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

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The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the Spring 2007 interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. The interns are Rebecca Deedman, Nick Diamond, Daniela Loor, and Gabriella Stumpf. All are seniors at the University of San Diego.

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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) |
| BICECA | = | Building Informed Civic Engagement for Conservation in the Andes-Amazon (www.biceca.org) |
| 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) |
| ICTY | = | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (www.un.org/icty) |
| 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 | = | Panafrican 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

Medical crew held for ransom by Taliban: The Taliban demanded that two of its leaders be released in exchange for four Afghan medical personnel abducted with their driver March 27 in southern Kandahar province. The kidnapping of the doctor, three nurses and driver parallels that of Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo and his two Afghan companions who were held hostage earlier this month. Mastrogiacomo was released after the Afghan government freed five imprisoned Taliban militants. However Ajmal Naqshbandi, his interpreter, and his driver, Syed Agha, were beheaded after the government refused to secure an exchange for their release. Shortly following Naqshbandi's death Afghan journalists staged a protest in Kabul. Shahabuddin Aatil, who claimed to be a spokesman for regional Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah, cited the government's refusal to negotiate Naqshbandi's release as evidence that the government is working for foreigners and not Afghans. Karzai countered by saying that Mastrogiacomo was released only after Italian prime minister Romano Prodi had warned that his - Prodi's - government could fall otherwise. Afghan lawmakers and foreigners working in Afghanistan have also protested the prisoner swap claiming that it provides incentive for guerrillas to continue abductions. Already the Taliban has asserted that two French aid workers and three Afghan staff members have been kidnapped in southwestern Nimruz province. The abductions highlight the growing lawlessness in southern Afghanistan as the number of Taliban attacks has been the highest since a U.S. and British-led coalition ousted them from power in 2001. (WP, April 9, 10).

NATO soldiers killed in roadside bombings: Six Canadian North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) soldiers were killed and one seriously injured after a roadside bomb exploded in the southern province of Kandahar April 8. A separate attack left one NATO soldier dead and wounded two others. The Canadian troops, primarily based in Kandahar, continue an anti-Taliban offensive in the opium-producing region. The recent killings were the biggest single combat loss for foreign troops in Afghanistan since June 2005. The surge in violence was evident throughout the country as a firefight with Taliban militants in the eastern Paktika province near the Pakistan border killed two Afghan guards and injured five. Also on April 8 in eastern Khost province, a gunman opened fire on Afghans working for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, killing two men and injuring another. The attacks came in response to NATO's largest ever offensive in Afghanistan, Operation Achilles, which began in March in an effort to eliminate Taliban militants from the northern end of Helmand province. Almost 4,500 NATO and 1,000 Afghan troops have been stationed in or around Helmand. More than 1,000 NATO and Afghan troops retook Sangin district in the region just days before the latest onslaught of bombings. The violence highlights how virulent the Taliban's resistance still remains in Afghanistan since a U.S. and British-led invasion ousted the Taliban from power in late 2001. (NYT, April 9; WP, April 9, 10).

GUATEMALA

Police raids find murder evidence: National Police and Public Ministry agents raided four homes in Jalpatagua, located in northern Guatemala, April 4 and found evidence that could provide new information on the murder of three Salvadoran diplomats and their driver who were killed February 19. Police carried out the raids to find new evidence, in the hope of capturing Venner Adilcar Morales Silva and policemen Jeiner Ercides Barillas Recinos and Carlos Humberto Orellana Aroche, accused of involvement in the crimes. The homes investigated belonged primarily to relatives of Luis Herrera, one of the four Guatemalan policemen arrested in connection with the murders. The policemen had been held in a jail in El Boquerón, where they were killed February 25 in a prison riot. Amid the discoveries made in the raids was a driver's license belonging to William Pichinte, one of the murdered diplomats. Clothes, documents and cell phones were also found although it was unclear to whom they belonged.

