



Peace & Justice Update
October 17, 2008
(Volume 20, Number 3)

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 (www.andina.com.pe)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
APN	=	Asia-Pacific News (www.apn.bttravel.com)
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)
CENS	=	China Economic News Service (www.cens.com)
CFR	=	Council on Foreign Relations (www.cfr.org)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
CNN	=	CNN (www.cnn.com)
Colombia Reports	=	Colombia Reports (www.colombiareports.com)
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)
DPA	=	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (www.dpa.de/index.html)
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)
Holiday	=	The Holiday (www.weeklyholiday.net)
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)
IOL	=	IOL South Africa News (www.iol.co.za)
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 Club	=	Media Club (www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com)

Media for Freedom	=	Media for Freedom (www.mediaforfreedom.com)
Monitor	=	Monitor Online (www.monitor.co.ug)
MONUC	=	MONUC (www.monuc.org)
Nepal Monitor	=	Nepal Monitor (www.nepalmonitor.com)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Age Daily	=	The New Age Daily (www.newagebd.com)
New Nation	=	The New Nation (http://nation.ittefaq.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)
SA Terrorism Portal	=	South Asian Terrorism Portal (www.satp.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
Sky News	=	Sky News (http://news.sky.com/skynews)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
Star Online	=	The Star Online (www.thestar.com.my)
TSN	=	Tanzania Standard Newspapers (http://dailynews.habarileo.co.tz)
Telegraph	=	Telegraph (www.telegraph.co.uk)
Times of India	=	Times of India (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
UN News	=	UN News Center (www.un.org/news)
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

Major parties reactivate. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led a countrywide protest October 12 and the Awami League (AL) has scheduled protest rallies for October 19. The party-led protests are the first since imposition of emergency rule in January 2007. The BNP led a four-party alliance demonstration throughout the country to advocate ending the emergency rule; dropping the corruption cases against party leader and former Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia; withdrawing amendments to election laws; and rescheduling the date of upazila, or local government, polls. Following the BNP protests, the AL announced their rallies for October 19 to address these issues: the permanent and unconditional release of party president, Sheikh Hasina, also a former prime minister; and the lifting of the state emergency law prior to the December 18 elections. Meanwhile, the Caretaker Government (CTG) is scheduled for a long-awaited election dialogue with the BNP and political party ally, Jamaat-e-Islami October 14. BNP leader Khaleda Zia was invited to the talks, but will not chair for her party. The talks are supposed to address the BNP demands made in their protest rally October 12. The CTG has held negotiations with political parties since May 22 in order to “bridge the gap created by the anti-corruption drive targeting mainly the political leaders.” Though the AL and BNP initially rejected negotiations, both have made steps to open dialogue with CTG, as it is seen as crucial to talk with both major parties in order for elections to proceed smoothly. However, CTG dialogues with the AL ended in a stalemate with both sides agreeing to reconvene to discuss political and constitutional issues. This meeting is expected to be held soon. Bangladesh came under military-backed rule in January 2007 due to violent and corrupt elections. (Daily Star, October 14; New Age, October 14, 2008)

Groups in Bangladesh clash; Violence continues in Assam. Fighting between activist groups at Jagannath University left 12 injured October 13. The Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of the Awami League, was accused of trying to impede on a demonstration by the group Islami Chhatra Shibir, an Islamic fundamentalist group. According to reports, the BCL threw bricks at Shibir men and the Shibir fought back. Police were called in to control the situation; no one was arrested. BCL accuses Shibir of being a militant organization and according to Jagannath University BCL president, Quamrul Hasan Ripon, “will not be tolerated on the campus.”

