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 peacebuilding 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 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 Peace & Justice updates are written by the Spring 2004 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Donna Chung (University of San Diego), Erina Fischer (University of California, Irvine), Marjan Nahavandi (University of California, Los Angeles), and Hilary Stauffer (University of San Diego).*
UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AP = Associated Press (www.ap.org)
AFP = Agence France Presse (www.afp.com)
AllAfrica = AllAfrica Global Media (www.allAfrica.com)
Amnesty International = Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring = BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/)
CDC News = Center for Disease Control News (www.thebody.com)
CNN = Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
CPJ = Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org)
DPA = Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.com)
FT = Financial Times (www.ft.com)
GlobalSecurity = GlobalSecurity (www.globalsecurity.org)
Guardian = Guardian Unlimited Network (http://www.guardian.co.uk/)
HRW News = Human Rights Watch News (www/hrw.org)
ICG = International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IRIN = Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
(IUN Dept. of Humanitarian Affairs Information Network: (www.unog.ch)
IWPR = Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kantipur Online = Kantipur Online (www.kantipurnow.com)
NCN = New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
PANA = Pan African News Agency (www.panapress.com)
RSF = Reporters Sans Frontieres (www.rsf.org)
TASS = ITAR-TASS News Agency (www.itar-tass.com/english/)
UPI = United Press International (www.upi.com)
UN News Center = UN New Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA = Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
WP = Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
WPS = What the Papers Say (www.wps.ru:8101)
WWP = Women Waging Peace (www.womenwagingpeace.net)
Xinhua = Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)
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**BALKANS**

**CROATIA**

UN Tribunal indicts two Croatian generals: Two Croatian generals, Mladen Markac and Ivan Cermak, were indicted for crimes against humanity March 5 by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague. The two men agreed to surrender, and the new Croatian government pledged full cooperation with the tribunal. Such collaboration was seen as crucial to the country’s eventual membership in the European Union. The top Croatian war crimes suspect, General Ante Gotovina, was indicted in 2001, but remained at large. The indictments of Markac, Cermak and Gotovina all stemmed from the August 1995 Croatian recapture of the Serbian rebel stronghold of Knin, where many Serb civilians were killed. In 1991, Croatia declared independence from the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Soon after, civil war erupted between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Croats, eventually spilling over into neighboring Serbia and Bosnia. Armed conflict endured until the signing of the Dayton peace accords in November 1995. (FT, March 8; Reuters, March 6, 2004)

**SERBIA**

Ovcara massacre suspects on trial: A war crimes trial began March 9 in Serbia for six Serbs accused of killing 192 civilians in the Croatian town of Vukovar in 1991. At the time of the massacre, the suspects were members of a paramilitary group fighting against Croatia’s declaration of independence from Yugoslavia. The suspects allegedly took the Croatian prisoners of war from a Vukovar hospital and executed them at the Ovcara pig farm. The trial was held at the Special Court in Belgrade, established under the auspices of the UN’s International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague. The trial was considered an important experiment in domestic justice for those charged with atrocities committed during the Balkans wars of the 1990s. Human rights groups expressed concerns that holding low-ranking soldiers accountable for the atrocities might damage the case against three senior Serb officers on trial at The Hague who were accused of orchestrating the massacre. The fear was that Serb authorities would try to use the trial to prove that individuals were responsible for the crimes and that no orders were issued from above. (BBC, WP, March 8, 2004)

**GENDER AND PEACE**

Countries observe International Women’s Day: International Women’s Day was observed around the world March 8, with calls from women’s groups to advance gender equality and women’s rights. Advocates used the occasion to draw attention to issues such as honor killings in Pakistan, rising HIV/AIDS infections from sexual violence, domestic abuse, and the global trafficking of women and children. Supporters were reminded that women also faced less obvious inequities such as discrimination and prejudice in higher education and the workplace. International Women’s Day was first observed in the United States in 1909 as “National Woman’s Day.” The event gained global prominence in 1911, with the backing of the Socialist International movement. It
has since been celebrated annually as a rallying point for women, predominantly in the
developing world. (AFP, March 8; Halifax Daily News, March 6, 2004)

