



Peace & Justice Update  
*April 11, 2008*  
*(Volume 18, Number 6)*

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

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## SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

|                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| The Age               | = | The Age ( <a href="http://www.theage.com.au">www.theage.com.au</a> )  |
| AfricaFocus           | = | AfricaFocus ( <a href="http://www.africafocus.org">www.africafocus.org</a> )  |
| AFP                   | = | Agence France-Presse ( <a href="http://www.afp.com">www.afp.com</a> )   |
| AllAfrica             | = | AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com">www.allafrica.com</a> )                                       |
| American Chronicle    | = | American Chronicle ( <a href="http://www.americanchronicle.com">www.americanchronicle.com</a> )                           |
| Amnesty International | = | Amnesty International ( <a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a> )  |
| Asian Tribune         | = | Asian Tribune ( <a href="http://www.asiantribune.com">www.asiantribune.com</a> )  |
| AP                    | = | Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )   |
| AWID                  | = | Association for Women's Rights in Development ( <a href="http://www.awid.org">www.awid.org</a> )                          |
| BBC                   | = | British Broadcasting Corporation ( <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk">news.bbc.co.uk</a> )                                   |
| BBC Monitoring        | = | BBC Monitoring International Reports ( <a href="http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk">www.monitor.bbc.co.uk</a> )                 |
| CBC News              | = | CBC News ( <a href="http://www.cbc.ca">www.cbc.ca</a> )   |
| Christian Monitor     | = | Christian Monitor ( <a href="http://www.christianmonitor.org">www.christianmonitor.org</a> )                              |
| CIA                   | = | CIA - The World Factbook ( <a href="http://www.cia.gov">www.cia.gov</a> )   |
| Concord Times         | = | The Concord Times ( <a href="http://www.concordtimesl.com">www.concordtimesl.com</a> )                                    |
| Crisis Group          | = | International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisgroup.org">www.crisisgroup.org</a> )                               |
| The East African      | = | The East African ( <a href="http://www.nationmedia.com/eastafrican/current">www.nationmedia.com/eastafrican/current</a> ) |
| eKantipur             | = | Kantipur Online ( <a href="http://www.kantipuronline.com">www.kantipuronline.com</a> )                                    |
| eng24.kg              | = | News Agency 24 ( <a href="http://eng.24.kg">http://eng.24.kg</a> )  |
| EU                    | = | European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )   |
| Financial Times       | = | Financial Times News ( <a href="http://www.ft.com">www.ft.com</a> )   |
| FMM                   | = | Free Media Movement ( <a href="http://www.freemediasrilanka.org">www.freemediasrilanka.org</a> )                          |
| Guardian              | = | Guardian Unlimited Network ( <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk">www.guardian.co.uk</a> )                                 |
| The Hindu             | = | The Hindu Newspaper ( <a href="http://www.hinduonnet.com">www.hinduonnet.com</a> )  |
| HRW                   | = | Human Rights Watch ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</a> )   |
| Herald Tribune        | = | Herald Tribune ( <a href="http://www.iht.com">www.iht.com</a> )   |
| ICC                   | = | International Criminal Court ( <a href="http://www.icc-cpi.int">www.icc-cpi.int</a> )                                     |
| ICG                   | = | International Crisis Group ( <a href="http://www.crisisweb.org">www.crisisweb.org</a> )                                   |
| ICTY                  | = | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia ( <a href="http://www.un.org/icty">www.un.org/icty</a> )        |
| IHT                   | = | International Herald Tribune ( <a href="http://www.iht.com">www.iht.com</a> )   |
| Independent           | = | The Independent ( <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk">www.independent.co.uk</a> )                                      |
| IndiaTimes            | = | India Times ( <a href="http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com">www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com</a> )                      |
| IPS News Agency       | = | Inter Press Service News Agency ( <a href="http://ipsnews.net">ipsnews.net</a> )  |
| IRIN                  | = | Integrated Regional Information Network ( <a href="http://www.irinnews.org">www.irinnews.org</a> )                        |
| ISN                   | = | International Relations and Security Network ( <a href="http://www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm">www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm</a> ) |
| IWPR                  | = | Institute for War & Peace Reporting ( <a href="http://www.iwpr.net">www.iwpr.net</a> )                                    |
| Kathmandu Post        | = | The Kathmandu Post ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com.np">www.nepalnews.com.np</a> )                                     |
| Jurist                | = | The Jurist ( <a href="http://jurist.law.pitt.edu">jurist.law.pitt.edu</a> )   |
| LA Times              | = | Los Angeles Times ( <a href="http://www.latimes.com">www.latimes.com</a> )  |
| Library of Congress   | = | The Library of Congress ( <a href="http://www.loc.gov/index.html">www.loc.gov/index.html</a> )                            |
| Monitor               | = | The Monitor ( <a href="http://www.monitor.co.ug">www.monitor.co.ug</a> )  |
| Nepal News            | = | Nepal News ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com">www.nepalnews.com</a> )   |
| Nepali Times          | = | Nepali Times ( <a href="http://www.nepalitimes.com">www.nepalitimes.com</a> )   |
| New Vision            | = | New Vision ( <a href="http://www.newvision.co.ug">www.newvision.co.ug</a> )   |
| News24                | = | News24 ( <a href="http://www.news24.com">www.news24.com</a> )   |
| NYT                   | = | The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )   |
| PANA                  | = | Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )                                       |
| Peace Africa          | = | Peace Africa ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica">www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica</a> )                         |
| PDO                   | = | People's Daily Online ( <a href="http://english.peopledaily.com.cn">english.peopledaily.com.cn</a> )                      |
| Prensa Latina         | = | Prensa Latina, Latin America News Agency ( <a href="http://www.plenglish.com">www.plenglish.com</a> )                     |