New light has been shed on the violence in India’s northeast Assam state between tribespeople and Muslims. 53 people died in the fighting and 150,000 were displaced in the clashes on October 3 through 7. The cause of the attacks is disputed. According to some press accounts, the attacks were caused by anti-Muslim immigrant sentiment directed at Muslim immigrants who cross Assam’s border from Bangladesh. An expert on the region, Sanjoy Hazarika, says that the shared border of Assam and Bangladesh is overcrowded and migrants from Bangladesh cross the border to find jobs. According to Hazarika, there could be as many as 2 million Bangladeshi migrants. The tensions between the tribespeople and the Muslim settlers are longstanding. In an agreement signed in 1985, the Assam Accord, the Indian government pledged to deport migrants who had crossed the border since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. The Indian government does not actively pursue this pledge because of a lack of resources and the political advantages of having more voting power from the Assam district. However, the recent violence shows that the main targets of the violence were not Bangladeshi migrants but Indian Muslims located in Assam before Bangladesh’s independence in 1971. The Bodo tribe, the largest tribe of Assam, seems to resent any outsiders in their tribal homeland and is not concerned with distinguishing the Indian Muslims from the Bangladeshi migrant Muslims. The clashes seem to have both expressed and fed local animosities, as local media reported that a local justice described illegal Bangladeshis as a “cancerous growth.” (Economist, October 11; Holiday, October 10; New Nation, October 14, 2008, SATP, 2001; UNHCR, April 16, 2002).

COLOMBIA

Judicial strike threatened security. A strike of judicial workers that has “paralyzed” the nation’s judicial system may be coming to end. As of October 16, members of the union, Asonal, which represents court workers, have agreed to the terms proposed by the government. However, the Bogotá chapter of Asonal has not yet accepted the government’s proposal, nor have they agreed to end the strike. According to a government communiqué October 10, the strike posed major threats to societal stability as it “infringes institutional stability, estate security, and citizen coexistence.” President Álvaro Uribe declared a state of emergency October 10, giving the government leverage to break the 42 plus day strike of approximately 90 percent of the 40,000 court workers. Workers are striking for higher pay and better working conditions; Uribe’s state of emergency decree allowed those on strike to be fired. In an effort to restore the judicial system, the government and Asonal reached a preliminary agreement October 13 in which the government conceded an extra \$150 billion pesos (U.S. \$75 millions) to increase wages. In the time in which judicial workers, including court workers, prosecutors, and judges, have been on strike, police reported that 2,700 people charged with crimes such as homicide, robbery, and drug trafficking were released due the effects of the strikes because the legal time for charges to be pressed expired. Furthermore, courts have not been able to rule on 120,000 trials and have not held 25,000 hearings because of the strike. (Colombia Reports, October 9, 12, 14, 16; CNN.com, October 7; Presnsa Latina, October 10, 2008).

U.S. and Colombia continue coordinated efforts in combating drug trafficking and related activities. Two Colombian right-wing paramilitary warlords were sentenced October 9 to decades in a U.S. federal prison after pleading guilty to a widespread cocaine smuggling conspiracy. These two are the first of 14 warlords extradited to the U.S. in May 2008 for sentencing. The charges against the men were focused on a cocaine smuggling ring that shipped approximately 20 tons of cocaine into the U.S. from December 1997 to November 1999. The U.S. charges against the men did not mention violence. The men were leaders of the Colombian right-wing paramilitary group, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). The AUC has been a major player in Colombia’s civil conflict for the past two decades. Financed primarily through cocaine production, the AUC has become one the country’s largest and most powerful drug trafficking organizations. The AUC has committed many atrocities including massacres and kidnappings. One of the leaders of AUC recently sentenced in the U.S. was also an ally of the notorious drug lord of the 1980s, Pablo Escobar. The recent extraditions of the AUC warlords represent progress for the Colombian government in debilitating paramilitaries. According to President Álvaro Uribe, the 14 warlords extradited to the U.S. in May were part of a top-secret operation in which the defendants were extradited because they were still able to conduct criminal operations from inside Colombian prisons. Since 2003, Colombia has embarked on intense efforts to combat insurgency groups. More 30,000 paramilitary fighters have demobilized as part of a peace effort. (Washington Post, October 9, 2008).

