



**Peace & Justice Update**  
*October 31, 2008*  
*(Volume 20, Number 5)*

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

**Source information:** Information presented in this update is condensed from wire and newspaper reports from Lexis/Nexis and from electronic sites on the World Wide Web. Complete bibliographical information is unavailable from these services, but every attempt has been made to properly cite information and give credit to source materials. This update is intended for use by IPJ staff and associates for informational purposes only. As the material in this update is condensed, and does not directly quote the primary source, information from the update should not be quoted.

**Update subscriptions:** Electronic subscriptions to the Peace & Justice Updates are free; simply send an email to [updates@sandiego.edu](mailto:updates@sandiego.edu) and include the word “subscribe” in the subject line.

*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.*

*The interns are Elisabetta Colabianchi (University of San Diego),  
Chris Groth (University of San Diego '06), Carolyn Smith  
(University of California, San Diego), and Ali Wolters (University of San Diego).*

## SOURCE LIST

ADINA	=	Agencia Peruana de Noticias ( <a href="http://www.andina.com.pe">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> )
African Path	=	African Path ( <a href="http://www.africanpath.com">www.africanpath.com</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> )
APN	=	Asia-Pacific News ( <a href="http://www.apn.bttravel.com">www.apn.bttravel.com</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> )
Business Day	=	Business Day ( <a href="http://www.businessday.co.za">www.businessday.co.za</a> )
California Now	=	California Now ( <a href="http://www.canow.org">www.canow.org</a> )
CBC News	=	CBC News ( <a href="http://www.cbc.ca">www.cbc.ca</a> )
CENS	=	China Economic News Service ( <a href="http://www.cens.com">www.cens.com</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> )
CNN	=	CNN ( <a href="http://www.cnn.com">www.cnn.com</a> )
Colombia Reports	=	Colombia Reports ( <a href="http://www.colombiareports.com">www.colombiareports.com</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> )
EFE	=	EFE ( <a href="http://www.efc.com">www.efc.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">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> )
Holiday	=	The Holiday ( <a href="http://www.weeklyholiday.net">www.weeklyholiday.net</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> )
IDMC	=	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center ( <a href="http://www.internal-displacement.org">www.internal-displacement.org</a> )
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune ( <a href="http://www.iht.com">www.iht.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> )

Kaiser	=	The Henry J. Kaiser Foundation ( <a href="http://www.kaisernetwork.org">www.kaisernetwork.org</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> )
Mongabay	=	Mongabay ( <a href="http://www.mongabay.com">www.mongabay.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> )
Medical News Today	=	Medical News Today ( <a href="http://www.medicalnewstoday.com">www.medicalnewstoday.com</a> )
Miami Herald	=	Miami Herald ( <a href="http://www.miamiherald.com">www.miamiherald.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 Age Daily	=	The New Age Daily ( <a href="http://www.newagebd.com">www.newagebd.com</a> )
New Nation	=	The New Nation ( <a href="http://nation.ittefaq.com">http://nation.ittefaq.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> )
OSAC	=	Overseas Security Advisory Council ( <a href="http://www.osac.gov">www.osac.gov</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> )
Radio Nuevas	=	Radio Nuevas ( <a href="http://www.radionuevas.co.cu">www.radionuevas.co.cu</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> )
SABC	=	South African Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://www.sabc.co.za">www.sabc.co.za</a> )
SA Terrorism Portal	=	South Asian Terrorism Portal ( <a href="http://www.satp.org">www.satp.org</a> )
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance ( <a href="http://www.seapabkk.org">www.seapabkk.org</a> )
Sky News	=	Sky News ( <a href="http://www.news.sky.com/skynews">www.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://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com">www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com</a> )
UDW	=	Upside Down World ( <a href="http://www.upsidedownworld.org">www.upsidedownworld.org</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> )
USDS	=	U.S. Department of State ( <a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</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 ([www.winnipegsun.com](http://www.winnipegsun.com))  
WP = The Washington Post ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com))  
Xinhua = Xinhua News Agency ([www.xinhuanet.com/english](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english))

## UPDATE SUMMARY

### *SPECIAL REPORT:*

#### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Rebels launch major offensive.  
Cross-border tensions.  
Nkunda details his demands.  
International community debates response.  
Humanitarian crisis worsens.

#### **BANGLADESH**

Political party's registration for December election incites hostile reactions.  
Terrorist organization may be regrouping.

