



Peace & Justice Update  
*August 1, 2008*  
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The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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ADNKI	=	ADNKI ( <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> )
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> )
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> )
EU	=	European Union ( <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int">www.europa.eu.int</a> )
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network ( <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk">www.guardian.co.uk</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> )
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> )
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> )
Khaleej Times	=	Khaleej Times ( <a href="http://www.khaleejtimes.com">www.khaleejtimes.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> )
New Zealand Herald	=	The New Zealand Herald ( <a href="http://www.nzherald.co.nz">www.nzherald.co.nz</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> )
Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre ( <a href="http://www.prensalibre.com">www.prensalibre.com</a> )
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency ( <a href="http://www.panapress.com">www.panapress.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> )
SEAPA	=	Southeast Asian Press Alliance ( <a href="http://www.seapabkk.org">www.seapabkk.org</a> )
SMH	=	Sydney Morning Herald ( <a href="http://www.smh.com">www.smh.com</a> )
ST	=	Sudan Tribune ( <a href="http://www.sudantribune.com">www.sudantribune.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> )
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency ( <a href="http://www.xinhuanet.com/english">www.xinhuanet.com/english</a> )
WP	=	The Washington Post ( <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com">www.washingtonpost.com</a> )
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## CAMEROON

Twelve dead after rebel attack in Bakassi Peninsula. Violence continued as August 14 approached, marking the final pull-out date for the ceding of the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon per the internationally-brokered 2006 Green Tree Agreement. Twelve people were killed July 24 in the Bakassi town Kombo Anjanai—two Cameroonian soldiers and ten rebels, according to Cameroon's Defense Minister Remy Ze Meka. Eight rebels were captured and were being transported to Yaoundé for further questioning. The attack was instigated by an armed rebel group on power boats, speculated by the media to be the Niger Delta Defense and Security Council group that had claimed responsibility for a handful of similar attacks two days prior to the July 24 attack. Commander Ebi Dari, acting as representative for the rebels, stated to The Associated Press, "we want Paul Biya (Cameroon's President) and Nigeria's President (Umaru) Yar'Adua to come together to renegotiate the Bakassi problem," warning that attacks will continue if renegotiations do not occur. In a span of nine months, 37 people have been killed in a total of four rebel attacks. France has pledged to help curb future such attacks, although it is unclear what form this help will take. Tension around the Bakassi issue has been high in Nigeria as it faces internal disputes over the validity of former President Obasanjo's pledge to cede the Bakassi Peninsula. Despite arguments that Obasanjo acted unilaterally and excluded official approval by the military and parliament, current President Yar'Adua has affirmed his intention to uphold the agreement. (Associated Press, July 25; The Post, This Day, July 28, 2008)

Petitioners warn of difficulties in obtaining bail. A spectrum of individuals employed in law, journalism, law enforcement, and human rights petitioned the Senior State Council in Kumba over difficulties with pre-trial bail. In their appeal to the council, the petitioners stated, "We the petitioners beg your intervention in the interest of justice and the rule of the law to put a stop to the current practices and usher in a new era where bails are truly free and the rights of all Cameroon's citizens are truly respected and protected." The demands arose after the Global Conscience Initiative initiated a series of dialogues on the issue, ending July 11. The petitioners took note of violations of the Criminal Procedure Code; for example, a suspect often has to pay the equivalent of around \$60 (FCFA 25,000) to be allowed bail; even when a court orders the release of pre-trial detainees Kumba prison officials still incur a \$20 fee. Denial of bail is grounds for later compensation under the law if the person is discharged and acquitted in court without further appeal. However, the process is sluggish, leaving most cases unpunished. The Superintendent of the Kumba Production Prison denied allegations of collecting money for bail. (The Post, July 27, 2008)

## COLOMBIA

Diplomatic dispute breaks out between Colombia and Switzerland. Colombia has made allegations against a Swiss mediator's involvement in hostage-release talks with leftist rebel groups. Colombia cut the European mediation effort following the successful July 2 undercover operation, releasing 15 hostages including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and three American defense contractors. Now, Colombian officials are accusing Swiss mediator Jean-Pierre Gontard of exceeding his authority and of being a money courier for the leftist guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The Swiss government came to the defense of the Geneva-based academic, stating that his work was "strictly humanitarian." Gontard, a 67-year-old university professor, has been involved in mediation and negotiations for the release of hostages over the last eight years. He was contacted earlier this month by phone for comment on the courier allegations, but declined to do so. He did however deny allegations on a