After performing a black light test in one of the houses where it is believed the diplomats were tortured, police found traces of blood which were sent to laboratories for DNA testing. The recent events have pressured President Oscar Berger to order a purge of corrupt police officers and to advocate the creation of an International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, which would investigate organized crime and corruption within the police force. Organized crime in Guatemala has increased in the wake of the 36-yearlong civil war that ended in 1996 and claimed over 200,000 lives. (PrensaLibre, April 4, 2007).

KOSOVO

Proposal for Kosovo independence gains international support: Members of both the United States Senate and the Kosovo parliament have expressed approval of a United Nations-sponsored proposal to grant Kosovo autonomy, while several U.N. Security Council members have also lent their support. In an April 5 vote, Kosovo's parliament overwhelmingly accepted the proposal, which grants independence to the province with initial European Union oversight, and pledged to facilitate the implementation of its provisions. Introduced February 6 by U.N. special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, the proposal allows Kosovo to establish its own flag, national anthem, constitution and army, as well as to join international organizations. It has been rejected by ethnic Serbs but embraced by Kosovar Albanian lawmakers, and was submitted to the U.N. Security Council on March 26 for a final decision after a year of fruitless negotiations between Serb and Albanian diplomats. Ethnic Albanian MPs overwhelmingly approved the April 5 resolution, but it was not voted on by Serb lawmakers, who have boycotted Kosovo's parliament since a 2004 outbreak of violence against Kosovo's Serb minority. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate will review an April 9 resolution introduced by Senate Foreign Relations Committee members Joseph Lieberman, John McCain, Gordon Smith and Committee chairman Joseph Biden that backs the U.N. proposal and urges President Bush to do the same. The senators' resolution calls for Bush to pressure the Security Council to approve the U.N. proposal, and for the establishment of diplomatic ties with an independent Kosovo under the condition that it move toward democracy and provide protection for its Serb population. Support for the proposal has also been mounting in the U.N. Security Council, where, according to Council president Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the governments of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the U.S. and Russia are expected to draft a possible resolution by the end of April. But despite the progress of the negotiations, Council members have not been able to secure the backing of permanent member Russia, which continues to support Serbia in opposing independence for Kosovo. Considered the cradle of Serb civilization, Kosovo is Serbia's most treasured province, but has been administered by a U.N. provisional government since a 1999 NATO air campaign ended fighting between Kosovar Albanians and ethnic Serbs. (B92, April 9; WP, April 3, 5, 2007).

Serbian Supreme Court upholds war crimes conviction for Kosovar Albanian: Rejecting an appeal for transfer to Kosovo, the Supreme Court of Serbia reaffirmed a September 2006 verdict sentencing former guerrilla fighter Anton Lejak to 13 years in prison for war crimes committed during the 1999 Kosovo conflict. The 2006 conviction stemmed from charges brought against Lejak and several others, all former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) that fought Serb counterinsurgency forces in the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Lejak and the other KLA fighters were implicated in the June 1999 kidnapping of eleven guests from a Roma wedding party, and were accused of holding the captives in a hotel basement where they raped one, sexually abused another, and executed four. The court received Lejak via extradition from Montenegro after he was arrested in an attempted carjacking. But because the court lacks jurisdiction over United Nations-administered Kosovo, it has been unable to obtain custody over other Kosovar suspected war criminals, many of whom remain in Serbia's southernmost province. The Lejak ruling comes amid the trial of two Serbs at the Supreme Court for their involvement in the murder of three ethnic Albanians, as well as proceedings against former Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

(ICTY) for the torture and killing of Roma and Serb collaborators. All the alleged crimes were committed during the 1999 conflict, which was ended by a 78-day NATO air campaign in Kosovo and Belgrade. After having administered the province for the past eight years, the U.N. is reviewing a proposal to grant Kosovo independence. (B92; WP, April 5, 2007).