#### **COLOMBIA**

Extrajudicial killings probed by government.  
Drug ring tied to Hezbollah.

#### **GUATEMALA**

Femicide rate continues to rise.  
Mexico and Guatemala meet to address border issues.

#### **NEPAL**

Army Integration Special Committee established.  
Violence continues in Kapilvastu district.

#### **PERU**

Protests sweep Peru, taking police hostage and challenging Garcia's new cabinet.  
Sixty armed criminals attack Lima shopping center.

#### **SOUTH AFRICA**

Zuma returns from weeklong trip to the United States.  
ANC orders elite crime-fighting unit to disband.

#### **UGANDA**

Famine, malnutrition and continued fighting in Karamoja.  
UPDF soldiers arrested for terrorizing northern civilians.

## SPECIAL REPORT

### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

*Developing situation: The situation in the eastern DRC continues to change. The information contained in this story should only be considered accurate as of October 31, 2008.*

#### Rebels launch major offensive.

Beginning October 26, the rebel National Congress for the People's Defense (CNDP), led by former general Laurent Nkunda, launched a major offensive in Nord Kivu province, stoking fears that the conflict might return to fighting and casualty levels not seen since the peak years of the war in 1998-2002. The fighting began when the CNDP overran a Congolese Army (FARDC) base at Rumangabo and then seized control of the headquarters of Virunga National Park. Further advances led the rebels to take over the towns of Rutshuru, Rubare, Kalengera, Katala, Kibumba and Kibati. The rebel offensive led to the full-scale retreat of FARDC troops from the region, causing widespread panic in the provincial capital of Goma. After pushing to within a few miles of Goma, Nkunda declared a unilateral ceasefire October 29. In a letter to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Nkunda stated that his rebels were opening "emergency humanitarian corridors" in order for the civilians to flee the conflict zone in and around Goma. The same letter also clarified that the corridors were designed to allow humanitarian organizations access to areas under CNDP control. As of October 31, the ceasefire was holding and MONUC reported no new reports of fighting or shelling in the area.

*Agence France-Presse (AFP)* has estimated that there are as few as 850 MONUC troops, made up predominantly of members from the Indian contingent, left to prevent a complete takeover of Goma. The head of UN peacekeeping operations, Alain Le Roy, noted that MONUC is hoping to shift more troops into Goma from other parts of the country, but they do so at the risk of destabilizing other regions. MONUC helicopter gunships have been used in an attempt to keep the bulk of Nkunda's troops on the outskirts of the town. The AP reported that there has been a shift in residents' attitudes towards the MONUC troops, who are now being credited for halting Nkunda's advance. This is in sharp contrast to reactions earlier in the week when UN vehicles and compounds were attacked by angry civilians who claimed that the UN wasn't doing enough to protect them. Reuters reported October 31 that a small number of FARDC troops remained in the streets of Goma attempting to prevent looting; however, numerous media reports have accused FARDC troops of being the worst perpetrators of the looting. UN Radio Okapi reported numerous accounts of looting, carjacking, and rapes taking place as FARDC troops retreated from the fighting.

#### Cross-border tensions.

The government in Kinshasa continued to accuse neighboring Rwanda of actively supporting Nkunda and his rebels, a charge that they have been making for weeks. While in Kinshasa, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer stated that she had seen no evidence of Rwandan troops fighting in the DRC, but there was evidence that "Rwandan territory has been used to provide support to [the] CNDP," most notably supplies and weapons. There were reports of gunfire and shelling across the DRC-Rwanda border October 29, but there is conflicting evidence as to where the cross-border fire originated. Foreign ministry representatives from both countries have been meeting with their counterparts in Kinshasa and Kigali to discuss the situation and potentially schedule a diplomatic summit between the two countries.

#### Nkunda details his demands.

In a telephone interview October 30 with *AFP*, Nkunda proclaimed that, while he wanted to avoid a direct confrontation with MONUC forces, his rebels would not back down if engaged. He exclaimed: "We will respect MONUC...but if they shoot, we will have to defend ourselves." He also

remarked that MONUC would not be able to stop him from seizing Goma. When questioned by AFP about his motives, Nkunda replied that the inhabitants of Nord-Kivu were under threat from Congolese Army and Hutu rebel forces, and that he would take control of Goma “if MONUC is incapable of securing” the city and protecting its civilians. Many analysts have argued that, in addition to ethnic disputes, attempted to control the country’s vast mineral wealth have also fueled the conflict.