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|---------------------|---|---|
| Prensa Libre        | = | Prensa Libre ( <a href="http://www.prensalibre.com">www.prensalibre.com</a> )   |
| Oxfam Great Britain | = | Oxfam Great Britain ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a> )  |
| RadioFreeEurope     | = | RadioFreeEurope, Radio Liberty ( <a href="http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007">www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007</a> ) |
| ReliefWeb           | = | Relief Web ( <a href="http://www.reliefweb.int">www.reliefweb.int</a> )   |
| Reuters             | = | Reuters ( <a href="http://www.reuters.com">www.reuters.com</a> )  |
| RSF                 | = | Reporters sans frontières ( <a href="http://www.rsf.org">www.rsf.org</a> )  |
| The Rising Nepal    | = | The Rising Nepal ( <a href="http://www.gorkhapatra.org">www.gorkhapatra.org</a> )   |
| SDUT                | = | San Diego Union Tribune ( <a href="http://www.signonsandiego.com">www.signonsandiego.com</a> )                                |
| The Star            | = | The Star.com ( <a href="http://www.thestar.com">www.thestar.com</a> )   |
| Transparency Int.   | = | Transparency International ( <a href="http://transparency.org">transparency.org</a> )   |
| UNESCO              | = | UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization ( <a href="http://www.unesco.org">www.unesco.org</a> )                  |
| UNFPA               | = | United Nations Population Fund ( <a href="http://www.unfpa.org">www.unfpa.org</a> )   |
| UNHCHR              | = | UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ( <a href="http://www.unhcr.ch">www.unhcr.ch</a> )                                      |
| UNICEF              | = | UN Children's Fund ( <a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> )   |
| UNIFEM              | = | UN Development Fund for Women ( <a href="http://www.unifem.org">www.unifem.org</a> )  |
| UN News Center      | = | UN News Center Homepage ( <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a> )  |
| VOA                 | = | Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )   |
| Web India           | = | Web India ( <a href="http://www.webindia123.com">www.webindia123.com</a> )  |
| WP                  | = | The Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )                                    |

## UPDATE SUMMARY

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### *Featured Story: Historic Poll Takes Place in Nepal*

Nepal currently faces the historic opportunity to vote for a body which will eventually rewrite the country's constitution and decide its future government. The nation has faced many obstacles before actually reaching this twice-postponed Constituent Assembly (CA) election; however, the main parties have continually expressed their commitment to the creation of a federal democratic republic and the implementation of the peace process. In each of their party manifestos, the main political parties, namely the Nepali Congress (NC), the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the Madhesi parties, and the royalist parties have stressed the importance of this election and the constitution-making process. Out of a population of 27 million people in Nepal, there are 17.6 million registered voters for the CA election, up from the 13.5 million for the 1999 election. With so many voters and such a significant election, an Election Commission has been enacted to help maintain order and consistency at the polls. The Election Commission is a constitutional body which has been developed solely for the purpose of watching the polls, especially to ensure security on the day of the elections and accuracy in distributing and counting the ballots.

