

PROGRAMME ON CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nº 15, April 2007



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HEADLINES OF THE MONTH

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worsening

- **AFGHANISTAN:** United Nations and various human rights organizations report the increasing impact of the armed conflict on the civilian population, which has become the objective of the Taliban militias.
- **ALGERIA:** An attack against a Government seat and a police station in Alger vindicated by the al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb causes the death of 30 people and more than 200 injured people.
- **MYANMAR:** Contra insurgent military operations against the opposition armed groups in the Karen and Shan states intensify.
- **PAKISTAN:** Pakistani security forces and civilian patrols join to combat Taliban militias in the area of Waziristan causing more than 50 deaths.
- **PALESTINE:** The Hamas' armed organization, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, announces the end of the ceasefire declared in November due to the assassination of Palestinians in the West Bank by the Israeli forces.
- **PHILIPPINES:** The clashes between the armed forces and the MNLF in the south of the country, the most intense in the last years, provoke the death of dozens of people and the displacement of 40.000.
- **SOMALIA:** The worst clashes of the last 16 years between the Transitional Federal Government, supported by the Ethiopian armed forces, and the Somali insurgence, take place causing since February more than 1.000 deaths and 400.000 displaced in the capital.
- **TURKEY:** The army intensifies its attacks against the opposition Kurdish armed group PKK in the southeast of the country, killing 29 combatants in 10 days, while the PKK announces that it will abandon the ceasefire if Turkish Government rejects negotiation.

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- **CÔTE D'IVOIRE:** After the signature of the peace agreements, the confidence zone that divided the country is dismantled and the Government promulgates an amnesty law that leaves war crimes unpunished.
- **DR CONGO:** Opposition leader J.P. Bemba abandons the country after the clashes in Kinshasha that caused 600 casualties, a serious setback to the efforts to establish democracy in the country.
- **ERITREA – ETHIOPIA – SOMALIA:** The conflict in Somalia progressively acquires regional dimensions after the attack of the pro-independence Somali group FNLO in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden against Chinese oil interests and the withdrawal of Eritrea from the IGAD because of its policy towards Somalia.
- **GEORGIA (SOUTH OSSETIA):** The Georgian Government prepares a new peace plan which foresees the creation of a provisional administrative unit in South Ossetia, a proposal rejected by the pro-independence leaders.
- **INDONESIA (ACEH):** The simultaneous burst of two explosive artefacts, in a police stations and the residence of a former GAM leader, becomes the first serious incident since the signature of the peace agreement in August 2005.
- **KYRGYZSTAN:** The social protests organised by the opposition and held during several days end following violent clashes, while the President reinforces his positions despite the continued climate of political instability.
- **NEPAL:** The delay on the celebration of the elections for the Constituent Assembly, initially agreed for June, could jeopardize the peace process, according to the political parties.
- **NIGERIA:** The general elections, marked by the fraud and the death of more than 150 people, conclude with a victory of the presidential party PDP.
- **SERBIA:** Political parties have not reached yet an agreement on government formation, while the failure to comply with the three-month term, which expires in mid-May, would force the celebration of new elections.

- **SYRIA – ISRAEL:** The tension among both countries increases after the warning by the Syrian government of a possible conflict if Israel doesn't accept the beginning of peace negotiations.
- **SUDAN (DARFUR):** The Sudanese Government is accused of violating the arms embargo over Darfur after accepting the beginning of the second phase of the joint UN-AU action plan.
- **ANGOLA:** UNHCR concludes its repatriation plan for the Angolan refugees after the return to the country of more than 410.000 people since the end of the war.
- **CHAD – SUDAN:** Peace agreement between Chad and Sudan in Libya to avoid an escalation of the tension after the first direct combats between the armed forces of both countries in Sudanese territory.
- **IRAQ:** The Swiss city of Geneva will host in the near future a national reconciliation conference on Iraq that will gather all the Iraqi political forces, including the Muslim Ulemas Association.
- **TIMOR-LESTE:** The first presidential elections since the independence, in which the current Prime Minister and the candidate of the governmental party FRETILIN will dispute the second round, take place without major incidents.
- **UGANDA:** The Government and the opposition armed group LRA resume the peace talks and agree to extend the cessation of hostilities for three months after the intervention of the local, regional and international mediation.



