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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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SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

ADNKI	=	ADNKI (www.adnki.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africanfocus.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)
B92 News	=	B92 News (www.b92.net/eng/news)
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)
KL	=	KosovaLive (www.kosovalive.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)
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)
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)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)

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AFGHANISTAN

Karzai and Musharraf meet in Turkey to ease Afghanistan-Pakistan tensions: After a two-day meeting brokered by the Turkish government, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf signed the Ankara Declaration, which stated that Afghanistan and Pakistan would work together to fight all forms of extremism and terrorism through coordinated action. The trilateral talks between the two aforementioned presidents and Turkish President Ahmed Necdet Sezer and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan ended with an agreement to share intelligence on extremist groups in an effort to deny sanctuary, training and financing to terrorist leaders and others involved in anti-state activities. Additionally, Karzai and Musharraf pledged to work together to promote peace and stability in the region by strengthening bilateral relations through respect for territorial integrity and ensuring non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The two also pledged to combat increased poppy cultivation, highlighting the connection between terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. A Joint Working Group was established to monitor progress on the agreed matters and to ensure the declaration's implementation. The meeting was prompted by increasing quarrels between the Afghan and Pakistani presidents who have different views of how to deal with the re-emergence of Taliban militants. Karzai has repeatedly accused Musharraf of allowing Taliban fighters to operate along the Pakistan-Afghan border while Musharraf has rebutted the claim saying that Afghans have not provided adequate intelligence for his government to use to prevent militants from operating in the region. Taliban attacks in Afghanistan have increased significantly in the past three months and United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops have launched several operations to combat the insurgency. Since Pakistan became a U.S. ally in 2001 it has deployed 80,000 soldiers to its Afghan border to track down militants. (News Network International, NYT, April 30, 2007).

Coalition forces launch offensive against Taliban: British- and United States-led coalition troops killed over 130 Taliban fighters in two separate battles in the western province of Herat according to a U.S. military statement released April 30. Both battles took place in the Zerkoh valley in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) effort to expel the Taliban from its stronghold and bring the region back under President Hamid Karzai's control. The first battle April 27, killed 49 Taliban members and the second one, April 29, lasted 14 hours and killed 87 Taliban militants. Thousands of local Afghan villagers protested the deaths, demonstrating at the district government headquarters and saying that the allied troops had killed civilians, not Taliban. The U.S. claimed that air support and Afghan forces were involved in the fighting but Herat governor Sayed Hussein Anwari rejected the claim saying that the Americans had carried out an independent operation. He also confirmed reports that civilians had been injured by police firing during the protests. The protest came one day after locals in eastern Nangahar province staged a demonstration over the killing of civilians by coalition forces in the area. NATO and Afghan forces have killed over 150 Taliban and foreign fighters since the beginning of the U.S.-led Operation Achilles, launched in March in an attempt to eradicate Taliban fighters from the opium-producing Helmand province. The province's poppy fields, however, were left untouched as their destruction would antagonize the two million farmers whose livelihoods depend on the crop. The surge in violence, including an increase in Taliban suicide and roadside bombings, prompted NATO forces to launch a series of offensives across the country. The recent clashes have been deadliest since a U.S. - and British-led coalition ousted the Taliban in October 2001. (NYT; Reuters, April 30, 2007).

GUATEMALA

U.S. congressmen urge Guatemala to arrest former dictator: United States lawmakers petitioned the Guatemalan government April 27 in an effort prevent former dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt from receiving protection against prosecution on human rights violations. Thirty-one members of Congress, including representatives from the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and the House Appropriations

