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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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ADNKI	=	ADNKI (www.adnki.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
B92	=	B92 Net (www.b92.net/eng/)
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)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
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)
Kantipur Online	=	The Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times (www.khaleejtimes.com)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (http://jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Makfax	=	Macedonian Independent News Agency (www.makfax.com)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
New Zealand Herald	=	The New Zealand Herald (www.nzherald.co.nz)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panfrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
SERBIANNA	=	Serbianna.com (www.serbianna.com)
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald (www.smh.com)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (www.unhcr.ch)
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)

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AFGHANISTAN

Increased Taliban attacks kill policemen and civilians: A March 12 roadside bombing in the Bakwa district of Farah killed ten Afghan policemen, including the new security head of the district. An aide of Farah's security chief, Khair Mohammad Baryali, claimed the bomb was detonated by Pakistan-linked Taliban fighters. March 13 suicide bombings included an attack on a police checkpoint on the Pakistan-Afghan border and the detonation of two bombs in the southern province of Helmand. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks, which killed two civilians and injured a dozen others. The bombings highlight the recent escalation of violence in Afghanistan, where fighting has killed about 1,000 civilians and a total of over 4,000 people in the last year. Observers expect figures to increase this year, as the Taliban has issued a warning that it has prepared thousands of suicide bombers. Most of the violence has occurred around the southern and eastern Afghan-Pakistan border, and many have blamed it on Pakistan, criticizing the country for harboring terrorists and allowing them to organize attacks on targets in Afghanistan. In response to these cross-border attacks, the United States launched its first major military operation of 2007 against the Taliban in a campaign entitled Operation Achilles. Taliban insurgents have remained active in Afghanistan since being ousted in 2001 by U.S. and British-led forces. (NYT, March 12, 2007).

Karzai signs war crimes immunity bill: On March 10 President Hamid Karzai signed into law a bill to grant amnesty to suspected perpetrators of war crimes committed over the last 25 years. The controversial amnesty bill has divided Afghan society since it was passed in the lower house of Congress January 31. Many who opposed the bill—including Afghan and international human rights groups—said that it violated the country's constitution and international human rights law. They also claimed the bill was passed by the Afghan parliament in large part because the parliament is dominated by former militia leaders seeking amnesty. Lawmaker Mir Ahmad Joyenda stated that MPs opposing the legislation were coerced into supporting it by warlords in the national assembly. After the legislation passed the upper house February 22, Karzai stated that he would not sign it into law; but civilian protests and pressure from former Mujahideen leaders and members of Karzai's cabinet persuaded him to approve the bill with some amendments. Karzai praised Parliament's efforts to encourage national reconciliation but amended the bill to protect victims' rights and enforce "punishment of an individual who committed crimes against another individual." The bill grants full legal and judicial immunity to any person involved in Afghanistan's 25-year-long period of conflict, from the Russian invasion in 1979 until a United States and British-led operation that ousted the fundamentalist Taliban in 2001. (IRIN, March 12; Reuters, March 10, 2007).

GUATEMALA

Bush seeks to promote positive image of United States: On March 12 United States President George W. Bush arrived in Guatemala, his fourth stop on his five-country tour of Latin America. Bush received a warm welcome from residents in Santa Cruz Balanya, in the southern department of Chimaltenango where he oversaw the administration of healthcare by U.S. and Guatemalan doctors. In other regions of the country, however, he was met by demonstrators protesting Guatemala's admission into the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The protestors claimed that the treaty prevented Guatemalans from rising out of poverty. They also deplored what they saw as the U.S. role in the civil war that lasted from 1960-1996, and to which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-backed coup of 1954 is widely seen as a precursor. Among the 100 protestors were indigenous Mayans who opposed Bush's visit to their sacred Iximché ruins and condemned him as a murderer. Mayan priests announced that they would purify the site of "bad spirits" after Bush's visit. Bush hoped the trip would improve ties with Latin American leaders, who have felt overlooked by the U.S. because of the war in Iraq. Controversial U.S. policies on trade and immigration have also decreased the president's

popularity in the region and have generated severe criticism by leftist Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. Bush planned to address the need for the U.S. to provide more support for combating drug trafficking in the area by supplying helicopters and modern navigation systems. Guatemala planned to request U.S. support in purging the police force after receiving the annual U.S. State Department human rights report last week, which highlighted corruption and impunity within the police department. Guatemala's national wealth is poorly distributed, with the richest 20 percent of the population receiving over two thirds of the country's income. (Reuters, March 12, 2007).