Somalia launches campaign against FGM: A coalition of approximately 90 Somali
grassroots women’s groups launched a campaign against female genital mutilation
(FGM) on International Women’s Day. It was estimated that nearly 98 percent of Somali
women underwent the ritual, which involved partial or total removal of the external
female genitalia for cultural or religious reasons. Protesters launched demonstrations in
cities nationwide, including the capital of Mogadishu. Event organizers said that the aim
of the campaign was to educate Somali women that there was no religious basis for the
practice. The World Health Organization estimated that between 100 and 140 million
girls and women worldwide underwent FGM, primarily in African countries, but also in
Asia and the Middle East. The procedure often caused severe pain, infection, and led to
more serious consequences such as hemorrhaging and possible transmission of HIV from
use of the same instrument in multiple operations. (IRIN, March 8, 2004)

GREAT LAKES

RWANDA
Embassy reopens in the DRC: The Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced
March 4 that the cabinet decided to reopen its embassy in the Democratic Republic of
Congo (DRC), and named Juru Antoine Munyakazi ambassador to the DRC. Rwandan
officials said that they expected the DRC to make a decision about opening an embassy
in Rwanda in the future. The decision was part of ongoing diplomatic efforts to
normalize relations between the two countries, which were strained after Rwanda
deployed troops to the DRC in 1996 to oust Mobutu Sese Seko, one of the longest-
serving African leaders. In August 1998, Rwanda, together with Uganda, intervened
militarily in the DRC to back the Congolese Rally for Democracy. This action resulted in
a complex war that drew in four other African nations including Zimbabwe, Namibia,
Angola, and Chad. In July 2002, Rwanda and the DRC reached a peace agreement aimed
at ending their hostilities. Since then, approximately 20,000 Rwandan soldiers have
withdrawn from the DRC. (AFP, March 5; AllAfrica, March 4; IRIN, March 4, 2004)

UGANDA
EC gives $7.5 million to the government: The European Commission (EC) was to
provide $7.5 million to northern Uganda where approximately 1.4 million internally
displaced persons have sought refuge. Channeled through the EC humanitarian office,
the aid would be used to assist in health and nutrition programs, immunization and
vaccination campaigns, HIV/AIDS awareness, food security, water and sanitation. The
funding would also support the provision of shelter, blankets, landmine awareness, and
child-soldier rehabilitation. The decision was made a few weeks after the EC supported a
parliamentary resolution declaring northern Uganda a humanitarian disaster area.
Despite continued denial by the Ugandan government, the delivery of humanitarian aid to
the population in the north was often restricted. Northern Uganda has suffered
extensively from the LRA insurgency, which began 18 years ago in an attempt to replace
the existing government with one based upon the Biblical Ten Commandments. (IRIN, March 8, 2004).

Sudan extends protocol against the LRA: The Sudanese government extended a protocol under which Ugandan troops were allowed to fight against rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in southern Sudan. In a press statement, Major Shaban Bantariza, a spokesperson of the Sudanese army, said that the Sudanese government was committed to strengthening the existing defense cooperation with Uganda to eliminate LRA rebels. The Ugandan government sent a group of military officials to Sudan to negotiate the three-month renewal of the protocol in detail. The two governments signed the initial protocol allowing Ugandan troops to launch a campaign against the LRA in southern Sudan March 2002. (AFP, March 5, 2004)

HORN OF AFRICA

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA

Government denies seeking mediation: The government of Eritrea denied that it sought mediation from Nigeria concerning its border conflict with Ethiopia. Articles in The Guardian and Nigerian Daily March 3 reported that Eritrea solicited assistance from Nigeria in the dispute. Despite the articles’ report, Eritrea claimed that the facts were misrepresented, and that the meeting between Eritrea’s ambassador to Nigeria and Nigeria’s Foreign Minister was a routine diplomatic activity. Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia increased following Ethiopia’s rejection of a boundary commission ruling to award the town of Badme to Eritrea. Since Ethiopia refused to implement the ruling stipulated by the 2000 Algiers Agreement, Eritrea has refused to engage in dialogue. The Algiers Agreement signed by both parties ended the two-year border war, and stated that the ruling of the boundary commission was final and binding. (IRIN, March 8, 2004)

SOMALIA

Final peace talks to begin: The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced that the final phase of Somali peace talks was to commence March 13. Somalia’s peace talks received plenary endorsement February 23 on a peace agreement signed between the Transitional National Government and Somali warlords to end the 14-year armed conflict in Somalia. The peace agreement stipulated a framework for a five-year transitional period, during which an all-inclusive Somali government was to be established. The final phase of peace talks was expected to select members of parliament and establish a future interim government. (IRIN, March 8, 2004)

