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The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Fall 2008 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego.

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SOURCE LIST

ADINA	=	Agencia Peruana de Noticias (http://www.andina.com.pe)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africanfocus.org)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
Bloomberg	=	Bloomberg (www.bloomberg.com)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
CFR	=	Council on Foreign Relations (www.cfr.org)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
Daily Dispatch Online	=	Daily Dispatch Online (www.dispatch.co.za)
Daily Star	=	The Daily Star (www.thedailystar.net)
Economist	=	The Economist (www.economist.com)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
Guatemala Times	=	The Guatemala Times (www.guatemala-times.com)
Himalayan Times	=	The Himalayan Times (www.thehimalayantimes.com)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
IANS	=	Indo-Asian News Service (www.ians.in)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
India Times	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
Inside Costa Rica	=	Inside Costa Rica (http://insidecostarica.com)
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency (http://ipsnews.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (http://jurist.law.pitt.edu)
Kantipur Online	=	The Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
KBC	=	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (www.kbc.co.ke)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Living in Peru	=	Living in Peru (www.livinginperu.com)
Media for Freedom	=	Media for Freedom (www.mediaforfreedom.com)
Monitor	=	Monitor Online (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal Monitor	=	Nepal Monitor (www.nepalmonitor.com)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)

Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Prensa Latina	=	Prensa Latina (www.plenglish.com)
Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre (www.prensalibre.com)
Resolve Uganda	=	Resolve Uganda (www.resolveuganda.org)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
Sky News	=	Sky News (http://news.sky.com/skynews)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
The Star Online	=	The Star Online (www.thestar.com.my)
TSN	=	Tanzania Standard Newspapers (http://dailynews.habarileo.co.tz)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNHCR	=	UN High Commissioner for Refugees (www.unhcr.org)
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)
Winnipeg Sun	=	Winnipeg Sun (www.winnipegsun.com)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english)

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BANGLADESH

Caretaker Government pursues restoring country to democracy. On Saturday, September 20, the Caretaker Government (CTG) announced highly anticipated parliamentary elections, expected to restore the country to democracy, would be held December 18, 2008. Fakhruddin Ahmed, chief advisor to the CTG, announced that elections for local villages and town councils will occur in two phases, scheduled for December 24 and December 28, 2008. In a further step to promote democratic conventions, Ahmed announced that the emergency rules prohibiting public gatherings would be relaxed or suspended during the campaign. The elections come after nearly two years of rule by a military-backed caretaker government. The caretaker government assumed power after the 2007 elections turned violent. However, there is now concern about whether the electoral process will proceed smoothly. As of September 29, the Election Commission (EC) will be unable to enforce its newly mandated poll code of conduct, according to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Shamsul Huda. The EC's code of conduct for parliamentary polls officially took effect September 18 as part of the EC's comprehensive election reform initiatives. These initiatives include: guarding the election against corrupt polling practices; voter identification; and the restriction of electioneering until three weeks before the start of balloting. However, parties that have not yet registered for the election cannot be held to the election code of conduct, and political parties for the national election remain uncertain at this time. The EC had initially planned to enforce the code prior to the announcement of the poll schedule in an effort to exclude the polls from influence of corrupt money. Huda announced that the code will be enforced with the announcement of the parliamentary poll's election schedule, said to be announced during the first week of November. The election code of conduct is important for the country's upcoming election because from 2001 to 2006 the country was worst in the world amongst international corruption rankings. If the parties do not register, and therefore, cannot be held to the code of conduct, then repeals to the code may have to be made, posing a major obstacle in securing free and fair December elections. (Daily Star, September 30; Economist September 20-26, 2008)