State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee urged Attorney General Juan Luis Florido to arrest Ríos Montt and others accused of genocide during Guatemala's 36-yearlong civil war that lasted from 1960-1996. They urged that Ríos Montt be arrested on outstanding warrants for genocide and torture issued by Spanish Judge Santiago Pedraz in 2006 after Ríos Montt was found guilty in connection with a 1980 attack by Guatemalan security forces on demonstrators at the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala. On April 28, the Guatemalan Republican Front party publicly endorsed Ríos Montt as their candidate for a seat in Congress in the upcoming September elections. The announcement triggered international outcry from human rights groups who say that should Ríos Montt win, he would enjoy four years of immunity from prosecution because of a national law that prohibits members of congress from being arrested. Ríos Montt was president from 1982-1983, during Guatemala's bloodiest period of conflict. Over 200,000 people were killed during the war with the main victims being native Mayan Indians. According to a United Nations report, over 90 percent of the killings were carried out by the Guatemalan government which at the time was supported by the Reagan administration. Rights groups have filed criminal genocide complaints against Ríos Montt, who has adamantly denied any wrongdoing. Andrew Hudson, a member of the Human Rights Defenders program—a nonprofit organization based in New York and Washington—said that prosecuting Ríos Montt could help break Guatemala's culture of impunity. (Sacramento for Democracy, April 27; WP, April 28, 2007).

Organized crime on the rise: Guatemala's murder rate has risen quickly in the past few years with 6,033 people killed in 2006, according to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) study. The data show an increase of more than 13 percent from 2005 and the murder rate is higher than during even the 36-yearlong civil war. According to the director of the presidential human rights commission, Frank La Rue, organized crime has taken over the country. Much of the violence is due to rival youth gangs, called *maras*, and government figures suggest that there are somewhere between 20,000 and 50,000 gang members in Guatemala with some experts putting the figure closer to 200,000. UNDP officials speculate that a lack of employment opportunities, educational facilities and recreational spaces has put much of Guatemala's youth at risk of joining gangs. Many gang members are foot soldiers of organized crime, which has profited from the illegal drug trade and has infiltrated some governmental institutions. Corruption within the government was brought to light in late February when four police officers were accused of killing three Salvadoran diplomats and their driver. Political analysts and government officials believed that the arrested officers, who were later killed in their cells in El Boquerón prison, were working for drug-smuggling cartels. The incident exposed the existence of death squads operating within the police force which has since been restructured with the resignation of Interior Minister Carlos Vielmann and dismissal of almost 600 policemen in April. The increasing violence has prompted political candidates in the upcoming September elections to make security a priority in their campaigns. The Guatemalan government and left-wing rebels signed peace accords in 1996 but high crime rates persist and impunity continues to prevail. (Financial Times, April 18, 2007).

KOSOVO

U.S. and EU push for Kosovo independence: In a document issued May 1 at a summit in Washington, the United States and the European Union called upon the United Nations Security Council to immediately adopt a resolution for Kosovo independence. The document, whose signatories included U.S. President George Bush, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, also encouraged involvement by donor organizations in the development of an independent Kosovo. The document came two days after statements by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Dan Fried that the U.S. would recognize Kosovo's independence even without an accompanying U.N. resolution. Richard Holbrooke, architect of the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the 1992-95 war in Bosnia, also asserted February 28 that the U.S. would act unilaterally to make Kosovo independent, and expressed hope that the EU would follow suit. Fried's and Holbrooke's remarks came amid speculation that Russia planned to veto a proposal for Kosovo's independence currently under review

by the United Nations Security Council. Unveiled February 6 by former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, the proposal would allow Kosovo its own flag, national anthem, constitution, and army, as well as self-governance with initial EU supervision. Russia, which shares Slavic cultural roots with Serbia, opposes independence and has repeatedly called for renewed negotiations and for Ahtisaari's replacement. In his April 28 statement, Holbrooke warned that a Russian veto of the Ahtisaari proposal would not prevent Kosovo's independence, but would instead precipitate a violent secession. Meanwhile, the May 1 U.S. and EU joint document sought to dispel Russia's concerns that Kosovo's independence would set a precedent for secessionist movements in other areas of the world. Independence for Kosovo would end its status as an international protectorate, under which it has been governed by a U.N. provisional government since a 1998–99 interethnic conflict between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians. (B92, May 1; WP, April 28, 2007)

