

Peace & Justice Update

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The countries for the *Peace & Justice Update* have been chosen as areas of focus at the institute.

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The Peace & Justice Updates are written by the interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego.

The interns during the fall 2011 term are:

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SOURCE LIST

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AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
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AI	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
Al-Jazeera	=	Al-Jazeera (www.english.aljazeera.net)
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EFE	=	EFE (www.efe.com)
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Jeune Afrique	=	Jeune Afrique (www.jeuneafrique.com)
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LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Latin America Press	=	Latin America Press (www.latinamericapress.org)
LBO	=	Lanka Business Online (www.lankabusinessonline.lk)
Liberian E-Mansion	=	Liberian Executive Mansion (www.emansion.gov.lr)
Miami Herald	=	The Miami Herald (www.miamiherald.com)
Mindanews	=	Mindanews (www.mindanews.com)
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Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
NACLA	=	North American Congress on Latin America (www.nacla.org)
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Sudan Tribune	=	Sudan Tribune (www.sudantribune.com)
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Times Online	=	Times Online (www.timesonline.co.uk)
UN News	=	UN News Center (www.un.org/news)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNHCR	=	UN High Commissioner for Refugees (www.unhcr.org)
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
UNMIL	=	United Nations Mission in Liberia (www.unmil.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America News (www.voanews.com)
Web Newswire	=	Web Newswire (www.webnewswire.com)
WPFd	=	World Press Freedom Day 2010 (www.wpfd2010.org)
WSJ	=	The Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
Xinhua	=	Xinhua News Agency (www.xinhuanet.com/english)

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

COLOMBIA

FARC rebels execute four hostages during a clash with the army, fifth hostage escapes

The Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) executed four military hostages during a rescue attempt November 26 by the Colombian army in the jungle of the southern province of Caquetá. Prior to their deaths, the hostages were believed to have been held captive for between 12 and 14 years. One of the hostages was a soldier and the other three were members of the national police.

The hostages have been identified as Colonel Edgar Duarte Valero, Major Elkin Hernandez Rivas, Lieutenant Alvaro Moreno, and Sergeant Libio Jose Martinez. Sergeant Martinez was thought to be the FARC's longest held hostage for a total of 14 years and had never met his 13 year old son. A fifth hostage, police sergeant Luis Alberto Erazo, escaped and hid in the jungle during the fighting. He suffered facial injuries as a result of grenades being thrown at him during his escape but is now reunited with his family after being held captive for 12 years.

The bodies of the four hostages were found the morning of November 26 shortly after the rescue mission ended. Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon stated that three of the hostages were shot in the back of the head and one was shot in the back by FARC rebels.

The Colombian government stated that the "operation was a rescue attempt by the armed forces who had intelligence that the rebel unit was holding hostages." In two previous rescue attempts, one in 2003 and the other in 2007, FARC did not hesitate to kill the prisoners when Colombian troops tried to rescue them. Families of the slain hostages criticized the rescue attempts and have called on the Colombian government to begin peace talks with the FARC.

This possibility has appeared closer in recent months, with President Juan Manuel Santos taking a number of steps towards negotiation with the FARC leadership, including legislation to make it possible for demobilized guerrillas to hold public office and moves towards land reform. However, less than a month ago, the security forces killed the FARC's commander-in-chief, alias "Alfonso Cano," in a raid on his hideout in southwest Colombia. This has been widely condemned as a step backwards for peace, both as an act of violence and because it left the leadership in the hands of "Timochenko," a more hardline figure.

This latest event has again set back hopes of peace. President Manuel Santos is receiving criticism and some of the blame for the execution of the hostages. The FARC told former Senator Piedad Cordoba that they planned to release six hostages, but did not release any names or give projected dates for their release. FARC rebels noted that the decision was made by their past leader Alonso Cano, before his death November 4. Rebels also stated that the actions of Santos and the Colombian military disrupted what could have been a "humanitarian gesture."

The FARC secretariat stated, “We profoundly regret the tragic ending of the demented rescue attempt ordered by the Colombian government.”

