

**WCI Headlines
June 2008**

Colombia

Summary Analysis

In June, Colombia continued its struggle between government forces and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC). However, the Colombian government reports that FARC's popularity is shrinking as guerillas continue to abandon and desert the army, and several South American leaders (including President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela) have increased pressure on FARC to end their violence and free their hostages. Colombia also struggled with political complications, as Congresswoman Yidis Medina was arrested for bribery and President Álvaro Uribe requested that the ballots for the 2006 election be recounted on suspicions of corruption. In addition, the economy in Colombia faces many of the problems that much of the global community faces now: a slump in the value of the dollar and rising costs of fuel.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Hundreds refugees arrive in Zaragoza, after army clashes with FARC
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/06/hundreds-refugees-arrive-in-zaragoza-after-army-clashes-with-farc/>
- Colombian government to reward killers of FARC leader
 - http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=171043
- Colombia says FARC will have 3,000 men in 2009
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/17/colombia-says-farc-will-only-have-3000-men-in-2009/>
- Colombian rebels release proof-of-life video of hostage lawmaker
 - <http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5jqS1K46HModZSLD9SMiD3j0-9CRg>

International Relations

- Chavez increases pressure on FARC
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7443182.stm>

- Ecuadoran president rules out military offensive against FARC
 - http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-06/19/content_8398108.htm
- France re-established contact with FARC
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/19/france-re-established-contact-with-farc/#more-1522>
- Move to renew Colombia-Ecuador ties collapses
 - <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iCugtGPcxruL1KQ2vbcemQoVyCZwD91GL1TG1>

Politics

- Yidis Medina found guilty of bribery
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/05/yidis-medina-found-guilty-of-bribery/>
- Uribe wants a redo of the '06 presidential vote
 - <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/latinamerica/la-fg-colombia28-2008jun28,0,1718933.story?track=rss>

Economy

- Coca cultivation rises in Colombia, U.N. says
 - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/18/AR2008061802950.html?hpid=topnews>
- Sinking dollar is causing hunger in Colombia
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/20/sinking-dollar-is-causing-hunger-in-colombia/>
- Truckers on strike across Colombia
 - <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/16/truckers-paralysing-transport-cargo-across-the-country/#more-1469>

Social/Cultural

- Violence against women in Colombia increasing

- <http://colombiareports.com/2008/06/12/violence-against-women-in-colombia-increasing/#more-1423>

Ethiopia

Summary Analysis:

Violence between the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ethiopian troops in the Somali region of Ogaden continues to escalate. This has heightened the need for humanitarian aid in food supplies and intervention to help women who are being abused in the region. In addition Ethiopia continues to suffer from a drought that has increased the number of children suffering from malnutrition. Despite conflict within the country, Ethiopia continues to play an active role in the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Focus Areas:

Health & Humanitarian Issues

- Cases of child malnutrition escalate in Southern Ethiopia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806240945.html>
- HIV/AIDS patients stop taking medication
 - <http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnL24395950.html>
- UNICEF appeals for \$49million for drought stricken Ethiopia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806260985.html>
- Netherlands Contributes 2.7 million Euros for UNFPA Program to Stop Violence Against Women
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806260215.html>

Conflict and violence:

- UN looks at disbanding Eritrea/Ethiopia force
 - <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN428405.html>
- Sexual violence of Muslim women in the Ogaden Region
 - <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/66188>
- Continued fighting in the Ogaden Region between ONLF and Ethiopian troops
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806270555.html>

Political:

- Ethiopia's economic diplomacy registers success
 - http://www.isria.info/RESTRICTED/D/2008/JUNE_28/diplo_26june2008_53.htm

Liberia

Summary Analysis:

The international food shortage continues to impact Liberia as President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf creates new ways to domestically solve the problem. Domestic and regional airlines have returned to Liberia as well as the United States Peace Corps. Major steps are being taken to help women and young girls who have been negatively impacted by the war. A new radio station addressing women's issues has been created along with a UN built safe house for victims of sexual violence and increased funding for female education.