In a separate telephone interview with The Associated Press, Nkunda requested direct negotiations with the government in Kinshasa to address the security situation in Nord Kivu. In addition, Nkunda demanded the opportunity to discuss a non-transparent \$9 billion (USD) proposed deal that provides China with mineral resources in exchange for infrastructure development. Nkunda also revealed that he turned down a government offer of \$2.5 million (USD) to cease fighting because he could not abandon his mission “to protect Congo’s people”, and he expressed interest in playing a future role in reforming the country’s fledgling army.

#### International community debates response.

The international community continued to remain divided regarding how to respond to the growing tensions in the eastern DRC. On October 29, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner floated the idea of sending a 1,500 member contingent of European Union (EU) troops to support MONUC, but several EU members are reported to have expressed reservations about the idea, most notably Germany and Britain. Belgium was the other major country to express support for France’s proposal. Javier Solana, the EU’s top foreign policy envoy, focused on the diplomatic role that the EU can play and toned down speculation about a potential military force. Kouchner and others have steadfastly maintained that any EU operation would be strictly a humanitarian mission, and the focus would likely be on Goma and the surrounding towns. If a decision is made to deploy, the EU would likely send the troops from two multinational battle groups that it maintains permanently on standby. Reducing the likelihood of a military solution is the fact that the battle groups contain a large number of British and German troops, and both countries have privately expressed opposition to deploying to the region.

Several weeks ago, the head of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Alan Doss, requested a temporary increase of 2,000 personnel – including troops, police, and special forces units – but a decision is still several weeks away and, even if approved, the reinforcements would not arrive for another 2-3 months. Doss has stressed the importance of adding special forces troops and intelligence equipment – specifically unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) – because the CNDP rebels are fighting in small, highly organized groups that are difficult to locate. On October 27, the former force commander of MONUC, General Vicente Díaz de Villegas, resigned citing personal reasons; however, it has been reported that he had privately expressed frustrations regarding a lack of resources, MONUC’s limited mandate, and a lack of leadership from the government in Kinshasa.

In response to the crisis, the UN Security Council adopted a non-binding statement October 29 which condemned the actions of Nkunda and called for an immediate end to rebel operations. The same statement also expressed concern at “reports of heavy weapons fire across the DRC-Rwanda border.” The UN has dispatched envoys to both Kinshasa and Kigali.

#### Humanitarian crisis worsens.

The debate over military assets comes at a time when the UN and international aid agencies have warned of a potential humanitarian catastrophe in the region. On October 31, the UNHCR received “credible reports” that refugee camps in the Rutshuru area, known to house up to 50,000 people, have been forcibly emptied, looted, and burned. Reports suggest that upwards of 30,000 refugees are trapped in between the CNDP rebels and UN forces in the area surrounding Goma. A spokeswoman from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

reported that over 8,000 refugees have crossed the border into neighboring Uganda since the recent round of fighting began, and hundreds of others have been gathering at border crossings. Food and medical supplies are running low in the border communities on the Ugandan side, and UNHCR has warned that the communities will become overwhelmed soon. Up to 1,200 refugees have also crossed into neighboring Rwanda. In total, it is estimated that there are nearly one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nord Kivu province. On October 29 the UN ordered all local aid agencies to evacuate from the region as they could no longer guarantee their security.

Sources: (AFP, October 26, 28, 30, 31; AP, October 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; BBC, October 26, 28, 29, 30; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, October 30; MONUC, October 28, 29; New York Times, October 29; Reuters, October 25, 26, 28, 30; Washington Post, October 29, 2008)