Swiss public radio show indicating him as the source of \$20 million paid to FARC for the release of the 15 hostages. Regardless, Bogotá has begun a very public campaign against him, releasing email correspondence linking Gontard to communications with the rebel forces. Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos accused Gontard of being the “transporter” of \$500,000 that had made its way into rebel hands and was intercepted in Costa Rica earlier this year. Colombian officials have suggested that the ransom paid was for two employees of a Swiss pharmaceutical company taken captive in 2001. Colombia’s top prosecutor Mario Iguaran announced last week that Colombia has launched a preliminary investigation regarding Gontard’s activity, which is largely based upon email correspondence that links him with FARC. “This goes beyond any humanitarian role to directly aiding a terrorist organization, which is what the FARC is,” the Colombian official said. “If Gontard had run such a mission in the United States and been found out, he’d be in jail on charges of financing a terrorist organization.” (Los Angeles Times, July 25, 2008)

Red Cross negotiates release of eight hostages. The International Committee of the Red Cross arranged for the release of eight hostages Wednesday July 30 in the northwestern rural area of Vigia del Fuente. The hostages had been abducted July 17. The release was an independent handover without assistance or coordination from the Colombian military; it took place via a confidential dialogue between the leftist guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Red Cross. When asked if any payment was involved, Heller responded that the Red Cross does not get involved with payments or ransoms of any kind. In fact, FARC reportedly initiated the exchange with the Red Cross. Yves Heller, spokesman for the Red Cross in Bogotá, mentioned that the recent usage of the Red Cross emblem in a July 2 military rescue had not hindered their operation and negotiation with FARC, and that the Red Cross was still active in their humanitarian missions in Colombia. Heller also reported that the Red Cross are taking serious security measures. Meanwhile, police have arrested Senator Carlos García, the head of Colombia’s National Unity Party, which holds the most seats in the Senate and has been the strongest voice in promoting a referendum that will allow President Alvaro Uribe to run for a third consecutive term. García was arrested last Friday for alleged ties to right-wing paramilitaries and was charged with criminal conspiracy. (CNN.com, July 30, 2008)

## GUATEMALA

Freedom of Information Bill continues in Congress. A Freedom of Information Bill survived its second debate in Congress July 23 despite attempts at interruption. In a move forwards, it was established July 30 that the law would enter the third debate August 1. However, the final approval and editing will be scheduled for a later date ; a meeting with the Commission of Legislature is to take place to discuss possible amendments. If passed as is, the law will require that public companies or private companies that handle public money provide information on how public funds are spent and what results come about from the funds. If informational requests are not addressed to within ten days, sanctions will be made against the company. The Freedom of Information Bill stems from the 2002 ratification of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and is part of a larger effort to strengthen confidence in public institutions. Among the bill’s supporters are the Patriot Party and the ruling National Unity of Hope party. The Unionist party numbers among those opposed. Nineth Montenegro, a supporter of the bill in Congress, describes that “although no one says it publicly, there is a sordid fight to undermine this initiative. The Freedom of Information Bill is one of the many commitments made by the country in order to combat corruption, a scourge that impedes development.” (Prensa Libre, July 26, 28, 31 2008)

UN observer ends eight day stay lamenting state of indigenous education. The special rapporteur of the UN for the situation of the Right of Education Vernor Muñoz expressed concern upon the conclusion of his visit over the exclusion of the indigenous community in the education system, as well as over the privatization of teaching. Concerning privatization he remarked, “it is compelling to observe that 80 percent of secondary education is in the hands of private schools, which makes it impossible for thousands of families to assure a basic and diversified education for their children.” He labeled the situation among the Mayan, Garifuna and Xinca peoples “critical,” especially for the children. Muñoz observed that indigenous communities, often the target of racism and discrimination, face a lack of understanding and knowledge of their cultures and languages in the education system. In addition, he called the allocation of two percent of gross domestic product (GDP) to education “unacceptable” in light of the desired six percent. Despite recent improvements in education throughout the country, gaps between rhetoric and action still exist, Muñoz warns. In a violation of the right to education, one million five hundred thousand boys and girls remain working instead of in school. Muñoz did applaud the My Family Progresses project, which gives remittances to the poor in order for them to be able to send their children to school. Muñoz’s assessment comes twelve years after the signing of the Peace Accords that called for strong improvements in the quality and reach of the education sector (Prensa Libre, July 28, 2008)

