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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)
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)
The Hindu	=	The Hindu Newspaper (http://www.hinduonnet.com/)
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)
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune (http://www.iht.com/)
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)
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)
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)

UPDATE SUMMARY

AFGHANISTAN

Police die in suicide bombing; Government refuses to negotiate with kidnappers

GUATEMALA

Guatemala begins restructuring police force; Political activist killed

KOSOVO

Conflicting statements illustrate divide on Kosovo issue; U.N. plans mission amid dip in approval ratings

NEPAL

Constituent assembly elections delayed; Maoists threaten mass protests if republic is not declared

SOMALIA

Government official accuses Ethiopian troops of genocide; Wave of violence delays plans for reconciliation conference

SRI LANKA

Violence continues throughout the country

SUDAN

Sudan agrees to United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping force; Sudanese government troops accused of killing seventy-three civilians in northern Darfur

UGANDA

Government and LRA renew expired truce; Police arrest opposition members over deadly riot

UPDATES

AFGHANISTAN

Police die in suicide bombing: Ten policemen were killed and dozens wounded April 16 in northeastern Afghanistan after a suicide bomber blew himself up on a police training field. The attack took place in Kunduz, a city located 150 miles north of Kabul. Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi claimed the Taliban were responsible for the attack. The bombing was preceded by a combined United States and Afghan attack on militants in Ghazni province that took place April 15, killing fifteen insurgents and wounding another fifteen. Additionally, in eastern Paktika province U.S.-led coalition forces attacked suspected Taliban members who were crossing from Pakistan into Afghanistan, killing ten and injuring fifteen. The effort to step up military operations along the Pakistani-Afghan border comes as 4,500 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces and 1,000 Afghan troops engage in Operation Achilles in the southern, opium-producing Helmand province. The operation was launched in March to combat the growing number of militants who have taken refuge in the area. Suicide attacks in Afghanistan increased from about twenty in 2005 to almost one hundred forty in 2006. The allied troops arrived in Afghanistan in October 2001 in a U.S.- and British-led operation that ousted the Taliban from power. The bombing in Kunduz is the worst attack in the north since the launch of that operation, and Taliban leaders have warned coalition forces that more attacks are imminent. (NYT, April 16; WP, April 16, 17, 2007).

Government refuses to negotiate with kidnappers: Afghanistan's foreign minister, Rangeen Dadfar Spanta, declared April 15 that the government would no longer make prisoner exchange deals with kidnappers. The statement came after the release of a videotape of two French aid workers whom Taliban militants claimed to be holding hostage in southwestern Nimruz province. The Taliban have threatened to decapitate the aid workers and send their heads back to Paris should the Afghan government not comply with their demands. Additionally, five Afghan health workers are being held captive by the Taliban in southern Kandahar. Last month Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo was kidnapped in Helmand province and freed after the Afghan government released five Taliban prisoners. However, future prisoner swaps are not expected to occur as the exchanges were severely criticized by the United States and Britain, who claimed that such procedures endanger NATO troops by returning militants to the battlefield, and that they also encourage future abductions. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that he supported the international rules being drawn up to deal with hostage crises, stating that common rules are needed to address the issue. He invited all countries to present to the General Assembly their guideline proposals on how to respond to kidnappings. 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. (NYT, April 16; WP, April 15, 18, 2007).

GUATEMALA

Guatemala begins restructuring police force: The Guatemalan government has begun to restructure and purge the national police force after the dismissal of almost 600 policemen and the replacement of police chiefs and commissioners last March. The purge consists of moving agents accused of having committed crimes such as robbery, extortion, kidnapping and murder from the police department. The Constitutional Court released a resolution April 12 that would give authorities the ability to fire policemen linked to such crimes. The purging process is directed by recently appointed Interior Minister Adela de Torrebiarte, who began restructuring the police force the week of April 9, naming nine new police chiefs and vice ministers. Torrebiarte replaced Carlos Vielmann who resigned from office after being accused of having knowledge of death squads inside the country's police force. Many police offices were vacated after Erwin Sperissen, previous national police chief, and several other officials submitted their resignations after the murder of three Salvadoran diplomats and their driver

exposed extensive corruption in the police department. In addition to launching a restructuring of the force, President Oscar Berger and the United Nations have proposed a commission—International Commission Against Impunity—in Guatemala to purge the police force of corruption and to investigate human rights abuses. Much of the organized crime within Guatemala is a legacy of Guatemala's 36 year long civil war that ended in 1996 and took over 200,000 lives. (La Opinion Digital, April 14, 15; Terra, April 10, 2007).