## **BANGLADESH**

Political party's registration for December election incites hostile reactions. The recent registration of Jamaat, a political party, for December 2008 parliamentary elections has drawn a series of distressed reactions from civil society groups and individuals. Before the party amended its constitution, it did not recognize the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 from Pakistan. New amendments to election law, which now requires that party constitutions not contradict the country's constitution, instigated Jamaat's constitutional changes. The party's recent changes and registration for the election have drawn protests from civil society groups such as the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee (WCFFC) and Bangladeshi professionals who have filed complaints with the Election Commission (EC) on the basis that Jamaat is still "an illegal and unconstitutional party." Groups are demanding the prosecution of Jamaat leaders, accusing the party of being responsible for war crimes during the 1971 liberation war, including genocide, rape, collaboration with the Pakistani forces, and robbery all in the name of religion. The EC published notification of Jamaat's registration October 26, but those filing complaints are also upset at the late publication, as the notice of the party's registration was issued October 23. Though the EC has published notices about 13 political parties' registrations, the Jamaat notification is the only one to have elicited complaints. M.A. Hasan of the WCFFC group alleges that Jamaat leaders, "did not confess their crimes and did not surrender to the Bangladesh government," and that many of those leaders are still heading the party. WCFFC is scheduled to meet with the Chief Election Commissioner October 30 to present evidence as to why Jamaat should not be allowed to register for the parliamentary elections. Jamaat, historically, has been a fundamentalist Islamic party and is a member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party four-party alliance. December parliamentary elections are meant to restore the country to democracy after being governed by a military backed Caretaker Government for the third time in as many decades. (Daily Star, October 21 and 28, 2008).

Terrorist organization may be regrouping. Intelligence indicates that over 250 militants of an outlawed terrorist organization, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangaldesh (JMB), are at large and may be regrouping. The JMB militants are "a matter of grave concern for law-enforcement agencies, who have no clue to their whereabouts or activities." Bangladeshi security forces reportedly dismantled the group in 2006. However, recent intelligence indicates that the organization may be reforming. Bangladeshi investigations indicated that the organization had suffered a loss of leadership after top officials were arrested and executed in March 2007. In early 2007, Bangladeshi investigators learned from arrested militants that JMB did have a new leader and that meetings were held to discuss JMB's reorganization. Law enforcement officials are also concerned about explosives in JMB's possession

that remain largely unaccounted for. This recent intelligence explains fears by law enforcement officials that “militants under the name JMB or any other outfit may strike again during the next national polls.” JMB is a fundamentalist Islamic group pursuing the establishment of Islamic rule through armed struggle. The JMB is responsible for several bombings throughout the country in 2005. The national parliamentary polls are set for December 18 and the reemergence of a threat could prolong the country’s state of emergency, which many think should be lifted prior to the elections. Although the United Nations is still likely to send election monitors under a state of emergency, a U.S. diplomat in Bangladesh has expressed reservations about the credibility of elections held under those conditions. (Daily Star, October 28, 2008; New Age, October 7, 14, 2008; South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2001).

## **COLOMBIA**

Government probes extrajudicial killings. Reports circulated October 29 indicate that more than two dozen Colombian army officials have been dismissed for alleged engagement, or at least complicity, in the practice of extrajudicial killings – killing civilians to be presented as combat kills in the Colombians’ battle against paramilitaries and guerrillas. Among the fired Colombian officials are three generals. The BBC further reports that three colonels from the 15<sup>th</sup> Mobile Brigade of Colombian security forces allegedly killed eleven young homeless men from Bogotá by either kidnapping or luring the young men away by promising them work. The men were instead taken to Norte de Santander province near the Venezuelan border, where the 15<sup>th</sup> Mobile Brigade is stationed, and killed. The bodies were then passed off as combat kills to gain promotions in the army. Three colonels were the first to be dismissed earlier this week and the October 28 purge came as Amnesty International (AI) released a detailed report on the human rights abuses by the army and called for the U.S. to cease military aid to Colombia. These reports suggest that the practice of extrajudicial killings by Colombian security forces could be widespread. According to the BBC’s Jeremy McDermott, “the sacking of the three colonels could be the start of a scandal that could spread through the army and threaten the security policy of President Álvaro Uribe.” According to a report obtained by the Associated Press in September, 803 members of Colombia’s armed forces, 99 of them officers are under investigation for extrajudicial killings. The recent wave of allegations is directing scrutiny on U.S. policy towards Colombia as prosecutors and human rights groups are concerned about the increase in civilian killings since 2002, when the Colombian army intensified a counterinsurgency financed by more than \$500 million dollars in U.S. military aid per year. According to the New York Times, the current wave of allegations puts focus on the U.S. Embassy in Colombia, “which is responsible for vetting Colombian military units for human rights abuses before they can receive aid.” Studies by AI and Fellowship of Reconciliation – a human rights nongovernmental organization – indicate that 47 percent of extrajudicial killing cases in 2007 involved Colombian units financed by the U.S. AI reports 330 unlawful killings were committed by Colombian security forces in 2007. This scandal comes as the Colombian armed forces are also being investigated for collaboration with right-wing paramilitary groups, which the U.S. State Department classified as terrorists in 2001. According to the U.S. State Department’s 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Colombia, “political and unlawful killings remained an extremely serious problem.” (BBC, October 25, 29; NYT, October 30; U.S. Department of State, March 11; Washington Post, October 29, 2008).