NEPAL

Maoists enter political mainstream: Former Maoist rebels joined an interim government April 1 under a peace deal that would bring them into the political mainstream. In a statement made by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala responded by stating, “A new chapter has begun in the history of Nepal.” The formation of the interim cabinet was delayed from March 30 to April 1 due to differences over ministerial seniority rankings. The Maoists, who agreed to a peace deal last year after an insurgency that killed 13,000 people since 1996, took five of the 21 ministries including the departments of information, local development, planning and works, forestry, and women and children. While Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula saw this event as a step ahead for Nepal, he also drew attention to the fact that as the Maoists had formally joined the interim cabinet, the peace process had theoretically ended. The Maoists were urged to remain true to their commitments since the deal had still not been put into practice. Up until last year’s truce, the Maoists were engaged in a violent civil conflict with the state. They have now joined the government and constituent assembly elections as the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, that would have decided Nepal’s future as a kingdom or republic. (BBC, April 1; Reuters, April 2, 2007)

Trouble in Terai region threatens constituent assembly elections: In an April 11 statement, the Madhesi People’s Rights Forum (MPRF) said it would call a general strike to renew its quest for regional autonomy. MPRF Chief Upendra Yadav said, “We have called for a general strike on April 20, 21 and 22 in the entire Madhesi region against the anti-Madhesi and anti-democracy policy of the government.” The MPRF, which masterminded a series of deadly protests earlier this year in large parts of the Terai, the narrow strip of land that borders India and is home to the historically repressed Madhesi, has refused talks with the government. The Forum insists that Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula must resign, and accused him of ordering excessive force to quell protests. Additionally, the Janatantrik Terai Liberation Front (JTTLF), which split from the main Maoist rebel group in 2004, has also threatened to disrupt constituent assembly elections scheduled for June 20. The elections constitute the cornerstone of the 2006 peace deal signed between the Nepali government and the Maoists, which put an end to the decade-long civil war that took more than 13,000 lives. (Reuters, April 10, 11, 2007)

SOMALIA

High-ranking U.S. official meets with government leaders: Underscoring growing international concern over lawlessness in Somalia, U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer met April 8 with President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi, clan leaders, and members of civil society to address the security situation in the country. Frazer, the most prominent U.S. official to visit Somalia since 1994, warned conference attendees about the danger posed by global jihadists who aimed to make the country ungovernable, and recommended that clan, government and civil society leaders work toward reconciliation. Speaking in the government-controlled market town of Baidoa, Frazer suggested the opening of dialogue between the different parties to the conflict. Frazer’s comments came as the government prepared for an April 16 conference for national reconciliation, scheduled after a ceasefire was declared between Yusuf’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and clan leaders. The March 24 truce ended the bloodiest week of conflict in the country since the December 26 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts. Fighting since the ouster has killed over 1,000 civilians and displaced hundreds of thousands more, and has escalated since the arrival of the vanguard of an African

Union mission sent to the country to assist the TFG in restoring stability to the country. The mission has deployed 1,200 Ugandan troops and expects to send an additional 6,800 troops from Burundi, Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria to replace the Ethiopian troops that have occupied the country since helping TFG forces to overthrow the Courts. In the April 8 meeting, Frazer highlighted the importance of the African Union mission, but urged that Ethiopian troops not withdraw prematurely. She also condemned Eritrea for its alleged role in destabilizing the country by supporting jihadist elements, many of which are remnant forces of the Courts that TFG officials have accused of waging the insurgency. Prior to the Courts' six-month rule, Somalia had lacked an effective central government since 1991, when warlords' overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre plunged the country into violence. Except for the Courts, none of the 15 governments following the Barre regime has been able to consolidate control over Somalia. A U.N. intervention mission was deployed in 1993 to help stabilize and develop the country, but withdrew shortly after 18 American soldiers were killed, mutilated and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. (BBC, April 6; WP, April 8, 2007).