Guatemalans criticize Bush for deportation policies: Upon his arrival in Guatemala March 12, United States President George W. Bush vowed to improve immigration laws, setting an August deadline for the U.S. Senate to develop comprehensive legislation. Guatemalans criticized Bush for a police raid and arrest of 361 illegal workers, many of them Guatemalan, in New Bedford, Massachusetts last week. They denounced Bush for separating children from their parents as the U.S. sent the workers to Mexico and Texas to be deported. U.S. federal officials released sixty people for humanitarian reasons, and President Bush denied Berger's accusations that families had been divided, stating that the United States is a "compassionate country." Nevertheless, protests plagued Guatemala March 12. In Guatemala City, riot police used tear gas to disperse protesters who were hurling stones and eggs and burning American flags. In Iximché, a 537-year-old Mayan ruin, hundreds of indigenous Mayans faced off with police, at one point blocking the president's route to the site. While Guatemalan President Oscar Berger and Bush had reached agreement on many policies, including the promotion of free trade and the fight against drug trafficking, the issue of immigration and deportation remained a source of contention for the two leaders. Immigration to the U.S. is a focal point of U.S. - Guatemalan relations, as almost 10 per cent of Guatemala's population resides in the United States. (NYT, March 12, 2007).

KOSOVO

E.U. plans to enforce Kosovo plan: A March 12 report issued by the European Union endorses a United Nations-sponsored proposal to grant Kosovo limited autonomy and outlines a plan for an E.U. delegation to oversee implementation of its stipulations. The report came as the final round ended in deadlock March 10, with Serbian and ethnic Albanian negotiators unable to reach a compromise on the U.N. proposal. Presented February 2 by U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, the proposal grants Kosovo the right to establish its own constitution, flag, national anthem and national army, and to apply for membership in international organization. It also provides protection for the province's ethnic Serb minority, and mandates the replacement of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) with an E.U. successor. The plan has been broadly accepted by ethnic Albanian policymakers but has received a cool reception by many ethnic Albanians and been met with outright rejection by ethnic Serbs and Belgrade. Ahtisaari was to present the proposal to the U.N. Security Council for a final decision in late March, and the E.U. anticipated its passage by proposing the deployment of a 72-member E.U. delegation and 200 support staff to oversee its implementation. Unlike UNMIK, the E.U. administration would allow the local government to run Kosovo but would exercise the power to veto government decisions and ensure officials' compliance with the U.N. proposal. It would also help the Kosovo government to draft a new constitution, and would retain occupying NATO forces to help disband Kosovo's civilian emergency unit and develop a multiethnic Kosovo army. Kosovo has been administered by UNMIK since a 1999 NATO air campaign drove out the Serbian army, which was fighting an insurgency by ethnic Albanians. (WP, March 12, 2007).

Kosovo talks end in deadlock: On March 10, United Nations Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari called an end to the final round of U.N.-sponsored talks on the status of Kosovo, marking the conclusion of a year of negotiations that failed to produce a solution. Ahtisaari issued his announcement after Vienna summit meetings at which Serb negotiators refused to recognize his proposal to make the Serbian province semi-autonomous. The proposal would establish the groundwork for Kosovo's eventual

independence by allowing it to create its own flag, constitution, national anthem and national army, and to apply for membership in international organizations. However, it did not explicitly call for Kosovo's complete autonomy. While Kosovar Albanians have accepted the plan, Serbs have overwhelmingly rejected it as an infringement on their sovereignty and a violation of international law. The lack of progress toward a solution has prompted Ahtisaari to refer his proposal to the U.N. Security Council, which will make the final decision on implementation at the end of March 2007. Most Security Council members have supported Kosovo autonomy, but Serbian ally Russia has argued for more time for a negotiated solution, and has been heavily lobbied by Serbia to use its veto power to reject the proposal. If the U.N. fails to implement the proposal, Kosovar Albanians may unilaterally declare independence, which could lead to renewed violence in the region. The U.N. has administered Kosovo since NATO air strikes ended a 1999 conflict between ethnic Albanians and minority ethnic Serbs. (BBC; WP, March 10, 2007).