Belgrade condemns plans for Serb militias: Plans by nationalist Serb groups to form a Serb “Kosovo Guard” have provoked criticism from various political leaders and government officials, as well as warnings that prospective militia operations could jeopardize Serbs' already-tarnished international reputation. The militia, composed of members of the Serbian Veterans' Movement and the United Serbian People's Movement, has vowed to instigate an insurgency in Kosovo should the province be granted independence. The proclamation comes amid anticipation of an upcoming decision on Kosovo's status by the United Nations Security Council, which is reviewing a March 28 proposal for Kosovo independence. Martti Ahtisaari, the U.N. Special Envoy who engineered the proposal, referred it to the council after a year of fruitless negotiations led to deadlock between Serbian and Kosovar Albanian negotiators. Ethnic Albanians constitute 90 percent of Kosovo's population and welcome independence for Serbia's southernmost province, but Belgrade and Kosovo's minority ethnic Serb population oppose it. Despite Serbia's outright hostility toward the push for Kosovo's independence, President Boris Tadic has issued assurances that Serbia would not employ violence to retain its most cherished province. Meanwhile, all Serb political parties, including the right-wing Radical party, have expressed opposition to the formation of the Kosovo Guard, which reportedly comprises 5,000 war veterans from various Serb communities. In addition, a Serbian Interior Ministry spokesperson warned that formation of such a group was illegal, while Serbian newspaper Danas drew comparisons between the present militia and the Serb counterinsurgency forces that killed Albanian civilians in the 1998–99 interethnic conflict. Since the conflict, which NATO forces ended with air strikes against Kosovo and Belgrade, Kosovo has remained an international protectorate under U.N. administration. (Reuters, April 30, 2007)

NEPAL

Prime Minister vows to guard democracy on its one-year anniversary: April 24 marked the one-year anniversary of the date on which 19 days of mass demonstrations culminated in King Gyanendra's reinstating the parliament, putting an end to absolute monarchical rule and opening the way to democracy. “It is a historic day achieved through the courage, resolve, and sacrifice of the people ... This is a day when the people of Nepal made the struggle for the protection of their rights a success ... No one can hijack it again,” said Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala at a government-sponsored celebration joined by thousands of rejoicing Nepalis. Hours later, demonstrators marched on the streets of Kathmandu demanding an end to the monarchy. Maoists observed the occasion by calling for the declaration of a republic. Maoist chief Prachanda said at a separate rally, also in Kathmandu, “We must unite to turn Nepal into a republic through parliament ... That day will be a real democracy day.” On a May Day rally Prachanda threatened to launch massive protests in parliament and on the streets if the republic was not declared within the next two weeks. He continued that while Maoists still wanted unity with an alliance of seven political parties, that unity now depended on the seven-party alliance's willingness to accept a republic. Koirala, on the other hand, has insisted that the decision of getting rid of the monarchy and forming a republic should be left to an upcoming constituent assembly

as agreed in the peace deal that Maoists signed with the government November 2006 declaring an end to the decade-long civil war. Besides disputes within the government on the question of the monarchy, ethnic unrest in the southern plains of Nepal in which at least 58 people have been killed has overshadowed the peace agreement. (BBC, April 24; Reuters, April 20, 23, 24, May 1)

U.N. says Maoists in breach of peace agreement: A United Nations statement April 30 revealed that the former Maoist rebels had not kept their promise of allowing more than 200,000 internally displaced people (IDP) to return home after a decade-long civil war that killed 13,000 people. Lena Sundth, Chief of the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal said in a statement, "Now that [the Maoists] are part of the interim government it is time for them to prove that they have the will to ensure that those promises are transformed into action at the local level." Sundth added that many IDPs had not been able to return home due to fear of local Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) cadres, who reportedly chased returnees away and in some cases beat them. So far only those IDPs that support or have close affiliation with the CPN-M have been able to return to their properties, said Dilliram Dhakal of the Community Study Welfare Centre, a local NGO that has been advocating for the rights of the displaced. Additionally, problems with the second phase of the Maoist registration with the U.N. have brought negative attention to the former rebels. Chief of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) Ian Martin said May 1 that any pre-conditions regarding the second phase of the Maoist arms and armies' registration and verification would not be acceptable to the UN body. Martin's comment came amid stalemate in the second phase of the registration process of Maoist combatants scheduled for May 1, in which they were planning to identify any child soldiers or recruits enlisted after the beginning of the peace process with the intention of inflating the strength of the movement. Maoists have said that they would not allow the process to begin until conditions at camps housing combatants were improved and the interim government paid a monthly remuneration to the fighters. Maoists joined the interim parliament earlier this year under a power-sharing pact with the government that resulted from a November 2006 comprehensive peace agreement. Under the peace deal, about 31,000 former guerrillas and 3,500 weapons were housed in 28 U.N.-monitored camps. (BBC, April 30; IRIN, April 26; Kantipur, May 1; Reuters, April 30, May 1, 2007)