Political activist killed: Two members of the National Unity of Hope (*Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza* or UNE), a center-left political party, were shot April 14 as they were returning home from a political meeting. Fernando Mejía de la Rosa was the municipal secretary general of UNE in Masagua, located in the south central department of Escuintla, and was working on Oscar Oswaldo Alfaro's campaign for mayor of Masagua in upcoming elections. Mejía's wife, Delmis Yolanda Flores Morales, was also active in UNE politics. Juan José Alfaro, UNE's national adjunct secretary, expressed concern that the murders could be politically related as more than 21 UNE members have been assassinated since 2004. He was also troubled because many of the murder investigations have provided little to no results. UNE strategic director Jose Carlos Marroquín stated his regret that the campaign had taken a violent turn before it had even officially begun and was concerned that violence was becoming an everyday issue in politics. UNE won 17.6 percent of the popular vote in the 2003 legislative elections and its presidential candidate, Alvaro Colom Caballeros, gained 45.9 percent in the second round of presidential elections, ultimately losing to current president Oscar Berger of the Grand National Alliance. UNE, which publicly denounced human rights abuses, was the most frequently attacked party during the 2003 elections, as the rightist Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG) party, led by former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, used intimidation and direct attacks in an attempt remain in power. Impunity remains a major problem in Guatemala in the wake of a 36-yearlong civil war that left a legacy of violence. (Prens Libre, April 16, 2007).

KOSOVO

Conflicting statements illustrate divide on Kosovo issue: Less than a week after Serbian President Boris Tadic declared that Serbia would never accept independence for Kosovo, United Nations official Albert Rohan stated April 16 that the province would be independent by the summer of 2007. Rohan, the deputy to U.N. special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, who authored a February 6 proposal to grant Kosovo independence, predicted that Russia would not veto the proposal when it came up for a vote in the U.N. Security Council. Russia has supported Serbia in opposing Ahtisaari's proposal, which calls for Kosovo independence with initial European Union oversight. Unwilling to give up on the prospect of negotiated settlement, Russian officials suggested further diplomatic measures after a year-long conference on Kosovo's status ended in failure. After the last round of talks was concluded March 10, Ahtisaari sent his proposal to the Security Council, which is reviewing his plan and is expected to make a decision by April or June 2007. The United States and Western European council members have been raising support in the council for the proposal, but anticipate that a possible veto by Russia may lead to outbreaks of violence in the province. Rohan argued Monday that Russia's veto threat was not serious, since permanent Security Council members rarely exercise their veto power. However, he also warned that independence was the only option for Kosovo and that the current situation there was susceptible to destabilization and violence, and urged Serbian leaders to recognize that they would not be at fault for "losing" Kosovo if it became independent. Rohan's comments follow an April 10 interview with President Tadic, in which Tadic stated that while Serbia would accept Kosovo's political and economic autonomy, it would not allow it to become an independent state. The Serbian president suggested that Serbia was still open to negotiations, and that all parties must reach a mutually acceptable agreement over the status of Kosovo, which has been governed as an international protectorate since a 1999 conflict between majority ethnic Albanians and minority ethnic Serbs. The conflict, which killed over

10,000 and displaced over 1 million civilians, was ended by a 78-day NATO air campaign against Belgrade and parts of Kosovo. (B92, April 16; WP, April 10, 2007).