Many have described the electoral system as complicated and confusing with a combined first-past-the-post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR) system, in addition to a few seats designated as the interim cabinet's nominees. The 240 FPTP seats are directly elected by a majority in each of the constituencies. The 335 PR seats are filled by voters choosing a party and the party subsequently choosing which candidates it will nominate depending on how many seats it receives. The remaining seats are appointed as the cabinet nominees, bringing the total number of available seats to 601. There are quotas in place to ensure the diverse allotment of seats to all minorities, including women, Dalits, Madhesi, the "oppressed and indigenous," and those from the "backward region" in western Nepal. This complicated system of votes and quotas has made it difficult for many parties and candidates to understand the system. Most were forced to revise their initial PR list because of inadequate minority representation.

Although the parties have officially agreed to maintain a free and fair environment in the elections, the campaign trails have been marred by violence and disorder. Many parties and political analysts blame the Maoists for much of the disruption, citing the Maoist leaders' ideas that the election is the next step in their revolution. One human rights organization, INSEC, reported that 97 percent of the election-related violence was caused by the Maoists. Madhesi militant groups, especially in the Tarai district, have also disrupted the election process by leading protests to gain more autonomy and better representation in the CA polls. Although these two groups signed agreements with the government that they would not use violence to disrupt the election processes, the tactics continued until the day of the elections and many believe will continue until the political parties come up with a consensus. Despite the violence, many Nepali citizens have expressed their intent to go to the polls, no matter what type of danger they face.

It is expected that the results of the election will be contested, especially by parties that question the fairness and accuracy of the outcome. The Election Commission has estimated that it will not have a complete count until the end of April. If the Maoists do not see the results they are seeking, it is believed that they will blame the results on the "old regime" and continue to deny the outcome. The NC and UML are the parties most likely to respect the electoral product, but may still file complaints if not completely satisfied. The Madhesi parties could easily resort to street protests, as they have done in the past, if their expectations are not met.

There are many important national and international organizations with missions in Nepal to observe the elections. Notably, The Carter Center has sent a team of 60 observers from 20 different countries to watch over the elections throughout Nepal. Through these observers, The Carter

Center hopes to “help build confidence in the ongoing electoral process, and, if necessary and appropriate, help mediate acceptance of credible election results.” The Center hopes that through its presence during the election, the potential for violence may be reduced. The government of Nepal, the Maoist party, as well as the Election Commission have welcomed The Carter Center’s short and long-term observers into the country. Dee Aker, Interim Executive Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, is serving as a short-term observer with the Center’s international election observation mission in Nepal. Other significant observation missions were sent by national groups such as the Nepal Election Monitoring Alliance and General Election Observation Committee and international groups such as the European Union and the Asian Network for Free Elections.

Regardless of which party eventually wins the election, there is no doubt that it will face the great challenge of creating a government that will satisfy the majority of the Nepalese. Within two years, this new government must decide on the practicalities of implementing a new federalism; maintaining security within the nation; creating the structure of the government; and managing important international relations, especially with neighboring India and China. The new government must be willing to cooperate, compromise, and unify a divided people. (International Crisis Group, “Nepal’s Election and Beyond,” April 2, 2008; Cartercenter.org; <http://peace.sandiego.edu/programs/nepal.html>).

