



**Peace & Justice Update**  
*October 10, 2008*  
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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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## SOURCE LIST

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

Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times ( <a href="http://www.nepalitimes.com">www.nepalitimes.com</a> )
New Vision	=	New Vision ( <a href="http://www.newvision.co.ug">www.newvision.co.ug</a> )
News24	=	News24 ( <a href="http://www.news24.com">www.news24.com</a> )
NYT	=	The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )
Prensa Latina	=	Prensa Latina ( <a href="http://www.plenglish.com">www.plenglish.com</a> )
Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre ( <a href="http://www.prensalibre.com">www.prensalibre.com</a> )
Resolve Uganda	=	Resolve Uganda ( <a href="http://www.resolveuganda.org">www.resolveuganda.org</a> )
Reuters	=	Reuters ( <a href="http://www.reuters.com">www.reuters.com</a> )
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières ( <a href="http://www.rsf.org">www.rsf.org</a> )
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance ( <a href="http://www.seapabkk.org">www.seapabkk.org</a> )
Sky News	=	Sky News ( <a href="http://news.sky.com/skynews">http://news.sky.com/skynews</a> )
ST	=	Sudan Tribune ( <a href="http://www.sudantribune.com">www.sudantribune.com</a> )
Star Online	=	The Star Online ( <a href="http://www.thestar.com.my">www.thestar.com.my</a> )
TSN	=	Tanzania Standard Newspapers ( <a href="http://dailynews.habarileo.co.tz">http://dailynews.habarileo.co.tz</a> )
Telegraph	=	Telegraph ( <a href="http://www.telegraph.co.uk">www.telegraph.co.uk</a> )
Times of India	=	Times of India ( <a href="http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com">http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com</a> )
UN News	=	UN News Center ( <a href="http://www.un.org/news">www.un.org/news</a> )
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization ( <a href="http://www.unesco.org">www.unesco.org</a> )
UNHCR	=	UN High Commissioner for Refugees ( <a href="http://www.unhcr.org">www.unhcr.org</a> )
UNICEF	=	UN Children’s Fund ( <a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> )
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women ( <a href="http://www.unifem.org">www.unifem.org</a> )
VOA	=	Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )
Web India	=	Web India ( <a href="http://www.webindia123.com">www.webindia123.com</a> )
Winnipeg Sun	=	Winnipeg Sun ( <a href="http://www.winnipegsun.com">www.winnipegsun.com</a> )
WP	=	The Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english">www.xinhuanet.com/english</a> )

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## **BANGLADESH**

Clashes laced with fear of ethnic cleansing. Violent clashes broke out October 3 between Bodo tribespeople of India and Muslim settlers from Bangladesh in India's northeast Assam state, Udalguri district. The violence has since spread to Assam's Darrang district. In recent days, 43 people have lost their lives and between 50,000 and 80,000 people have been displaced. Those displaced are taking refuge in the relief camps set up in the Udalguri and Darrang districts. To quell the violence, police have instituted a curfew and have orders to shoot into crowds. Police have already fired into rioting crowds and killed several people in two different riots. The ethnic groups have used bows and arrows, machetes, and guns and have set fire to villages. According to senior Indian government officials, the Indian police are on the "offensive" and are "mobilizing all resources to control the situation." The violent clashes reflect entrenched tensions between the tribespeople and the Bengali settlers in the area. India's Health Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, described the conflicts as having "extremist elements" which harken back to 1994's "ethnic cleansing of non-tribals." The *BBC* reports that the Bodo tribe has a long-standing dispute with Muslim settlers from Bangladesh, and has targeted them specifically for the past two months. The indigenous tribes describe the Bengali immigrants as "illegal infiltrators." However, the Muslim leaders of the Bengali immigrants claim that their group settled in the area prior to Bangladesh's existence in 1971. Furthermore, the Muslim leaders claim Indian citizenship. (*BBC*, October 5, 2008; *Times of India*, October 6, 2008)