NEPAL

Leader says Maoists still have thousands of combatants and arms not yet confined: Prachanda, leader of Nepal's former Maoist rebels, said March 12 they still have thousands of combatants and weapons not confined in the U.N.-supervised cantonments they had agreed to in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in November 2006. Prachanda was quoted by Nepali media saying his fighters and their arms could not be registered because they did not meet U.N. standards. The Maoist leader said that although his group did not intend to derail the peace process, they still had plenty of people capable of launching multi-prolonged military attacks. In an attempt to limit the damage caused by Prachanda's remarks, the top leader's deputy Baburam Bhattarai confirmed the remarks while also stating that they were meant to be understood differently. Bhattarai said Prachanda had used the generic Nepali word for weapons in his statement, but had actually been thinking of bombs when he said it. The deputy said the bombs had been placed outside the cantonments with the U.N.'s knowledge, adding that "[their] insurgency was fought mainly with bombs, not firearms." As for the fighters, Bhattarai quoted Prachanda as saying there were thousands of Maoists who could "make bombs and fight a war" but were not necessarily members of the Maoist army, continuing that they had thousands of ideological weapons at their disposal. In response to the controversy, Prachanda has said that his remarks were satirical and understood incorrectly. The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has said that all unlicensed firearms still in the community should be brought under police control, and that "any report of unregistered Maoist army weapons outside the cantonments [would] be investigated." UNMIN added that if any such weapons were found, they would be violating the existing peace agreement, and would therefore be illegal. Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in November 2006, Maoist rebels agreed to move their army into 28 camps around Nepal, and to lock up their arms over a six-week period that started in January of the present year under U.N. supervision. (BBC, March 13, 14; Reuters, March 14, 2007).

Prime Minister calls on king to relinquish his throne; federal state is formed: In a March 12 statement, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala asked King Gyanendra to relinquish his throne in order to facilitate Nepal's transition to a republic. In his statement Koirala also called upon the crown prince to abandon his claim to the throne. The prime minister—who has been one of the few leaders in favor of continuing the monarchy, albeit in ceremonial form—dramatically changed his stance after King Gyanendra defended his 2005 royal takeover last month. Koirala maintained that the king himself had cleared the way for the establishment of a republic, as his statement had aided the forces that were seeking to destabilize the country. When asked why the republic could not be announced through the interim legislature, the prime minister said the king's position would be decided only after constituent assembly elections. In a related development, Nepal's parliament overwhelmingly passed an amendment March 12 that would change the country from a unitary to a federal state. The amendment (passed by 278 votes to five) would increase the number of constituencies in the southern plains, giving

that region of the country proportional representation for the first time. In response to this announcement the Madhesi people, who live in the southern plains and have been striking for autonomy in the past weeks, have withdrawn their indefinite strike—returning a measure of stability to the troubled region. King Gyanendra, whose popularity has plummeted since he grabbed absolute power in 2005 only to be forced to back down last April, has been stripped of most of his powers and the constituent assembly elections scheduled for mid-June would determine his fate as monarch of Nepal. ([BBC](#), March 12; [Kantipur](#), March 12, 13; [Reuters](#), March 12, 2007).

SOMALIA

President and others attacked as government plans move to Mogadishu: Mortar attacks greeted President Abdullahi Yusuf March 13 as he returned to his Mogadishu home following a decision by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to relocate from Baidoa to the capital city. Fired a few hours after the president's arrival, the six mortar shells hit the presidential palace and surrounding homes, leaving the president unharmed but killing a twelve-year-old boy. Elsewhere in Mogadishu, a roadside bomb killed two government aides and injured a bodyguard after hitting a convoy carrying the deputy mayor of the city. The parliament voted March 12 to move its operations to Mogadishu after Ugandan troops under African Union (A.U.) command arrived safely in the city and assumed control of the airport. The decision represents the first attempt by the TFG to take control of the capital since the December 26, 2006 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts, after which the city descended into lawlessness as insurgents began to mount near-daily rocket attacks against government forces and civilians. The Ugandan troops were part of a United Nations-sponsored A.U. mission sent to Mogadishu in order to suppress the increasing violence, which has claimed dozens of civilian lives and prompted an exodus from the city. The mission, consisting of troops from Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda, is expected to replace Ethiopian forces that have occupied the country since helping TFG to oust the Courts. Prior to the Courts' six-month rule, Somalia had not had an effective government since 1991, when warlords overthrew President Mohamed Siad Barre. Government officials have attributed the violence to remnants of the Courts, who have sworn to wage an insurgency against the government and its allies. ([BBC](#), March 12, 13; [WP](#), March 13, 2007).

