



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 (www.adnki.com)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
American Chronicle	=	American Chronicle(www.americanchronicle.com)
ANN	=	Afghan News Network (http://afghannews.net/)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
The Australian	=	The Australian (www.theaustralian.news.com.au/)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
B92	=	B92 Net (www.b92.net/eng/)
B92 News	=	B92 News (www.b92.net/eng/news)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
Cape Times	=	The Cape Times (www.capetimes.co.za)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
Concord Times	=	The Concord Times (www.concordtimesl.com)
Daily News	=	Daily News, Sri Lanka (www.dailynews.lk)
The East African	=	The East African (www.nationmedia.com/estafrican/current/)
einnews	=	The Russia News Service – (http://www.einnews.com/kyrgyzstan/)
eng24.kg	=	News Agency 24 (http://eng.24.kg/)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
FMM	=	Free Media Movement (www.freemediasrilanka.org)
Gazeta	=	Gazeta (www.gazeta.ru/english/)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
The Hindu	=	The Hindu Newspaper (www.hinduonnet.com/)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
Herald Tribune	=	Herald Tribune (www.iht.com/)
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 (www.iht.com/)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency (http://ipsnews.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
IRNA	=	Islamic Republic News Agency - http://www2.irna.ir/en/news
ISN	=	International Relations and Security Network (www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm)
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)
KDD	=	KyrgyzstanDailyDigest (www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/)
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times (www.khaleejtimes.com)

KL	=	KosovaLive (www.kosovalive.com)
KT	=	Korea Times (www.koreatimes.co.kr/)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (http://jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Mehr	=	The Mehr News Agency - http://www.mehrnews.com/en/
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
News Afghanistan	=	Afgaha.com- News- Afghanistan (http://afgha.com/)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
Novosti	=	RIA Novosti (http://en.rian.ru/)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
Pajhwok	=	Pajhwok Afghan News (www.pajhwok.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
PDO	=	People's Daily Online (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/)
PINR	=	Power and Interest News Report (www.pinr.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
RadioFreeEurope	=	RadioFreeEurope, Radio Liberty (www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
Russia Today	=	Russia Today (www.russiatoday.ru/)
Scotsman	=	The Scotsman (http://news.scotsman.com)
SC-SL	=	The Special Court for Sierra Leone (www.sc-sl.org)
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (www.seapabkk.org)
SERBIANNA	=	Serbianna.com (www.serbianna.com)
SLCMP	=	Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program (www.slcmp.org)
The SMH	=	The Sydney Morning Herald (http://www.smh.com.au/)
SomaliNet	=	SomaliNet (www.somalinet.com/)
The Star	=	The Star.com (www.thestar.com/)
ST	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
TamilNet	=	TamilNet (www.tamilnet.com)
TCA	=	Times of Central Asia (www.timesca-europe.com/)
TP	=	Turkish Press (www.turkishpress.com)
Transparency Int.	=	Transparency International (http://transparency.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)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua (http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-07/08/)

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UPDATES

AFGHANISTAN

Karzai and Bush discuss security at Camp David: President George W. Bush and President Hamid Karzai discussed security and the role of Iran in Afghanistan during a two-day summit at Camp David August 5 to 6. Iran has sent field workers to provide aid to Afghan villages but American officials believe that Iran is providing the Taliban guerrillas with weapons. Iran's role was the point of contention in a meeting that otherwise ran smoothly. President Karzai described Iran as a "positive force that has been helping the country," while Bush remained skeptical. On the eve of the Camp David Summit, Karzai stated that the security situation had deteriorated over the past two years, resulting in the suffering of the Afghan people, the killing of school children, the burning of schools and the kidnapping and killing of international helpers. Karzai and Bush also discussed the fate of the remaining 21 Korean hostages being held in Ghazni, central Afghanistan. Despite Taliban threats to kill the remaining hostages, the U.S. and Afghan leaders remained firm in their positions. Both agreed that in negotiations for their release, there should be no exchange of hostages for Taliban rebels. South Koreans were greatly disappointed with the summit outcome. Held since July 20, 23 South Korean Christians on an evangelical aid mission were riding a bus from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar when the Taliban abducted them. Two of the 23 hostages have been killed. Embroiled in war for nearly six years, Taliban and NATO-led forces continue to fight as peace making efforts prove unsuccessful and the security situation worsens. (BBC; Korea Times; NYT, August 6, 2007)