Caretaker government amends election laws. The interim, military backed government, known as the Caretaker Government (CTG), has amended its newly instituted election laws. The CTG instituted a series of new election laws to establish free and fair elections December 18. Laws have been amended so that political parties can register for the December 18 elections using provisional party constitutions; according to the original law, parties had to "democratize" their constitutions in order to be eligible. New election laws also involve scrutiny of potential candidates. Prospective candidates must submit information on personal wealth, police records, and educational qualifications to the Election Committee (EC). The EC will then distribute pamphlets with the candidate's information to their respective constituencies. Withholding the personal information allows the EC to cancel a candidate's participation. While the CTG has passed many electoral reforms in hopes of ridding the country of corruption and restoring democracy, it is the same government that is being criticized for committing violations of human rights while in office. Human Rights Watch reports continuing concerns over torture and extrajudicial killings by the CTG. Allegations point to state security forces and the elite law enforcement agency, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). The CTG has denied allegations of the use of torture by the country's Directorate General Forces Intelligence. The CTG also denies that the RAB has committed extrajudicial killings. Human Rights Watch claims that RAB killings have increased and the government has yet to act or to hold any party responsible. Human Rights Watch asserts that it is crucial for the country to address these issues in order to become a working democracy. (*Daily Star*, October 7; *HRW*, October 6; *New Age*, October 7, 2008)

## **COLOMBIA**

Many implicated in drug trafficking scandal. According to Colombian authorities, narcotics traffickers acquired the maps of patrol routes of the Colombian and United States Navy and Coast Guard, allowing the traffickers to avoid possible interdiction at sea. The traffickers' patrol maps were discovered when Colombian authorities searched a narcotics ship in January 2006. According to the investigation, a ring of cocaine smugglers, who also used navigational charts in trafficking, had been selling the maps of patrol routes to drug organizations since 2002. The United States attorney

of Manhattan, Michael J. Garcia, said that the ring was able to ship thousands of kilograms of cocaine through the Caribbean Sea and Central America, funneling the drugs into the United States and other locations. Those responsible for the sale of the navigational charts are now facing prosecution in the United States. A former petty officer in the Colombian Navy, Otoniel Ricardo Cabarcas, is accused of selling charts and has been extradited to the U.S. on conspiracy charges. Two other men have also been extradited to the U.S. to face charges. According to prosecutors, one of the defendants sold uniforms to the Colombian Coast Guard and cultivated relationships with high ranking Colombian naval officers and was then able to access confidential information. The other defendant, a former Colombian naval officer, was the captain of the trafficking ship where the maps were found. According to the Washington Office on Latin America, there are numerous alleged ties between high Colombian officials and paramilitary groups: 39 members of the Colombian national legislature are under formal investigation, 29 are currently detained. These officials are being investigated for possible political and economic agreements with paramilitary death squads, money laundering, and conspiracies to commit crimes such as kidnapping, homicide and massacres. (NYT, October 4; WOLA, September 29, 2008)

FARC activity threatens Colombia's diplomatic relations with Ecuador. Colombia's announcement October 4 that Ecuador must pursue the Marxist guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, (FARC), in Ecuador's territory, further deepened the already strained diplomatic relations between the two countries. President Álvaro Uribe announced that the countries should establish "effective" cooperation and coordination with Ecuador to combat the FARC. According to Uribe, the FARC has established camps in Ecuador used for producing cocaine, holding hostages, and carrying out attacks. Colombia's call to action comes after Colombia raided the guerrilla camps within Ecuador's border in March 2008. The broken diplomatic relations and recent comments by Ecuador's president, Rafael Correa – Correa announced that his government would "never forget the aggressions of Colombia" – Uribe to cancel an October 14 trip to Ecuador for a regional diplomatic meeting. Though the FARC has long been an entrenched insurgency in Colombia, the Uribe presidency is largely seen as making progress in debilitating the group. Recent raids by the Colombian army, specifically, the disputed raid in Ecuador, have killed top FARC commanders. In February 2008, the Colombian army acquired a memory stick of the names, aliases, and some photos of approximately 9,000 FARC rebels. However, the FARC has still been able to carry out activities. As recently as August 2008, the FARC was the suspected group responsible for the bombing of a party in Ituango, Colombia in which seven people were killed and 52 were injured. Colombia has been combating the FARC since 1964. (Boston Globe, October 4, 2008; HRW, August 18, 2008; NYT, September 26, 2008)