Fresh wave of violence hits capital: A series of attacks aimed at newly-arrived African Union peacekeepers and security forces killed at least twelve and wounded nine—mostly civilians—in the latest round of violence in the capital city. A March 8 rocket attack on an A.U. armored vehicle killed at least ten civilians after missing its target and hitting a neighboring restaurant, followed by March 10 clashes between insurgents and government forces that killed a policeman and wounded two security troops. Further clashes March 12 between Ethiopian forces and insurgents killed a woman and a 13-year-old boy and wounded five others. The recent violence followed the vanguard deployment of the A.U. peacekeeping mission, which has been sent to Mogadishu to support the fledgling Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and underscored the challenges the mission has faced in helping to restore stability to the capital. The mission, composed primarily of Ugandan troops, was expected to replace withdrawing Ethiopian forces that have occupied Somalia since the December 26 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts. But despite Uganda's large contribution and pledges by Burundi, Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria, the mission has managed to raise only half of its required 8,000 troops, and has become the target of insurgents who have vowed to fight any intervention force. The Ugandan peacekeepers, sent to train TFG security forces, began arriving March 6 amid rocket attacks against a welcoming ceremony held at Mogadishu airport. The TFG has been the fourteenth attempt to establish a central government in Somalia, which has been plagued by anarchy since the 1991 ouster of President Mohamed Siad Barre by warlords. The Courts controlled the country for the six months prior to their December 26 ouster, and are believed to be responsible for the near-daily rocket attacks and gun battles in Mogadishu. ([WP](#), March 8, 10, 12, 2007).

SRI LANKA

Civilians flee by the thousands as clashes between rebels and government escalate: Large-scale turmoil has erupted as the Sri Lankan government has ordered the military to take control of remaining pockets of Eastern Province where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have controlled the region for the past two decades. LTTE spokesperson Rasiyah Ilanthiraiyan stated that the government was attempting to push the LTTE into a full-scale war and warned that continued pressure from the military could result in a conflict that would envelop the entire island. He also accused the international community of being unresponsive to the “humanitarian havoc.” The army reported that March 10 nearly 10,000 civilians fled Tiger-held territory and more than 40,000 have left their homes to find safety in government-controlled areas of the provisional capital, Batticaloa, for fear of being massacred in military and rebel fighting. Artillery fire has pervaded areas where the military has overrun several Tiger camps. One particular confrontation occurred when government soldiers came upon a group of Tamil Tigers. A clash broke out resulting in the death of one soldier and the wounding of ten others. In addition, the bodies of ten Tamil Tigers were found in the past two weeks, executed by suspected government agents. President Mahinda Rajapakse has instructed the police to be more accountable in their operations in order to prevent further killing that has plagued the country since the civil war began in 1983. (BBC, March 11, 13, 2007).

Schools closed due to fighting: The recent escalation in fighting has caused more than one hundred schools to be shut down and converted to shelters for thousands of internally displaced Sri Lankans who have fled their homes to escape violence. Reports of rocket strikes have terrorized students and rendered two young girls unconscious. The air force continued attacks March 14, the third consecutive day of bombing raids targeted at rebel jungle positions. Head teacher of Vincent Girls School Subha Chakravarthi reported that multi-barrel rockets were fired from areas opposite the school. Not only have schools been hit, hospitals have experienced tremors and building damage due to the shelling. Counter-attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) added to the overall violence and the threat of mortar and artillery shells falling on schools, hospitals and neighborhoods. The education of approximately 24,000 children has been affected throughout the eastern region of the country. In addition, Amnesty International’s Asia Pacific director Purna Sen has reported that armed groups, suspected to be part of the Karuna rebel faction, have been abducting displaced people from the camps as well as distributing relief goods. The outbreak of violence continues to violate a ceasefire declared in 2002. (BBC, March 14, 2007).

SUDAN

United Nations (U.N.) Human Rights Council to discuss Darfur crisis: U.N. investigators, operating on a mission of the Human Rights Council, have accused the Sudanese government of planning and participating in war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, including mass rape, torture and murder. The team of investigators urged the international community to step in immediately, characterizing past responses as “pathetic.” Due to Khartoum’s refusal to allow the team into Sudan, the members were to travel to adjacent regions to interview Sudanese refugees and inspect the impact of the war that has spread into Sudan’s neighbor, Chad. The team corroborated accusations of abuses in Darfur. Meanwhile, Sudanese ambassador to the U.N. Ibrahim Mohammed Kheir asserted that the humanitarian situation in Darfur was improving. The head of the mission, Nobel peace laureate Jody Williams, expressed frustration with the international community saying that hollow threats would only breed further complacency on the part of the Sudanese government. Some European members of the Human Rights Council were expected to be planning a motion of censure against Sudan. The Council has only passed one such motion only done so once against Israel for its actions in Lebanon and Gaza. However, many African nations were expected to resist the censure. The Human Rights Council was

created in March of 2006 to replace the former Human Rights Commission and is expected to assert stronger legitimacy in tackling the genocide developing in Darfur since 2003. ([BBC](#), March 12, 2007).