Conflictive leaders to return for elections. The times violent rivalry between the leaders of the most prominent political parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Awami League, will be part of the December elections aiming to restore the country to democracy. The interim Caretaker Government (CTG), backed by the military, seized power in part to end the rivalry between Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Begum Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League. However, on September 11, the CGT freed Khaled Zia from jail on bail and five days later allowed Sheikh Hasina to return from the U.S. where she was receiving medical treatment. Both were in jail on corruption charges as part of the CTG's effort to combat the country's corrupt politics. Though Hasina is allowed to return to the country, a court rejected a bail plea on her behalf over charges that she extorted 50 million taka (\$729,000) from a businessman during her tenure as Prime Minister. This rejection means that Hasina could be arrested when she returns to the country at some point over the next few weeks. An appeal on behalf of Hasina to the Supreme Court is expected. Hasina's lawyers argue that bail is needed in order for her to prepare for the December elections. Both Zia and Hasina are expected to participate in the December elections. However, the High Court's rejection of Hasina's bail puts the election roadmap into a predicament as the CTG has been trying to bring the two begums together for dialogue in order for the elections to run smoothly. According to a report from *The Economist*, though the CTG tried to end the careers of the begums it was unable to; the parties held together, and unless there is a major upset in December, one of two women will be elected Prime Minister. The two parties and leaders have battled incessantly for decades to a point in which the democratic system did not function: this is the third period of military rule in

Bangladesh the past three decades initiated because the government was ineffectual. (BBC, September 29; Daily Star, September 30; Economist, September 20-26, 2008)

COLOMBIA

Para-politics scandal continues. The head of Colombia's army, General Mario Montoya, is being investigated for collaborating and assisting Colombian paramilitary forces. This comes after Gen. Montoya has led the Colombian army's charge against guerrilla forces, acting as the trustee to the U.S. aid package to assist Colombia's army in securing the country from illegal groups. Montoya is one of the many allies of Colombian president Álvaro Uribe being investigated for ties to illegal paramilitary groups. A former paramilitary fighter is accusing the general of funneling weapons to a militia and collaborating with death squads that took control of impoverished areas of Medellín a few years ago. According to testimony from several imprisoned paramilitary commanders, and a CIA report, Montoya and his troops may have operated closely with paramilitary groups. The CIA report, disclosed by the *Los Angeles Times* in 2007, alleges that Montoya operated alongside the paramilitary group, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), in neighborhood Comuna 13, to combat guerrillas in that area. Montoya and Colombian authorities assert that the CIA report's allegations against him are inaccurate. The AUC is considered a brutal paramilitary force, yet they were a counter force against leftist rebels during a time when the Colombian army was considered ineffective. The AUC, which began disarmament in 2003, is responsible for the massacre of thousands of villagers and assassinations of political leaders and union members, and is fueled through the cocaine trade, receiving additional support from wealthy Colombians and the Colombian security forces. The guerrilla group, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), also fueled by the drug trade, has been a major target of the Colombian army. Recently, the FARC's movement has suffered due to effective counter-insurgency policy by the army and government. Montoya maintains that he battles the death squads of the paramilitaries and the guerrillas alike. However, paramilitarism has increased in regions where Montoya has been in command. The U.S. supplies a large aid package to the Colombian army. In light of the recent allegations, Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), chairman of the Senate subcommittee that oversees the aid package, is currently withholding 72 million dollars in funds. Reports of the army killing hundreds of peasants and presenting those peasants as rebels have sparked concerns, as has Montoya's strategy of measuring success through combat kills. This has led human rights groups to contend that measuring success in such ways promotes the slaying of civilians. Montoya denies this allegation as well. The allegations surface as Colombia is trying to secure a free-trade deal with the U.S. before the Bush administration leaves office. (NYT, September 26; WP, September 17, 2008)

Para-politics scandal reaches higher commands. Top aides of President Álvaro Uribe are now being investigated by the inspector general's office for a secret meeting with representatives of a paramilitary warlord, Diego Fernando Murillo. The secret meeting took place in April at the presidential palace. This is the latest chapter in the so-called para-politics scandal that has put two key allies of the president in jail and has implicated 70 law makers and the former head of the secret police. The investigations are pitting the executive and judicial branches against each other. The secret meeting is igniting a furor, as the representatives of the warlord brought forward tape recordings, the content of which can apparently undermine the current investigations because it provides evidence against judges. Uribe has alleged that the investigations are politically motivated by the court. The court's president, Francisco Ricaurte, has alleged that the Uribe administration is infringing upon the court's independent nature and "that sectors of the government have a plot against it." This investigation of official links between government officials and illegal paramilitary