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Comments from rebel leader warn of expanded conflict. Breaking months of silence, General Laurent Nkunda, leader of the National Congress for the Defense of People (CNDP), has threatened to not only continue his efforts to fight the government forces, but to potentially expand his operations to cover larger portions of the country. In an October 2 interview with the BBC and Radio France International, Nkunda stated that his rebel group was ready to "liberate the people of Congo," and he called on the people of the DRC to "stand up for their liberty." During the *BBC* interview, Nkunda declared that he was no longer interested in participating in the January 2008 Goma Accord, and he stated that he would be renaming his rebel group "The Movement for the Total Liberation of Congo." Although a spokesman for Nkunda later remarked that Nkunda's

comments were not meant to imply that the CNDP was ready to expand its operations outside of the North Kivu region, analysts familiar with the conflict have noted that the comments show a significant change of tone from Nkunda's previous statements. In the past, Nkunda had maintained that his desire to continue fighting was focused solely on protecting his fellow Tutsis from attacks by Hutu militias, most notably the Rwandan Liberation Democratic Forces (FDLR), in the eastern portion of the country. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) quickly condemned Nkunda's comments and released a statement declaring that "the international community will not tolerate this renewed attempt at destabilizing the peace process." When questioned about Nkunda's remarks, UN Special Envoy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo Alan Doss described the comments as "unacceptable," and warned that the recent rise in tensions in the North Kivu region have placed the country in "a potentially very dangerous" situation. The government in Kinshasa was also quick to react, with DR Congo Defense Minister Chikez Diemu calling Nkunda's statement "irresponsible." It is estimated that Nkunda's CNDP rebel force is currently comprised of approximately 4,000 guerrilla fighters, the majority of whom are centered in the North Kivu region. Despite a significant degree of concern regarding Nkunda's recent comments, analysts have noted that, while Nkunda's fighters have proven to be a difficult force to contain in the North Kivu region, he may not have the resources to expand his operations to cover a country equivalent in size to Western Europe. ([AFP](#), October 4; [BBC](#), October 2; [DPA](#), October 4; [MONUC](#), October 3; [Reuters](#), October 3, 2008)

New fighting breaks out in Ituri region. After a long period of relative calm, fighting has broken out in the Ituri region of northeastern DR Congo. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) reported that fighting began September 29 between militia groups and both the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and MONUC troops. The fighting started when rebels from the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front (FRPI) dislodged FARDC troops from their positions in Tchev, Bukiringi, and Kagaba, located just south of Bunia, the capital of Ituri province. According to MONUC military spokesman Jean-Paul Dietrich, a MONUC helicopter that was dispatched to the region to assess the situation in Tchev and Quinz became engaged in a firefight with rebel forces on the ground. The following day, FRPI rebels fired upon an armored convey of Bangladeshi peacekeeping troops who were on patrol south of Bunia. Four MONUC troops were reported injured in the clash. On October 2, MONUC helicopters patrolling the region near Kagaba were again fired upon by rebel groups. Witnesses on the ground claimed that there were civilian fatalities from the clashes, but none of those reports were independently confirmed. MONUC has stated that they believe the FRPI is responsible for all of the attacks. While the FARDC has refused to comment on the situation in Ituri, it has been reported that additional army troops have been dispatched to the region. Dietrich attributed the fresh round of fighting in the region to new recruits who have now merged with the remnants of the FRPI. MONUC estimates that the FRPI currently consists of around 2,000 fighters. The new fighting in the Ituri region comes at a time when the UN Special Envoy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Alan Doss, has admitted that MONUC has a "very small presence" in Orientale province and the Ituri region due to MONUC's current "preoccupations in the Kivus." Doss recently requested a "modest" surge in UN peacekeepers troops and air mobility assets for the MONUC force, but he admitted that, due to very few available resources, it is unlikely that the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will be able to provide any significant increase to the MONUC force in the short term. ([AFP](#), October 1, 3; [AP](#), October 2, 4; [IRIN](#), October 3; [UN News](#), October 3, 2008)