Sudan rejects findings of U.N.'s mission on Darfur: Sudanese Minister of Justice Mohammed Ali al-Mardi has officially rejected the deployment of troops in Darfur prior to departing for Geneva March 11 where the U.N. Human Rights Council was to meet for its fourth session. At the session, al-Mardi said that he was to express Khartoum's rejection of the Council as well as the threat of sanctions against Sudan. By March 13, Sudan had dismissed the Human Rights Council's mission by accusing the leader, Jody Williams, of bias and a hostile attitude. Al-Mardi also stated that the council was illegitimate because two of the five members had dropped out of the mission, contrary to official reports that only Indonesia's ambassador had withdrawn due to Khartoum's refusal to grant visas to members of the ambassador's team. Gabon's ambassador also did not travel with the mission, which was to interview humanitarian officials and refugees in Chad. Gabon's ambassador was to report on the conclusions of the mission which were to be presented to the Council March 16. Al-Mardi claimed that since a peace deal was signed with one rebel group May 2006, there have been notable decreases in malnutrition and mortality rates. However, humanitarian agencies have stated that Darfur still requires major assistance in ending the killing that has taken nearly 200,000 lives and displaced millions of Sudanese since 2003. ([Reuters](#), March 13; [ST](#), March 11, 2007).

UGANDA

Lord's Resistance Army rebels to rejoin peace talks: Ugandan negotiators met Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) top leader Joseph Kony at his bush hideout in an attempt to restart the stalled Juba peace talks. Vincent Otti, LRA's second-in-command, affirmed that former Mozambique President and U.N. envoy for the conflict, Joaquim Chissano, along with southern Sudan Vice President and chief mediator of the negotiations, Riek Machar, and Ugandan Internal Affairs Minister, Ruhakana Rugunda, met Kony in the Democratic Republic of Congo March 11. Otti said of the meeting, "It was positive. ... We told them what we wanted, and we are waiting for a response." Although the LRA's demand for new mediators was met, only five countries out of the eight they had previously requested were to join the negotiations. "We have agreed that the mediation of the southern Sudan government is going to be beefed up with South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo," said Rugunda at a press conference. The rebels were reported to have set out 18 conditions for their return to the southern Sudanese capital Juba in order to resume peace negotiations. Among these conditions were the withdrawal of Ugandan government forces from south Sudan; the deployment of 1,000 peacekeeping troops to LRA assembling areas to protect their security; an allowance increase for the rebels' negotiating team; and "respect [for] the LRA" by the mediation team. Last January, LRA delegates walked out of peace negotiations that would have put an end to a 20-year war that has killed tens of thousands of people and uprooted 1.7 million more in northern Uganda. The peace talks, which started with a truce signed by the Ugandan government and the LRA in August 2006, were halted after Sudanese President Hassan Omar al-Bashir vowed to eject the LRA from Sudan. ([BBC](#), March 13, 14; [Monitor](#), March 13; [Reuters](#), March 12, 13, 2007).

Ugandan lawyers strike: On March 12, lawyers initiated a three-day strike against government interference in the judiciary. The action came after opposition lawyer Kiyimba Mutale was beaten unconscious by military forces as they entered the High Court earlier this month and arrested six opposition supporters who had been granted bail. Judges ended their own weeklong strike March 9 after President Yoweri Museveni expressed regret about the incident. Elias Kisawuzi, judicial spokesman, said about the strike, "We have called it off. The president wrote to us yesterday addressing most of the concerns and we were satisfied. ... It was not directly an apology, but he indicated the [incident] was regrettable." On the other hand, Uganda Law Society President Oscar Kihika said in a news conference that lawyers would not be in court, stating, "This is a symbolic way

for the lawyers to condemn the interference with the independence of the courts. There shall be no court business but we shall meet clients at our private chambers.” Mutale and another lawyer, who said he planned to sue the authorities over the assault, held a mock trial outside the court March 14. Mutale brandished his first “exhibit”—the bloodstained shirt and tie he had been wearing on the March 1 raid. With somber music playing in the background Kihika told a group of demonstrators, “We are telling the executive what they did was wrong. ... We want commitment to the rule of law.” On March 15, the last day of the strike, hundreds of lawyers in black gowns, some in the traditional white wig, marched around the High Court to symbolically cleanse it of the government raid. “Our ancestors used to slaughter a chicken or a goat. ... Our lawyers, in walking around the court, are engaged in this act,” Kihika explained. The raid on March 1 recalled a similar incident in 2005, when opposition leader Kiiza Besigye was arrested on murder and treason charges. ([BBC](#), March 12; [Reuters](#), March 12, 14, 2007).