Sources: [Associated Press](#), Nov. 29; [Pan-American Post](#), Nov. 28, [Los Angeles Times](#), Nov. 27, 2011.

Please send comments to Felicia Gomez at feliciagomez-12@san Diego.edu.

GUATEMALA

Former president to be extradited to United States

President Alvaro Colom agreed November 14 to extradite to the United States his predecessor, Alfonso Portillo, president from 2000 to 2004.

Portillo is accused embezzling Guatemalan public funds, using U.S. bank accounts to launder \$70 million, and hiding the money in offshore accounts. He also stood trial in Guatemala on charges of stealing \$15 million from the military in 2001, but was cleared of those charges in May of this year.

The extradition was initially authorized at the beginning of the year by a local court, a decision that was then ratified by the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, both which rejected appeals from Portillo’s attorneys to drop the charges.

Portillo came to office promising to redistribute wealth, but critics say his presidency was one of the most corrupt administrations in the country’s recent history.

Sources: [BBC](#); [Fox News Latino](#), Nov. 15; [Christian Science Monitor](#), Nov. 16, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@san Diego.edu.

Thousands protest increased violence

Thousands of women marched through the center of Guatemala City November 25 to raise awareness about the dangers of violence against women. The protesters demanded justice from the government and asserted that the legal system should do more to punish the attackers.

More than 650 women have died violent deaths so far this year in Guatemala, a country where 98 percent of crimes committed go unsolved, and in many cases, are not even investigated.

The women demanded that the state institutions responsible for guaranteeing the lives and security of women uphold constitutional mandates and international conventions to protect women against violence.

The march coincided with the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and was commemorated throughout Central America where violence against women and femicide have become widespread problems. Amnesty International reported in the 2011 State of the World's Human Rights report that thousands of women in the region were raped, forcibly disappeared, or killed this year, and that women were particularly at risk in certain parts of Guatemala and Mexico.

Sources: *Business Recorder*, *Gather*; *Prensa Libre*, Nov. 26; *Amnesty International*, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

HAITI

Conference aims at increasing foreign investment

An investor forum held the week of November 28 organized by the Clinton Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank, and President Michel Martelly's administration invited participants to learn about investment opportunities in Haiti's still struggling economy.

Up to 1,000 participants from more than 29 countries participated, including fashion designer Donna Karan and actor Sean Penn. The forum gave potential investors the chance to learn more about how the country wants to create jobs in a troubled nation still trying to recover from the massive earthquake nearly two years ago.

"Haitians don't want a gift," Martelly said. "They want work."

Martelly hopes to create 500,000 jobs over the next three years, with some of these opportunities coming from the planned new Marriott hotel and a South Korean-run industrial park slated to open next year. He said his government is working to draft laws that would make it easier to open businesses and create new projects in Haiti.

Martelly's original plan to create new jobs by restoring the decommissioned Haitian army has been put on hold until a commission can be formed to study how best a new army can replace the UN peacekeeping forces. The controversial plan drew immediate opposition from foreign diplomats and other critics who said the country would be better off strengthening the underfunded and undermanned national police force.

In the past, international companies have been reluctant to do business in Haiti because of complicated laws and occasional political unrest. New investors must also be willing to spend more on fuel and security, services the government struggles to provide.

The conference comes as questions linger about the need for an agency that encourages transparency and coordination in Haiti's reconstruction, a lack of which may make international donors reluctant to fulfill their pledges to help rebuild the nation. In the almost two years since the earthquake, less than half of the \$4.6 billion in pledged aid has been disbursed and political tensions threaten to end coordinated reconstruction efforts.

In October, the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, a Haitian and international panel co-chaired by former U.S. President Bill Clinton dissolved after Haitian officials failed to renew its 18-month mandate. Officials say that 120 projects submitted to the disbanded panel remain on hold and donors fear pledged money will not be distributed properly without the commission's oversight.