Russia to cancel 90 percent of Afghan debt: Under an agreement signed August 6 by Russian Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin and his Afghan counterpart Anwar ul-Haq Ahady, 90 percent (11 billion USD) of Afghanistan's debt to Russia is to be written off. Afghanistan owed its largest debt to Russia, as a result of weapons sales during the Soviet era. The details of the agreement signal that the remaining amount of the debt will be restructured for payment over 23 years, but according to Kudrin, the remaining amount could be written off if Afghanistan successfully completes reforms under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative of the International Monetary Fund. The HIPC program requires countries to liberalize their economies and develop a strategy for poverty reduction. Russian diplomats say the agreement is intended to support the recovery of Afghanistan and gain a reliable security partner in the region. A participant in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank debt relief program, Russia has already written off the debt of many developing countries. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Afghan guerrillas fought against the Soviet-backed government and Soviet forces for the next decade, resulting in enormous human and economic devastation. (Herald Tribune; Russia Today, August 6, 2007)

KOSOVO

Serbia proposes rules for upcoming Kosovo negotiations: The Serbian government has created a list of proposed rules to regulate negotiations on the future status of Kosovo. On August 3 the list was sent to the ambassadors of each of the six countries known as the Contact Group: Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States. Though no specific details of the rules have been released, Kosovo government minister Slobodan Samardzic has said the rules have been designed to prevent the sort of negotiations that took place under special United Nations envoy Martti Ahtisaari. These negotiations ended without an agreement. The opposing sides on this issue will hold talks for 120 days facilitated by the Contact Group. Serbia is prepared to offer Kosovo

broad autonomy including some characteristics of sovereignty, but Kosovo's ethnic Albanians have said they will refuse to accept anything less than complete independence from Serbia. Specifically, Serbia may allow Kosovo independent membership in the International Monetary Fund. This southern province of Serbia has been under UN administration since 1999; its final status has long been a subject of contention. (AP, August 3; VOA, August 3; 2007)

EU appoints representative for Contact Group talks: The European Union (EU) announced July 29 its choice of Wolfgang Ischinger as its representative for upcoming negotiations over Kosovo's final status. A German diplomat, Ischinger will join representatives from the United States and Russia to jointly mediate the talks within the Contact Group. He is currently Germany's ambassador to Britain, was formerly the ambassador to the United States, and served as deputy foreign minister in the 1990s when he took part in the Dayton peace agreement that put an end to the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia. EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana stated, "Ambassador Ischinger will make every effort to achieve real and meaningful negotiations between the parties." Solana made clear that "Kosovo is a key priority for the European Union." His spokeswoman said that the goal of the Contact Group would be "to achieve a lasting and sustainable solution to the question." Kosovo's government has announced that it is ready to work toward solving the question of Kosovo's future, but has also emphasized that it does not see independence as negotiable. The Contact Group negotiations are the latest effort to reach agreement over Kosovo's final status. (AP, July 29, IHT, July 29; 2007)

KYRGYZSTAN

Police crack down on human rights rally: A human rights rally in the capital of Bishkek was forcibly disrupted by Kyrgyz police July 30. The demonstration, of which the local authorities had been notified, was organized by the Kyrgyz nongovernmental organization "Democracy." The purpose of the demonstration was to call on the United States and other Western governments to continue their efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Kyrgyzstan. Police confiscated banners and flags, arrested the leader of Democracy and his son and forcibly dispersed other participants. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and the Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (KCHR) were alarmed by the police crackdown, which took place outside the U.S. Embassy. These organizations have called on Kyrgyz authorities to release the current detainees and in the future to permit peaceful protest actions. The forceful response to a peaceful demonstration in support of democracy is illustrative of the challenges Kyrgyzstan faces in establishing human rights and freedom of expression. (KDD, August 7; IHF, August 6; 2007)