## **GUATEMALA**

The fight against insecurity continues. President Álvaro Colom, Vice President Rafael Espada, cabinet members, and representatives of the Chamber of the Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, and Finance Sectors (CACIF) met October 2 at the Presidential palace to address the security problems currently facing the nation. They proposed a strategy of increasing security by providing more police in certain regions, improving civil intelligence and calling for the community to engage in further participation. The following day, Colom urged the nation to be active in the fight against violence, insecurity and impunity. At a news conference, Colom stated his goals in tackling organized crime and its consequences, particularly drug trafficking and violence. The government asked Parliament for an increase of approximately one billion dollars for the Defense ministry budget in order to ensure more security in the country. On October 4 representatives of the Central American Integration System (SICA) met in Tegucigalpa, Honduras to discuss regional security and integration. The main issue was security in Central America and the potential establishment of a customs union across member nations. Guatemala continues its fight against insecurity, violence, and narcotics activity by holding meetings with different bodies and forming independent organizations including the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) which was established with the help of the United Nations in 2007. (Guatemala Times, October 3; Prensa Latina, October 3; Prensa Libre, October 2; Xinhua, October 4, 2008)

Mexico extradites Ex-President back to Guatemala. On October 7, former President Alfonso Portillo was extradited to Guatemala from Mexico. Portillo, president from 2000 to 2004, was charged with corruption and fraud and now faces trial in the Guatemalan courts. Guatemalan officials accuse Portillo of transferring over 15 million dollars in public funds, allocated to the Defense Ministry, to his own personal accounts or the accounts of those close to him. In 2006, Mexico ordered Portillo to be extradited back to Guatemala, but he challenged the case and took it to Mexico's Supreme Court, which gained him time while administrations changed. Portillo stated that the Oscar Berger administration, which succeeded him in 2004 had "pursued [him] in a savage and indiscriminate manner." Portillo has now stated that he is "coming here to confront the law," his reason for facing the charges in Guatemala. The former President said that he believes the new administration under Álvaro Colom will help him obtain justice as he is an innocent man and has trust in the courts. Rafael Espada, Guatemala's acting President while Colom is abroad, stated that he would support the legal process and not interfere with the Portillo case. Before being elected President, Portillo promised to redistribute wealth to the poor in Guatemala; he instead brought more corruption to the country. Portillo ran for President representing the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG) party, led by dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, who was responsible for many killings during Guatemala's long civil war. Montt has not yet stood trial for the genocide case against him. (AFP; AP; Guatemala Times; NYT; Reuters, October 7, 2008)

## **NEPAL**

Peace talks planned between government and Terai groups. Minister of Education Renu Yadav announced October 6 that the government of Nepal had formally invited representatives from the armed groups operating in southern Nepal's Terai region to participate in peace negotiations. The announcement came after a reported weeklong meeting in the Indian state of Bihar between representatives from 14 different armed groups operating in the Terai. Nepali news outlets reported that after the meeting the Terai groups informed the government of their intention to declare a ceasefire during the 10-day Dashain festival, held October 6-14, on the condition that the government show an interest in holding "meaningful" peace talks. Yadav is one of several