Prime Minister Garry Conille and a transition team are trying to decide what form a new reconstruction commission should take. However, moving forward may be difficult as the proposal must go before Parliament for approval, and as lawmakers are routinely at odds with President Martelly, critics question whether a decision will actually be made. It was similar political sparring that caused the original commission's mandate to die unceremoniously in October, when lawmakers took no action to renew it.

Sources: *Associated Press*, Nov. 29; *Seattle Times*, Nov. 24; *Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

EGYPT

Voting commences following week of unrest

As political turmoil returned to the streets in Tahrir Square, votes for the new parliament began early November 28. The vote is the first since former dictator Hosni Mubarak was deposed late in the spring. Protests leading up to the votes were staged due to popular displeasure with the interim military government that has been in control since Mubarak lost power.

The events of November 18, when mass protests in Tahrir Square prompted police violence which resulted in the deaths of protesters left many in doubt of Egypt's positive change towards

democracy over the last nine months that began with the “Arab Spring.” Egyptians had clearly grown tired of the interim military rule.

Despite efforts to hinder and postpone parliamentary elections, the first day of elections, November 28, saw a relatively smooth day of voting with minimal violence. There was also a higher turnout than expected, particularly among female voters and Coptic Christians.

However, reports of parties campaigning around polling areas, vote buying, inadequate access to polling stations, and insufficient vote counters were all marked difficulties of the voting process.

With initial results coming in November 30, analysts put the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party in the lead with 40 percent of votes and the more conservative Al-Nour party in second. The November 28 vote elected 168 of 498 members of Parliament. With votes occurring in waves, the seats of the lower chamber will be elected in January and those of upper chamber in March.

While many outside of Egypt, particularly in the West, will likely be leery of acceptance of an Islamist ruling party controlling politics, optimism about the elections has arisen following last week’s violence.

“This is the beginning of a new era in Egypt, democracy in action. Not in theory, but in action,” said presidential candidate and former Arab League General Secretary Amr Moussa following the first day of voting.

But for Moussa’s optimism for democracy to be borne out by a functioning and popularly elected parliament, the military government must fully handover legislative powers to this new ruling body. Further, it is imperative that those who are elected, as well as those who are not, accept the election results. Such efforts will contribute to a smooth transition of power.

Sources: *The Guardian*, Nov. 30; *Al Jazeera*; *The Guardian*, Nov. 28; *Al Ahram Weekly*, Nov. 18, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

IRAN

Tehran protesters storm British embassy; UK severs diplomatic relations

Protesters in Tehran moved in on the British embassy November 29 and briefly detained six staff members after smashing windows and tearing down the British flag.

The protesters were reportedly acting out against the economic sanctions that Britain had imposed against Iran following the UN sponsored findings of the International Atomic Energy Association's (IAEA) report on its nuclear capabilities earlier this fall. The UK and United States have been the most outspoken countries in favor of strong economic sanctions against Iran in response to the report.

Suspecting that the move, carried out by the "student basij militia," was backed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, British foreign secretary William Hague took little time to declare that all Iranian diplomats inside and out of their embassy in the UK would be expelled from the country. Further, he asserted all British staff would be removed from Iran and their embassy in Tehran abandoned. As one official put it, "If you let your thugs destroy our embassy and assault or scare our staff, you cannot expect to maintain normal civilized relations with the rest of the world."

Iran's Parliamentary Chairman Ali Larijani has denied the government's involvement, citing "several decades of domination-seeking behavior of Britain" as the reason for the embassy's siege. He has also spoken out against UN involvement in castigating his country.

The Iranian government assured the international community that a thorough investigation would be launched into the November 29 event in an effort to preserve diplomatic ties to other countries. The Netherlands, France and Germany have also called their ambassadors from Tehran back to their respective countries temporarily until security can be assured.

The U.S. does not have an embassy in Iran at present and has not since the events at their embassy during the 1979 Iranian Revolution in which 50 diplomats were held hostage for 400 days.