SUDAN

Darfur violence escalates: UN officials reported an escalation of violence and a breakdown of law and order in the Darfur region of western Sudan as government associated militias attacked local villages. Sources reported the entire area of Jabal Si, home to approximately 70,000 Sudanese, to have been cleared of residents. A report issued by the UN Darfur Task Force March 4 documented attacks in northern Darfur by Sudanese government forces. The Sudanese army killed at least 67 people, abducted 16
schoolgirls, and raped civilians February 27 in the town of Tawilah. Government militia and paramilitary forces, including the Janjawid militia and Popular Defence Forces, were accused of attacks against civilians in the region. The year-old Darfur conflict between the Sudanese government, pro-government militia, and rebel groups has displaced approximately 800,000 civilians. (IRIN, March 5, 10, 2004)

**Government militia merges with SPLM/A:** The Equatoria Defence Forces (EDF), a Sudanese government-backed militia group, officially declared their support March 5 for the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) of Uganda. The merge followed increased fighting between the LRA and SPLM/A in southern Sudan after LRA rebels killed Sudanese civilians between February 24 and 28, and ambushed SPLM/A enclosures March 2. Since the early 1990s, EDF and LRA were both allied with the government of Sudan. In a joint statement, the two Sudanese forces announced their merge for the sake of “reconciliation, forgiveness, and unity for the people of Sudan,” and agreed on the need to stabilize security for the south. The merger was expected to help unify southern Sudan in a south-south reconciliation process, and to help the progress of Sudanese peace talks aimed at ending the 20-year civil war. The war has killed approximately two million people, and has displaced over three million since it broke out in 1983. (AllAfrica, March 8; IRIN, March 5, 2004)

**Children rally for peace:** Approximately 1500 children gathered at Sudan’s Republican Palace March 8 to call for an end to the 20-year civil war. The children lit torches that represented Sudan’s 26 states and three significant leaders: President Omar al-Bashir, Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, and head of the SPLM/A, John Garang. Independent charity groups, including the Sudanese Peace and Dignity, organized the rally and were to fly five children to the peace talks in Kenya to hand a petition to leaders of the negotiation teams. (AP, March 8; WP, March 9, 2004)

**INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

**HRW reports U.S. abuses:** Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report March 8 on human rights violations by the U.S. in Afghanistan. The report documented cases where U.S. forces used “military tactics,” such as unprovoked deadly force, and also noted that Afghan forces deployed with U.S. forces mistreated civilians during search and arrest operations. The report included descriptions of frequent civilian arrests and detailed accounts of detainees’ treatment, such as beatings, and sleep deprivation. HRW feared that civilians held without tribunals or legal counsel would set a poor example for intervention operations. The report concluded by urging the Afghan government and the U.S. to bring their detention system into compliance with international law. (HRW, March 8, 2004)
NEPAL

Human rights situation alarms UN: Three UN human rights experts said they were concerned about human rights violations committed by security forces and Maoist insurgents. A statement released in Geneva March 9 urged the Nepalese government and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) to comply with international human rights laws and norms. An increased number of harassments, arrests, torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians were the major human rights issues facing the country. The UN specialists claimed that the human rights situation in the country had worsened since issuing a public warning in November 2003 concerning the secret detention of dozens of civilians. More than 9,000 people have lost their lives during the nine-year insurgency, as the Maoists have fought to remove the monarchy and install a communist state. (UN News Service, March 9, 2004)

Prime Minister promises free and fair elections: Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa said that he was committed to holding “free and fair general elections,” however he did not give a date for when elections would be held. Thapa claimed that he held talks with different party leaders regarding the elections in order to re-instate the parliamentary system. He maintained that the government was open to resuming peace talks with the Maoists, although they had not directly approached him. Recently, the Maoists held a dialogue with both the UN and the European Union. The Maoists broke a seven-month cease-fire with the government August 2003, claiming the government was not addressing their political demands. (AFP, March 7, 2004)

Women’s group calls for strike: A pro-Maoist women’s group called for a nationwide strike on International Women’s Day, closing all shops, markets, private companies, and educational institutions. This was the second strike called by the insurgents within a week. (AFP, Xinhua, March 8, 2004)

AI seeks safety for captured security forces personnel: Amnesty International (AI) urged the Maoists March 9 to guarantee the safety of security forces personnel, captured March 2 during a Maoist attack on the district headquarters of Bhojpur in eastern Nepal. AI released the names of those missing and asked the Maoists to inform their families of their whereabouts and to guarantee their safety and security. (Amnesty International, March 9, 2004)