groups has reached into all areas of the government: over 30 lawmakers have served time in jail and top officials, including the former head of intelligence and the president's cousin, have been arrested. The investigations allege that officials collaborated with illegal paramilitary groups in trafficking cocaine to the United States, combating trade union activists, and conducting operations in villages. (WP, September 17, 25, 2008)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Increased fighting continues in North Kivu province. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has reported continued clashes between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and Laurent Nkunda's rebel National Congress for the Defense of People (CNDP) near Goma in North Kivu province. Officials from the UN, African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU), as well as representatives of the members of the UN Security Council, have all expressed concern that the current clashes, which began August 28, present a serious threat to the January 2008 peace accord, also known as the Amani Program. Both the FARDC and the CNDP have been accused by the UN of violating the cease-fire agreement during the current round of clashes. While many in the international community have called for DRC President Joseph Kabila to hold talks with Nkunda, he continues to refuse to negotiate with the man he has declared a "terrorist." Instead, Kabila's government has called on the UN to increase the mandate of the MONUC forces in the region to allow them to use greater force to implement the peace accord. UN deputy spokeswoman Marie Okabe stated that the hostilities in the region have displaced nearly 100,000 people. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that over 1,700 people have fled the region and are currently seeking refuge in neighboring Uganda. UNHCR spokeswoman Roberta Russo noted that the situation in Uganda does not currently warrant UN action; however, this claim is being disputed by Ugandan officials. Bahane Niyibizi, a Ugandan MP who represents the region affected by the Congolese refugees, declared that "the situation is exerting a lot of pressure on the community and on local resources." Specifically, he complained of medical and food shortages in the area. The current fighting can be tied back to the DRC's five year civil war, in which Nkunda was a rebel commander backed by Rwanda. Nkunda continues to refuse to disarm his forces because he argues that the DRC government has not done enough to protect the country's minority Tutsi population from attacks by the predominantly Hutu rebel group known as the Rwandan Liberation Democratic Forces (FDLR). (AFP, September 29; AP, BBC, September 17; UN News Service, September 15, 29, 2008)

Lord's Resistance Army attacks displace thousands of civilians. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced September 29 that at least 17,000 civilians have been forced to flee the villages of Kilwa, Duru, and Nambia in Dungu territory near Garamba National Park in the northeastern corner of the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to recent raids by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) forces in the region. Caritas, a Catholic aid agency operating in the region, claims that the number of people affected may be as high as 75,000. According to UNHCR, large groups of Congolese civilians have started crossing the border into the Yambio region of southern Sudan, and specifically to the town of Yei, to seek refuge. There are conflicting reports on the exact number of people who have crossed into southern Sudan, although it is estimated that between 700-1,200 people have currently fled to Yei. The Congolese refugees arriving in southern Sudan have reported the LRA forces have been destroying homes, killing civilians, looting health centers, and abducting children during their most recent raids. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced that up to 90 children were abducted by LRA forces during

the raids. UNHCR has reported that they are working with aid agencies in southern Sudan to ensure that adequate resources are in place to deal with the influx of refugees. In response to the increasing LRA attacks, at least 1,000 people held a protest at the UN operating post in Dungu. The protestors were critical of the lack of action by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to protect civilians from the LRA. Jean-Charles Dupin, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the DRC reported that two MONUC peacekeepers from Morocco were injured, several UN vehicles were burned, and the OCHA office was vandalized and destroyed. Following the protests, MONUC announced that it would be sending a multidisciplinary team to Dungu “to evaluate the security and humanitarian situation.” According to its current mandate, MONUC forces are restricted to providing transport and military support to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). The LRA is a rebel group that has been engaged in a protracted battle against the government of Uganda since 1987, and it has taken refuge in several neighboring countries, including the DRC. (AFP, September 26, 30; BBC, September 25; IRIN, September 29; UN News Service, September 26, 2008)

GUATEMALA

President calls for immigration reform. President Álvaro Colom addressed the opening of the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations September 25, proposing a way to investigate and examine the effects of immigration and the treatment of migrants throughout the world. He called on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to create a panel of former presidents from countries of high immigration or emigration to explore the global migration phenomenon, including both the advantages and consequences. Colom stressed the importance of a joint coalition, calling on many Latin American countries including Mexico, Colombia and El Salvador to be a part of forming the solution. U.S. authorities have tightened up security on illegal immigration policies, which include many more raids, deportations, and prison sentences. Colom called for the international community to globalize what’s human, since “we have globalized trade, [and] we have globalized information.” This free flow of migration would help “eliminate the suffering of millions of human beings that simply seek opportunities of work and welfare,” Colom urged. A recent study reports that 30,000 Guatemalans immigrate to the United States every year and 500,000 are currently living undocumented in the country. This year the U.S. deported more than 18,000 Guatemalans and the number is expected to increase in future years. (Media for Freedom, September 25; Prensa Latina, September 25, 26, 2008)