U.N. plans mission amid dip in approval ratings: The United Nations Security Council will send a mission to Kosovo to assess the situation and review the performance of the current United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), according to an April 14 statement by Vitaly Churkin, the Russian ambassador to the council. The mission, originally proposed by Churkin in March 2007, will confer with the council before the council decides whether to grant Kosovo independence in accordance with a proposal submitted March 26 by former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari. The proposal calls for Kosovo's full independence with initial supervision by the European Union, and has been welcomed by lawmakers of the Albanian majority, but rejected by the province's minority Serbs and the Serbian government. Serbs see Kosovo as their most valued province, considering it the birthplace of Serb civilization, but it has been administered by UNMIK since a 1999 conflict between Albanian secessionists and Serb counterinsurgency forces. One of the tasks of the upcoming mission is to evaluate the progress made since the conflict under the UNMIK administration, which now ranks among the least popular of all U.N. institutions. In an April 12 "Early Warning" report, the United Nations Development Program listed UNMIK approval ratings at 24 percent, the lowest since March 2004 riots by ethnic Albanians resulted in nineteen deaths, and a drop of over 36 percent since 2002. UNMIK's recent unpopularity has been attributed to Kosovo's poor economic situation and high unemployment rate, for which many Kosovars blame the administration. Kosovo has remained economically depressed and ethnically divided since the 1999 conflict, which NATO forces ended with air campaigns against Kosovo and Belgrade. Serbia opposes Kosovo's independence partly out of concern for the province's minority Serbs, who constitute less than 10 percent of the population. (WP, April 12, 14, 2007).

NEPAL

Constituent assembly elections delayed: The Election Commission of Nepal said April 13 there was not enough time to hold elections for a constituent assembly in June, insisting that to rush would be detrimental to the success of the peace process. Commission Chief Bhoh Raj Pokharel, told reporters, "We need at least 110 days before the polling day, even after necessary laws concerning the election are in place." Violent protests in the Terai, the narrow strip of land that borders India and is home to the historically repressed Madhesis, have hindered the peace process. Analysts have said that if a vote does not take place in June, the constituent assembly elections would have to be pushed back to October or November, after the monsoon season has passed. Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) Chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who uses one name, Prachanda, said that the basis of the unity between the Maoists and the government was the elections, and that unity had been broken. Moreover, the Unified Marxist Leninist party said that the inefficiency of the government and the prime minister were to blame for the delay. Although negative reactions within the government have surfaced, international analysts agreed with the Election Commission's decision to postpone the vote to a more stable date. On April 1, the Maoists joined an interim government as part of a November 2006 peace agreement that put an end to a decade-long civil war that took more than 13,000 lives. (BBC, April 13; IRIN, April 16; Reuters, April 13, 2007).

Maoists threaten mass protests if republic is not declared: Maoists responded to the delay of the constituent assembly elections formerly scheduled for mid-June by threatening mass protests April 16 in an attempt to press the government to declare the country a republic. The elections are expected to determine the fate of the monarchy in Nepal. Maoist second in command, Baburam Bhattarai, said, "If elections can't be held on time the interim parliament should declare a republic ... If political parties don't agree to our proposal then we will go to the people and organize mass protests." Bhattarai also stated that the June elections were the main basis of unity between the Maoists and an alliance of the

seven main political parties, and with the elections no longer taking place as expected that basis had crumbled. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala said that whether or not to adopt a republic would depend on Maoist behavior, and on the Maoists' trust in the seven-party alliance. The former rebels, who led a decade-long insurgency in which more than 13,000 people were killed, joined the interim government earlier this month under a peace agreement signed November 2006. (Kantipur; Reuters, April 16, 2007).

SOMALIA

Government official accuses Ethiopian troops of genocide: Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Aidede alleged April 14 that Ethiopian troops have committed genocide in Somalia, and urged them to withdraw from the country. Ethiopia immediately responded by denying the charges. Aidede, a former warlord brought into the cabinet of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), issued his allegations in the third week of a ceasefire that has allowed for talks between Ethiopian military officials and leaders of the dominant Hawiye clan. Ethiopian troops have occupied Somalia since supporting the TFG in its December 26 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts, and have assisted government forces in trying to suppress insurgent forces. The ensuing violence has killed thousands of civilians and displaced tens of thousands more. The insurgency has been attributed to remnant forces of the Courts, and has been supported by militias from the Hawiye clan of which Aidede is a member. Aidede's comments underscore the divisions within the government, which on April 13 voted to expel 31 members of parliament. Among the expelled MPs was former parliament speaker Sharif Hassan Adan, who, like Aidede, has voiced opposition to the Ethiopian presence in Somalia and has called for peace talks with insurgents and members of the Courts. Prior to the Courts' six-month rule, Somalia had lacked an effective government since an alliance of warlords turned on each other after overthrowing President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, leaving the country in a state of lawlessness. United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross have labeled the current violence in Somalia the worst in 15 years. (BBC, April 13, 18, 2007).

