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 bibliographical 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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UPDATE SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AFP = Agence France Presse (www.afp.com)
AP = Associated Press (www.ap.org)
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)
BCR = Balkan Crisis Group (http://www.iwpr.net)
Channel NewsAsia = Channel NewsAsia (www.channelnewsasia.com)
CNN = Cable News Network (www.cnn.com)
CPJ = Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org)
CSCE = Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (www.csce.gov)
Economist = Economist (www.economist.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)
IWPR = Institute for War and Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kantipur Online = Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Latinnews Daily = LatinNews Daily (www.latinnews.com)
Los Angeles Times = Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
M2 Presswire = M2.com (http://m2.com/M2/M2Web.nsf)
Mail&Guardian = Mail&Guardian Online (http://www.mg.co.za/Content/l3.asp?ao=66106)
NCN = New Congo Net (www.marekinc.com/NCN.html)
Reuters = Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF = Reporters Sans Frontières (www.rsf.org)
Santiago Times = The Santiago Times (http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes)
Scotsman = The Scotsman (www.scotsman.com)
UN News Center = UN New Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA = Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Washington Times = The Washington Times (www.washintontimes.com)
WP = Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
WWP = Women Waging Peace (www.womenwagingpeace.net)
Xinhua = Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english/index.htm)
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COLOMBIA

FARC leadership changes hands: Senator Jaime Dussan, of the left-wing Polo Democrático Independiente (PDI), claimed that Guillermo Leon Saenz, alias Alfonso Cano, assumed control of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). FARC commanders contacted Dussan’s party June 11 to inform them of the change. Cano, the ideological head of the guerrilla forces, replaced former leader Manuel Marulanda who was suspected to have died of prostate cancer. The change in FARC leadership raised hopes that a shift away from violence and toward political negotiation with the Colombian government would be possible, however, analysts noted that Cano’s ideology was strictly communist and would be unlikely to change. The PDI has had contact with Colombia’s largest rebel force in an attempt to negotiate a peace process between the Colombian government and other paramilitary forces. The FARC have been fighting to install a Marxist regime in Colombia for more than 40 years and today have become one of the worlds most powerful and affluent guerrilla armies. (BBC, June 12; Latinnews Daily, June 14, 2004)

FARC kills coca workers: The FARC murdered 34 coca field workers June 15 near La Gabarra, a town 310 miles northeast of the capital, Bogotá. The coca workers were shot by FARC forces who claimed that they were aiding the right-wing paramilitary forces of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). The UN condemned the FARC offensive against civilian farmers stating that international humanitarian law prohibited violence against individuals not directly involved in hostilities. The AUC denied involvement although the region has become known for its ongoing struggle between the FARC and the AUC for control of the drug trade. Coca has been cultivated in Colombia as the raw ingredient for cocaine but has also been harvested by farmers for use in chocolate products. (AP, June 16; Xinhua, June 17, 2004)

VENEZUELA

Referendum raises doubts: A recall referendum on Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was scheduled to take place August 15 amid controversy over the President’s campaign finances and the legitimacy of the electoral system. Opposition sources were concerned that the President and his election team, the Nacional Maisanta Commando Group, might use government oil proceeds to illegally fund his campaign. Supporters of Chavez and the opposition alike complained about the recent publication of a list of 117 employees from the Junta Nacional Electoral (JNE) who signed the recall petition. As the body that would be responsible for managing the referendum process, the JNE’s neutrality was called into question by the list. The referendum would be the culmination of strong opposition to Chavez’s presidency, which was criticized over the last three and a half years for its record number of human rights violations, political persecutions, and power aggrandizement schemes. (BBC Monitoring, June 13; Latinnews Daily, June 11; VOA News, June 10, 2004)