First woman appointee expected to bring credibility to police system. President Álvaro Colom has appointed Marlene Blanco to head the National Civil Police (PNC). She is the first woman appointed to this post in Guatemala, and only the second in Latin America. Efforts to strengthen the institution have been made through the restructuring of the National Police, including appointments of other high ranking police officials, sub-chief Rembert Larios, and Blanco. Blanco has over 20 years of experience working in law enforcement covering several jobs in the PNC. She is sister to Orlando Blanco, the secretary of the Presidential Secretariat for Human Rights and Peace. Her stated goal is to bring effectiveness and credibility to the PNC and to help citizens “trust in the institution again.” Blanco stated that she realizes there is a separation between the citizens and the police, and she pledged to improve trust between both groups. The PNC has been associated with organized crime and drug trafficking. The institution was created in 1997 to replace the National Police, which was mandated to be completely dissolved by the 1996 Peace Accords. In 2005, approximately 75 million pages of documents from the National Police were discovered in

Guatemala City that included evidence making them responsible for many human rights crimes during the 36-year war. (Guatemala Times, September 22; Inside Costa Rica, September 24; Prensa Libre, September 23, 2008)

NEPAL

Maoist weapons dispute in the Constituent Assembly. Members of several political parties delayed proceedings in the Constituent Assembly (CA) last week in protest of an alleged security code violation by Maoist assembly members and their bodyguards. The current dispute stems from a September 2008 incident in which the bodyguard of Maoist MP Barshaman Pun was caught trying to enter the parliament building with “sophisticated weapons.” This incident follows a trend of senior Maoist leaders and ministers traveling with armed guards, generally members of the Maoist People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, whose nom-de-guerre is Prachanda, has also been criticized for initially announcing that his security would be ensured by the PLA and not by Nepal’s police or army. The protest in the CA, which forced a temporary adjournment of the session, was led by the main opposition party, the Nepali Congress (NC), but the NC was also supported by several opposition parties as well as partners in the ruling coalition. Leaders from the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Tarai-Madhes Democratic Party (TMDP), Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal, Rastriya Janamukti Party (RJM), and the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) were all critical of the Maoists on the issue of weapons in parliament; however, CPN-UML and MJF members did not participate in the attempts to delay proceedings in the CA. During the protest, NC leader Bimalendra Nidhi accused the Maoists of attempting to “intimidate” members of the CA. CPN-UML leader Agni Prasad Kharel also voiced his concern, stating “if the Maoist leader [Barshaman Pun ‘Ananta’] feels threatened, he can ask for state security, but he has no right to bring his own armed group into the Constituent Assembly.” Kharel went on to state that weapons should be prohibited in the CA because “it will send a message that the Constituent Assembly’s decisions are influenced by gun power.” During the session, CA Chairman Subas Nembang reminded members that the building was to be free of weapons, and that the marshals have been tasked with maintaining security within the chamber. The Maoists have faced increased public criticism on the weapons issue, as some have viewed the move as a failure to agree to their pledge of laying down their arms to focus on a political future. The issue has also been a source of tension between the Maoists and Nepal’s Army. The Maoists, who fought a ten-year “People’s War” against the monarchy, returned to mainstream politics earlier this year and are currently the party with the most seats in the CA. (Himalayan Times, IANS, September 26; Nepal News, September 29, 2008)

Prime Minister Dahal declares UN trip a success. Upon returning from the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal declared his visit a “great success,” and stated that he was encouraged by the meetings that he held with foreign leaders. Dahal, whose nom-de-guerre is Prachanda, spent a large portion of his trip urging the international community to develop economic partnerships to assist his country’s post-conflict reconstruction program. Specifically, Dahal courted Nepali businessmen in the U.S. and Canada, who have reportedly expressed an interest in investing in tourism and water resource projects within the country. Minister of Foreign Affairs Shyamananda Suman, who traveled with Dahal, emphasized that Nepal will continue to struggle with natural disaster risks, most notably flooding, and humanitarian problems unless increased foreign resources and technical support measures can be obtained. Dahal called specifically on U.S. President George W. Bush to provide financial support to aid in Nepal’s planned development projects. Also during his trip, Dahal urged the U.S. to remove his Maoist party from

the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. During his meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Richard Boucher, Dahal emphasized Nepal's progress in the peace process over the past two years, and he argued that it was time for the U.S. to "move on" from the past. As a result of his trip, Dahal announced that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will be visiting Nepal October 30-31. (Kantipur, September 30; Nepal Monitor, September 27, 2008)