Recent fighting raises concerns over possible war crimes: An anonymous April 6 e-mail received by European Union official Eric van der Linden warned that a recent offensive by government, Ethiopian and African Union forces against insurgents in Mogadishu may have resulted in the perpetration of war crimes. The unknown author, thought to hold a senior position in a government or intergovernmental organization, described how the forces intentionally attacked and forced the displacement of civilians, in effect violating the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The accusations follow a week of what the International Committee of the Red Cross has deemed the heaviest fighting in Somalia in the last 15 years, with attacks between government-aligned forces and insurgents killing at least 380 civilians, wounding up to 700, and displacing 50,000 from the capital. A March 24 ceasefire stopped the fighting and allowed for talks between Ethiopian military officials and leaders of the Hawiye clan, which is suspected to be supporting the insurgents. In response to the April 6 e-mail, European diplomats have begun to analyze the legal ramifications of the war crimes, and a Somalia-based human rights group has announced that it has started to gather evidence of the crimes for submission to the ICC. Many of the attacks have been staged in residential areas, and have disproportionately affected civilians, prompting President Abdullahi Yusuf to advise residents to leave their homes. Yusuf has attributed the insurgency to remnant forces of the Union of Islamic Courts, which controlled the country for six months until their December 26 ouster by government and Ethiopian forces. During their rule, the Courts imposed Shar'ia law and suppressed the violence that had plagued Somalia throughout the previous 15 years. In response to deteriorating security conditions since the Courts' overthrow, the African Union has begun deployment of an intervention force composed of troops from Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda to Somalia to help restore stability. (BBC, April 3; WP, April 3, 6, 2007).

SRI LANKA

Soldiers and civilians killed in two bus bombings in North and East: A bomb detonated inside a crowded bus killing sixteen civilians, including three children, April 2 in eastern Sri Lanka. The ministry of defense immediately accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), but the Tamil Tigers denied any responsibility for the incident. The blast occurred as President Mahinda Rajapakse was visiting India to take part in a South Asian summit. On April 7, days after the first explosion took place, a roadside bomb hit a bus in northern Sri Lanka resulting in the deaths of seven people. According to the defense ministry, the bus hit a Claymore mine on the outskirts of Vavuniya, 155 miles north of Colombo and the last government-held town before reaching Tamil Tiger-held territory. The LTTE was accused of the second attack but has denied this accusation as well. LTTE spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthiraiyan claimed that the bombings were part of a military intelligence program to destroy the Tigers' reputation internationally. Although the

LTTE and military have been officially observing a 2002 ceasefire, violence has continued to escalate as the army continues to make gains into Tamil-held territory, displacing tens of thousands. (BBC, April 7, 2007).

Leader of splinter rebel faction grants rare media interview: BBC Colombo correspondent Roland Buerk met with Colonel Karuna Amman April 4 for an interview. Karuna, whose real name is Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan, has led a breakaway faction of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since 2004. Prior to the split, Karuna described himself as the second-in-command of the LTTE, leading commander in the East and one of the most successful rebel leaders on the battlefield. Karuna left the LTTE because, in his view, a disproportionate number of cadres of eastern Tamil Tigers were being sacrificed in battle while Tigers in the north, in control of the LTTE, remained safe. The founder and current leader of the LTTE, Velupillai Prabhakaran, enlisted Karuna as a trusted aide in the past. Karuna has asserted that Prabhakaran was never serious about the 2002 ceasefire with the Sri Lankan government, and that Prabhakaran led the LTTE to drag out the peace talks as long as possible in order to buy more arms and prepare for the next stage of fighting. Karuna rejected all claims that his breakaway faction has been working alongside the government, saying that “we being together with them (the military) is not right, we have never been together with them and we will not be together with them.” Karuna’s alternative explanation was that his faction’s departure had taken away 70 percent of the Tigers’ fighting force, and that as a result, the military had been given renewed strength to take back rebel-held areas in the North and East. Colonel Karuna also denied allegations that his organization is recruiting child soldiers, saying that there is no need to recruit them because his faction is a political, not military, body. Karuna further stated that he no longer hopes for a separate Tamil state but, rather, an integrated Sri Lanka free of ethnic division and conflict. He expressed a desire to build up the economy and education for the areas most affected by the war so that Sri Lanka could become a strong and united country. The Karuna faction has added a new element to an ethnic conflict that has afflicted the country for over two decades. (BBC, April 4, 2007).