Wave of violence delays plans for reconciliation conference: A series of battles in Mogadishu has killed at least nine and injured over 50, threatening a fragile three-week ceasefire and prompting organizers of a conference on peace and reconciliation to reschedule it from May to June. On April 14 and 15 clashes between insurgents and Ethiopian and government troops left two Somali troops dead, and were followed by an April 18 shelling of residential areas that killed at least seven people. Despite the recent violence, the March 24 ceasefire between Ethiopian military officials and leaders of the dominant Hawiye clan still holds, but the delay in the prospective reconciliation conference is the second one to date. Originally scheduled for April, the conference was initially pushed back after a four-day assault by government-aligned forces, begun March 21, that killed hundreds and raised suspicions of war crimes. Following the April 14-15 violence, the chairman of a committee responsible for planning the conference announced that it had once again been rescheduled and would now be held June 14. The organization of the conference followed calls by the locally-based Elman Human Rights Group for the government to take steps toward national reconciliation. Somalia has been plagued by violence since the December 26 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts by Ethiopian and government troops, after which remnant forces of the Courts began an insurgency against pro-government forces. Since the Courts' overthrow, the insurgency has expanded to include militias from the Hawiye clan, and has garnered support from opposition to the presence of Ethiopian troops. An African Union mission supported by Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda has deployed 1,200 troops (the entire troop contribution is Uganda's) to Somalia to help stabilize the country, which has lacked a tenable, effective government since the 1991 overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre. (BBC, April 18; WP, April 15, 2007).

SRI LANKA

Violence continues throughout the country: Air force jets bombed a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) training base in northern Sri Lanka April 17 setting off an explosion and fire due to an arms store inside the base. The attack happened at an LTTE camp in the village of Vattappalai in the Mullaitivu district, which has been a Tiger stronghold. Also April 17, Lieutenant Colonel Upali Rajapakse (no relation to President Mahinda Rajapakse) reported that two men were shot, allegedly by Tiger rebels in the eastern Batticaloa district. In addition, a local aid worker was shot by an unidentified gunman in the eastern district of Amapara, and in the northeast, Tiger rebels were suspected of killing a civilian April 16. According to the Ministry of Defense, intercepted Tiger communication showed that the LTTE had kidnapped two families who were trying to escape a rebel-held area and make their way to the cleared area of Mannar on the northwestern tip of the island. The continued violence and unrest has coincided with New Year festivities, observed by both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities throughout the country. Although the government and rebels signed a ceasefire brokered by the Norwegian government in 2002, an unofficial civil war has been escalating since 2005, bringing the death toll to more than 69,000 Sri Lankans since 1983. (International Herald Tribune; The Hindu, April 17, 2007).

SUDAN

Sudan agrees to United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping force: Monday April 16 marked the day that President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan withdrew his opposition to a large-scale U.N. peacekeeping force to fortify the current African Union troops in Darfur. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution August 31 of 2006 to deploy this force. Because al-Bashir had repeatedly rejected the U.N. force on the charge that it would violate his country's sovereignty, international pressure had been building for Khartoum to consent to the force. Approximately 200,000 persons have been killed (some estimates are as high as 400,000) and over two million uprooted in the Darfur region. The peacekeeping force was to consist of 3,000 well-equipped military police officers along with aviation and logistical support, including six controversial attack helicopters; al-Bashir had previously cited the helicopters as a reason for rejecting the peacekeeping force. After U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon reassured al-Bashir that the helicopter gunships would not be used in offensive operations, the president relented. United States deputy secretary of state John Negroponte stated that the U.N. "must move quickly to a larger U.N.-African Union (A.U.) force with a single unified chain of command that conforms to U.N. standards and practices." This larger force has still to be agreed on by al-Bashir, but Ban Ki-Moon seemed hopeful that the U.N. and A.U. would be moving quickly to deploy the force in order to halt the violence that has decimated the region since 2003. (NY Times, April 16, 2007).