## COLOMBIA

FARC quashes hopes for hostage release: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas announced on Tuesday, April 8 that they would no longer partake in unilateral discussions regarding the release of Ingrid Betancourt, a hostage whom they have held captive for more than six years. Betancourt, who holds dual Colombian and French citizenship, was captured by the FARC as she campaigned for the presidency in 2002. The announcement of failed talks came days after France, along with Spain and Switzerland, sent a rescue mission to Colombia in hopes of obtaining the hostage from rebel hands. Although the French humanitarian mission to free Betancourt failed, the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner expressed France’s determination to see Betancourt’s eventual release. He announced, “The FARC have refused, so the plane is coming back ... What matters is that we will continue in one form or another. We have to find her.” The mission failed for many reasons, one of the most important being poor contact with the FARC. A March 1 raid on a rebel camp in Ecuador by Colombian forces resulted in the killing of top FARC spokesman, Raúl Reyes. In the aftermath to his death, the Colombian and French governments have been unable to obtain knowledge of the whereabouts of the guerrillas. Colombian senator Piedad Córdoba remarked, “All I can say is, as soon as we have a chance to resume contact with someone ... we can work on this subject.” Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has helped organize hostage releases in the past and also stated that he too lacked access to the group now that Reyes was dead. He also announced in a news conference April 4 that he would not aid in the hostage release until the United States and Colombia stopped searching for Ivan Márquez, a member of the FARC’s ruling secretariat. The U.S. State Department declined to admit that it was searching for Márquez. The guerrillas have demanded that the Colombian government set up a demilitarized zone in southwestern Colombia for 45 days in order for a hostage swap to take place. Colombian president Álvaro Uribe has continually denied this request, and throughout his presidency has maintained his firm stance against making deals with the rebels. The FARC is estimated to be holding about 40 high-profile political prisoners as bargaining chips, including three American defense contractors, and an additional 700 hostages for ransom. (Associated Press, April 4, 6, and 9; BBC News, April 9, 2008).

U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement sent to U.S. Congress: United States President George W. Bush sent a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Colombia to Congress Monday, April 7 to be ratified after it had been signed by the two countries in 2006. The agreement would allow imports of grain, cotton, and soybeans that the U.S. receives from Colombia, as well as the agricultural products, automobile parts, medical and scientific equipment that the U.S. exports to Colombia, to all be traded free of tariffs. Bush expressed his belief that this agreement would strengthen national security and the U.S. economy as well as further solidify the relationship between the U.S. and Colombia, an ally in what he called a "critical region" of the world. The agreement has been put on a fast track, leaving Congress with 90 days to approve or reject it; it also has sparked controversy within the U.S. Congress, especially between Republicans and Democrats who do not agree on the possible outcomes of free trade. The Democrats, including the two leading presidential candidates Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, have expressed firm opposition to the agreement. The Democratic majority leader, Senator Harry Reid, announced his support for Colombia's efforts to improve its economic condition, but also stated, "Many Democrats continue to have serious concerns about an agreement that creates the highest level of economic integration with a country where workers and their families are routinely murdered and subjected to violence and intimidation for seeking to exercise their most basic economic rights." He expressed the opinion of many Democrats who see this agreement as a reward to an unjust and violent government. The Republican side of the debate focuses on the potential for the agreement to encourage the Colombian government to work towards reducing the violence against trade unionists and bring its practices to international attention. House Minority Whip Roy Blunt expressed his hopes that this agreement will create a more balanced and permanent trade between the U.S. and Colombia, which he called "one of [the U.S.'s] most important allies in South America." Colombia is currently the largest recipient of U.S. aid in the hemisphere, and trade between the two countries amounted to \$18 billion in 2007. (New York Times, April 7; Washington Times, April 8, 2008).

## GUATEMALA

Guatemala to enhance border with Mexico: Guatemala and Mexico have adopted a series of agreements to strengthen security along 970 kilometers of their shared border. The agreements were concluded April 2 in Guatemala City during a two-day meeting of the Eighth Conference of Military Commanders of Border Areas. According to the Mexican newspaper El Universal, unidentified sources claimed that the objective of the agreements was to implement military action to combat drug trafficking. The inspector general of the Guatemalan army, Julio Villagrán de León, denied the allegation and said, "[T]he idea is to have better control with military operations in border areas." Villagrán de León explained that there was no intention to militarize the border and that the army supported the actions of the National Police. Ministry of Defense spokesman, Colonel Daniel Domínguez, said that Guatemalan and Mexican military authorities stationed at the border agreed to enhance cooperation to improve security. The two countries have agreed to expedite the exchange of information and create new procedures for institutional cooperation. According to Domínguez, the actions were aimed to curtail the illicit movement of contraband such as drugs and weapons, and put a check on the illegal trafficking of people. By signing these agreements, the Guatemalan government could elicit opposition to the augmented military role within Guatemalan borders over civilian forces. The 1996 Peace Accords mandated that the mission of the military was to focus primarily on external threats. (Prensa Libre, April 3, 4, 5, 2008).

