



**Peace & Justice Update**  
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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 ( <a href="http://www.adnki.com">www.adnki.com</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> )
AI	=	Amnesty International ( <a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a> )
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media ( <a href="http://www.allafrica.com">www.allafrica.com</a> )
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune ( <a href="http://www.asiantribune.com">www.asiantribune.com</a> )
The Australian	=	The Australian ( <a href="http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/">http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/</a> )
AP	=	Associated Press ( <a href="http://www.ap.org">www.ap.org</a> )
B92	=	B92 Net ( <a href="http://www.b92.net/eng/">www.b92.net/eng/</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">http://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> )
B92 News	=	B92 News ( <a href="http://www.b92.net/eng/news">www.b92.net/eng/news</a> )
Cape Times	=	The Cape Times ( <a href="http://www.capetimes.co.za">www.capetimes.co.za</a> )
CBC News	=	CBC News ( <a href="http://www.cbc.ca">www.cbc.ca</a> )
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook ( <a href="http://www.cia.gov">www.cia.gov</a> )
Daily News	=	Daily News, Sri Lanka ( <a href="http://www.dailynews.lk">www.dailynews.lk</a> )
eng24.kg	=	News Agency 24 ( <a href="http://eng.24.kg/">http://eng.24.kg/</a> )
FMM	=	Free Media Movement ( <a href="http://www.freemediasrilanka.org">www.freemediasrilanka.org</a> )
EU	=	European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )
Gazeta	=	Gazeta – ( <a href="http://www.gazeta.ru/english/">www.gazeta.ru/english/</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/">http://www.hinduonnet.com/</a> )
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch ( <a href="http://www.hrw.org">www.hrw.org</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/">http://www.iht.com/</a> )
IndiaTimes	=	India Times ( <a href="http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com">www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com</a> )
Independent	=	The Independent ( <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk">www.independent.co.uk</a> )
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency ( <a href="http://ipsnews.net">http://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> )
Kantipur Online	=	The Kantipur Online ( <a href="http://www.kantipuronline.com">www.kantipuronline.com</a> )
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post ( <a href="http://www.nepalnews.com.np">www.nepalnews.com.np</a> )
KDD	=	KyrgyzstanDailyDigest ( <a href="http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/">www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/</a> )
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times ( <a href="http://www.khaleejtimes.com">www.khaleejtimes.com</a> )
KL	=	KosovaLive ( <a href="http://www.kosovalive.com">www.kosovalive.com</a> )
Jurist	=	The Jurist ( <a href="http://jurist.law.pitt.edu">http://jurist.law.pitt.edu</a> )
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times ( <a href="http://www.latimes.com">www.latimes.com</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> )
Novosti	=	RIA Novosti ( <a href="http://en.rian.ru/">http://en.rian.ru/</a> )

NYT	=	The New York Times ( <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">www.nytimes.com</a> )
Pajhwok	=	Pajhwok Afghan News ( <a href="http://www.pajhwok.com">www.pajhwok.com</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.com</a> )
PINR	=	Power and Interest News Report ( <a href="http://www.pinr.com">www.pinr.com</a> )
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</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> )
Scotsman	=	The Scotsman ( <a href="http://news.scotsman.com">http://news.scotsman.com</a> )
SC-SL	=	The Special Court for Sierra Leone ( <a href="http://www.sc-sl.org">www.sc-sl.org</a> )
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance ( <a href="http://www.seapabkk.org">www.seapabkk.org</a> )
SERBIANNA	=	Serbianna.com ( <a href="http://www.serbianna.com">www.serbianna.com</a> )
SLCMP	=	Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program ( <a href="http://www.slcmp.org">www.slcmp.org</a> )
SomaliNet	=	SomaliNet ( <a href="http://www.somalinet.com/">www.somalinet.com/</a> )
ST	=	Sudan Tribune ( <a href="http://www.sudantribune.com">www.sudantribune.com</a> )
TamilNet	=	TamilNet ( <a href="http://www.tamilnet.com">www.tamilnet.com</a> )
TCA	=	Times of Central Asia ( <a href="http://www.timesca-europe.com/">www.timesca-europe.com/</a> )
TP	=	Turkish Press ( <a href="http://www.turkishpress.com">www.turkishpress.com</a> )
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage ( <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a> )
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization ( <a href="http://www.unesco.org">www.unesco.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> )
VOA	=	Voice of America ( <a href="http://www.voanews.com">www.voanews.com</a> )
WP	=	The Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )
Web India	=	Web India ( <a href="http://www.webindia123.com">www.webindia123.com</a> )