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Tensions on the rise between the DRC and Rwanda. DRC officials have accused neighboring Rwanda of sending troops onto Congolese soil to aid the efforts of rebel leader General Laurent Nkunda and his National Congress for the People’s Defense (CNDP). The accusations stem from an October 8 incident in which CNDP rebels overran troops from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and seized a military base at Rumangabo, located 40 kilometers north of Goma in North Kivu province. The FARDC claims that the CNDP does not have the resources to overtake Rumangabo, and that it could only do so with outside assistance

from the Rwandan Army. According to the UN, dozens of FARDC troops were killed and wounded in the fighting, and thousands of civilians were forced to flee the conflict zone. During a meeting at the UN, DRC representatives provided 34 photos which the government cites as proof of the Rwandan incursion. The government of Rwanda has called the charges “ridiculous,” and it claims the DRC is making the accusation in response to a Rwandan letter that cites reports of collusion between the FARDC and a Hutu militia known as the Rwandan Liberation Democratic Forces (FDLR). The UN is still trying to verify the Congolese accusation, but Alan Doss, head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), admitted that it would be a difficult task. Doss cited the porous border between the two countries, the geographically rugged terrain in the area, and the fact that Nkunda’s CNDP rebels wear Rwandan uniforms and speak Kinyarwanda, a language spoken on both sides of the border, as major challenges to verifying the claims. Humanitarian groups operating in the eastern DRC have frequently documented strong linkages between Rwanda and the CNDP rebels, but they have reported no new evidence of the presence of Rwandan troops in the DRC. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently expressed “increasing concern” over the situation and called on “all states in the region to prevent their territories and nationals from being used to aid armed groups in the eastern DRC.” ([AFP](#), October 8; [MONUC](#), Oct 10, 13; [Reuters](#), October 10, 11, 2008)

Violence continues in the Ituri region. Troops from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) have been engaged in ongoing battles against the Popular Front for Justice in Congo (FPJC) on the outskirts of Bunia. The town of Bunia is the capital of Ituri province and a major base for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) peacekeeping forces operating in the region. Captain Charles Boyeka, a spokesman for the FARDC, reported that 13 rebel fighters and two army soldiers have been killed in recent clashes in Kagaba and Bukiringi, both located on the outskirts of Bunia. The BBC and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have reported that shops and schools have been closed in Bunia and thousands have fled as the fighting moved to within 10 kilometers of the town. There is serious concern for the well-being of civilians in the neighboring town of Bogoro, as OCHA and aid groups have been cut off from accessing the area. When queried about the situation, Jean-Charles Dupin, the head of OCHA in Orientale Province, stated: “as long as there is still fighting, (and) as long as the militia are still along the roads, no one will set foot [in Bogoro].” Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a German nongovernmental organization operating in the region, reported that it has been forced to stop distributing supplies to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and cannot reach an estimated 3,000 people in Bogoro. The Ituri region was the site of nearly 10 years of intense fighting, but was relatively calm throughout 2007 and most of 2008. The FPJC is considered a new rebel group, and it is comprised largely of soldiers who previously fought with the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front (FRPI). In early October, the government in Kinshasa announced that it would be sending additional FARDC troops to the region in an effort to quell the recent upsurge in violence. ([BBC](#), October 11; [IRIN](#), October 8, 10, 2008)

GUATEMALA

Agreement signifies the strengthening of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. President Álvaro Colom made a five-day visit to Taiwan during the week of October 6 and signed a joint communiqué with the Taiwanese government. Colom traveled to Taipei October 7 to attend the Republic of China Double Ten National Day celebrations, which commemorate the Wuchang uprising of 1911 that led to the establishment of the Republic of China. Before his departure, Colom met with Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou to discuss continued cooperation between the two nations. The