Limitations on international observers raise concern: Venezuelan election officials said that they might limit the role of international election observers in the upcoming
referendum on Hugo Chavez’s presidency. Officials from the National Election Commission said that limiting the role of international observers would be necessary due to the belief that many groups, including the Organization of American States and The Carter Center, were biased against President Chavez and could not be trusted to act impartially. Opposition groups countered that international election observers were necessary to ensure a free and fair election and that their exclusion could allow Chavez to cancel the vote or rig the results. Combined with concerns about the use of a new, untested electronic voting system for the August referendum, analysts have begun to worry about the breakdown of democratic rule in Venezuela. (Latinnews Daily, June 11; VOA News, June 10, 2004)

THE BALKANS

CROATIA
Reforms lead to EU candidacy: The European Union (EU) announced June 18 that Croatia was an official candidate for membership. EU officials were pleased with the country’s efforts to meet the political, judicial, and economic reforms necessary for membership; particularly its cooperation in sending suspected war criminals to the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague and its acceptance of ethnic Serb refugees who fled Croatia during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Croatia applied for membership in 2003 and talks about its official entry into the EU were to begin in 2005. (AP, BBC, June 18, 2004)

GENDER AND PEACE

Solomon Islands discuss gender issue: Two weeks after the seventh Commonwealth States Women’s Affairs meeting that stressed the importance of gender inclusion in peace processes, the Solomon Islands issued a statement indicating that inequalities faced by women would be addressed by the transitional government. Ethel Sigimanu, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, stated that the transitional government would strive to build a society with full political, social, and economic equality regardless of gender. The conflict in the Solomon Islands began in 2000 when anti-government rebels staged a coup, and ended in September 2003 when an Australian-brokered peace agreement was signed. More than 2,000 Australian peacekeeping troops have been deployed to assist the government in restoring order and implementing the peace process. (BBC, June 9; FT, June 16, 2004)

GREAT LAKES

BURUNDI
Government relocates refugees: Approximately 25,000 Congolese refugees were to be moved from refugee camps in the west to two separate sites in the eastern province of Cankuzo. The government looked to separate the Congolese Tutsis, known as Banyamulenge, from the other two ethnic groups, the Bashi and the Bafurero, in order to avoid ethnic fighting while the groups stayed in Burundi. The refugees were driven out
of the eastern region of the DRC due to fighting that began June 2 in Bukavu and throughout the South Kivu province. (BBC, June 9; IRIN, June 10, 14, 18, 2004)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Coup attempt fails: In an attempt to overthrow the transitional government, military forces of the presidential guard led by Major Eric Lenge took over the state radio and television stations June 11 in the capital, Kinshasa. The coup occurred following a series of protests about the government’s failure to protect Bukavu, an eastern city that had been taken over by rebels. The coup ended less than three hours later as Lenge fled the city, evading military forces. Citizens of Kinshasa doubted the reality of the attempted overthrow and accused President Joseph Kabila of staging the coup to gain power. The civil war in the DRC lasted from 1998 to 2002 and claimed more than 2.5 million lives. Fighting has continued in the east, where rebel groups supported by Gen. Laurent Nkunda and Col. Jules Mutebutsi recently invaded. Kabila became president of the transitional government in 2002. The DRC was scheduled to hold elections in June 2005. (AP, June 12; IRIN, June 11; Reuters, June 12, 14, 2004)

Rebel military withdraws from Bukavu: Rebel troops, led by Gen. Laurent Nkunda and Col. Jules Mutebutsi, formerly members of the DRC military, withdrew from the region June 8. The rebels, who were briefly integrated into the Congolese army following the civil war, attacked Bukavu June 2 to protect Banyamulenge from persecution by DRC regional commander Gen. Mbuza Mabe. Under pressure from the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), the rebels pulled out of Bukavu and other nearby towns. Upon his withdrawal, however, Gen. Nkunda requested help from Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to prevent another war by speaking with Congolese President Joseph Kabila to establish an independent investigation of the supposed Banyamulenge persecution. Upon Nkunda’s withdrawal from Bukavu, more than 11,000 Banyamulenge fled into neighboring Burundi, intensifying ethnic tensions in the region. (BBC, June 9; IRIN, June 4, 10; The Monitor, June 21, 2004)