## NEPAL

Nepal’s first president takes office: Nepal’s Constituent Assembly (CA) chose the nation’s first president July 21. Madhesi physician Ram Baran Yadav, a member of the Nepali Congress party, defeated Maoist front-runner Ramraja Prasad Singh in a 308-282 runoff vote. The runoff came after both candidates failed to secure the necessary 298 votes in an earlier secret ballot. Yadav’s selection came as a blow to the Maoists, who carried the most seats following April’s legislative elections. Multi-party talks on who should fill the presidential post had been deadlocked since April. The president was selected only a week after the July 13 passage of the fifth amendment to the interim constitution, which allowed for important political positions to be filled by majority vote. Although the presidential post is widely considered ceremonial, filling it was necessary for the new government’s formation. Yadav, who was sworn in July 23, will also be responsible for swearing in a new prime minister now that former PM Girija Prasad Koirala has officially stepped down from his post. It is expected that Maoist leader Prachanda will fill the PM slot, thus heading the new government. (AP, BBC, 21 July; Reuters, 23 July 2008)

Maoists threaten to boycott government, then reverse opposition: Having failed to seat their candidate as the nation’s first president, Maoist representatives to the Constituent Assembly initially claimed they would not lead the formation of a new government. Protesting that the rival alliances which led to the selection of President Ram Baran Yarav would also hinder the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist’s ability to fulfill campaign promises, such as those on land reform, Maoist leader Prachanda remarked that the party had “lost the moral grounds to lead the new government” after they were unable to obtain the necessary votes to win Ramraja Prasad Singh the presidency. The party’s refusal threatened to destabilize a political process which finally seemed to be moving forward after months of deadlock. However, following several days of talks with other CA parties, the Maoists appeared ready to negotiate. Spokesman Krishna Mahara told reporters that the party had put forward three conditions for leading the government, one of which allows the Maoists a minimum of two years in power. The other conditions are the dissolution of the alliance of the three main parties’—Nepali Congress, Communist *Party of Nepal* (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Madhesi People’s Rights Forum—and the implementation of a “minimum program” by the Maoists in order

to move legislation forward in the CA without requiring majority approval. The former Maoist rebels ended ten years of fighting in 2006, and later joined the political process. In April's legislative elections, the party won the largest number of seats, but fell short of obtaining a majority. (AP, BBC, 22 July; Reuters, 25 July; Nepal News, 29 July 2008)

## SIERRA LEONE

Local government elections results announced: The results from the July 5 local government elections have been announced at the British Council Hall in Freetown. The All Peoples' Congress (APC) managed to win 10 regional councils, giving them the majority over the other two political parties, the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) and the Peoples' Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). The SLPP won eight councils, while the PMDC secured just one. Observers who noted the PMDC's poor performance in the elections attributed it to numerous internal problems relating to financial accountability. It has also been said that the PMDC had supported the APC during last year's presidential election. However, the relatively close numbers between the SLPP and the APC have appeared as proof to many that the elections were in fact legitimate, and it is doubtful that any vote rigging or electoral fraud took place by either the APC or the SLPP. The ruling APC party will continue to keep a strong grip on the province of Kono, as well as much of the north. (The Patriotic Vanguard, July 23, 2008)

Politicians fear tribalism as a result of elections: Politicians of the victorious All Peoples Congress (APC) party have voiced concerns that members of other political parties will attempt to win over supporters through other outlets. One of the APC politicians, Sheikh Sillah, has said that he fears that politicians that are against the APC will resort to "preaching the Rwanda-type tribalism." Seeming to draw a parallel to the use of hate radio during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, he went on to say in a newspaper interview that "these so-called intellectuals or useless people are instigating the people against the others, and preaching false information over the media." This is of course in reference to the situation in Rwanda where individuals funded hateful media broadcasts, thus instigating conflict. The opposing party in question in Sierra Leone is the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP), who came close to beating out the APC in local government elections but ultimately lost. (All Africa; July 29, 2008)

## SRI LANKA

Security high during SAARC summit: Security throughout Sri Lanka has been at an unusually high level since the start of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit July 27. Despite the fact that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) offered a ceasefire for the duration of the summit, the government of Sri Lanka remains convinced that the LTTE will use this time to attack. Approximately 12,000 police and 7,000 troops have been deployed in Colombo alone to provide security to the summit, and many of the roads going in and out of the city have been closed. In addition, trains going through Colombo have been denied access to the central parts of the city. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama told reporters July 26 that "This is the largest ever SAARC summit to be held, security must be the ultimate." In addition to the Sri Lankan forces deployed, two Indian warships have been stationed off the coast of Sri Lanka. The Delhi-class destroyer *Mysore* and Rajput-class destroyer *Ranvir* will be stationed some 12 nautical miles off the western coast of the island. India has also deployed several transport helicopters, which will be at the service of Indian delegates. (AP, July 28; Sri Lankan Army, July 29, 2008)