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### **AFGHANISTAN**

Major increase in opium production jeopardizes security: According to the latest edition of the annual UN report on illegal drugs released June 26, opium production is increasing dramatically and consequently posing a threat to the prospects for establishing security within the country. The *World Drug Report*, states that more than 90 percent of illegal opium, used to make heroin, comes from Afghanistan. During the 1980s, Afghanistan produced approximately 30 percent of the world's opium. Despite the presence of 30,000 international troops, opium poppy seed cultivation has soared in the countryside, an occurrence attributed to the fact that heroin traffickers are targeting new trading routes in Africa. Also, only \$1 million has been spent from a \$70 million fund designed to provide alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers. In response, the UK Foreign Office expressed that the fund has been operating in a challenging environment. Furthermore, the UN report says the production of illegal drugs must be seriously addressed if the country hopes to regain real security. Southern Afghanistan, where British troops and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces have been fighting the Taliban since its ousting in October 2001, is the location of most of the poppy cultivation. (BBC, June 22, 25, 2007)

Female MP continues to receive death threats: For the past three months Shukria Barakzai, a Member of Parliament and former journalist, has been receiving warnings from the government indicating she is a target for assassination. Every month, the government has sent her a letter stating that she may be targeted by a suicide bomber in the following six months. Barakzai stated that she is being threatened by various elements because of her speeches against the country's warlords, her support for women's rights and her criticisms of Pakistan. Despite the constant death threats, Barakzai, a wife and mother of three, has not fled the country. She criticizes the government for simply warning her but not providing any form of security. Although almost six years have passed since the toppling of the Taliban and women's rights are now enshrined in the constitution, the state still cannot protect women and ensure they travel to work safely. According to Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission, 1,500 atrocities against women were committed last year. Another female MP, by the name of Tooarpekay, places much of the responsibility on lax government officials. Government inability to meet basic needs for schools and jobs may lead individuals to join the Taliban, making the condition of women ever more dangerous. (BBC, June 20, 2007)

### **KOSOVO**

ICTY Prosecutor urges EU not to proceed with Serbia negotiations until war criminals captured: United Nations Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Carla Del Ponte has urged the European Union (EU) to forestall the progression of negotiations with Serbia for European Union membership until war criminal Ratko Mladić is arrested and the full cooperation of Serbia is established. She has expressed satisfaction with signs that the Serbian government is ready to cooperate with the tribunal in bringing top war criminals to justice, but insists that the first step towards EU membership, the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement, must go no further until Mladić has been brought to justice. Although the whereabouts of war criminal Radovan Karadžić remain uncertain, it is widely believed that Mladić is currently in Serbia. Del Ponte believes that if the government in Serbia has the political will to arrest Mladić it could happen very soon. Mladić and Karadžić were indicted by the ICTY for war crimes including the orchestration of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys, as well as the siege of Sarajevo. Del Ponte fears that prematurely granting Kosovo independence or proceeding with Serbia's path to EU

membership would have the potential to undermine efforts to bring these war criminals to justice. The prosecutor is eager to see the criminals apprehended before her scheduled resignation in September 2007. Only four war criminals remain at large out of 161 indicted by the ICTY for crimes during the wars following the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. (AP, June 26; Reuters, June 24; 2007)