While the Iranian government continued to emphasize that this was an isolated event carried out by a fringe group against the former colonial power of Britain, international responses have been more critical. "For rioters essentially to be able to overrun the embassy and set it on fire," said U.S. president Barack Obama, "is an indication that the Iranian government is not taking its international obligations seriously."

Sources: [The Guardian](#); [BBC](#), Nov. 30; [New York Times](#), Nov. 29, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

SYRIA

UN report on violence against protesters comes amid tightening sanctions

A recent report released to the United Nations Human Rights Council has highlighted the questionable manner in which Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's government has handled ongoing protests in his country that have left as many as 3,700 dead since they began.

In the 40-page report, alarming facts were presented about the ways in which President Bashar Al-Assad's government forces had responded to protesters. "State forces shot indiscriminately at unarmed protesters," reveals the report. "Most were shot in the upper body, including in the head. Defectors from military and security forces told the commission that they had received orders to shoot at unarmed protesters without warning."

The UN compiled the contents of the report from 223 interviews with victims and witnesses as well as defectors of government security forces, despite difficulties of accessing the country due to Al-Assad's hardline stance against international involvement in the ongoing conflict.

Following the report, November 30 marked increasing sanctions revealed by the Arab League, which imposed a trading block a few days prior. Seventeen Syrian officials including Al-Assad's younger brother, Maher Al-Assad and his wealthy cousin Rami Makhlouf are currently facing a travel ban as enforced by the League, a move that has been supported by Turkey.

Turkey took things a step further by freezing Syrian economic assets held through the Syrian Commercial Bank as well as cutting trade, specifically of arms. "Every bullet fired, every bombed mosque has taken away the legitimacy of the Syrian leadership and has widened the gap between us," according to Turkey's foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu. "Syria has wasted the last chance that it was given."

With the moves by the Arab League and Turkey as well as increasing attention from the UN, impatience that the Syrian people have expressed for Al-Assad to step down from power after twelve years and an even longer legacy of his father's reign has now rippled to the international community.

Sources: *New York Times*, Nov. 30; *The Guardian*, Nov. 28, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

NEPAL

Task Force gives Constituent Assembly an extra six months; prominent parties object

A special four-member taskforce designed by the Nepali government to assess the Constituent Assembly (CA), a body designed to accelerate the conclusion of the peace process and establish a new constitution in Nepal, informally decided to give the CA a renewed six-month extension. In a November 25 Supreme Court ruling, the dissolution of the CA had been determined to occur immediately. However, its future is now under highly contested.

Comprised of Bahadur Bogati of the ruling UCPN-Maoist party, Krishna Prasad Sitaula of the Nepali Congress, Ishwor Pokhrel of the CPN-UML, and Jay Prakash Gupta of United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF), the task force formed November 27 and was aimed at assessing the future of the CA. The current CA mandate was set to expire November 30.

In a November 29 amendment to the constitution, as proposed by the task force, the CA was given its last and final extension. The 601-seat assembly had received four previous such extensions following its inception in 2007.

While the public had been by and large receptive to the move, several high profile politicians, including members of Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai's ruling party were outspoken in their displeasure with the vote, claiming that the CA has overstepped its political lifespan.

For many, the renewal of the CA without holding a vote is a marked failure of the Nepali political system. With prominent politicians being convicted and suspected of embezzling state funds, and the current government's inability to address the aftermath of conflict which ended in 2006 and renewed in 2008, members of the opposition see a continued political deadlock on the horizon.

Sources: *Asia Times*, Dec. 1; *Ekantipur*; *The Himalayan Times*, Nov. 28, 2011.

Please send comments to Andy Paul at ajpaul@sandiego.edu.

PHILIPPINES

Formal charges brought against Arroyo, under hospital arrest

On December 1, a Philippine court ordered ex-president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to be moved from an exclusive private hospital to a military-run medical facility while awaiting trial for electoral

fraud. President Benigno Aquino had previously agreed to the extended hospital arrest of his predecessor to treat a newly discovered ailment on November 29.