government ministers who have recently stated that it is the government's intention to solve the situation in the Terai region through negotiations. The government has put together a three-person negotiation team which includes Yadav, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Janardan Sharma, and Minister for Local Development Ram Chandra Jha. Sharma, who has been named the government's lead negotiator, is a member of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), which heads the governing coalition; Jha is a member of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML); and Yadav represents the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF). Nepali news outlets have reported that the 14 Terai groups came to a 15-point agreement during the meeting in Bihar that spells out the terms of a working alliance between the different groups titled the "Joint Armed Front." When questioned about the upcoming negotiations with the government, the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) leader and vice-coordinator of the newly created Joint Armed Front, Bibas Bidrohi, stated "if the government fosters an environment that is favorable and pledges to make the talks meaningful, we are ready to sit for such talks." The JTMM is one of the 14 armed groups that have been fighting a low-intensity insurgency in the country's Terai region. Media reports claim that dozens of people have been killed in the violence since 2006. The ethnic Madheshis living in the Terai region, who are culturally and linguistically closer to the Indians living to the south of them, have demanded greater regional autonomy and claim that the government discriminates against them in terms of representation in the parliament, judiciary, and other state institutions. ([Kantipur Online](#), October 5; [Nepal News](#), October 3; [Reuters](#), October 4; [Xinhua](#), September 3, 5, 6, 2008)

Debate continues regarding army integration. The delicate task of integrating members of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the Nepali Army continues to be one of the greatest challenges for ensuring a lasting peace in Nepal. Two clear sides have emerged in this debate, with the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), leaders of the governing coalition, favoring full integration en masse, while the Nepali Army (NA), as well as several political parties, have endorsed a slower approach based loosely on the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) model that has been used by UN peacekeeping operations internationally. NA leaders have expressed concern about trying to integrate the politically motivated Maoist fighters into an avowedly apolitical institution like the army. The NA generals have proposed bringing in an independent organization to determine the willingness of the fighters to join the army, citing examples from ten conflict-affected countries where efforts were made to integrate former combatants who had no interest in joining the national armed forces. NA chief General Rookmangud Katawal has proposed a plan that offers four different options for the Maoist fighters: 1) sending them for foreign employment; 2) sending them to school or college; 3) engaging them in "nation building" tasks; or 4) offering them employment in the Nepali Police, the Armed Police Force, or the NA. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his Cabinet have not publicly responded to Katawal's four-option plan. Several political parties, including the main opposition, Nepali Congress, as well as the CPN-M's coalition partners, the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum, have all suggested considering other alternatives for the Maoist soldiers. Specifically, the Nepali Congress has suggested that the Maoist fighters be trained for border guard or industrial security force positions. While Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa has not endorsed these suggestions, he has noted that he would like to see the NA involved in economic development and infrastructure projects throughout the country. The NA has previously been involved with building roads and bridges, as well as running mobile health clinics and providing humanitarian support for victims of the recent floods and landslides. Despite all of the different proposals that are currently on the table, there are several conflicting reports as to how much progress is actually being made. Government officials maintain that they are

on track to meet the integration goal within six months, as outlined in the August 2008 Common Minimum Program (CMP) agreement, but senior military officials claim that they have not been contacted by the government regarding the integration issue. Under the terms of the 2006 UN peace deal, there are currently 19,000 Maoist fighters currently residing in UN-supervised camps. (Kantipur Online, October 4; Nepal News, September 30, October 1; Reuters, September 10, 2008)

## **PERU**

Protestors denounce government corruption following oil contract scandal. Thousands of workers, teachers, builders, and doctors marched on Congress October 7 to call for the cabinet to step down, following the government corruption scandal October 5. A TV station broadcasted a tape of a top state oil official and a lobbyist allegedly discussing payments to help an oil company win a round of auctions for oil concessions. The taped conversation was said to be between Alberto Quimper, an executive with the state oil agency, Perupetro, and a well-known lobbyist, Rómulo León. The company Discover Petroleum of Norway is said to have made payments to León but denied paying any bribes. Juan Valdivia, Peru's Energy and Mines Minister, resigned following the scandal, denying any wrongdoing but assuming political responsibility. President Alan García's approval ratings have fallen to 19 percent, according to polling firm Ipsos Apoyo, corruption being cited as one of the voters' top ten complaints about him. Members of Peru's largest labor confederation, Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (CGTP), are demanding García change the cabinet and his free-market economic model, which many claim is the reason for persistent poverty in Peru despite marked economic growth. The protests were said to have been planned weeks prior to the corruption scandal to express people's fears of the spread of the international financial crisis. Ollanta Humala, the leader of the Peruvian Nationalist Party who nearly beat García in the 2006 election and is hoping to win in 2011, called on the president to fire his entire cabinet. Peru's energy sector has made a recent push to attract billions of dollars in foreign investment in Peru's large mining industry and fast-growing oil and gas sectors. (BBC, October 7, 8; Reuters, October 7, 2008)