Daughter of ousted president charged Monday: Bermet Akayeva, daughter of ousted president Askar Akayev, was charged August 6 with obstruction of justice, destruction of court documents and contempt of court. She has been accused of pressuring a regional court in Kemin province in an effort to persuade it to overturn an April ruling that barred her from running in a by-election for parliament. Akayeva claimed that the charges were politically motivated and had no factual grounds. After more than a decade in power, ex-president Askar Akayev was ousted in 2005 and fled to Russia with his family. That Akayeva had been living primarily abroad with her father gave the court justification for denying her the right to run in the election in the April ruling. Akayeva is the first of the family to return to Kyrgyzstan. This Central Asian country gained independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991 and has hence struggled to establish political stability and the rule of law. (AP, August 6; 2007)

NEPAL

Party politics beset cabinet: Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation Matrika Yadav, of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), submitted his resignation from the cabinet August 2. Minister Mahara caught the government and the Maoist leadership off guard when he submitted his resignation to Information and Communications Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who heads the five-member Maoist ministerial delegation in the current eight-party coalition government. Maoist party chairman Prachanda met with Yadav the evening of August 2 in an unsuccessful attempt to get the minister to retract his resignation. Minister Yadav, who had been at loggerheads with the prime minister and with some factions of his own party, listed numerous reasons for his sudden decision to quit the government. Among others, he cited the lack of cooperation from the Home Ministry (which oversees the police), the alleged participation of the army in sandalwood smuggling, dissatisfaction with peace talks initiated with rebel groups in the Terai, the continued imprisonment of Maoist cadres in state prisons and the government's half-hearted efforts in determining the whereabouts of people missing due to the civil war. The prime minister accepted Yadav's resignation August 10 and assigned the Forests and Soil Conservation portfolio to Minister for Local Development Dev Gurung, who also belongs to the Maoist party. In addition, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party – Anandi Devi (NSP-A) received a letter August 6 from party chairperson Anandi Devi Singh ordering him to resign immediately. Singh's letter asked Mahato to resign for his "failure to do anything to institutionalize the achievements of the Madhesi movement." In the same letter, Singh assured that her party would continue to be part of the coalition government and would help with the conduct of a "meaningful Constituent Assembly" election. Singh's letter appears to have set off an internal revolt in the NSP-A, prompting an emergency meeting of the party's executive committee without Chairperson Singh. The executive committee asked minister Mahato to remain in the government, a request with which the minister said he would comply. Nepal's current cabinet is composed of ministers from eight political parties, including the Maoists. Virtually all of these parties have a history of discord. ([nepalnews](#), August 2, 3, 6, 10, 2007)

New U.S. ambassador arrives: Nancy Powell, who was appointed U.S. ambassador to Nepal July 16 after her predecessor James F. Moriarty's three-year term ended, has arrived in Kathmandu. On her arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Ambassador Powell said, "Namaste! It's very nice to be back. I look forward to working with the government and people of Nepal as we move forward in this time of democracy. Dhanyabaad!" Powell, who speaks Nepali in addition to Urdu and English, served as a consular officer in the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu from 1980-1982 and as State Department Nepal Desk Officer from 1982-1984. She was the National Intelligence Officer for South Asia at the State Department until her recent appointment as ambassador to Nepal. Powell is a former ambassador to Pakistan, Ghana and Uganda, and has also served in India and Bangladesh. She presented her credentials to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala along with the new North Korean ambassador to Nepal August 9. Along with the UN, India and the European Union, the United States has played a significant role in promoting democracy in Nepal during the last few years through its vocal opposition to the previous royal regime and its calls on the state and Maoists to refrain from human rights abuses. The U.S. initially continued military and economic aid to Nepal after the king's military takeover of executive powers on February 1, 2005. However, American policy toward Nepal changed course after the royal regime imposed stringent media censorship and intensified repression in the wake of the coup. ([nepalnews](#), August 6, 9, 2007)