communiqué, signed October 11, pledged to strengthen diplomatic ties and boost Taiwanese investments in essential areas of Guatemala. The agreement will allow for the second stage of work to occur on a major highway aimed to improve transportation, trade and tourism in Guatemala. President Ma further said that his country would help increase security by improving the penitentiary system in Guatemala. This includes the construction of a prison and the creation of a fingerprint identification system. The two men stressed the importance of cooperation in many fields including the improvement of life in rural areas through the implementation of the Guatemala Rural Development Plan, designed to promote food safety, housing construction, elimination of poverty, women's vocational training, and health care. According to *Asia-Pacific News*, the leaders also discussed the importance of Mayan culture and its preservation as a responsibility of both Guatemala and the international community. Colom addressed Guatemala's challenge of poverty and called for the bilateral trade agreement signed in 2006 with Taiwan to be optimized in order to boost investment in the country to create jobs and wealth. Guatemala has been a diplomatic ally of Taiwan for the last seven decades, enjoying friendly ties with the country. (APN, October 11; CENS, October 14; Guatemala Times, October 13, 2008).

National police begin upgrading under Blanco.

The recently appointed chief of the National Civil Police (PNC), Marlene Blanco has stated that her primary objective is to reform the police system and bring credibility to the institution so that citizens can trust the police. To this end, Blanco has started a telephone hotline for citizens to use to report crimes and corruption by police officers and other government officials. Blanco hopes that the denunciations will help to weed out corrupt members of the PNC. The phone lines are expected to be operational within the next few weeks, and Blanco stated that she will personally answer and attend to certain calls based on the need. She has already begun to eliminate corrupt police officials and has called for well-trained and honest police. The sub-chief of the National Police, Rembert Larios, has stated that some members of the police have already begun to report cases of corruption within their ranks. The National Civil Police (PNC) was created in 1997 to replace the National Police and restructure the law enforcement of the country. The National Police was dissolved due to corruption and involvement in numerous human rights crimes during the 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. (Guatemala Times, October 8, 2008).

NEPAL

Violence highlights uncertainty surrounding Terai peace talks. Three people were killed and several injured in a bomb blast October 14 in the town of Chandranigahapur, located approximately 70 kilometers south of Kathmandu in the Terai region of southern Nepal. The blast occurred on the final day of the two-week Dashain festival, during which time several Terai armed groups had declared a ceasefire. Witnesses reported that the bomb was planted in a fruit stand next to a bus station. Protests erupted in the area following the blast as local residents blamed government officials for a lack of security in the region. There were reports of several shops being vandalized in the Chandranigahapur market, and the protestors built a roadblock which temporarily halted vehicle traffic on the east-west Mahendra Highway. Police were forced to use rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the group. Two armed groups known to operate in the region – Terai Sena and Terai Army – have claimed responsibility for the bombing, although no arrests have been made. The Chandranigahapur bombing comes after a shooting incident October 13 in Arnama in Siraha district, situated 150 kilometers southeast of Kathmandu, in which one man was killed. In a separate incident, two people were shot and killed October 15 near the Taulihawa bazaar in Kapilvastu district, located approximately 260 kilometers southwest of Kathmandu. These three events come at

a critical point in relations between the government and the armed groups operating in the Terai. It was announced October 6 that the government had formally invited representatives from the armed groups to participate in peace negotiations. This announcement followed a joint statement from representatives of the 14 different armed groups operating in the Terai that stated their interest in participating in negotiations. Prior to the recent incidents, senior government officials had stated that peace negotiations would likely begin “in the next few weeks.” It is unclear at this point whether the recent events will have any effect on the planned talks. The Terai is a fertile agricultural region located along Nepal’s southern border with India. It encompasses nearly 17 percent of the country, and the Madhesi people who live in the area make up about 30 percent of the country’s population. The armed groups operating in the Terai 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. ([AFP](#), October 14; [BBC](#), October 14; [Himalayan Times](#), October 14; [IRIN](#), October 14; [Kantipur](#), October 14, 15; [Nepal News](#), October 13, 14, 15, 16; [Reuters](#), Oct 14, 2008)