Group of child workers advocates for fair conditions. A group of children is demanding the right to lawful employment, claiming that even if child labor is condemned as a human rights abuse, so long as poverty persists, child labor will also. The Manthoc Child and Adolescent Workers' Association works to promote the rights of children and increase quality of life for workers under the legal working age in Peru. Currently, Peruvian legislation allows for the employment of children at the age of 14, sometimes 12. However, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that 22.3 percent of children ages 6-14 are working as child laborers in Peru's agriculture, manufacturing and other service sectors. Manthoc is made up of members between the ages of six and 18 who have come together on their own initiative to work towards a solution to the problem of child labor exploitation through "establishing and enforcing steady and dignified working conditions and ensuring that children are valued, protected and respected for the labor that they perform." Samuel Calderón, a child who has worked at a warehouse in his home since he was six and is now a Manthoc delegate, says Manthoc is distinguished from other organizations in its ability to not only look at the negative aspects of child labor – exploitation and abuse – but also the positive: a way to learn and develop new skills. The Manthoc youth offer training and assistance to other children who are victims of exploitation in order to empower children and give them control over their future. The organization's 3,500 children work in small workshops in "dignified" conditions, where they receive food, help with schoolwork, psychological support and professional training. Fabiola Segura, Manthoc's national delegate, said it was regrettable that "politicians make laws that in principle are to

help children but in the end don't benefit them at all, and that's why we would want to express our opinion." ([IANS](#), October 6; [UNHCR](#) August 27, 2008)

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

Tutu, among others, welcomes opposition party. After the ruling African National Congress (ANC) ousted former President Thabo Mbeki September 20, internal divisions within the ANC have caused many to rethink their support, including Desmond Tutu. Tutu, the Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town and Nobel Peace laureate known for his leadership in the anti-apartheid struggle, expressed his deep disappointment in the ANC, which holds the majority of seats in parliament. Tutu stated that he would support a new opposition party. "Democracy flourishes where there is vigorous debate and people are actually careful of what they do," Tutu declared. He argued that more competitive politics would raise credibility, and that the current division in the ANC could lead to more tension as people increasingly tend to pick sides, supporting either the leftist Zuma or loyalist Mbeki allies; "We could easily find ourselves in a situation where we have a series of mini-coups." The ANC displeased many following Mbeki's forced exit, which has caused an even greater split within the party, raising concerns regarding the new direction of the country. However, the new president, Kgalema Motlanthe, stated he did not think the ANC would split, and if there was a split, "it won't threaten the party's political dominance." Others disagree, citing a potential alliance among opposition parties including the main opposition, the Democratic Alliance as well as the Inkatha Freedom Party and Democratic Movement among others. The former Archbishop reiterated the importance of an opposition party and said that the only way he would vote would be if "there are attempts at healing rifts and people are not into the business of rubbing people's noses in the dust." ([AFP](#), October 5; [BBC](#), October 6; [Bloomberg](#), October 3; October 6; [New Vision](#), October 3; [Telegraph](#), October 7, 2008)