Arroyo is scheduled to be relocated from her \$1000 a day private hospital suite to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, a heavily secured facility in northern Manila. Judges say government doctors will be able to provide Arroyo with the medical treatment she requires for what her doctors say is a rare bone disease, loss of appetite, and intestinal infections. However, her private doctors will also be able to treat her in the new facility.

Arroyo was arrested November 18 on charges of electoral fraud in a high-profile case set off by her attempts to leave the country for medical treatment the week before. The Supreme Court had upheld her right to travel until charges had formally been brought; however government officials stopped her from leaving for fear she would not return to the Philippines to stand trial.

The charges are being led by Arroyo's successor and critic, President Benigno Aquino III, who was overwhelmingly elected on promises to rid the Philippines of corruption and has said he wants to start with Arroyo. The election fraud charges stem from allegations that Arroyo conspired with officials to tamper with the results of 2007 election to favor her candidates. The charges carry a maximum of 40 years in prison.

During her nine-year presidency from 2001 to 2010, Arroyo ranked as the country's least popular leader and faced several attempted coups and impeachment attempts over corruption allegations.

Perhaps motivated by the recent electoral fraud charges, on November 22 relatives of 57 people massacred in 2009 in the southern Philippine province of Mindanao sued Arroyo over the killings, which they claim she could have prevented. Court documents say Arroyo turned a blind eye to a decade of human rights abuses in the region and instead cultivated ties with corrupt political leaders. At least two allies of Arroyo are among the 100 suspects being tried on murder charges in the country's worst politically motivated massacre, which killed 32 media workers, making it the worst single killing of journalists in the world. While the lead lawyer in the case, Harry Roque, said there is no evidence Arroyo planned the massacre, "she not only funded and armed the killers but gave them the sense of influence. She could have prevented it. She knew about the possible dangers."

No trial dates have been set for either charges, yet Arroyo remains under close watch by both government officials and medical professionals.

Sources: *Phil Star*, Dec. 2; *Gulf Today*, Nov. 30; *Time*, Nov. 22; *Washington Post*, Nov. 17, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

UNICEF provides \$85M to increase child welfare

The United Nations has pledged more than \$85 million to the Philippines to assist in its efforts to improve the well-being of Filipino children and to help the country to reach its international commitment to reduce maternal and child mortality by 2015.

The financial aid will help the Philippine government achieve its pledge under the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate poverty and hunger, provide primary education, reduce child deaths and improve maternal health. The MDGs are time-bound, concrete and specific goals that 189 world leaders committed to achieving by 2015 at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The UN said the Philippines had made considerable progress in the past ten years toward some of the goals but was still far behind in areas such as education, poverty and maternal health.

The spending of the money must conform with the UN Development Assistance Framework, the strategic program framework of the UN, and the Philippine Development Program of the National Economic Development Authority.

Sources: *Phil Star*, Nov. 29, 2011.

Please send comments to Meghan Auker Becker at megtab@sandiego.edu.

SRI LANKA

Army prepares rebuttal to UN report

The Sri Lankan military issued a response to United Nations' calls for the Sri Lankan government and military to address wartime human rights violations December 2.

Under direction of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a panel was formed in May 2010 to assess the actions of the Sri Lankan government related to the detention, murder and disappearance of civilians suspected of ties to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) movement towards the end of the nearly quarter century-long conflict.

Ban made the September 12 decision to bring his panel's findings, the Darusman report, to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council, indicating that the UN was not yet satisfied with Sri Lanka's post-war actions and continues to seek further attention to past and present human rights violations.

Sri Lankan Army Commander Lieutenant General Jagath Jayasuriya issued a statement entitled "Transforming of Wartime Army into Peacetime Army" December 2 and explained that the military would prepare a counter-report "as a response to specific paragraphs that made allegations against the military during humanitarian operations in the Darusman report." He continued, "[members of]

the tri-services are now giving final touches to the compilation of a new report that will be shortly submitted to the international community.”