Nepali Congress rejects Maoists call to join unity government. Despite a potential warming of relations between the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) and the Nepali Congress (NC), it remains highly unlikely that the parties will govern together in the same coalition. Current Prime Minister and CPN-M Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal met with his counterpart, NC President and former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, October 14 at the annual NC tea reception. During his comments to journalists, Dahal, whose nom-de-guerre is Prachanda, took a conciliatory line towards his opponent, stating “though there was some bitterness between us in the past, I take this tea party as an important event and an opportunity for reconciliation and improvement in our relations.” Dahal also expressed hope that the NC will join the government in the future. At the reception, Koirala extended a warm welcome to his political opponent and pledged to extend “full cooperation” to work with Dahal. However, when questioned by reporters the following day, Koirala maintained his previous position that the NC had no intention of joining in a coalition with the CPN-M. In comments made October 15, Koirala remarked: “the NC will cooperate with the government from the opposition benches... [but] one thing is clear, the NC is not in favor of joining the government.” The comments from Dahal and Koirala come at a time when the two parties are divided on several major issues, most notably the integration of former Maoist fighters into the Nepali Army (NA) and the writing of the new constitution. NC leaders have stated that they would “launch a strong struggle” if the former Maoist fighters are integrated en masse into the NA. On the constitution issue, Koirala and the NC have been critical of the CPN-M for not acting quickly enough towards drafting the document. Dahal recently stated that drafting the constitution is currently the top priority of his government. The CPN-M is the largest party in the Constituent Assembly (CA), controlling 220 of the 601 seats (38 percent); the NC is the second largest party in the CA and controls 109 seats (19 percent). ([Himalayan Times](#), October 14; [Kantipur](#), October 13, 14, 15, 16; [Nepal News](#), October 13, 14, 2008)

PERU

The Shining Path launches an ambush killing 14. Twelve soldiers and two civilians were killed October 9 in a bomb attack by Shining Path rebels in the Andean mountains about 250 kilometers southeast of Lima. A military convoy of four trucks was returning to base when a device hidden underneath one of the vehicles exploded. The soldiers “reacted immediately which produced an engagement that lasted several hours,” the Armed Forces Joint Command said in a statement. The attack was a response to the Peruvian army’s offensive to uproot the Shining Path from the isolated

jungle in the Ene-Apurimac valley. The region is home to dense cultivations of coca, the raw material used for cocaine, and a haven for traffickers and guerrillas. The proceeds from protecting the drug trade have allowed the rebels to rearm; once 10,000 strong in the early 1990s, the Shining Path is now said to number only 300 to 600. The offensive, launched in August, is spearheaded by 1,200 government troops, who called the recent incident the worst attack in the past decade by the Maoist-inspired organization. “This regrettable act shows that ... the Shining Path continues to spill the blood of defenseless people, including women and children, violating the human rights of the population and members of the armed forces,” the military reported. Carlos Tapia, an expert on the Shining Path, told the [Associated Press](#) that Thursday’s ambush does not necessarily indicate the group is resurgent. The Shining Path terrorized Peru in the 1980s and early 90s, in a war that killed nearly 70,000 people. President Alberto Fujimori’s 1992 arrest of the group’s leader, Abimael Guzmán marked a turning point in government efforts to quell the insurgency. In 2006, Guzmán was sentenced to life in prison in a retrial for terrorism, murder, and other crimes. Fujimori’s rule ended in scandal in 2000, and he is currently on trial for human rights violations. ([AFP](#); [AP](#); [BBC](#); [Telegraph](#), October 11, 2008)