Stalled Kosovo status raises fears: Serbia's staunch ally, Russian President Vladimir Putin, claimed June 25 that Russia's Kosovo policy is based on the principles of international law and the "desire to create stable relations for the development of all countries." He feared setting a dangerous precedent by allowing Kosovo to unilaterally declare independence in opposition to Serbia's right to sovereignty over its territory. Russia has maintained that it would only consent to an agreement reached between Serbs and Albanians, which in effect gives Serbia the power to refuse any proposal and potentially forestall compromise. Serbia's President Boris Tadić warned that "such a political and legal precedent would undermine the ability of Southeast Europe to exploit its potential for geopolitical development." But ethnic Albanian war veterans warned that time was running out. Abdyl Mushkolaj, leader of the veterans of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), told a gathered crowd in Western Kosovo, "People are tired, and they cannot wait any longer." He warned that another war was inevitable if Serbia jeopardized the national issue. The KLA is a guerrilla group that formed to expel the Serbians from Kosovo during the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. It still commands weapons and loyalties in Kosovo and the prospect of violence is real as frustration continues to rise. Western diplomats are trying to come up with an alternative to the Ahtisaari plan and the resolution delaying the final decision for 120 days because both are currently blocked by Russia and Serbia's positions. Kosovo's current status is regulated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 which names Serbia as the legal successor state but also requires that the will of the people be taken into account in the determination of its final status. (ISN, June 26; IHT, June 24; TP, June 24; Reuters, June 24; 2007)

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

Regional defense ministers to gather for annual Bishkek Summit on Security: Defense ministers from the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are gathering in Kyrgyzstan's capital city of Bishkek to discuss issues of global and regional security. Defense officials from SCO's six member states, Kyrgyzstan, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia, are expected to attend. Originally a lower official was to be sent from Russia, but at the last minute it was decided that Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov would attend in person, and he arrived in Kyrgyzstan June 26. Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon are also invited to participate. Part of the agenda is to sign an agreement to conduct joint antiterrorism military exercises according to Kyrgyz Defense Minister Ismail Isakov. The "Treaty of Long Term Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation" is expected to be the main outcome of the summit. Intended to strengthen relations, the treaty will be signed by the presidents of the SCO if agreement is reached. The meeting is also a strategic display of cooperation in the defense sector among SCO. The SCO was established in 2001 as a non-military alliance and is perceived by many as an attempt to provide a counterweight to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). (Novosti, June 27; eng.24.kg, June 26, 27; 2007)

High Treason indictment first in Kyrgyz history: Jypargul Arykova, a senior consultant of the parliament's press service, has been indicted for high treason under Article 292 of the Kyrgyz criminal code. Under this legislation the crime is defined as, "revealing a state secret or other help for a foreign country or organization in carrying out inimical actions threatening the Kyrgyz state security, from the side of a Kyrgyz citizen." The consequences for Arykova, if convicted, are ten to twelve years in jail and confiscation of her property. On June 21 the National Security Services reported the arrest of "a senior official from one of the republic's key governmental institutions" after she was caught trying to

convey sensitive information to a foreign intelligence agent. When first arrested, Arykova was accused of a lesser crime but as the gravity of her crime was made clear, the indictment charge was elevated to high treason. Karganbek Samakov, chair of the interparliamentary relations committee, said that Arykova may have links to the People's Republic of China and had reportedly been divulging secrets to Chinese agents for a number of years before she was caught in the act. In a possibly related development, a Chinese citizen charged with espionage was also detained. Since achieving independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has struggled to establish rule of law amidst poverty, corruption, and political unrest. ([Novosti](#), June 22; [eng.24.kg](#), June 25; 2007)

## **NEPAL**

**Government announces date for constituent assembly elections:** On June 24, government spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara announced that constituent assembly elections would be held November 22. Mahara, who is Minister of Information and Communication, made the announcement following a meeting of the cabinet. The minister also acknowledged the poor state of law and order in the nation. He added that the government would strengthen security measures throughout the country to enable an environment conducive to fair elections. The government has deferred the final decision on whether to hold elections in one day or in phases, pending a consultation with the Election Commission. The elections had been originally slated for June 22 but were postponed owing to inadequate preparations. In a related development, Minister Mahara announced that the Election Constituencies Delimitation Commission (ECDC) has been given three weeks to review a report it submitted to the government in April. The report calls for increasing the number of election constituencies to 240 from the 205 constituencies represented in the former parliament which was elected in 1999. Most of the new constituencies are to be created in the historically underrepresented Terai region. The report in its current state envisages one representative each from the 240 constituencies elected on a first-past-the-post system. Another 240 members will be elected on the basis of proportional representation and a further 17 will be nominated to the constituent assembly by the cabinet. The report has been sent back to the ECDC for review because parliamentarians from the Terai claimed it was biased against them. The interim parliament comprises 205 members who were part of the last parliament elected in 1999 in addition to 83 non-elected Maoist members who joined it in January this year. ([eKantipur](#), June 24, 2007)