SOMALIA

U.N. to look into peacekeeping operations in Somalia: In an April 30 statement to the United Nations, the U.N. Security Council requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to develop a contingency plan for the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Somalia. The prospective U.N. peacekeeping mission would reinforce a U.N.-sanctioned African Union mission that has sent an estimated 1,500 Ugandan troops to the country to help restore law and order. The A.U. mission originally planned to send 8,000 troops from Burundi, Ghana, Malawi, and Nigeria, but was unable to raise the proposed troop contributions or to quell the fighting that engulfed Mogadishu. Discussion of the proposed U.N. mission comes amid an April 30 statement by A.U. Lieutenant-General Edward Wamala rejecting government claims that government and Ethiopian forces had defeated the insurgency, and warning that Somalia may experience a resurgence of violence. The government declared victory April 28 after a week-long offensive by pro-government forces pushed insurgent forces out of Mogadishu, killing over 350 residents and displacing thousands. U.N. agencies labeled the recent fighting in Somalia the worst in fifteen years, citing reports that battles between governments and insurgents had killed over 1,300 civilians and forced hundreds of thousands to flee since the December 26 ousting of the Union of Islamic Courts. However, the U.N., while backing the A.U. mission, has resisted involvement in Somalia in light of a 1994 incident in which warlord militias killed and mutilated eighteen American troops, prompting withdrawal of a 1992 U.N. intervention mission. Reflecting these reservations, Security Council President Emyr Jones Perry attached a condition to the council's April 30 statement that the U.N. would not deploy peacekeepers unless the situation in Somalia worsened. Since the 1992 intervention, Somalia has lacked a tenable central government, but enjoyed a brief period of stability

under the six-month rule of the Courts. Following their ouster, remnant forces of the Courts led the insurgency against pro-government forces (WP, April 30, 2007)

Mogadishu residents return amid fears of cholera outbreak: Waves of Mogadishu residents who fled the recent fighting between pro-government and insurgent forces have begun returning to the city, following President Abdullahi Yusuf's claim of victory over the insurgency. Responding to Yusuf's assurances that the fighting had ended, hundreds of refugees have filtered back to the city, either on foot or traveling by bus, but have avoided areas that experienced the heaviest fighting. The influx follows April 28 reports by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) that Somalia could face a cholera outbreak, due in large part to widespread displacements during the fighting. Gun battles and shelling in Mogadishu forced 350-400,000 residents to flee the city, especially during two major government offensives that killed thousands of civilians and have prompted U.N. agencies to label Somalia's refugee crisis the worst in the world. Many of the displaced fled to areas that lack sanitary conditions and access to clean drinking water, resulting in an increase in cholera cases and stoking fears of an impending epidemic. MSF stated in its April 28 report that the 1,200 cholera patients that have checked in to the local cholera treatment center represented only a small portion of cases. Compounding the problem further, the recent fighting has rendered Somali health facilities nearly inoperable, preventing them from supplying clean water and providing adequate oral rehydration therapy. The fighting has also raised suspicions among EU officials that pro-government military operations were intended to provoke mass displacement, and has prompted officials, as well as a Somali-based human rights organization, to look into allegations of war crimes. Somalia has experienced chronic violence for the last fifteen years, and especially since the December 26 ouster of the Union of Islamic Courts. Prior to the six-month rule of the Courts, under which Somalia enjoyed relative peace and stability, the country had lacked an effective government since warlords overthrew military president Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. (BBC, April 28, 30, 2007)