PHILIPPINES

Mass exodus as troops move in on rebels: An estimated 12,000 people have fled the southern island of Basilan following the launch of a government offensive against rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Local residents began fleeing Basilan July 21 when the government announced its intention to launch punitive action against MILF elements responsible for the beheadings of 10 marines July 10. The military offensive, dubbed “Oplan Katarungan” is being led by approximately 5,000 marines backed up by an army battalion, a Scout Ranger company and intelligence units from the navy’s Special Warfare Group. Philippines police had served arrest warrants for those responsible for the beheadings and gave a deadline for the perpetrators to be turned over to the government for legal action. MILF’s failure to hand over those responsible for the marine beheadings prompted the government to launch the offensive. The two parties have been observing a ceasefire since 2003 in an attempt to end their roughly two decade-long conflict. With the latest government campaign, the ceasefire is in danger of collapse. (AHN Media Corp., August 5; Xinhua, August 6, 2007)

Extremist bomb-maker arrested, mall bombing plot foiled: With the arrest of bomb-maker Kaharudin Usman Talib August 3, police have foiled an Islamist plot to bomb shopping malls in Manila. An extremist trained by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terror network, Talib was arrested August 3 at a shopping mall in a Manila suburb. A related police raid August 4 in Talib’s neighborhood of Maharlika Village resulted in the discovery of a bomb fashioned from a 60mm mortar filled with C-4 plastic explosives. A police official from the southern metropolitan Manila region said, “This powerful improvised explosive had complete components but was still unarmed when found... the arrest and bomb discovery are a major blow to JI cells operating in the country.” The same official described Talib as the right-hand man of two wanted men, Zulkifli bin Hir and Basit Usman, who have a U.S. State Department price on their heads for USD 5 million and USD 50,000 respectively. The Manila bombings were intended to evoke sympathy and generate additional funding for JI from financiers abroad. (AP, August 6, 2007)

SIERRA LEONE

Controversial ruling finds two guilty of war crimes: On August 2, the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown found Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa guilty on four counts of war crimes. Both men were former leaders of the Civil Defense Force (CDF), a group widely thought to have protected civilians from the rebel attacks of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during the nation’s decade-long civil war. The Court ultimately ruled that though the intention of this militant faction, commonly known as the Kamajor militia, was indeed to protect civilians, this intent could not excuse the atrocities it committed against the rebels. But the case remains controversial. Far from unanimous in their opinions, the judges convicted the pair on four of the eight charges of which they had been accused. The ruling comes on the heels of last month’s sentencing of three former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council leaders and precedes the trial of three former RUF members. The Special Court, with the support of the UN, has been established as a legitimate method by which to try the worst war crimes offenders. After suffering a war that killed over 50,000 people, Sierra Leone has now reached a fragile state of peace. (AllAfrica, BBC, August 2, 2007)

International groups fear gender discrimination in upcoming election: A coalition of international nongovernmental organizations including Search for Common Ground, the BBC World Service Trust and the 50/50 Group has expressed concern that women's opinions will not be adequately accounted for in the national election. The 50/50 Group, with funding from the African Women's Development Fund, has been working to encourage women's participation in the August 11 poll by raising awareness throughout the country. A recent survey showed that 23.8 percent of persons polled believed that a woman could not vote for a candidate of her own choosing. And as these and other groups point out, awareness alone cannot overcome every obstacle facing women on election day. According to a study by Oxfam in 2006, women are about half as likely to be literate as men. This lack of education renders many women ill-equipped to weigh in on issues vital to their own well-being. The groups hope not only to engage women at the polls, but also to motivate more of them to join female governmental representatives in the political ranks. Sierra Leone has three women in its 45-member cabinet and women currently make up 14.5 percent of the legislature. Still, contending parties have yet to support a female candidate for the presidency. In the midst of a national trend of stability and international participation, the groups hope Sierra Leone will join those before it in incorporating this previously overlooked group in positions of political power. (IPS News Service, August 6, 2007)

SOMALIA

Islamist leader denies Ethiopian negotiations: Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed, leader of the executive council of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) denied August 4 that his party was secretly negotiating with the Ethiopian government. Ahmed's party was ousted from power January 2007 by Somali and Ethiopian troops. The statement comes after *Asharqalawsat*, the Arabic online newspaper, quoted an anonymous UIC leader who claimed his group had engaged in dialogue under the mediation of various African and Arab states. Ahmed conceded that he believed dialogue could provide a solution to the political differences between the UIC and the allied governments of Somalia and Ethiopia. Nevertheless, he insisted that talks must lead to Ethiopia's complete military withdrawal from Somalia. UIC members see Ethiopia's security presence as a foreign invasion and Somalia's Transitional Federal Government as an Ethiopian pawn. Somalia has been hosting a national peace conference in Mogadishu since July 15, aimed at reconciling the various Somali clans and ostracizing the UIC contingent. (SMN; SomaliNet, August 4, 2007)