**Government creates commission to probe disappearances:** On June 26, the government formed a three-member commission to probe into disappearances of people during the armed conflict between the state and Maoist rebels. The commission is tasked with probing disappearances between February 13, 1996 when the civil war started and November 21, 2006 when it ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord between the then seven-party alliance government and the Maoists. The government has tapped former Supreme Court Justice Narendra Bahadur Neupane to head the commission, with lawyers Sher Bahadur K.C. and Raman Kumar Shrestha making up the rest of the commission's membership. The commission has been given a six-month deadline to investigate and report back to the government with recommendations on action to be taken against the perpetrators of the disappearances. Hundreds of people, estimated at between 800 and 900, remain missing according to estimates by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). ([BBC](#), June 27, 2007; [Nepalnews](#), June 26, 2007)

## **PHILIPPINES**

**Radio journalist gunned down:** On June 25, radio journalist Vicente Sumalpong of the state-owned radio station Radyo ng Bayan was shot dead in the southern island of Tawi-Tawi. Sumalpong was shot by two gunmen on a motorcycle as he was picking up a colleague on his way to work. The colleague,

Ruelan Hope Borja, was wounded in the attack. Police have so far been unable to apprehend the perpetrators of the murder. Sumalpong is the third reporter to be murdered in the Philippines this year and the 52<sup>nd</sup> reporter to have been killed since President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo came to power in 2001 in a military-backed revolution, making the country one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists. (AP, Reuters, June 24, 2007; Reporters Sans Frontieres, June 26, 2007)

Appeal for U.S. marine convicted of rape postponed: On June 26, the attorney to convicted U.S. Marine Lance Corporal Daniel Smith announced that a Filipino court of appeals would not hear Smith's challenge to the conviction and the 40-year prison sentence which he is serving, until mid-September at the earliest. Smith's attorney Jose Justiniano added that if the court of appeals does not overturn the conviction, his client would be appealing to the Philippine Supreme Court. Smith, of the 31<sup>st</sup> Expeditionary Unit based in Okinawa, Japan, was arrested inside the Subic Bay Freeport November 1, 2005. He was convicted of raping an inebriated Filipina inside a van as two other marines watched. The two others were acquitted after a seven-month trial. Smith has been held in the U.S. Embassy in Manila since late December, 2006. The rape case led to widespread anti-American protests in the Philippines with protestors calling for a revision of the Visiting Forces Agreement between that country and the United States. (Stars and Stripes, June 26, 2007)

## **SIERRA LEONE**

UN criticizes poor human rights standards in prison system: The UN envoy in Sierra Leone has criticized the poor state of the national prison system, in a report presented June 21. The report, titled *Behind Walls: Inventory and Assessment of Prisons in Sierra Leone*, documents all 1,495 detainees and their treatment in the country's 13 prisons. Violations of basic human rights, including inadequate food and water supply and poor medical and sanitation standards, it said, will contribute to instability in the country recovering from civil war. A lack of resources in the prison system has had long-ranging effects. Overcrowding and poor medical facilities have rendered dense populations more vulnerable to disease, and a dearth of trained lawyers has opened the door to complaints about fair court proceedings. The UN cited poor conditions and dubious legal accountability as creating a significant "threat to peace and stability." In response to the report's recommendations, Sierra Leone committed to improving its prisons with immediate, emergency action taken by the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and sustained support from the UN Peacekeeping Fund. In addition to providing amenities, UNIOSIL and the government stated that they planned to train prison officials and legal personnel to ensure timely, legitimate trials. With these measures, Sierra Leone hopes to build credibility and prestige in the eyes of its citizens and the international community. Since the official peace of 2002 ended the 10-year civil war, Sierra Leone has become increasingly willing to implement international recommendations for human rights protections, demonstrating a new commitment to international cooperation and national accountability. (BBC, June 22; UN News Center, June 21, 2007).

