Charles Taylor went into exile in August, but fighting continued in the countryside. (The Independent, November 21, 2003)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

South Africa to offer free AIDS medication: The South African government approved a plan to distribute free antiretroviral medication to its citizens infected with AIDS. The Health Minister said that the distribution of the drugs was “a matter of urgency”. The drugs had been shown to alleviate the symptoms of AIDS and to prolong the lives of victims. They estimated that 50,000 patients would be treated in the first year. The government also announced that it would triple its spending on the virus to $1.7 billion, and would use some of the money to train thousands of health care professionals, and set up treatment centers in all of the country’s 50 health districts. In addition, more money will be spent on AIDS prevention awareness and education. An estimated 12% of the South African population had the AIDS virus. (New York Times, November 19, 2003)

Filipinos protest kidnappings for ransom: Hundreds of Filipinos protested the continuation of the practice of kidnapping-for-ransom in Manila during the funeral of a Coca-Cola executive who was kidnapped and killed. Chinese-Filipinos, including several children, were the targets of kidnapping-for-ransom gangs. There were 156 kidnappings this year. Anna Dominique Coseteng, a former Chinese-Filipino senator, said that there was a feeling of “desperation and exasperation” in the Chinese-Filipino community. Chinese business and civic groups asked the government to do more to go after the kidnappers, to establish a special court to try the kidnapping cases, and to provide resources to the kidnapping task force. Groups that studied the kidnappings contended that one reason the kidnappings were so hard to stop was because most of the kidnapping-for-ransom groups included police officers and soldiers. (New York Times, November 23, 2003)

Colombia rebels free two hostages: The leftist National Liberation Army (ELN) freed two of the seven hostages who they captured two months ago. The hostages were foreign tourists. They did not say when they would release the other five. The ELN created a video showing the hostages, saying that they would be killed if the government attempted to rescue them. The Colombian government helped by Roman Catholic Church
mediators, were trying to negotiate the release of the tourists for weeks. The ELN asked for an investigation into what they called the oppression of indigenous people by right-wing paramilitaries in the area. Last week, officials arrived from the Roman Catholic Church and various human rights groups to look into the rebel group’s allegations. (BBC, November 24, 2003)

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Sharon may take unilateral steps to peace: Israeli news reported that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon might uproot some isolated Jewish settlements and set borders for a Palestinian state. Sharon was under pressure to revive the stalled peace talks and loosen the military grip on Palestinians. Some of the pressure came from the symbolic peace plan agreed to in Geneva by Israeli left-wing opposition figures and Palestinians. Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie said he would welcome the removal of the settlements on occupied land, but only if it led to implementation of the U.S.-backed peace “roadmap.” Qurie called on Israel to halt construction of the security fence and to freeze expansion of settlements, but said he was prepared to meet all of the commitments of the roadmap and exert maximum efforts to stop violence. Sharon and Qurie were scheduled to hold their first summit the week of December 1. In the three-year-old intifada Israeli security forces have killed more than 2,000 Palestinians, whereas Palestinian militants have killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings. The roadmap called for an end to the bloodshed and the implementation of steps leading to the creation of a Palestinian state by 2005. (Reuters, November 24, 2003)

KOREAN PENINSULA

North Korea needs more food aid: The UN issued an appeal for countries to meet the $225 million aid for North Korea in 2003, of which $192 million was needed for food aid. Only 57% of the $225 million had been pledged. North Korea had better harvests recently, but 40% of children in the country were malnourished last year, according to Pierette Vu Thi, UNICEF’s representative in North Korea. She said 70,000 children, among the total population of 23 million, were malnourished and in danger of dying without medical care. According to a report by two senior U.S. Senator aids, U.S. food aid to North Korea fell from 300,000 tons per year to 40,000 in 2003. A State Department spokesman said the Bush Administration was still considering whether to provide another 60,000 tons promised for 2003. The administration hesitated to provide the aid due to concerns that North Korea was providing the food to its military. North Korean officials were convinced that the U.S. was using the aid as leverage. The U.N. World Food Program recently issued another call for donors to provide $221 million to North Korea for 2004. (BBC, November 20; New York Times, November 23, 2003)

KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyz court bans organizations for “terrorist acts”: A source at the Kyrgyz Prosecutor-General’s office in Bishkek said November 19 that Kyrgyzstan’s Supreme Court banned the activities of four organizations for involvement in “terrorist acts.” The court announced that the four organizations – Hizb ut-Tahrir, the East Turkistan Liberation
Organization, the East Turkistan Islamic Party, and the Islamic Party of Turkistan – were extremist and pronounced all activities by the organizations illegal. The ITAR-TASS news agency, in its report of the court ban, listed the killing of a Chinese diplomat in Bishkek in 2002, an explosion at the largest market in Bishkek in December 2002, and an attack on a Chinese government delegation in 2000 as acts of terrorism by the organizations. However, the report did not specify which organization was responsible for the attacks. Three members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were arrested November 4 on suspicion of planning an attack on the U.S. airfield at Ganci. Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies were authorized to search and seize the property of these organizations for the state, and would also have more opportunities to bring distributors of leaflets for the organizations to court. Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamic extremist party that called for the overthrow of secular governments, was one of the most active organizations in Kyrgyzstan. As of June, there were 193 open cases against Hizb ut-Tahrir members, most for distributing leaflets, with 19 arrested in the northern provinces in the past six months. (Eurasianet.org, November 20, 2003)

**IMF gives Kyrgyzstan $40 million**: The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Horst Koeller, announced November 12 that the IMF was ready to give $40 million for a program to reduce poverty. The $40 million was in addition to the $61 million already given to Kyrgyzstan to complete a three-year program to fight poverty. President Akaev said the second year of the program ended successfully, and that it was necessary to activate internal sources by conducting anti-corruption strategies, exhibiting good governance, developing business, and improving the investment climate. (Eurasianet.org, November 12, 2003)

**Kyrgyz journalists fear speaking out about problems**: Alexander Ivanko, Senior Advisor to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, published an article on the OSCE website about the OSCE conference September 17-18 in which he spoke of the problems journalists faced in Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian states. He said the Central Asian republics, including Kyrgyzstan, excelled at placing pressure on journalists, through “structural censorship,” such as rent increases and tax investigations, and through the courts by bringing numerous libel cases against journalists. He cited the case of Moya Stolitsa, a Kyrgyz newspaper, which was bankrupted by fines from over 30 lawsuits, brought by the government and forced to close in June. Ivanko said none of the journalists were openly willing to speak out about their problems at the conference. (Eurasianet.org, November 12, 2003)

**MACEDONIA**

**Leader of Albanian National Army receives jail sentence**: Gafur Adili, the political leader of the Albanian National Army (ANA), was charged with inciting ethnic hatred due to articles he wrote calling for the union of Albanians in the Balkans, including Kosovo and parts of Macedonia and Serbia. The Albanian court sentenced Adili to ten months of imprisonment. The maximum sentence he could have received was ten years. The ANA was named a terrorist group by the United Nations and was responsible for sporadic rebel insurrections in Kosovo, Macedonia, and southern Serbia in recent years.
The goal of the ANA was to create a “Greater Albania” consisting of the entire Albanian population in the Balkans. Approximately 23% of Macedonia’s population is Albanian. (MSNBC News, November 21, 2003)

NEPAL
Maoist leader meets to discuss future of Nepal: General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal, Madhav Kumar Nepal, met with Maoist leader, Prachanda, in India to discuss the possibility of Nepal becoming a republic. Nepal stated, “There will be an important political development after a week which could have far-reaching consequences.” Although he did not elaborate, his party aids said Nepal was hopeful the Nepalese King Gyanendra would soon agree to form an all-party government and renew talks with the Maoists. Nepal added that Prachanda would be willing to restart talks if Nepal had an all-party government. The kingdom’s five major political parties did not recognize Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa because he was appointed by King Gyanendra, who dismissed the elected government in October 2002. Madhav Kumar Nepal said the meeting was positive, but Maoists did not agree to an anti-king alliance with the parties and remained firm in their desire for a special assembly to redraft the constitution. The Maoists withdrew from the peace talks in August and violence escalated, with more than 1,000 people dead in the past three months. (AFP, November 22; BBC Monitoring International Reports, November 24, 2003)