Focus Areas:

Post-Conflict Situation

- Domestic and Regional Airlines return to Liberia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806191087.html>
- Farm workers killed in land dispute
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7448970.stm>
- Senator Roland Kaine among those charged in land dispute killings
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806181282.html>
- More women and children are reporting crimes
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806171000.html>
- United Nations builds safe house for victims of sexual violence
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806150014.html>
- US Peace Corps operation to be re-installed
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806120832.html>
- Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins in Minnesota, USA
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806090651.html>
- Media Female Association (MEFA) formed to address women's issues
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806090650.html>

Agriculture

- 'Back to the Soil' National agriculture campaign launched
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806230829.html>
- Operation Eliminate Hunger launched by government, part of back to soil campaign
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806181280.html>
- Rural women urged to fight against discrimination
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806161082.html>

Economy

- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's Market Women's Fund brings Market Women to New York to lobby for the Adopt a Market Campaign
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806050683.html>
- Liberian Diaspora women hold development conference
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806161088.html>

International/Regional Relations and Aid

- National Women Conference in Monrovia where Vice President of Liberia Joseph Boakai emphasizes the importance of women for sustaining peace
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805070830.html>
- International NGO Plan International gives 70% of budget to girl's education
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806191081.html>
- U.S. cancels USD 400 billion debt
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806161083.html>
- U.N. extends arms embargo on Liberia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806231434.html>

Social/Cultural

- Preliminary results of National Population and Housing Census Announced
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806230830.html>
- President Johnson-Sirleaf launches first Peace Girls Leadership dialogue
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806161084.html>

Malawi

Summary Analysis:

While the month of May saw claims by President Bingu wa Mutharika that Malawi's agricultural production is stable, this month the agricultural sector has been both threatened by the current budget crisis. Political tensions running high throughout the government of Malawi have once again stalled agreement on proposed budget reforms. As the 2009 Presidential Election approaches, the national media has also become entangled in the political struggle as reporters continue to receive threats from politicians. In spite of these problems, Malawi's Youth Parliament increased their visibility in June by organizing a series of discussions to bring attention to issues that directly impact children, such as the food crisis and the increasing rate of orphaned children as a result of HIV/AIDS.

Focus Areas:

Agriculture and Environment

- Minister of State Peter Power opens Irish Embassy in Malawi and announces €10m aid package
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LRON-7FVH53?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>
- Budget Crisis Threaten Farm Spending
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806091402.html>
- Malawi's agriculture sector gets a boost from the World Bank, Norway and GEF
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-7FWQNG?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>
- Water Woes in Model Hospital
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806270442.html>

Women's Issues

- UK creates roadmap to safer motherhood in Malawi
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SKAI-7FXPQK?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>

Politics and Elections

- Malawians Worried About Ongoing Dispute Between Presidents Mutharika And Muluzi
 - <http://voanews.com/english/Africa/2008-06-10-voa3.cfm>

- Mozambique-Malawi Joint Defence Commission Meets
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806231820.html>
- Former Minister Warns Media Not to Report On Allegations of His Misconduct While in Office
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806130024.html>
- Journalist Removed From Media Tour of China On Instructions of Malawi Information Ministry
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806240083.html>

Social

- Malawi's Youth Parliament convenes in run-up to Day of the African Child
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EGUA-7FPR42?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>
- Child labour encouraged by poor record keeping
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-7F9RFJ?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=mwi>

Other

- Malawi upsets Egypt 1-0 in World Cup qualifier
 - <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/06/14/sports/AF-SPT-SOC-Malawi-Egypt.php>

Sri Lanka

Summary Analysis:

Armed conflict continues to plague Sri Lanka as the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) have bombed buses and other public areas this month killing many civilians. Government troops have been combating the LTTE and have regained occupation of the important fertile region of Mannar. Early in June Sri Lanka also experienced a detrimental flood but aid was swift and prevented further damage. The international community and the Sri Lankan government continue to work to promote peace and prevent further civilian deaths.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Government troops capture LTTE areas in Mannar
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/06/25/sec01.asp>
- Rambukkana Police under scrutiny for negligence toward prosecuting rape suspect
 - <http://www.island.lk/2008/06/25/news1.html>

- New fighting kills 36
 - http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2008/06/25/sri_lanka_new_fighting_kills_36/
- Continued fighting kills 28
 - <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gZGcTRtJMZLW0vCle1z0quu3y2TgD91K9H580>
- Bilingual requirements in public workforce is an effort toward national integration
 - http://www.colombopage.com/archive_08/June29160720CH.html
- Many civilians killed in terrorist attacks
 - http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/06/06/main_News.asp

Politics/Elections

- Contested elections
 - <http://www.southasianmedia.net/cnn.cfm?id=512518&category=Politics&Country=SRI%20LANKA>

Environment

- Local committees step in with flood relief
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78755>
- Flash flood claims at least 11 lives and some still missing
 - <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=25868>
- Troops regain Mannar Rice Bowl which is an important agriculture region
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/06/30/sec01.asp>

Economy

- Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Bandula Gunawardene threatens gas companies as prices continue to rise
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/06/25/news01.asp>

International Relations

- Government and UNICEF work to eradicate child malnutrition
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78903>
- UN urges Sri Lanka to use greater protection of unarmed civilians
 - <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=78629>
- Sri Lanka asks EU to list LTTE front organizations
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/06/13/news02.asp>