Drug ring tied to Hezbollah. According to an announcement by Colombian authorities October 21, more than 100 suspects were arrested in Colombia and elsewhere for a drug-trafficking and money laundering operation in which three of the suspects are believed to have shipped funds to

Hezbollah, a fundamentalist Islamic armed organization. The network, which Colombian authorities have announced they recently dismantled, allegedly trafficked drugs and laundered money for the Colombian drug cartel, Norte del Valle, and illegal paramilitary groups. The network was widespread, reaching as far as Asia. According to the attorney general's office, some of those arrested in Colombia used front companies to send cash from drug smuggling to groups overseas such as Hezbollah. The network used routes through Venezuela, Panama, Guatemala, the Middle East and Europe. In a separate drug trafficking operation, the Colombian police interdicted 10 tons of cocaine headed for Mexico from a major Colombian trafficking organization which is known to use Venezuela as a safehaven because President Hugo Chavez does not cooperate with U.S. anti-drug forces. Colombia is the world's largest producer of cocaine. Drug trafficking has been a source of funding for many guerrilla and paramilitary groups that have been fighting Colombian forces for the past several decades. (BBC, October 26; NYT October 22, 2008).

## **GUATEMALA**

Femicide rate continues to rise. The problem of gender-based killing of women, recently termed "femicide," has continued in Guatemala and other Latin American countries. It is a major problem in countries where machismo and patriarchal societies persist. These gender-based crimes have commonly gone unpunished because of the lack of accountability and law-enforcement in these countries and the lack of political willingness to address the problem. In only the first eight months of 2008, 443 women were killed in Guatemala, a number larger than was reported in 2007. Reports by the nongovernmental organization, The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), indicate a continuous increase in femicide, which about doubled from 2002 to 2006. Since 2001, when the police began to separate the statistics of femicide cases from all other homicides, there have been over 4,000 reported killings of women; more than 90 percent of these crimes go unpunished. Abuses committed toward women also include beating, maiming, and other aggressions. CS Sondeo, an alliance belonging to the civil organization, Democratic Advocacy and the Guatemalan Federation of Radio Schools, conducted a recent study showing that women recognize the problem of women-directed violence in Guatemala, but they do not know how to escape from it and where to go to receive help. Sixty percent of the violence is usually carried out within the home by family members or significant others. The study also showed that the problems of gender inequality are commonly thought of as limited to physical violence, but psychological, economic, and social abuses are often not taken into consideration even though they pose a major problem to Guatemalan women. On April 9, the congress passed a law recognizing femicide as a crime that merits longer prison sentences and sentences for psychological and physical abuse; the failure to acknowledge the rights of women is also recognized as a crime in the new law. (California Now, October 9; Prensa Libre, October 22, 2008)

Mexico and Guatemala meet to address border issues. On October 23, government officials from both Mexico and Guatemala met in the Mayan city of Tikal in Guatemala's Northern Petén region to discuss border issues focusing on drug trafficking. Guatemala's President Álvaro Colom said, "I am convinced that only by means of integral development, education, health and employment, we can stop organized crime." The escalation of narcotic activity in Guatemala is viewed as a side effect of Mexican President Felipe Calderon's "successful" undertaking of the drug trafficking problem in Mexico, and it is reported that these cartels have now crossed the border and established a major presence in Guatemala. One of these drug cartels is the Zeta gang, which has recently infiltrated many departments in Guatemala. According to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration

(DEA), international drug cartels are using Guatemalan territory to traffic and store drugs sent to North America. They also reported that more than 20 million tons of drugs pass “freely” by way of Guatemala each year. Both countries agreed on a plan to increase the police and military forces at the border in order to prevent organized crime and drug trafficking. According to *Radio Nuevitas*, Colom’s plan to eliminate drug trafficking involves the deployment of 15,000 police and military personnel. The bi-national high security entity was established by both governments three years ago and would involve the participation of Guatemala and the territories in southern Mexico in a joint effort against narcotics smuggling and other border issues. Many other related issues were addressed including the smuggling of other contraband such as arms and fuel, prostitution and human trafficking. At the meeting, authorities from both countries pledged to continue their joint efforts regarding security and advancement at the border, development of the border area including the improvement of rural roads and electrification of border towns, conservation of archaeological sites such as Mayan monuments, improvement of migrant shelter facilities and improvement of health, education, housing and employment programs. Mexico and Guatemala share a border spanning 600 miles, with approximately 1.5 million Guatemalans and over five million Mexicans living in the border region. (Guatemala Times, October 24; Prensa Latina, October 24; Prensa Libre, October 23; Radio Nuevitas, October 24, 2008)