Charles Taylor trial adjourned for a week: After boycotting his own trial in The Hague June 4, former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been given time to assemble a new legal team. The trial has been scheduled to resume July 3. Taylor, notorious for his support of Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, has been indicted on 11 counts of war crimes. At the commencement of the international trial in The Hague, Taylor fired his lawyer and refused to attend on grounds that he had not been offered adequate resources to mount a sufficient defense. The prosecution has protested, claiming that the decision to fire his lawyer at the last moment was one Taylor made strategically to buy more time before the trial. But in an effort to ensure just proceedings, the Court granted the time and resources. The high-profile nature of the case is derived from the heinous nature of his alleged crimes. In supporting rebel forces in the civil war, Taylor faces charges of use of child soldiers, sexual assault and slavery, and murder, among others. Few in the international community doubt Taylor's guilt in the case; still, consensus at

The Hague was that all measures must be taken to ensure a fair trial as the only hope for a lasting, indisputable decision. (BBC, June 25; Cape Times, June 26, 2007)

## **SOMALIA**

### International aid denied entry into Somalia:

The United Nations World Food Program reports that 140 of its trucks carrying food intended for malnourished Somalis have been stopped at the Kenyan border for more than a month. The Kenyan government claims the lack of security in Somalia has precluded it from opening its borders to allow any humanitarian assistance. Since closing its borders to all commercial traffic and refugees in January, Kenya has allowed only humanitarian vehicles to cross. This month's total closure is a response to increased instability in Somalia as that country's government struggles to contain the rising violence from Islamic insurgents. Kenya renewed its commitment to completely seal borders June 25, despite pleas from local Somali officials, until the Somali government can ensure its internal violence will not spill over into Kenya. (BBC, 25; SomaliNet, June 26)

### Instability and violence persist around Mogadishu:

On June 25, a Somali government soldier opened fire on a crowd waiting to receive food in Mogadishu. The security officer reportedly killed five people in an attempt to disperse the crowd clamoring to enter the food-distribution building. Eyewitnesses reported that bullets were fired without warning or provocation. In other news, a bomb killed five female street cleaners June 26 in Howlwadag district near the capital despite last week's curfew intended to curb violence. The attack was attributed to Islamist rebels opposed to the government and to the Ethiopian soldiers deployed there. Somalia has lacked a functioning government since 1991. The country's weak Transitional Federal Government is attempting to suppress fighters from the Union of Islamic Courts, which it and the Ethiopian forces ousted December 2006. (BBC, June 25, 26; Reuters, June 25)

## **SRI LANKA**

Blocked opposition website signals declining freedom of the press: In an act that worried international observers, the Sri Lankan government was suspected to have blocked internet access to TamilNet, a pro-Tamil news site popular with journalists and observers worldwide. Although the government denied the charge, critics have no doubt that the blocking of the site was officially sanctioned. The restriction was the latest in a string of incidents restricting freedom of the press. While acknowledging the biases inherent in TamilNet's coverage, the Free Media Movement (FMM, a Sri Lankan media watchdog group) cited the restriction as violating the right of Sri Lankans to "free flow of information." This group and others worry that the decision has ushered in a new era of increased censoring by the government of opposition voices. The censorship and corresponding criticism have come only a few days after President Rajapaksa traveled to Geneva to defend his country's human rights record. Escalating violence and forced removal of Tamils by government forces have set the stage for increasing human rights violations. The blocking of TamilNet, combined with the murders of key anti-government journalists in the past year, signals what FMM calls an "erosion of media freedom," that threatens both free access to information and human security. Jaqueline Park of the International Federation of Journalists called the northern city of Jaffna, "one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist." Deteriorating human rights protections and escalating violence have demonstrated the fragility of the cease-fire of 2002. (BBC, June 21; FMM, June 26; RSF, June 24; TamilNet, June 20, 24, 2007).

Naval battle takes toll on LTTE forces: In a sea and land battle June 20, Sri Lankan Army (SLA) forces claim to have killed 40 Tamil fighters and destroyed several ships of the Sea Tigers, the naval branch of

the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Immediately following the report, LTTE forces denied these figures and claimed instead that only 10 rebels had been killed and that their ships had suffered no damage. The LTTE went on to say that they had killed 15 government soldiers in the day's fighting. Although the casualty count has remained unclear, the intense fighting is undisputed, and government troops claim to have toppled the last remaining LTTE stronghold in the East. LTTE spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan denies government occupation of the camps, claiming that the attacks fell, not on "camps," but on minor "posts" only. But the SLA has insisted that its forces currently occupy the eastern Thoppigala region, and have begun clearing land mines from the eastern Tamil territory. The fighting in the East spurred violence in northern territories as well, and arrests of Tamils have continued in the southern capital, Colombo. With each disputed battle has come retaliation, and in the wake of such events, the 2002 cease-fire agreement has become increasingly irrelevant. (AP, BBC, June 20, 2007).