PERU

Shining Path rebel leader refuses to surrender. Filomeno Cerrón Cardoso appeared September 20 in his first interview since November 2006 claiming that the leftist rebel group he leads known as the Shining Path will never surrender so long as there is "widespread military repression" from the government. "Comrade Artemio," as Cardoso is called, demanded to negotiate a political accord with the government of Peru, which the group labels "dictatorial" and unwilling to support the rebels' steps toward peace. The group insists upon a political solution through general amnesty and national reconciliation. However, Congressman Yonhy Lescano from the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, Peru's ruling party, stated that a general amnesty is out of the question and that the group needs to surrender. The Shining Path terrorized Peru during the 1980s and 90s, estimated to have killed 70,000 people in their attempt to destabilize and overthrow the Peruvian government and begin a Maoist communist regime. The Shining Path has decreased in number since its leader, Abimael Guzmán, was captured in 1992, but it continues to operate in smaller numbers through money collected for protecting the drug trade. (CFR, September 25; IHT, September 19, 2008)

China and Peru work towards signing Free Trade Agreement. The 16th Economic Leaders Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, scheduled to be hosted by Peru November 21-24, is expected to give China and Peru an opportunity to complete a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Chinese Ambassador Gao Zhengyue explained that China and Peru have already participated in five rounds of talks at a technical level, and are scheduled to have one last meeting in mid-October in Beijing. The main issue left in the negotiations is the elimination of tariffs on "sensitive" products. According to information provided by the Chinese Embassy, experts from both China and Peru are confident that they will reach an agreement in the mid-October meeting. Zhengyue reported "there are not many sensitive products in China. We have more interest in buying agricultural products from Peru." President Alan García issued a statement September 29 that emphasized the importance of Peru's relationship with China and the benefits of a FTA, such as more jobs and new infrastructure, that should come as a result of using China as "a benchmark of modernity and technology." (ANDINA, September 29; Living in Peru, September 30, 2008)

SOUTH AFRICA

Mbeki's resignation pleases some, troubles others. South Africa's second President, Thabo Mbeki who succeeded Nelson Mandela five years after the end of apartheid, resigned September 21 after the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party urged him to step down. The ANC's support for Mbeki dropped after Judge Chris Nicholson threw out charges against ANC president Jacob Zuma, September 12, on suspicion of political corruption. Mbeki's resignation is seen by some as an upsetting setback to the African continent after the progress he had made, most notably his leadership in the formation of initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU). AU chairman President Jakaya Kilwete said that Africa "lost

a prominent leader who has had immense contribution to the development of Africa.” After years of near-silence, Mbeki was recently a major mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis, resulting in a power-sharing deal between President Robert Mugabe and former opposition leader and new Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai. Mugabe called Mbeki’s resignation “devastating” but Tsvangirai did not think it would affect negotiations. Following Mbeki’s resignation, 11 other cabinet ministers also stepped down. Mbeki’s decision has been seen as a democratic one - placing the will of the South African people before his own political and personal endeavors. Others, however, see Mbeki’s departure as a positive change for South Africa and the entire continent because it opens “a door for a new presidency in South Africa to take a position consistent with international justice and to reach a solution to the Darfur crisis.” Some argue that Mbeki was too lenient with both Mugabe and Sudan’s president, Omar el-Bashir, due to his loyalty to African leaders. ([AFP](#), September 26; [KBC](#), September 23; [Monitor](#), September 28; [Tanzania Standard Newspapers](#), September 23; [The Star Online](#), September 26, 2008)