Former Interior Ministry advisor assassinated: Former advisor to the Interior Ministry Víctor Rivera was killed April 7 on Vista Hermosa Boulevard in Zone 15 of Guatemala City. Driving only a few blocks away from his residence, Rivera, accompanied by his assistant María del Rosario Melgar, was intercepted by two automobiles. Rivera and Melgar were subsequently fired upon. Rivera died a half hour before midnight from gunshot wounds to the head and chest. Melgar was wounded. Rivera, a controversial character of Venezuelan origin, had been dismissed from his position a week earlier by President Álvaro Colom. Rivera had spent the last ten years residing in Guatemala, specializing in investigating kidnappings, extortions and high-impact crimes like the death of three Salvadoran parliamentarians and their driver who were murdered last year in Guatemala. Despite many allegations of illegal acts of so-called social cleansing, Rivera was never convicted of any crime. In reference to Rivera's death, Aristides Crespo, vice president of the first Legislative Council, said, "It is unfortunate, not only because his status as a former officer, but because it is further demonstration of impunity and violence in our country." In Congress, many were shocked by the news of Rivera's death and demanded an investigation. Mario Taracena, head of the political party, National Unity for Hope, regretted the murder and stated, "From the moment they fired me I would have gone directly to the airport and would have left the country." He also added that Rivera was fired on the grounds that he was not compatible with Colom's security plans. During the 2007 presidential elections in Guatemala, security was one of the main topics debated. Colom promised to improve security, reduce violence and prevent impunity. Impunity has plagued Guatemala since the 36-year civil war in which many figures have yet to face punishment for the violent acts they committed. (Prensa Libre, April 8, 8, 9, 2008).

## UGANDA

Kony agrees to sign the final peace agreement: On April 8, the chief mediator of the peace talks between the government and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and South Sudan vice president, Riek Machar, announced that LRA leader, Joseph Kony, had agreed to sign the final peace deal April 10. Kony was to sign the agreement at Ri-Kwangba on the Sudan- Democratic Republic of the Congo border. Machar heard from the lead negotiator for the LRA, David Matsanga that "Kony is in Ri-Kwangba and he is ready to sign the peace deal on Thursday." Ugandan and foreign dignitaries arrived in Juba April 8 and left for Ri-Kwangba April 9 for the signing by Kony on April 10. The LRA stated that they were threatened by the government's bringing LRA fighters out from the bush. They accused the government's External Security Organization (ESO) of using former LRA combatants and negotiators, such as Martin Ojul (former LRA delegation boss), Denis Okrot and Rei Achama, to pull fighters from the bush. Matsanga stated, "This is a violation of the cessation of hostilities agreement and it must stop." President Yoweri Museveni will sign his part of the agreement April 15 in Juba, with other presidents attending including Omar el-Bashir of Sudan. The cessation of hostilities deal in August 2006 marked the end of the war between the government and the LRA rebels, which began in 1987. The final peace deal is the last document that needs to be signed by parties, the government and the LRA, to make peace in Uganda official. (The Monitor, April 9, 2008).

Government lacks laws to prosecute LRA leader and rebels: On April 8 Kampala High Court Registrar, Paul Gadenya said that special courts such as the one needed to indict LRA leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity operate under the laws considered by the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well some specific local laws on war crimes. Gadenya said that in order "[t]o set up such a court we need local laws on genocide and war crimes. It is therefore the duty of Parliament to make a law that should spell out the functions of such a special court, the offenses to

be tried and the specific jurisdiction giving powers for the judges who will handle the related offences." A section of the peace deal on justice for war crimes outlines ways in which Uganda will try to deal with rebel atrocities internally, using a mixture of traditional tribal reconciliation rituals and Ugandan courts. Justice James Ogoola explained, "We are at think-tank level of planning. It is the intellectual stage where the judiciary and the other institutions of government have to be ready with strategies of resolution of disputes. This is a very complex issue we are planning." Although there are high hopes, the government lacks both the local and international laws governing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other atrocities. The proposed special court would be under a Special Division of the High Court in Uganda according to the February agreement reached by negotiators in Juba, to deal with various atrocities committed during the armed conflict in Northern Uganda. The new focus to set up the court was in response to fears that the ICC indictments of the top rebels could jeopardize the peace talks. (The Monitor, April 6, 2008).