SRI LANKA

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam launch third air raid: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out an air raid in and around Colombo in retaliation against government strikes at Tamil Tiger positions. Two fuel facilities were bombed, including a gas storage depot that caught fire in the explosion. As a safety measure, Cathay Pacific Airways of Hong Kong suspended flights to Sri Lanka indefinitely. In addition, Colombo authorities shut off power at the same time that citizens were watching Sri Lanka play Australia in the cricket World Cup final. LTTE spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan reported that two squadrons of the LTTE air force conducted the raids; he also reported that a state petroleum building was bombed. Colombo's high population density resulted in many of its residents witnessing the raid—the third by the LTTE since the beginning of the year—firsthand. Some experts have believed that the Tamil Tigers could have as many as five light aircraft that they have smuggled into the country and assembled in jungle bases. Increasing attacks and violence by the LTTE bring the death toll to more than 64,000 since the war began in 1983. (BBC, April 29, 2007).

Top Tamil Tiger arrested in the United States: A top member of the LTTE and United States representative of the insurgent group, Karunakaran Kandasamy, was arrested in Queens, New York, on charges of supporting terrorist activity in Sri Lanka. The charges include arms support as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial support to the LTTE. Kandasamy would face up to fifteen years of prison and possibly deportation if convicted. A statement by the U.S. embassy in Colombo reported that his arrest coincided with United States investigations into the LTTE and its reliance on U.S. support for money, weapons and military technology. It also reported that the LTTE has been secretly operating within the U.S. to bolster its terrorist operations in Sri Lanka. Kandasamy's lawyers have vigorously argued his innocence saying that he has merely been fighting for freedom in his own country. Although there has been no official confirmation that Kandasamy had been giving

money to the LTTE, court papers have claimed that he raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in the United States through an American branch of the Tamil Tigers and also arranged for rebel leaders from Sri Lanka to meet Tamil Tiger sympathizers who had backgrounds in engineering, technology, weapons, medicine and other scientific fields. Federal Bureau of Investigation investigator Mark Mershon stated that not only had Kandasamy been supporting the LTTE but orchestrating United States support. Human Rights Watch has reported that due to the civil war, which began in 1983, approximately 800,000 ethnic Tamils have left Sri Lanka and now reside in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. This number represents a fourth of the total Sri Lankan Tamil population. Although some Tamils living abroad provide direct support to the LTTE, many of the expatriates are deceived by the Tigers into sending money that will ostensibly be distributed to support family members. In reality, the funds are pocketed by the LTTE. Outside sources of support have contributed to the conflict in Sri Lanka by funding what is thought to be one of the wealthiest militant organizations in the world. (BBC, April 26, 2007).

SUDAN

International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants: In February of 2007, International Criminal Court (ICC) chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo named Humanitarian Affairs Minister Ahmed Haroun and Janjaweed leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abd al-Rahman war criminals, linking them to fifty-one counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. On May 2, the ICC issued arrest warrants for both men, who have been accused of orchestrating many of the mass atrocities in the Darfur region. Sudan's government argued that the ICC had no jurisdiction to prosecute Sudanese nationals, and claimed that its own courts were capable of trying any suspects on their own. ICC allegations cite Haroun as the organizer and chief financial support for the Janjaweed Arab militia. Al-Rahman, who is thought to be already in government custody for attacks in Darfur, allegedly ordered the mass murder, torture and rape of Darfur civilians. Moreno-Ocampo reported that the investigations of the two men were carried out under difficult circumstances, but through eyewitness accounts and survivors' stories, ICC judges have confirmed the potency of the evidence and issued the arrest warrants. Moreno-Ocampo also stated that Khartoum had a legal duty to arrest the two men, even though Sudan was not a signatory to the ICC. Despite the legal urgency, Sudan has continued to reject the ICC's jurisdiction and has refused to turn over any Sudanese nationals to the Court. Moreno-Ocampo told the BCC that arresting the two men would not be solely about punishment but also about shedding light on the truth, which is that 200,000 have been killed and 2.5 million uprooted as a result of government complicity for the past four years. (BBC, May 2, 2007).