## **NEPAL**

Army Integration Special Committee established. After weeks of negotiations, it was announced October 28 that a five-member Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) had been formed to oversee the “management, integration, and rehabilitation” of the Maoist People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The AISC is comprised of two members from the ruling Communist Party Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M), and one each from the other three major political parties: Nepali Congress (NC), the Communist Party Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), and the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF). The committee will be led by Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister Bam Dev Gautam (CPN-UML). The formation of the AISC came after a series of failed attempts last week in which the opposition parties objected to the CPN-M’s previous demand to lead the committee. The deadlock was broken when Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal submitted a counter-proposal that stated the CPN-M would agree to give the leadership position to the CPN-UML, but in return the CPN-M should be allotted one extra position. The senior leadership of the NC has expressed opposition to the CPN-M being allowed an extra committee member, and in protest they have refused to name a member for their position on the committee. In response to the NC’s criticism, Dahal, whose nom-de-guerre is Prachanda, has stressed that his party has compromised by giving up their claim to the committee chair position, and he claims that the NC should do the same in return. Dahal’s CPN-M party is advocating for a large scale integration of the PLA soldiers per the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) and the interim constitution, whereas the CPN-UML favors some form of integration, but at a slower pace. While the senior leadership of the NC, led by party president Girija Prasad Koirala, has repeatedly expressed strong opposition to the integration, there are signs of division within the party. Narhari Acharya, an NC central committee member, stated that he believed that the PLA soldiers could be integrated into the NA if the integration abides by the CPA and other previous agreements. Highlighting the growing internal division within the party, he remarked: “we [some party members] find a lack of honesty in the recent statements given by NC leaders.” Under the terms of the 2006 UN peace deal, there are over 19,000 Maoist fighters currently residing in UN-supervised camps across the country. (AFP, October 28; Kantipur Report, October 25, 26, 28; Nepal News, October 23, 28, 29; Reuters, October 28, 2008)

Violence continues in Kapilvastu district. A Village Development Committee (VDC) secretary was shot and killed October 25 in Kapilvastu district, the latest in a series of killings in the region, located 250 kilometers west of Kathmandu. The Samyukta Janatantrik Mukti Morcha (SJMM), an armed group operating in the region, claimed responsibility for the attack and declared that the victim was killed due to alleged “corruption and spying for the Maoists.” The killing comes one week after two activists of the Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party (TMLP) were killed in Kapilvastu by an unidentified armed group. Both incidents have led to increased frustration among residents in the area. Civil servants shut down the VDC offices in Kapilvastu district October 26 in protest of the killing and to demand proper security from the government. The VDC Secretaries’ Welfare Protection Centre warned that they would conduct future work stoppages if the government continued to fail to provide adequate security for the region. The TMLP, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest party in the Constituent Assembly (CA) and controls 22 seats (4 percent), delayed and boycotted the proceedings in the CA from October 20-23 in protest of the killing of their supporters. Speaking in the CA, TMLP lawmakers criticized the government for their “indifference” towards investigating the murders and for failing to maintain law and order in Kapilvastu. The TMLP agreed to end their protests only after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Home Affairs Minister Bam Dev Gautam assured TMLP leaders that the government would form an investigation committee dedicated to solving the killings. The TMLP promised stronger protests if the government did not follow through on their commitment. Prior to their boycott in the CA, the TMLP staged a major strike, including the closing of businesses and the blocking of the major east-west highway in Kapilvastu, protesting the lack of security in the region. Media reports estimate that at least 14 government employees have been killed in the Terai since 2006. The government is currently attempting to establish the groundwork for peace negotiations with the armed groups operating in the region. (Kantipur Report, October 17, 21, 23, 25, 26; Kathmandu Post, October 20, 25, 27; Nepal News, October 22, 23, 25, 26, 2008)