## **SUDAN**

### Darfur Conference closes with disagreement and limited results:

An international conference in Paris regarding the conflict between the government and rebel forces in Darfur ended June 25 without substantial policy changes. United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice threatened Khartoum with additional economic sanctions if it prevented the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force, agreed to last week, from entering Sudan. However China, a major investor in Sudanese oil, called on the international community to respect Sudanese sovereignty and territorial integrity by focusing on a political solution, not economic sanctions. It cited Khartoum's acceptance of the hybrid force as a positive step for future negotiations. Nevertheless, the participating countries offered little clarity on the steps necessary to end the violence which has killed 200,000 people and displaced 2.5 million more since 2003. (Reuters, June 22, 25; ST, June 22, 2007)

### UN report finds environmental crisis behind Sudan's wars:

A United Nations Environmental Program report released June 22, after an 18-month study of Sudan's environmental situation, finds that spreading deserts and deforestation have contributed to the Darfur conflict and could potentially reignite war between northern and southern Sudan. It revealed that rainfall has decreased by 30 percent in the last 30 years and that the northern desert has advanced 60 miles southward in the past 40 years. Consequently, northern Arab herders have migrated into land administered by the autonomous region of Southern Sudan, cutting down trees to feed their camels. Tensions between these herders and local farmers threaten to destabilize a peace agreement reached between the Khartoum government and Southern Sudan in 2005 after a 21-year civil war. The report also indicates that similar social tensions and environmental degradation have contributed to the conflict in Darfur where recurring drought has exacerbated population pressures. Furthermore, two million refugees from the conflict are likewise exhausting water, wood, oil, and gas, and the report estimates that future resettlement would further strain these limited resources. The Sudanese government's political and economic neglect of the country bred the original rebellion in the south and now the conflict in Darfur. (AP; BBC, June 22; Guardian, June 23, 2007)

## **UGANDA**

Efforts to curb human trafficking: Officials attending a June 21 meeting in Kampala sought to raise awareness about the need for concerted government efforts to curb rising human trafficking. The director for operations at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported at the first regional anti-trafficking conference in East Africa, "It is our intention to take action and enforce the laws but we need alliances. There is a need for greater coordination, cooperation, and awareness in the region." The conference, conceived under the UN-led Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking of

Persons launched in March, seeks to fight human trafficking by building support to raise awareness, strengthen prevention, reduce demand, support and protect victims, and improve law enforcement. Uganda's assistant minister to the interior has reported that 25,000 to 30,000 children have been recruited into the Lord's Resistance Army rebel ranks and trafficked to the countries of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. According to the UNODC, most of the victims of trafficking are women and young girls forced into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Uganda is reported to be the East African country most affected by human trafficking. There, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been widely accused of abducting thousands of children during the past two decades of war between it and the government. (All Africa, June 18; IRIN, June 21, 2007)

MP attempts to rally support for Museveni to serve a fourth term: In March 2007 Member of Parliament James Kakooza began to plan the re-election of President Yoweri Museveni in the 2011 elections. Kakooza claims that 80 MPs have currently joined him (of a Parliament of 332), in support of Museveni serving a fourth term. According to Kakooza, lobbying of all members of the highest organs of the National Resistance Movement party (NRM) is under way in order to achieve "one voice" when choosing the party's presidential candidate in 2011. Yet National Resistance Movement publicist Ofwondo Opondo stated that he has not been aware of Kakooza's efforts. "The matter [a fourth term for Museveni] has never come up for discussion and it is one year down the road," he said. He also added, "Mr. Kakooza is not a strong opinion leader on matters of the NRM and the President. Those are just speculations although you cannot stop individuals from lobbying; ultimately it is the President's responsibility to speak on this matter." Museveni, president since 1986, was re-elected in 2006 when, in a controversial move, loyalists in the Parliament engineered a constitutional change abolishing presidential term limits. (All Africa; The Monitor, June 25, 2007)