SOMALIA
Clash over export tax leaves eight dead: Approximately eight people were killed and 10 wounded during a clash in Marka, a coastal town south of Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. The fighting was between the Sa’d and Ayr subclans of the Habar Gedir. The clash was triggered when the Ayr subclan militia imposed a tax on goods imported or exported through the Marka port. Sa’d businessmen planning to export huge quantities of bananas to Arab countries sent militia and took over a checkpoint manned by the Ayr, and then proceeded to attack Marka. The fighting began November 22 and subsided as both sides withdrew from town. Habar Gedir clan elders reportedly began serious mediation efforts to end the violence. Somalia has been without a central government for over a decade since Siad Barre’s regime was ousted. To date peace efforts have been unsuccessful and fighting has continued among clans and subclans. (IRIN, November 24, 2003)

Galgudud Region fighting causes massive displacement: Fighting in the Galgudud Region of Somalia forced approximately 2,000 families from their homes. They were driven to live in destitute conditions in the open with little or no food. Due to their weakened state, many of the displaced were succumbing to disease. The conditions were worsened by the lack of rain in the area this year. Yusuf Hasa Iyow, the governor of Galgudud, said that the residents were not in much better condition than the displaced. Iyow added that there were no aid agencies helping the displaced or area residents. However, Iyow was hopeful that mediation would end the fighting that caused the displacement between the Darod subclan of the Marehan and the Dir subclan of Fiqi Mahmud in Herale. (IRIN, November 24, 2003)
SUDAN

Sudanese government accuses PCP of delaying peace process: Vice President Ali Osman Taha alleged that the Popular Congress Party (PCP) was trying to sabotage peace talks with rebels in the western region of Darfur and to promote rebellion. Taha said that the leader of PCP, Hassan al-Turabi, blocked recent talks in Chad and continued “fanning sedition in Darfur.” Turabi was recently freed after three years of house arrest as part of efforts to end a 20-year civil war with the main rebel group in the south, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). The PCP denied involvement in escalating the situation in Darfur and stated that they were only attempting to highlight the issue. The rebel group, Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), have clashed with the government since February and accused Khartoum of neglecting the impoverished region of Darfur. The government and the SLM agreed to a six-week cease-fire that began September 6 and was extended October 26. Approximately 3,000 people have been killed since the conflict began, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced due to the conflict. (AFP, November 23; BBC Monitoring International Reports, November 24, 2003)

UGANDA

Rebel groups voice desire to return to Uganda: Ugandan rebels in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) told the UN officials that they were ready to end their rebellion and return home. Some members of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) contacted officials from the UN mission in the DRC, MONUC, and expressed a desire to put down their arms and return to Uganda. However, Uganda cited intelligence reports that indicated that rebels were regrouping and preparing for an attack on Uganda. (New Vision, November 24, 2003)

Otti’s wife surrenders: The wife of Vincent Otti, the second-in-command of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), surrendered to the Ugandan army. She and two other rebels surrendered with a global positioning system, two sub-machine guns, and several photographs of rebels. The surrender followed a battle between the army and the LRA in Acholi-Bur where two rebels were killed and Otti, who commanded the rebels, escaped. The army also recovered two other sub-machine guns, one hand grenade, and six loaded magazines as well as rescued seven abductees. In two other ambushes by the Ugandan army, three other rebels were killed, more weapons found, and eleven abductees were rescued. The conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan government has continued for more than 16 years. The LRA has been infamous for abducting children to be sex slaves and soldiers. (BBC, November 20; The Monitor, November 23, 2003)