## **PERU**

Protests sweep Peru, taking police hostage and challenging Garcia’s new cabinet. Thousands of protestors demonstrated in five Peruvian provinces October 28, threatening politicians and torching a police station – marking the first real test of President Alan García’s new cabinet. The police responded to the protests by firing tear gas into the crowds, which caused dozens to be injured including four policemen, three of whom were taken hostage and later released in the province of Moquegua October 29. Protesters in the provinces of Tacna and Moquegua have been locked in a dispute over how to distribute the mining taxes paid by Southern Copper Corp., one of the world’s largest mining companies. This year, Moquegua is expected to receive 20 percent of those tax revenues, while 80 percent will go to Tacna. In June, protestors in Moquegua took 60 police officers hostage in an attempt to urge Congress to pass a bill, assessing taxes based on how much mineral wealth a mine produces to replace the current system, which levies taxes based on how much dirt a mine moves. President García has shown support for the bill but lacks the influence in Congress to pass it. García appointed a prominent leftist, Yehude Simon, as prime minister following the resignation of his entire 17-member cabinet earlier this month in hopes of suppressing the protests and guaranteeing that the social programs reach the poor – 40 percent of Peru’s population. Simon has said he “would not tolerate violent protest and threatened to prosecute people who blocked roads,” claiming that talks could begin once the protests ceased. Three other provinces, Cuzco, Cajamarca and San Martin, held protests this week as well, demanding improved access to water, tax revenues, and infrastructure. (Living in Peru, October 29; Reuters, October 28, 29, 2008)

Sixty armed criminals attack Lima shopping center. On the morning of October 27, 60 armed criminals arrived to take over the top floor of the Polvos Azules shopping center in downtown Lima. The gang – armed with guns, sticks and knives – stormed the shopping center when the shop owners were opening for business at approximately 10:30 a.m. They come in through all seven entrances and began firing into the air. Some of the store owners fled the scene immediately, while others closed their stores and confronted the gang. Members of the national police’s special operations tactical unit, Subunidad de Acciones Tácticas (SUAT), arrived at 11:30 a.m. and upon entering the building began to fire into the air, which turned into what the local media described as “a prolonged shootout.” The criminals were surrounded by the police but some managed to escape and others were caught by store owners who beat them with metal bars and sticks. Twenty-seven people – 25 men and 2 women – were detained. The legal representatives for Polvos Azules blamed the attack on Florentino Zevallos Rojas, the former head of the shopping center’s administrative association who had been accused of fraud in 2000. (Living in Peru, October 27, 2008)

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

Zuma returns from weeklong trip to the United States. During the week of October 20 to 25, Jacob Zuma, leader of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, met in Washington with United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other U.S. government officials. The U.S. invited Zuma and other ANC delegates including Treasurer General Mathews Phosa and National Executive Committee members Siphwe Nyanda, Zweli Mkhize, and Nomaindia Mfeketo. Zuma and the ANC delegation met with President George W. Bush, Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Henrietta Ford and U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Ambassador Mark Dybul. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen existing relations between both countries and to discuss matters such as South Africa’s role in the Zimbabwe political deadlock, the ANC crisis in South Africa and changes in trade and the economy. The first meeting focused on Zimbabwe’s political crisis. Zuma stated that “we share the same views that a quicker solution to Zimbabwe is desirable for the Zimbabwean people and their country.” On October 20, the United States threatened that if Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe did not hold up his end of the September 15 power-sharing deal, the U.S. would impose new sanctions on the country. Rice told Zuma that these sanctions would remain until the crisis was resolved. The political crisis in South Africa was also discussed, and Zuma assured the U.S. that current ANC economic policies would continue even though there is a new president. Some investors have expressed concerns that a shift in power to Zuma may create a subsequent shift to a more leftist government, and away from the pro-business policies of former president Thabo Mbeki. (African Path, October 22; Business Day, October 25; VOA, October 23; Xinhua, October 26, 2008)

