

ALERT UNIT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nº 8, Agost/September 2006



HEADLINES OF THE MONTH

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- **AFGHANISTAN:** The Operation Medusa deployed by NATO in the south of the country might have caused the death of more than 400 Taliban militias since its beginning.
- **GEORGIA:** Tensions with Russia rise due to the detention of Russian military officers for espionage and due to accusations to President V. Putin of contacting Abkhazia and South Ossetia leaders.
- **NIGERIA (NIGER DELTA):** O. Obasanjo orders the deployment of a hard military operation in the Niger Delta region, in which the Nigerian armed forces set fire to the surroundings of Port Harcourt, accusing its population of hiding MEND militants.
- **PALESTINE:** Armed clashes between Fatah and Hamas militias, after the protests organised by civil servants demanding the payment of their salaries, cause the death of eight people in Gaza.
- **RUSSIAN Fed. (CHECHNYA):** Rebel Chechen leader, D. Umarov, withdraws offer of peace talks with Russia.
- **SRI LANKA:** The head of the Peace Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process is assassinated supposedly by the LTTE amid a strong escalation of the violence in the north and the east of the country.
- **SOMALIA:** The Union Islamic Courts takes the control of the southern city of Kismayo, the third of importance in the country, in spite of the contacts with the Transitional Federal Government.
- **SUDAN (DARFUR):** In spite of the UN Security Council Resolution that approves the deployment of the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, the Sudanese Government keeps opposing the arrival of the UNMIS, forcing the AU to increase its operations in the area to avoid a security vacuum.
- **THE PHILIPPINES:** The number of political homicides increases two years in a row and there is still a lack of prosecutions, Amnesty International denounces.

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- **BOLIVIA:** The Constituent Assembly adopts new rules that give more leeway to E. Morales' party, which has caused strong criticism among opposition groups.
- **CÔTE D'IVOIRE:** The scarce advances of the identification and disarmament process force the delay of the elections for the second time, opening a crisis in the peace process, while President L. Gbagbo declares that the UN pacification process has failed.
- **CUBA:** The President, F. Castro, transfers temporarily its powers for the first time in the 47 years of the regime due to an illness.
- **DR CONGO:** The instability in Kinshasa persists in spite of the meeting between the two candidates that will attend the second round of the presidential elections, J. Kabila and J. P. Bemba that will take place the next 29th of October.
- **EQUATORIAL GUINEA:** The Prime Minister and the whole Government offer their resignation to the President T. Obiang, who had previously made strong criticisms to the Government.
- **LEBANON:** Israel keeps its troops in Ghajar area waiting for a security agreement with the Lebanese army and the FINUL.
- **MEXICO:** The conflict between teachers and social organizations and the Government of the state of Oaxaca increases after demonstrators take over governmental buildings.
- **MOLDOVA (TRANSDNIESTER):** The referendum in the secessionist republic obtains a result of the 97% favourable to independence, but fails to achieve international recognition.
- **NEPAL:** The Maoists state that they will neither confine their combatants nor disarm them completely until a political agreement has been reached. The resumption of the peace negotiations might open a door to this agreement.
- **SERBIA (KOSOVO):** The talks between Serbs and Kosovars on the future status of the province achieve scarce progress, while the Serb Parliament approves unanimously a new Constitution that claims sovereignty over Kosovo and which will have to be approved in a referendum.

- **THAILAND:** A military coup takes over political power, establishes the martial law and a provisional military committee which has named S. Chulanont as new Prime Minister.
- **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:** Presidential, parliamentary and cantonal elections take place, whose elected leaders will govern without direct external support for the first time since the end of the war.
- **BURUNDI:** The Government and the last armed group in the country, the A. Rwsa FNL, reach a peace agreement to end the armed conflict that the country has suffered since 1993.
- **CHAD – SUDAN:** Both countries re-establish completely their diplomatic and economic relations.
- **INDIA – PAKISTAN:** The two countries agree the resumption of peace negotiations after the meeting maintained at the sidelines of the Non Aligned Countries summit.
- **MYANMAR:** UN Security Council will discuss on the country's situation in spite of the opposition of countries such as China.
- **TOGO:** All political parties and representatives of civil society sign the Intertogolese Agreement, putting an end to the political crisis with the creation of a national unity Government and the holding of elections in 2007.
- **TURKEY:** The Kursdish PKK declares a ceasefire after the appeal made from prison by its leader A. Ocalan, while Turkey demands the disarmament of the group.
- **UGANDA:** Peace talks between the Government and the LRA resume after several difficulties that have put the peace process at risk.



ISSUE OF THE MONTH

Uganda. Peace talks continue in spite of difficulties

The Government of Uganda and the opposition armed group LRA began on the 28th of September the third round of the peace talks in Juba, capital city of southern Sudan, under Sudanese mediation. However, the process is currently at a moment of fragility caused by the accusations made by both parties related to the violation of the truce that was established by the agreement reached on the 26th of August. The agreement on the cessation of hostilities included, furthermore, the regrouping of LRA combatants in two assembly areas in southern Sudan and the creation of the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team with the presence of the Ugandan Government, the LRA, the Sudanese mediation team and the AU.

The main subjects of the peace talks agenda that are being discussed in Juba include the following: cessation of hostilities (which has already been signed and is being implemented); comprehensive solutions including the LRA's participation in national politics, social and economic development of the northern and eastern Uganda, and

the resettlement of internally displaced persons; accountability and reconciliation; a formal ceasefire agreement; and the DDR process of the LRA combatants.

The current negotiations that began in July constitute the best opportunity to put an end to the armed conflict that northern Uganda has been suffering since 1986, because of the goodwill expressed by both parties until now and also the determination showed by the Sudanese mediation team headed by the Vice President of the southern Sudan Government, R. Machar, to reach a peace agreement. This conflict, which constitutes currently one of the most serious forgotten crises, has caused the forced displacement of some two million people. During the last 20 years, civilian population has become the main objective of the armed group, and lootings and children abductions to serve as combatants, were usual practices. Women and children have constantly suffered serious human rights violations perpetrated by both sides.



ARTICLES, REPORTS AND PRESS RELEASES

- La falta de voluntad política pone en peligro el proceso de paz en Côte d'Ivoire. (Press Release, 29th of September).
- El conflicto en el Líbano: una mirada más allá. (Published in "Sant Cugat, Mou-te i Coopera" the 21st of September).
- Alertas para un camino de construcción de paz. (Published in Cuadernos para el Diálogo in July).



AGENDA

- Presidential and legislative elections in Ecuador	15th of October
- Presidential elections (2nd round) in DR Congo	29th of October
- Presidential elections (2nd round) in Brazil	29th of October

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For any comments or suggestions, please write to: alerta.escolapau@pangea.org

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