Troops move east: The DRC relocated more than 20,000 troops to the eastern part of the country following violence between government and rebel troops in Bukavu and the South Kivu province. Rwanda had originally closed its borders immediately following the withdrawal of Gen. Nkunda’s and Col. Mutebutsi’s troops June 6, but allowed the dissident troops to cross the border nonetheless. Rwandan army spokesman Col. Patrick Karegeya stated that they abided by international humanitarian conventions because the troops were fleeing fighting. However, the DRC government suspected that Rwanda backed the rebels because Rwanda supported the same troops during the Congo civil war in the DRC that ended in 2002. (AP, BBC, IRIN, June 22, 2004)

UGANDA

Fighting continues in the north: The Uganda People’s Defense Force killed 28 rebels from the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Gulu district June 22 and June 19. This incident followed a June 9 attack by the LRA on a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) near Gulu town, killing 19 and forcing more than 3,000 refugees to flee. In response to the violence in the north as well as mass overcrowding in IDP camps, the
Ugandan government planned to relocate thousands of IDPs next month to new sites that would allow the IDPs access to farming land to supplement relief aid. The LRA has waged war against President Museveni’s government for 18 years, advocating a state run by the Biblical Ten Commandments. In the process, it has abducted more than 25,000 children and UNICEF estimated that 1.6 million people were displaced in the north. (AP, IRIN, June 9, 2004)

**HORN OF AFRICA**

**ERITREA**

**Government to meet UN envoy:** Eritrea agreed June 17 to send an official to meet with UN Special Envoy, Lloyd Axworthy, according to a spokeswoman for the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Axworthy was sent by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to mediate the dispute over the implementation of the April 2002 Boundary Commission ruling regarding the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Algiers Agreement of 2000 established the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and called for both sides to accept its ruling as final and binding. The Commission based its ruling on previously signed land treaties and agreements. Ethiopia rejected the ruling because it did not consider politics or demographics and called for a new dialogue to determine the border between the two states. However, Eritrea refused to engage in talks until the original ruling was implemented. (All Africa, June 21; IRIN, June 21, 2004, March 13, 2003)

**SUDAN**

**Chad fears spread of Darfur war:** The government of Chad threatened to abandon its role as a mediator in the Darfur conflict because the Sudanese-supported Janjawid Arab militia attempted to rally the Chadian Arab population in its attacks on Chadian villages. Authorities feared that the country would become destabilized if the militia continued to recruit Chadian Arabs into its ranks. Ahmad Allami, chief mediator in the Darfur peace talks and personal advisor to Chadian President Idriss Deby, stated that his country would refuse to mediate if the Khartoum government allowed its sponsored militia to continue crossing the border. Chad hosted previous talks between the Khartoum government and the two Darfur rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, which led to an April cease-fire. Chad continued to mediate as both sides have been accused of violating the cease-fire. (BBC, IRIN, June 18, 2004)

**INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

**UZBEKISTAN**

**Suppression of dissent in run-up to summit:** Uzbek state organs reportedly intensified efforts to suppress political activism in the days surrounding the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s six-nation summit in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. Demonstrators attempted to use the summit as an international audience for discontent with Uzbekistan’s human rights practices. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that Uzbek authorities broke up peaceful demonstrations, detained political activists and their children, and obstructed assembly by preventing picketers from leaving their homes. HRW representatives in Tashkent also reported physical attacks and threats of violence directed
at political and human rights activists and their families. The reporting of such actions by state organs was particularly salient as a hearing of the United States Helsinki Commission was scheduled to convene June 24. The hearing was to examine the democratization and human rights situations in Uzbekistan, as the U.S. Department of State was to decide whether the country would continue to receive assistance. Last year Uzbekistan was decertified for aid under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program by the U.S. Department of State due to a lack of progress toward ending police torture and other abuses. The actions reported by HRW were inconsistent with Uzbekistan’s international obligations under the Helsinki Accords (1975). (CSCE, June 18; HRW News, June 17, 2004)