Motlanthe appoints cabinet members including new Health Minister. Shortly after South Africa's new interim President, Kgalema Motlanthe, was sworn into office, he quickly made appointments to the rest of his cabinet. Motlanthe has been praised for attempting to appoint ministers who would continue the policies of the previous administration while at the same time improve their posts. Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president since the end of apartheid, described him as "one who seeks to unite rather than divide." The new President kept some of Mbeki's cabinet members including Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel. Trevor Manuel had stepped down after Mbeki's resignation but was later reappointed to his position by Motlanthe. His acceptance was another indication that the current economic policies would not change, and business leaders acclaimed his reappointment after the economy took a dip during the political transition. While some of the ministers remained, others were replaced, including Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang. Tshabalala-Msimang, also known as "Dr. Beetroot" because of her promotion of the use of beetroot, potatoes and other vegetables to treat AIDS, was replaced by Barbara Hogan and was moved to a new post, minister of the Presidency. Tshabalala-Msimang has been sharply criticized for her inability to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic as well as her statements describing anti-retroviral drugs as toxic. Barbara Hogan, in contrast, has stated that her current goals are to tackle both tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, in addition to improving health care overall. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), one of South Africa's leading AIDS lobby groups, viewed the change as extremely positive and described Hogan as "hard-working, competent, and principled." South Africa is the country with the greatest number of people with HIV/AIDS, amounting to more than five million people and 11 percent of the entire population. ([AFP](#), September 26; [BBC](#), October 6; [Bloomberg](#), October 2; [IOL](#), October 5; [Media Club](#), September 26, 2008)

## UGANDA

Karamojong warriors kill three during cattle raid. The Jie and Dodoth warriors, two traditional ethnic tribes in the Karamoja region, killed three people in Kaabong district during an inter-ethnic cattle raid September 29. The clash began at 2:20 a.m. when the Jie warriors attacked the Dodoth warriors and stole 85 head of cattle. The raid resulted in the death of a schoolgirl who attended Lokonayon Primary School and a man who was present at the scene of the clash; a third victim died on the way to the hospital. According to Ezekiel Lolem, a local council (LC) leader at Kaabong, “This is the fourth time the Jie are raiding us in less than two months.” The Kaabong LC chairman, Sam Lokeris, after confirming the incident “revealed the Jie warriors made another attempt to raid cattle at Kaabong Sub-county but they were repulsed by a combined force of Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) and Police.” In addition to the region’s security concern, Keith McKenzie, head of United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Uganda, said the “health indicators [in Karamoja] are the worst in the country, decidedly worse than in the LRA-affected [rebel Lord’s Resistance Army] northern districts.” It is reported that up to 100 children below the age of five die each week, many from preventable diseases. The UN health officials have attributed this to extremely low access to basic health services, which averages 24 percent in Karamoja compared to the national rate of 72 percent. Although cattle raids among the Karamojong have resulted in significant loss of life, women and children had not been targeted until recently. The increase in small arms, acquired through Uganda’s civil wars and through the markets in neighboring southern Sudan and Somalia, has expanded the violence of the raids to groups such as women and children. (IRIN; Monitor; Resolve Uganda, October 2, 2008)

LRA claims food will not bring peace as the ICC calls for the rebel’s arrest. Following September 17 abductions in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) the Minister for Disaster preparedness, Tarsis Kabwegyere, requested aid agencies stop supplying the rebels with food in order to urge them to sign the final peace agreement (FPA). The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) responded by claiming that the LRA will be able to feed themselves, without aid, for years to come. When asked in an interview how the LRA had been surviving in DRC, Fr. Benoit Kinalegu, the President of the Dungu Catholic Diocese Justice and Peace Commission in the DRC, responded by saying, “That question is really hard to answer because our communities do not have direct contact with the LRA. But I think they produce their own food, because when they pillage the villages, they often take farming equipment and seeds. I think they might also be poaching elephants and rhinos, because since the LRA came, we haven’t seen as many.” In light of the recent attacks in DRC by the LRA the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno-Ocampo, called for renewed efforts to arrest Joseph Kony and his high level commanders. The ICC also added that Kony was using these talks just as he had in the past, “to gain time to re-arm and attack again.” The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Gulu in northern Uganda, John Baptist Odama, believes that it has been the pressure of the ICC that has created a fear among the rebels and has hindered their commitment to the signing of the FPA. Debate over the ICC as a positive or negative force in bringing peace to Uganda has been renewed as the rebels are building up their base within the DRC, shifting the focus away from the LRA as a Ugandan problem and into a regional problem. (AP, October 6; IRIN, October 7; Monitor October 3; Resolve Uganda, October 2, 2008)