SUDAN

Chadian and Sudanese killed in cross-border clash: The Sudanese military beat back members of the Chadian army the night of April 9 after the Chadians crossed into Sudanese territory, chasing rebels after a day of intense fighting. According to a senior Chadian official, approximately thirty soldiers from both sides were killed in the clash, followed by the army’s retreat back into Chad. A Sudanese army spokesman claimed that seventeen Sudanese were killed and forty injured. A Chad government spokesman reported that eight Chadian government soldiers and many rebels were killed, while the rebel group Chadian Nation Concord (CNT) issued its own statement saying that ten of its fighters had been killed in the battle which lasted for six hours causing significant human and material losses. Both Chad and Sudan have accused each other in the past of supporting rebels in their respective countries, and the Chadian government has argued that Sudan has been intent on destabilizing its neighboring country. The Sudanese government has refused the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces to patrol the Chad-Sudan border, as well as to provide security for the millions of Sudanese who have been displaced in the past four years of fighting in the Darfur region, which borders Chad. (ST, April 9, 2007).

China and South Africa press Khartoum to accept peacekeeping force: The Sudanese government has been facing increased pressure from the international community to show more flexibility in allowing a peacekeeping force to enter the region of Darfur. China, a key ally with billions of dollars invested in Sudan’s oil industry, has remained relatively inactive in the past, but Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun recently asked President Omar al-Bashir to do more to improve security in Darfur. The BBC reported that China has been seen as the key in unlocking Khartoum’s unrelenting opposition to United Nations (U.N.) peace-keeping forces. In addition, Sudan has bought military hardware from China, and

Chinese workers have been sent to Sudan to build dams, roads and bridges. Mr. Zhai Jun stated that the Chinese government expected Sudan to comply more fully with a plan proposed by former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006 for a hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force. South African President Thabo Mbeki has also applied pressure on Khartoum to accept a peacekeeping force and provide for a full implementation of Annan's proposal. Although Al-Bashir agreed to the plan in November, conflicts arose over the plan's details, impeding the peacekeeping process. Sudan faces increasing pressure from many in the international community to bring peace to the war-torn area of Darfur. ([BBC](#), April 9, 10, 2007).

UGANDA

Government negotiators make significant progress at informal meeting with LRA: Ugandan negotiators, led by President Yoweri Museveni's younger brother General Salim Saleh, made significant progress in talks between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in a conference held in Mombasa, on the Kenyan coast. Pax Christi, a Catholic peace group supporting the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, said the March 31-April 6 meeting had reached "significant agreements" on extending the truce between the two parties. The peace group said both the government and LRA delegations had agreed on policies to address the marginalization of northern Uganda, adding that the government would ask parliament to pass laws recognizing the Acholi traditional alternative justice system of Mato Oput—a process which would require LRA rebels to acknowledge their crimes, ask forgiveness and pay reparation. Furthermore, Pax Christi stated that the government would then approach the International Criminal Court regarding the indictments of four LRA commanders. The Ugandan government said earlier this month it expected the talks to resume April 13 in Juba, Southern Sudan, after South Africa, Kenya and Mozambique agreed to join the peace process as mediators. ([Monitor: Nation](#), April 9; [Reuters](#), April 11, 2007).

Forceful disarmament operations in North-east spark heavy clashes: More than 100 persons have reportedly been killed during raids, battles or bombings, and many more displaced due to intense fighting between Karamojong warriors and the Ugandan military in the north-eastern Karamoja region. The drought-prone region has suffered banditry and inter-clan warfare for decades, fueled by disputes over shrinking water supplies and an overflow of cheap semi-automatic weapons trafficked from the Horn of Africa. The disarmament process has been characterized by brutality and serious rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions and torture conducted with impunity by the Ugandan military. The nongovernmental organization Save the Children UK said March 30 that it had met 256 people whose accounts indicated that 66 children were shot by troops, run over by armored cars, or crushed as animals stampeded during a February 12 military raid aimed at cattle rustlers in the Kotido district of the Karamoja. Lieutenant Henry Obbo of the Ugandan army rejected the report, alleging that the cattle rustlers had taken to dressing in women's clothing or school uniforms to dupe military patrols. UNICEF also accused the military of using "indiscriminate and excessive" force in Karamoja last November. ([Reuters](#), March 28, 30, 2007).