New Prime Minister appointed following resignation of entire cabinet. On October 9, Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo offered the resignation of Peru’s entire cabinet – after being mentioned in a taped conversation as someone who would provide favors in a plan to rig auctions in oil and gas concessions – and President Alan García accepted. García ordered an investigation to purge the government of corruption following the outbreak of the scandal, first reported October 5. A TV station broadcast a tape of an executive with the state oil company, Perupetro, and a prominent lobbyist who were allegedly discussing payments to help the Norwegian company, Discover Petroleum, win contracts. Juan Valdivia, Peru’s Energy Minister, stepped down that same day accepting political responsibility but denying any part in the scandal. Protestors took to the streets October 7 demanding the government to step down, denouncing corruption, and expressing their fears of the spread of the international financial crisis. Following the resignation of the entire cabinet, García appointed Yehude Simon, a leftist regional governor, as his new Prime Minister. García’s choice of Simon has come as a shock to many. Simon served eight years in jail on suspicions that he belonged to the Tupac Amaru revolutionary movement which, along with the leftist rebels of the Shining Path, was active in the 1980s and 1990s. Simon, who served as a lawmaker for the United Left party from 1985 to 1990 during García’s first administration, was pardoned in 2000 and elected governor of Lambayeque province in 2003. Simon was quoted in Peruvian radio as saying “I want to build a great alliance, friendship between sectors of the left and the government.” García is mid-way through his second five-year term in office, which ends in 2011. He first served as president in 1985-1990. With his approval rating steadily decreasing, mostly because of rising inflation, García must work to rebuild his administration while simultaneously preparing for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, to be hosted by Peru in November. ([AFP](#); [AP](#), October 12; [BBC](#), October 10, 11; [Reuters](#), October 11, 2008)

SOUTH AFRICA

ANC members move to form new opposition party. Mosiuoa Lekota, the former South African defense minister and ruling African National Congress (ANC) national chairman, has been threatening to break away from the ANC and form an opposition party along with other disgruntled ANC members. Lekota, who resigned subsequent to former President Thabo Mbeki’s ouster, stated that he was unhappy with the new leadership of the ANC under Jacob Zuma and claimed that hundreds of party members felt the same way. “The ANC is not the name ANC, it is its policies, it is

its balance, it is its political practice, it is its commitment to the future of democracy in this country,” he said. The dissatisfaction with the new ANC leadership arose prior to Mbeki leaving office, but that event prompted the idea of forming a breakaway party. According to *Bloomberg*, the ANC has said that members cannot defy party decisions and have the right to form a rival party if they are unhappy with the direction its leadership is taking. As the ANC is on the verge of splitting, other members are joining Lekota in his goal of starting an opposition party. Former defense minister Mluleki George has joined Lekota and is optimistic about the future of a new party. Other influential ministers and political figures including Mbhazima Shilowa are joining as well. Shilowa, the former premier of the wealthy Gauteng province where Johannesburg and Pretoria are located, resigned October 15 from the ANC. Lekota is expected to hold a national conference November 2 to determine whether there is enough support to form a new party. The ANC, founded in 1912, is Africa’s oldest liberation movement and has been a unified party ever since. (*AP*, October 8; *Bloomberg*, October 3, 8, 13; *NYT*, October 16; *Reuters*, October 10; *Telegraph*, October 8; *Time*, October 3, 2008).

Zimbabwe calls on Mbeki for continued mediation. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki has been called to again help mediate negotiations in Zimbabwe. Mbeki has played an active role in brokering the power-sharing deal between President Robert Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Mbeki’s role in the negotiations resulted in the formation of a joint coalition of the ruling Zanu-PF party and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), whereby Mugabe would remain president and Tsvangirai would become the Prime Minister. The agreement would give Mugabe control over 15 ministries and Tsvangirai control over 13, while the remaining three would go to the other MDC faction leader, Arthur Mutambara. Tensions arose again when Mugabe allocated control of the major ministries to his Zanu-PF party including defense, home affairs, foreign affairs and finance. The military, which considers the opposition a major enemy, and the police, known for impunity, are two of the groups controlled by Mugabe. According to *Sky News*, this move by Mugabe was deeply troublesome to the MDC, which accused Mugabe of “acting unilaterally.” The MDC also claimed that the move “jeopardized the agreement to govern jointly that was struck last month.” Mbeki flew to Zimbabwe’s capital, Harare, on Monday in order to save the power-sharing deal from being abandoned after Mugabe’s “act of bad faith,” as the opposition called it. Mbeki’s spokesman, Mukoni Ratshitanga, stated that all factions urged for his intervention. The leaders met October 10 and agreed there was need for outside help. “There is now consensus that there is indeed a deadlock so the intervention of the mediator becomes both imperative and inevitable,” said MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa. Mbeki has been the primary mediator between the two parties since disputes broke out following March elections in which Tsvangirai obtained the most votes and the MDC outnumbered the Zanu-PF party’s seats in Parliament for the first time since Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. (*AP*, October 13; *BBC*, October 14; *Bloomberg*, October 9; *NYT*, October 15; *Sky News*, October 11; *Xinhua*, October 8, 2008).