Sri Lanka accepts \$65 Million loan from Iran: Iran and Sri Lanka have agreed to the terms of a \$65 million dollar loan that will be used by Sri Lanka to develop a rural energy program. The plan is to help facilitate the supply and transfer of energy to more rural location. A high level committee has been put together to oversee operations and implementation. The news has caused tensions between Sri Lanka and Israel, a country that has been one of Sri Lanka's main suppliers of military technology. With more than \$100 million spent on defense, Sri Lanka has purchased aircraft as well as navigational equipment and artillery from Israel. However, since news of the Iranian loan surfaced, Israeli defense shipments have stopped coming to Sri Lanka, save for shipments of spare parts. (Fars News Agency, July 29; Trend News, July 28; Daily Mirror, July 26, 2008)

## SUDAN

Government clashes with Darfur rebels after president's bid for peace: In what some consider an effort to bolster his image following a proposed International Criminal Court indictment for war crimes, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir traveled to Darfur last week for a two-day circuit of its three state capitals. Speaking at a July 24 rally, he vowed to work toward achieving lasting peace in the troubled region. However, just days after the president's visit, rebels and government forces clashed in North Darfur, leaving four members of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) dead in an attack that the government initially denied. Both sides are pointing to each other as instigator of the fighting, in what has become a common practice in the five-year-old conflict between rebels and the Sudanese army and government-backed janjaweed militias. SLM president Minni Minnawi alleged that the army attacked one of its police posts and then ran search operations throughout nearby villages. Minnawi and two other rebel groups also claimed that government forces bombed several villages during the time of al-Bashir's visit to Darfur in a show of force. The joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) said it would send peacekeepers to investigate the reports. (AP, 24 July; Reuters, 27 and 29 July 2008)

Eight Darfur rebels condemned to death: Eight members of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were sentenced to death and another was acquitted by a special terrorism court July 28 for their role in a May attack on a city near Khartoum. The Sudanese government convened the tribunal after JEM rebels reportedly killed more than 200 people and wounded others in their May 10 assault on Omdurman, the capital's twin city. The raid came as a surprise to both residents and the government, and was the first rebel assault so close to the capital. Of the hundred-plus JEM fighters arrested after the attack, 90 juveniles have been pardoned by President Omar al-Bashir, and there is speculation that more juveniles remain in detention. However, JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussain has said that the children were not enrolled as fighters in the rebel group. In addition to the recently completed hearing, three similar trials of 30 other suspects related to the attack are continuing. (AP, BBC, Reuters, 29 July 2008)

## UGANDA

Human Rights Commission split over arrest. Buganda Kingdom information minister Peter Mayiga, his deputy Medard Lubega, and the chairperson of the civic education committee Betty Nambooze were arrested July 18. Placed under arrest with counts of terrorism and inciting violence, they also face charges of promoting sectarianism in violation of codes 41 and 83 of the Penal Code Act. While Lubega and Nambooze have been charged with sedition, Mayiga remains under investigation. The accused have been detained in western Uganda and, according to Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda, have been moved to separate locations. Two of them are reportedly ill. The Ugandan daily New Vision reported mixed reactions from within the Human Rights Commission. By the

time the Commission intervened on July 21, the three detained officials had not been tried in any court, and the Commission's head, Margaret Sekagya has named it a "direct violation of their right to liberty." However, many within the Commission are calling for support of the police in carrying out their investigation. Nevertheless, Sekagya has been the most outspoken against the arrests and their treatment. She has criticized support for Police investigation because it is "wrong," "counterproductive," and "should not mean condoning its breach of the law." (New Vision, Jul 20 and July 29, 2008).

Iran and Uganda expand economic ties. An Iranian newspaper reported July 28 that Uganda and Iran are seeking to establish a joint bank. The Executive Director of the Iranian Development Bank, Kurosh Parvizian, announced this following a meeting with Uganda's Foreign Minister Sam Kotsya. During the meeting they reached an agreement that an independent bank would be established in a joint investment between Uganda and the Iranian Export Development Bank in Kampala. Parvizian stated that "The goal of establishing this bank is to make the work of the Iranian exporters easier and to provide financial resources for the tradesmen in that country." He further added, "The growing presence of the Iranian companies in Uganda, the open economic atmosphere for investment and the comparatively good results of banking activities in that country have caused the Iranian Export Development Bank to consider partnership for setting up this bank." They have provided a ten million dollar credit line for Ugandan purchasers of Iranian goods, with hopes of fostering development and expansion of trade between the two countries. (BBC Monitoring Middle East, July 29, 2008).