Khartoum agrees to meet with Darfur rebels for peace talks: Sudan's government has agreed to meet with Darfur rebels for talks organized by the South Sudanese authorities. The talks were to be held in the southern capital of Juba in June. Foreign Minister Lam Akol reported to the BBC that Khartoum hopes that the former southern rebels, now part of the South Sudan government, would be in attendance; however, past attempts between the former southern rebel groups and Sudan's government have not been successful due to internal divisions among the Darfur rebels. Sudan Liberation Movement chairman Ahmed Abdul Shaffi commented that before the talks could begin, the rebel factions would have to come to agreement with each other. First Vice President and Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Lieutenant General Salva Kiir Mayardit emphasized the importance of strengthening the partnership between the ruling Nation Congress (NC) party and the SPLM for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Prospects for the talks appeared hopeful to the BCC's Alfred Taban who reported that the southern government is under pressure from international donors to secure peace in the country. The United States and United Kingdom in particular have urged Sudan to end the conflict in Darfur or face sanctions; however, Khartoum cautioned that external pressure would not work. Consequently, the U.S. and UK have agreed to hold off imposing the sanctions in the event that Khartoum decides to allow the deployment

of a United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in the country. A strengthened partnership between Khartoum and the former rebel factions of South Sudan would be a forward step in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and ending the mass atrocities that have plagued the country for decades. ([BBC](#); [ST](#), April 30, 2007).

UGANDA

Juba talks restart: Two months after the peace talks between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) stalled, new hopes for a resolution to the twenty-year conflict arose after the two parties resumed talks in the Southern Sudanese capital, Juba, April 26. Former Mozambican President and United Nations envoy to the conflict Joaquim Chissano told delegates of the mediation teams "[not to] let this opportunity go" as it might well be their last. In response to the LRA's demand, the mediation team was expanded to include Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Mozambique, adding to the original team, which had only included Southern Sudan. The head of the government mediation team, Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said his administration would do everything in its power to bring peace, also stating that they would ensure that their "brothers and sisters of the LRA ... [were] able to come home with head high and nothing to fear." Besides strengthening the mediation team the government also agreed to allow the rebel fighters to gather at a single assembly point in south Sudan rather than the two originally agreed upon, and agreed on an allowance increase for the LRA negotiation team. On April 26 the think-tank International Crisis Group (ICG) released a report proposing a "two-track" solution to one of Africa's longest and most brutal conflicts. The first recommendation addressed the issue of LRA's security fears, stating that the Juba talks should focus on ending the threat of the LRA walking out of talks for a second time. The United States and the United Kingdom should take part in this task by presenting a package of security and support to LRA leader Joseph Kony, said Crisis Group. The second track should focus on a follow-up national reconciliation forum that would include a plan for northern Ugandans to redevelop their communities and reintegrate returning rebels. The LRA walked out of peace negotiations in January after Sudanese President Hassan Omar al-Bashir vowed to "get rid of the LRA from Sudan." Joseph Kony and three of his top commanders are wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. ([BBC](#), April 26; [Crisis Group](#), April 26; [Reuters](#), April 26, 27, 2007)

LRA accused of killing seven in ambush: Uganda's military accused the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of ambushing three trucks on their way to Southern Sudan May 1, killing seven civilians. Army spokesman for northern Uganda Chris Magezi stated, "We recovered the bodies this morning ... They were stripped naked then beaten to death. The rebels also burned the trucks and looted their merchandise." LRA spokesman Godfrey Ayoo called the army's allegations "outrageous," adding that the Ugandan army had been attacking the LRA on a daily basis and was trying to cover up for its actions. The rebels have been accused of several road ambushes in Sudan since last year, but have denied the claims. Magezi said that this was the first time the rebels had ambushed vehicles in Uganda—an act that was once their trademark—since peace talks with the government began in Southern Sudan in July 2006. The LRA and the government extended a truce April 26, raising hopes of an end to a brutal war that has killed tens of thousands and displaced 1.7 million people. ([BBC](#), May 2; [Reuters](#), May 1, 2007)