UGANDA

Third senior politician confirms interest in running for presidency in 2011. While attending the 54th anniversary for the Democratic Party (DP) in Jinja October 8, Gulu Local Council Chairperson Norbert Mao confirmed he would run for president in 2011 if selected by the DP. Mao is the third senior politician to declare his interest in running for the presidency, following current President Yoweri Museveni and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) leader Kizza Besigye. While speaking at the celebration, Mao said that the “time had come for the country to be relieved of old leaders born before independence because they are no longer able to manage the affairs of the country.” DP

President General John Ssebaana Kizito followed Mao's remarks claiming, "in DP we maintain democracy, we believe in change of leadership therefore I am stepping aside for Mr. Mao to head the party and contest for presidency on the DP ticket in the oncoming elections." Former FDC presidential envoy Beti Olive Kanya, Kampala central MP Elias Lukwago, and the former DP Secretary General Lulume Bayiga were also present at the celebration. Kanya said she was at the function as a friend of DP, having been invited by Ssebaana, and was welcomed by the crowd shouting, "You are welcome back," and "come back to us." Kanya praised the high level of democracy of the DP at the celebration. The DP was formed prior to Uganda's independence and was rooted in the religious and economic demographics that began to model politics in Uganda at that time, specifically those of the Buganda Kingdom. Paul Ssemogerere was the party's leader for 25 years until his retirement in November 2005. The party produced Uganda's first prime minister, Benedicto Kiwanuka, in 1961. (Monitor, October 14, 2008)

Ugandan community bans female circumcision. The Sabiny, a people in eastern Uganda – the only group that continues to practice female genital mutilation (FGM) within the country – decided to ban the deeply rooted practice on the grounds that it was "outmoded" and "not useful," reported Kapchorwa district chairman Nelson Chelimo. Historically, the people in Kapchorwa believed that the practice of FGM - which involves cutting off a young girl's clitoris - was a way to ensure virginity and make women marriageable, with the belief that women who marry without circumcision would be stricken by illness. According to Chelimo, "the community decided that it was not useful, that women were not getting anything out of it, so the district council decided to establish an ordinance banning it." The ordinance came into practice October 8 and provides harsh punishments for persons circumcising girls and those who aid the process. The district council of Kapchorwa has already submitted legislation to parliament for the local ban to become a nationwide law. Christopher Chepkurui, the resident district commissioner of Bukwo, a neighboring district to Kapchorwa, has denounced the practice, directed police to arrest those who encourage FGM, and has encouraged parliament to develop stringent laws to punish the surgeons carrying out the practice. However, many women in the Sebei region shun health facilities and "some married women flee from their husbands to return to their father's homes for circumcision." According to the United Nations, about three million girls are at risk of FGM each year, and in Africa the UN agencies have called for a major reduction in the practice by 2015. The practice leads to bleeding, shock, infections and a higher rate of death for new-born babies. It has also been said that the practice increases the risk of HIV transmission and maternal and infant mortality. (AFP; BBC, October 15; New Vision, 7, 11, 2008)