Motlanthe sworn in as South Africa’s interim president. Deputy leader of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party and former anti-apartheid activist and mineworkers union leader Kgalema Motlanthe became South Africa’s third democratically elected President September 23. He is expected to have a brief caretaker role as president after Mbeki stepped down last week and to serve in the interim until April elections when it is likely that he will step aside and that Jacob Zuma will be elected the next president. Zuma was ineligible to become the interim president as he is not in parliament. Motlanthe is viewed by many able to unify the ANC and put an end to the internal power struggle within the ruling party, which has recently overlooked issues like corruption, poverty, crime and AIDS. Parliament elected him with 269 votes to 50 for the nominee of the main opposition party, Democratic Alliance, Joe Seremane. Motlanthe is popular within the ANC, parliament, and among many citizens because of his integrity and intelligence. He is expected to bring “calm and reassurance” and is well liked by both sides of the ANC. He is a compromise candidate who appeals to both Zuma’s communist and Mbeki’s loyalist allies according to *Bloomberg*. His appointment may also ease concerns by investors after South African stocks hit an all-time low following the resignation of Mbeki and half his cabinet last week. Motlanthe was elected in 1997 for Mbeki’s first five-year term, acting as Secretary General of the ANC. He was then appointed minister in Mbeki’s cabinet in May of this year in order to smooth over the transition of power of the new ANC leadership. ([Bloomberg](#), September 25; [Dispatch Online](#), September 26; [Sky News](#), September 25; [VOA](#), September 25; [Winnipeg Sun](#), September 26, 2008)

UGANDA

UPDF disregards UN Report on Karamoja. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security released a report on September 11 assessing the security situation in Karamoja, the northeast region of Uganda. The report warned that “the situation in Karamoja has deteriorated,” and it advised anyone travelling to the region to “ensure they have armed escorts wearing ballistic jackets and ballistic helmets.” The areas of Loyoro in Kaabong are considered “no-go-zones,” and the UN report recommended that any travel to the area be “suspended due to insecurity.” However, the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) disagrees with the recent report and claims that the UN does not have the proper facts to assess the security situation on the ground. UPDF 3rd Division spokesman, Captain Henry Obbo, said, “This report is unrealistic and not a true reflection of what is on the ground. Given the security improvement in Karamoja to about 300 percent, the report would therefore apply in 2006, but even so, not wholesome because there has never been a ‘no go’ area due to insecurity in Karamoja.” He went on to say that the roads in

Karamoja were safe both during the day and at night without an armed escort, unlike in 2006 when there were frequent robberies and ambushes. The New Vision reported on August 31 that there had been increasing insecurity in the region, citing three instances in the month of August in which people were killed by the Karamajong for allegedly stealing livestock, the livelihood of the pastoral Karimojong and the root cause of the conflict in the region. In addition, the Karamoja region is currently facing the third consecutive year of drought, a factor that continues to cause food insecurity and threaten livelihoods. (Monitor, September 10, 30; New Vision, August 31; Resolve Uganda, September 10, 30, 2008)

LRA abductions in DRC threaten peace. At the opening of the General Assembly of the United Nations September 23, U.S. President George W. Bush held an emergency meeting with Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni in response to the recent attacks and abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Attacks on the villages of Kiliwa, Duru, and Nambia took place September 17, resulting in the abduction of 50 children from a primary school in Kiliwa, 40 children from a secondary school in Duru, and the death of three civilians and the kidnapping of a village chief and two Italian missionaries. Julien Harneis, chief of field operations for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in eastern DRC, called for the release of the children without any preconditions, stating: "UNICEF is very concerned that they will now be forced to fight or support fighting, putting their lives at risk." The International Criminal Court (ICC) said the recent abductions in the DRC mark the LRA's "largest offensive and abduction campaign since the LRA left for the Central African Republic in February," where the LRA is reportedly running diamond mines. The ICC's office obtained information which stated: "Kony issued orders to abduct 1,000 new recruits and to attack Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to get weapons." The government of Uganda has placed the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) on "high alert over the LRA rebels" in response to the attacks, and UPDF spokesman Major Paddy Ankunda said "the only thing that will guarantee the LRA safety is to sign the peace agreement." Uganda has also requested that aid agencies stop supplying food to the LRA rebels and instead requested the aid agencies tell the rebels that food aid will not continue until the Final Peace Agreement is signed. There has been a ceasefire between the LRA and the government of Uganda since 2006, yet earlier this year the LRA was accused of looting villages and abducting hundreds of children in the Central African Republic. (AP, September 23; Monitor, New Vision, UN News Service, September 21, 2008)