Jayasuriya’s speech came just a few days after November 30 when a high ranking former member of the army confidentially revealed that the military had in fact issued specific orders to carry out human rights violations during the end of the war between the LTTE and the predominantly Sinhalese Sri Lankan government.

The source, who released the statement to The International, described strategic killings and assassinations, white vans used for the purpose of kidnapping and the murder of surrendering LTTE fighters. Many of these allegations against the Sri Lankan government have been corroborated by the UN report.

The current government, led by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, has denied the validity of what they call allegations by the UN and the international community. While they have produced the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), the Rajapaksa government is yet to publicly report its findings. The report is said to have made it to the president’s desk November 27, where it is to be processed and amended before its submission to the UN.

Sources: *The Nation*, Nov. 27; *The International*, Nov. 30; *Daily Mirror*, Dec. 2

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EAST AFRICA

KENYA

High Court seeks the arrest of Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir

On November 28, the Kenyan High Court ruled that Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir must be arrested if he returns to Kenyan soil, and be handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over alleged war crimes and genocide in Darfur. As a result, Sudan has ordered the Kenyan ambassador to leave the country within 72 hours and has recalled the Sudanese ambassador to Kenya.

The case was brought to the Kenyan High Court by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) against Al Bashir last year. Judge Nicolas Ombija, a judge for the Kenyan High Court stated that the Monday ruling means that Bashir’s arrest “should be effected by the Attorney General and the Minister for Internal Security should he ever set foot in Kenya.”

Kenya is a signatory of the treaty that established the ICC in 2002, but has previously failed to uphold the warrant for Al Bashir's arrest. In 2010 Al Bashir visited Kenya to attend a ceremony to celebrate its new constitution, but the Kenyan government did not arrest the Sudanese president on the ICC charges, remarking that at the time Kenya was obliged to defer to African Union (AU) decisions concerning his arrest. The AU has lobbied for the arrest warrant to be deferred saying that the ICC is only investigating war crimes in Africa and that arresting Al Bashir "would hamper the search for peace in Darfur." In response, the ICJ has responded by noting that Kenya's responsibilities to local laws and international agreements such as the Rome Statute are a higher priority than its obligations to the AU.

The UN estimates that more than 300,000 people have died during the conflict in Darfur, while Sudan's government states that 12,000 people have died due to the conflict. The Sudanese government also notes that media sources have exaggerated the number of people killed during the conflict for political reasons.

Sources: [Al Jazeera](#); [BBC](#); [CNN](#), Nov. 28, 2011.

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SOMALIA

Al Shabab bans aid organizations

On November 28, Al Shabab decided to ban 16 aid organizations, including six UN agencies, from central and southern Somalia. The decision is likely to further harm Somalis, who are already suffering from drought and famine. Heavily armed Shabab fighters raided the offices of several aid organizations, looted equipment and accused aid workers of being spies.

Al Shabab accused the 16 aid organizations of "disseminating information on the activities of Muslims and militant fighters, financing, aiding and abetting 'subversive' groups seeking to destroy the basic tenets of the Islamic penal system" and of trying to turn the population against Shariah law. An al-Shabab spokesman stated that his group had "conducted a meticulous yearlong review" through the Office for Supervising the Affairs of Foreign Agencies, "that detailed the illicit activities and misconducts of some of the organizations."

Some of the organizations banned include UNICEF, World Health Organization, UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Danish Refugee Council, German Agency for Technical Co-operation, Action Contre la Faim, and Saacid and Concern.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon condemned al-Shabab's actions, saying "it's a brazen act that prevents these organizations from providing life-saving assistance." He also demanded that al-

Shabab leave the premises of the organizations and return seized properties to the NGOs and agencies.

The Horn of Africa is currently experiencing the worst drought since 1991-92, which has so far killed tens of thousands of people. While the number of officially declared famine zones has decreased, the UN still insists that more than 250,000 people are at immediate risk of starvation which could increase with the limitations put on aid organizations, which many have come to depend upon for survival.

Sources: *Al Jazeera*; *New York Times*; *Washington Post*, Nov. 28, 2011.

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