40 Islamist gunmen attack base: Approximately 40 heavily armed Somali gunmen loyal to the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) attacked an Ethiopian base near Mogadishu July 31. Eyewitnesses reported they arrived in five vehicles and began shouting "God is great," during the attack. One government soldier and at least three civilians were reportedly killed in the attack, including a four year-old child. There has been an increase in fighting and violence from UIC sympathizers since the beginning of a national peace conference in mid-July. The conference, slated to last 75 days and gather more than 1,000 officials, is meant to form a functioning government with an adequate security infrastructure, something Somalia has lacked since dictator Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991. (BBC, July 31, 2007)

SRI LANKA

Human rights organization reports government guilt in killings, “disappearances”: On August 6, Human Rights Watch (HRW) released *Return to war: Human rights under siege*, a 129-page report detailing human rights abuses carried out by the national government. The focus on Sri Lankan government officials marked a shift from earlier reports that primarily dealt with abuses carried out by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). After conducting an 18-month study of the escalating conflict, HRW published its findings in the report with a final recommendation to send a UN monitoring mission to rein in the officially sanctioned abuses. Major violations included military attacks on northern and eastern LTTE strongholds without regard for civilians, forced removals of Tamil populations from their homes and numerous abductions, or “disappearances,” mainly of Tamil individuals. The report was released only a week after a demonstration against President Mahindra Rajapaksa. On July 26, 15,000 protesters took to the streets of Colombo, demanding presidential elections to oust the current administration. Since the ceasefire agreement of 2002, Sri Lanka has witnessed escalating violence between the government and the LTTE. As the HRW document explicitly reports, the basic human rights of thousands of civilians have been violated in this increasingly volatile situation. ([BBC](#), [HRW](#), August 6; [Reuters](#), July 26)

Tamil eviction case to be heard by Supreme Court: The Supreme Court has granted eight men the right to have their cases against the government heard this November. The men have protested forced eviction from their homes June 6 and 7. On Friday, July 27, the men presented their grievance to a three-judge panel. This panel has set the inquiry date for November 28, at which time it will evaluate the claims. Forced expulsions have become common in Sri Lanka, where fears of the violent LTTE have led to discrimination against the Tamil minority on a wider scale. The Supreme Court’s last major ruling halted the forced expulsion of nearly 400 Tamils from Colombo. ([BBC](#), July 26; [TamilNet](#), July 27, 2007)

SUDAN

Resolution on hybrid force approved: On July 31 the UN Security Council passed resolution 1769 calling for a 12-month deployment of 26,000 joint United Nations–African Union (UN-AU) troops to engage in peacekeeping efforts in the war-torn region of Darfur. The mission will assume authority and absorb the presently under-funded AU force that has struggled to reduce violence. Various Security Council members and Sudan had rejected earlier drafts of the mandate. These drafts’ more forceful language permitted unspecified “further measures” by the joint force against any Sudanese party failing to fulfill its resolution commitments and it threatened to impose sanctions if progress was not demonstrated. The modified text softened the tone and removed sanction threats but invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter on the use of force. Specifically, this chapter authorizes the mission to take any “necessary action” to “protect its personnel, facilities, installations, and equipment” to ensure the security of humanitarian workers and to protect Sudanese “civilians under threat of physical violence.” Sudan and China, Sudan’s largest oil-trading partner and strongest ally, were initially opposed to these liberties but Beijing changed its position July 30 leaving Sudan resigned to accepting the draft. The mission, set to deploy December 31, is not without critics. Some analysts and U.S. politicians insist the “weak” resolution will backfire because it no longer allows the joint force to seize illegal arms, disarm warring factions, arrest suspected criminals indicted by the International Criminal Court, or impose the sanctions necessary to ensure proper accountability. Darfur rebels have been fighting government soldiers and Janjaweed militias since 2003 and the conflict has killed an estimated 200,000 people. ([AFP](#), July 28, [Age](#), August 6; [BBC](#) August 1; [Reuters](#) July 31, August 1; [ST](#), July 31, 2007)