VENezuela

UUNew law threatens democratic governance: A new law signed in May by President Hugo Chavez drew criticism from several human rights organizations that claimed it undermined judicial independence. The Organic Law of the Supreme Court expanded the membership of the Supreme Court from 20 to 32 and altered the constitutional procedure for the appointment and removal of justices. Where previously a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly was required to appoint and remove justices from the highest court, the new legislation required only a simple majority. Human rights organizations implied a link between the new legislation and the recall referendum for President Chavez that was scheduled for August 15. The Supreme Court would be the final arbiter of the recall referendum, and many feared that increased political control of the judiciary would allow the governing coalition to influence the outcome of the referendum. Judicial independence and the rule of law as components of representative democracy were protected within Articles Three and Seven of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001) to which Venezuela was a party. (HRW News, June 17; NYT, June 20, 2004)

NEPAL

King appoints Prime Minister: King Gyanendra reappointed Sher Bahadur Deuba as Prime Minister June 2 and mandated that parliamentary elections including all political parties be initiated by mid-April 2005. Reactions to the appointment were mixed from the five opposition parties who organized daily street protests calling for the reinstatement of the dissolved parliament. There were indications that the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party would join the Deuba government. However, the Nepali Congress Party and other opposition parties were critical of the Deuba government and said their anti-monarchy demonstrations would continue. Deuba was fired by King Gyanendra two years ago after failing to secure elections for a new parliament. The political turmoil in Nepal came amidst a Maoist insurgency that began in 1996 and has claimed the lives of more than 9,000 people. (BBC, June 3; Kantipur Online, June 14, 23; Reuters, June 2, 2004)

Student Maoists end school strike: The All Nepal National Independent Students Union (Revolutionary), the student branch of the Maoists, called off a nationwide education strike after the government agreed to remove the “terrorist” label from the organization. The student Maoists’ school strike lasted nearly two weeks. The Maoists and affiliated
student groups have previously called nationwide strikes to press for their long-standing goal of rewriting the constitution. (BBC News, June 21; AFP News Online, June 19, 2004)

WEST AFRICA

Region creates rapid response task force: At the conclusion of a two-day meeting in Nigeria, Ministers of Defense from the 15 member nations of the Economic Cooperation of Western African States (ECOWAS) announced June 18 that ECOWAS was to launch a multinational force charged with responding to crises and threats to regional peace. The ECOWAS military force, consisting of 6,500 rapid response troops, was to have the capability to be deployed within 30 days of a crisis. Once its regional officials finished their assessment of member states’ financial and logistical capabilities, ECOWAS would begin recruiting troops to be on standby in their home bases. West African countries have long-term concerns about delays in the deployment of UN peacekeeping troops throughout West Africa including Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, where protracted civil wars cost hundreds of thousands of lives. (AP, June 18, 2004)

COTE D’IVOIRE

President pledges to revive peace process: After meeting with West African leaders in Nigeria over the weekend, Laurent Gdagbo, president of Cote d’Ivoire, said June 21 that he was ready to resume the stalled peace process. President Gdagbo stated that the presidents of Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo offered to mediate round-table discussions on the subject of a power-sharing government between the government and rebels. Political analysts expressed their skepticism, noting that the president’s statement came one day before a UN team was scheduled to arrive in Abidjan, the capital of Cote d’Ivoire. The team, appointed to assess UN peacekeeping operations and promote peace efforts in West Africa, stated that it intended to deliver “a very strong message” that would urge the parties involved in the Cote d’Ivoire conflict to collaborate and bring peace to the region. Cote d’Ivoire has been divided between the rebel-held north and the government loyalist south since a September 2002 coup attempt, which pulled the country into civil war. A French-brokered peace agreement was signed in January 2003, but the implementation of the agreement was halted in March 2004 when rebel forces boycotted the power-sharing government after government forces killed an estimated 100 opposition demonstrators. (AP, June 21, 22, 2004)