ISSUE OF THE MONTH

Algeria 11-A or the perpetuation of violence

The attacks of last 11th of April in Alger have caused a serious impact, both in the internal and international levels. The reasons have been several: in the first place, because of the large number of victims, more than 30 people dead and almost 200 injured, most of them civilians; in the second place, because they have targeted the core of the political power, the Government Palace, seat of the Executive; and finally, because they have very clearly put the hallmark of al-Qaida in the actions of the until recently known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (SGPC). The main alarm has been caused by the latter, which has been interpreted as the solidification of the tactical alliance of the Algerian group with the international jihadism, previously announced last September 2006 with the proclamation of the link between SGPC and Bin Laden and later with the change of name, al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

However, a set of elements oblige to change the sight towards the internal situation of the country. Since the daily violence that hit Algeria during the nineties, the attacks between the State forces and various armed groups have not stopped. As an example, in the year 2006 the figures given by the press situated in more than 400 the number of people dead because of the violence. It is true that the nature of the attacks has changed: if until 1997-98 they were mainly addressed against civilians, afterwards the main target were the police and the army; precisely since the appearance of the SGPC as a split of the GIA. During all these years, the opposition has

an alliance that brings benefits to both organizations, including the increase in the media repercussion of the AQIM actions, and not so much as the manifestation of a new phenomenon of violence.

The discontent of the population in the country is notable. In the first place, the precarious economic situation of a great part of the Algerians contrasts with the enormous incomes coming from the oil and gas reserves. In the second place, the strong power that institutions such as the army or its Intelligence Service have, together with the absence of opportunities for political participation, make the Algerian regime a space with serious democratic deficiencies. On the other hand, the implementation of a National Peace and Reconciliation Charter in 2005 has revealed, for several reasons, not only an ineffective instrument to address the violence of the past and the present, but furthermore, counterproductive. The Charter promoted by the President, A. Bouteflika, impedes to clarify the massacres of the nineties and to judge those responsible of the violence from both parts. At the same time, the minimization of the conflict, parallel to the analysis of the problem by the Government made almost only in security terms (the antiterrorist fight promoted by the USA) has offered scarce results when it comes to putting an end to the protracted conflict that suffers the country, as the 11th of April proves. Therefore, the global crisis in which Algeria finds itself, needs more than military recipes and security approaches. The crisis requires of an economic redistribution and social

continued between the Government and those armed groups that express their rejection to the politics of the Algerian regime, whom they accuse, amid other things, of being pro-occidental. In this sense, the adscription to al-Qaeda of the until recently known as SGPC has to be understood as

and political opportunities for the youngsters and the overall of the population; of a truthful and inclusive political debate; and mainly, of the establishment of justice mechanisms that are not based on the impunity of the violence perpetrators and that guarantee the respect of human rights.

ARTICLES, REPORTS AND PRESS RELEASES

- Alert 2007! Report of conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding. Published by Icaria Editorial [The confluence between nationalism, gender and feminism: a relevant analysis for conflicts and peacebuilding?](#) Published in Mujeres en Red
- What about Burma? Published in La Vanguardia
- Education: a military target. Published in El Corresponsal

AGENDA

Parliamentarian elections in Burkina Faso	6th of May
Second round of the Presidential elections in Timor-Leste	8th of May
Legislative elections in Seychelles	10th of May
Parliamentarian elections in Armenia	12th of May
Second round of the Presidential elections in Mali	13th of May
Legislative elections in the Philippines	14th of May
Parliamentarian elections in Algeria	17th of May
Parliamentarian elections in Viet Nam	20th of May
Parliamentarian elections in Ukraine	27th of May

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