Darfur rebels submit proposal for government talks despite SLM's absence: Eight Darfur rebel groups concluded a three day United Nations–African Union (UN-AU)-sponsored negotiation in Arusha, Tanzania August 5. The paper drafted at the talks' conclusion delineates a wealth-sharing agreement that insists that “both the individual and the communal compensations are to be considered according to international law standards” and includes a power-sharing accord demanding fair representation on the federal level for Darfur according to population. Despite the consensus, one major rebel actor, Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction leader Abdel Wahed Mohamed al-Nur boycotted the talks. Considered the father of the Darfur rebellion, al-Nur enjoys massive support among the Darfur population. He has critiqued the government of Sudan for supporting talks which he believes exacerbate rebel divisions. “Recognizing new factions will be endless, the rebels will split more and more, we will only see more movements... anyone with a Land Cruiser and satellite phone can proclaim himself a faction leader,” claimed al-Nur whose own SLM group was represented by four factions. In contrast to the current talks, al-Nur supports measures similar to those used by Khartoum to engage the rebels of Southern Sudan during the war of 1983-2005. These methods involve putting government pressure on all groups to remain under one leader so that true consensus is reached and further fractioning avoided. Moreover, Sudan reserves doubts about France's commitment to peace and reconciliation; it has criticized France for not pressuring al-Nur, who is residing in Paris, to attend the meetings. The meeting marks the third time in a year that various Darfur groups have organized to resolve differences. (AFP, August 3; Reuters, August 1; ST, August 4, 5, 9, 2007)

UGANDA

Juba peace talks delayed for a month: Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have refused to continue to participate in peace talks with the Ugandan government until donors provide them with 2 million USD. LRA technical advisor David Nyekorach said the money was needed for the transportation of groups of delegates to South Africa and the LRA hideout in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo for consultation with leader Joseph Kony. According to the LRA, the South Africa trip would allow wider consultations with experts and participants in the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as well as access to the TRC archive in the country. However, a month's delay in the talks was projected due to the inability to reach a consensus on the amount of money to be provided. The European Union and other development partners have already said the LRA's demand for 2 million USD is too high. The LRA hopes the funding will soon be received so talks can resume at the end of August. Peace talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government seeking to bring an end to the 21-year conflict in Northern Uganda have slowly progressed for more than a year, with the signing of an agreement on three out of five negotiating items accomplished. (BBC, July 30; The East African, August 5, 2007)

Northern Ugandan Women's Forum seeks justice: On August 2, more than 30 victims of the Lord's Resistance Army met with members of Parliament in Soroti district to discuss justice for female victims of the conflict. The Northern Uganda Women's Forum organized the meeting and held others in Gulu and Lira in order to debate the merits of different legal systems in prosecuting the LRA suspects and how to incorporate women's issues in the ongoing peace talks. Victims and lawyers at the meetings spent the bulk of the time debating which legal systems to use for different crimes such as cattle rustling, arson, forced marriage, rape and murder. Ultimately, the group decided to use a formal legal framework when dealing with serious crimes like murder, and more traditional mechanisms for crimes like theft. Hilda Akabwai, a legal consultant in the peace talks, expressed that many women are concerned with the manner in which traditional justice mechanisms

are implemented. “Traditional mechanisms often discriminate against women...for example when a woman is beaten by her husband, as a punishment her husband gives a goat to the woman’s brother instead of her,” she said. At the meeting women were also able to speak up about rape at the hands of the LRA, the Karamajong, the Uganda People’s Defense Force and the Uganda People’s Army (a rebel group that tried to bring down the current government from 1987 to 1993). A former rape victim expressed her concern that the cycle of violence in Uganda is too strong, and even if peace were to come, nothing could restore what was taken from her. Ugandan women still feel fearful, but hope the progress with the peace talks can be sustained in order to ultimately bring an end to the 21-year-old conflict. (All Africa; Daily Monitor, August 7; IRIN September 30, 2003)