Sudanese government troops accused of killing seventy-three civilians in northern Darfur: A Sudanese rebel group has alleged that the Sudanese government army and Janjaweed militia attacked eleven villages in the Sires Umm al-Qura area of northern Darfur since April 15, killing seventy-three civilians and causing people to flee the area. An army spokesman denied the claims saying that the Sudanese armed forces had no operations in the Sires area and blaming the violence on tribal clashes. A commander in one of the rebel factions belonging to the Sudan Liberation Army, Ibrahim al-Helu, corroborated the accusations of government-sponsored violence on the same day that the United States accused Khartoum of not implementing the 2006 peace accord signed by both the government and one rebel group that has since splintered. Although the peace accord was unstable from the beginning since only one out the three rebel factions signed it, the splintering has had a further destabilizing effect on the region by contributing to further tribal feuds, thievery and Janjaweed activity. The United States accusations against Khartoum came prior to Sudan's acceptance of the U.N. peacekeeping force April 16. Lack of accountability for widespread violent acts has characterized the Darfur conflict, now in its fourth year. (ST, April 17, 2007).

UGANDA

Government and LRA renew expired truce: Shaking hands and embracing, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels and government officials signed a new two-month truce April 14 in Ri-Kwangba, on the Sudan-Democratic Republic of Congo border, which would restart stalled peace talks. The peace talks, aimed at putting an end to the 21-year-long conflict that has killed thousands and displaced close to two million people, expired February 28 after the LRA refused to continue negotiating with the government, citing security fears. The two sides decided to resume talks April 26 in the southern Sudanese capital of Juba. The deal gave the LRA a six-week deadline to assemble its fighters in Ri-Kwangba, and guaranteed their security. The meeting was chaired by former Mozambique President and United Nations special envoy for the conflict, Joaquim Chissano. The government team, led by Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda, and the LRA team, headed by Joseph Kony, agreed that the talks would continue to be mediated by southern Sudanese vice-president Riek Machar. Chissano has said about the recommenced negotiations, "I believe sincerely that this is a no-return trip towards peace in Uganda." Despite the optimism, both parties recognized that progress toward final peace talks would be complicated by the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments against Kony and four other LRA commanders. Peace talks began July 2006 in Juba but broke down in January when the LRA walked out from the peace negotiations after Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir vowed to "get rid of the LRA from Sudan." ([IRIN](#), April 13, April 16; [Reuters](#), April 14, 2007)

Police arrest opposition members over deadly riot: Ugandan police said April 16 they had arrested two opposition members of parliament and 25 other people in connection with a violent demonstration against a government proposal that would lease almost a third of the Mabira rainforest reserve to the Indian-owned Sugar Corporation of Uganda. The April 12 riot, in which three people were killed including a man of Indian origin who was stoned to death, took place in Kampala during a protest organized by MPs Beatrice Atim and Hussein Kyanjo. Although spokesman Simeo Nsubuga affirmed the police had "27 suspects in custody suspected of crimes ranging from murder to incitement to violence, shop-breaking and theft and assault," he did not say what sentences they might face. So far, parliament has not yet changed the status of the forest due to the array of opinions within the government itself. President Yoweri Museveni has said in support of his decision that short-sighted people have been unable to understand where the future of Africa lies, adding that conservation is a luxury best left to rich nations. Scenes of South Asian men dragged off motorcycles and beaten while others ran for protection brought back bitter memories of 1972, when Uganda's late dictator Idi Amin expelled 75,000 Asians from the country. The rainforest controversy began last year when Museveni ordered a study into whether to raze 17,000 acres of the Mabira rainforest—a nature reserve since 1932—to expand sugar plantations in central Uganda. Critics have said that axing Mabira would devastate local ecosystems and dry up lakes and rivers. ([BBC](#), April 13; [Reuters](#), April 16, 17, 2007).