ANC orders elite crime-fighting unit to disband. On October 23, South Africa’s Parliament agreed, by a margin of about four to one, to disband the Scorpions, an elite crime-fighting unit. According to the *BBC*’s Mpho Lakaje, this move was foreseen for some time and the African National Congress (ANC) already had plans to disband the body, even after opposition parties and members of the public made many attempts to save the unit. Some have accused the Scorpions of initiating a smear campaign targeting the ANC party leader and presidential hopeful, Jacob Zuma. Previously known as the Directorate of Special Operations, the group was established in 1999, with the purpose of investigating corruption allegations. One of the cases was the high-profile Zuma arms deal, which alleged him to have accepted bribes from Thint, a subsidiary of the French arms company Thales, in

exchange for covering up information about a 1999 arms deal that would have had South Africa spending over five billion dollars to modernize their defense system while most of the country experienced extreme poverty. However, this case is now seen as part of a political conspiracy created by former president Thabo Mbeki. Zuma supporters rallied against the Scorpions, claiming that they were trying to stop him from running for President in 2009 elections or eliminating his chances by strengthening the corruption allegations. The dissolution of the Scorpions resulted in their placement into South Africa's police force and Parliament's deciding to create a new crime investigating force to replace them. According to the *New York Times*, despite accusations of political conspiracy, the Scorpions had a better track record than the police. South Africa has one of the worst crime rates in the world including major crimes such as murder, with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reporting that approximately 50 murders are committed each day; according to reports from the South African Police Service (SAPS) 150 persons are raped each day. (BBC, October 23; NYT, October 24; OSAC, March 19; Reuters, October 23, 2008)

## **UGANDA**

Famine, malnutrition and continued fighting in Karamoja. Over the past two years the northeastern region of Uganda, known as Karamoja, has suffered long dry spells followed by unusually heavy rains, leading to the late and insufficient planting of crops such as peanuts and sorghum. The resulting inflated food and fuel prices have made what food is being sold in the market unaffordable and have resulted in a growing rate of malnutrition among the Karamojong. In February 2007, both Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the World Food Program assessed the situation on the ground and their findings revealed that 20 percent of those they surveyed were suffering from acute malnutrition. In response, MSF opened an ambulatory therapeutic and supplementary feeding program for children under five in the worst-affected districts – Moroto and Nakapiripirit. The program began in June and was expected to run until September; however, with 593 severely malnourished and 1,846 moderately malnourished children admitted into the program, and another 390 admitted into the stabilizing center, the program is expected to continue into 2009. President Yoweri Museveni has ordered the local Karamojong leaders and the disaster preparedness ministry to ensure an adequate supply of relief food in Karamoja where currently 750,000 people have been affected by famine, according to the Famine Early Warning System Network. The government of Uganda has allocated the equivalent of approximately \$230 million USD for development in the Karamoja region over the next three years. The minister for Karamoja Affairs, Aston Kajar, said the funds are to be used for “infrastructural development, establishment of law and order, and provision of basic services like schools and health units.” Karamoja is located in northeastern Uganda and is made up of five districts: Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit. The Karamojong are nomadic peoples who are heavily dependent for their livelihoods on animals and on raiding cattle, which continues to bring insecurity to the region. On October 22, five Jie warriors, one of the main cattle raiding tribes in Karamoja, were killed by the Uganda Peoples' Defense Force (UPDF) in Kaabong district where they were found with five guns and 150 head of cattle. On October 24, a UPDF soldier was killed while attempting to pursue the cattle rustlers. (MSF, October 16; New Vision, October 23, 24, 26, 27, 2008)

UPDF soldiers arrested for terrorizing northern civilians. A Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) operation arrested three of their own soldiers and a member of the local defense unit October 22 after searching for a group of gunmen who have been terrorizing the civilians in the districts of Lira, Pader, and Kitgum. According to UPDF spokesman, Captain Deo Akiiki, the

soldiers are suspected of ambushing civilian vehicles and robbing the civilians who have returned to their villages from the internally displaced people's (IDP) camps. The soldiers – corporal Safi Ekaju, sergeant Jimmy Aboo, private Castro Richard Giriga, and a Local Defense Unit officer, Peter Odoch – were arrested with two rifles, 20 bullets, and three empty magazines. Akiiki condemned the act and said the soldiers would be court-martialed. He further claimed that the UPDF “would leave no stone unturned as they clean the army.” The UPDF operations are continuing to hunt for those who robbed a trader of \$250 USD off of the Kitgum-Pajule-Lira road in a recent vehicle ambush; the UPDF urged the traders not to travel with large sums of money. The war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government in the late 1980s led to the displacement of 1,374,000 civilians in northern Uganda during the height of the war in 2005; there are currently 921,000 IDPs in northern Uganda, according to a recent September report released by Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). On October 25, thousands of people participated in this year's Gulu Walk as an appeal to the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, to sign the final peace agreement. (IDMC, September; New Vision, October 22, 28, 2008)