

March 2008 WCI Headlines

Sri Lanka

Summary Analysis:

Fighting in Sri Lanka between the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) intensified this month. Continued calls for a political solution to the conflict went largely unheard as reports of severe human rights abuses abounded. Government interference led to the premature end of an investigation by international human rights experts. The parliament voted to extend the State of Emergency for another month. Local elections in the east of the country saw the incorporation of ex-Tamil Tiger combatants into the government. Women's participation in the conflict and gender-based violence were highlighted in the press and human rights reports in conjunction with International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8th.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Sri Lanka government lacks sincerity in devolving power to Tamils, says ex-official
 - http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/sri-lanka-government-lacks-sincerity-says-ex-official_10023114.html
- Rise of 'war monk' sparks fears of bloodier conflict: Hopes of peaceful end to lengthy hostilities fade with vows to crush Tamil Tigers
 - <http://www.sundayherald.com/international/shinternational/display.var.208675.2.0.0.php>
- Tell Sri Lanka to find a political solution: CPI
 - <http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=8130> \
- Court rules detention of minor illegal, orders release
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_5990.shtml
- SRI LANKA Hindus Traumatized By Civil War Join Way Of The Cross
 - http://www.tamilstar.com/news/lanka/article_5992.shtml
- HRW: Sri Lanka: 'Disappearances' by Security Forces a National Crisis
 - <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2008/03/06/slanka18203.htm>
- Expert panel quits Sri Lanka over rights abuse probe
 - <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSCOL44994>
- It is perfectly possible to combat terrorism without inflicting collective punishment upon peoples" - Dayan Jayatilleka, Ambassador to the UN
 - <http://www.lankamission.org/other%20pages/News/2008/March/2008-03-06gaza.htm>
- Lanka offers cash, jobs to surrendering LTTE suicide bombers
 - <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/001200803311860.htm>

Elections

- Peaceful local body polls in Sri Lanka's volatile east
 - <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/000200803102067.htm>
- Ex-Tamil Tigers win polls in Sri Lanka's tense east
 - <http://afp.google.com/article/ALegM5hfUjFDDBYgjs3qunPwcvdCN4s0zg>

International Relations

- China, Sri Lanka celebrate conclusion of friendship year
 - <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6365346.html>
- Response of the GOSL to the US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007
 - http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20080331_0
- Govt. refutes international assertion that situation in Lanka has worsened
 - <http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=8337>
- India's role in Sri Lanka constructive
 - http://www.upiasiaonline.com/Politics/2008/03/05/indias_role_in_sri_lanka_constructive/5784/

Women's Issues

- Make everyday a woman's Day (support women in the National Military)
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/06/fea03.asp>
- 262 gender based complaints last year
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/07/news15.asp>
- Sixty per cent women prone to violence
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/10/news35.asp>
- Rights & Wrongs: Sri Lanka, Uganda, Women's Rights and More
 - <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1751>
- 'Woman as terrorists' tool should be condemned by all'
 - <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/12/news20.asp>
- Women from every ethnic group together to demand an end to the war
 - <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=11754&size=A>

Liberia

Summary Analysis:

This month in Liberia saw slow but steady progress in the country's move towards a peaceful post-conflict society. Anti-corruption concerns plague the press, Liberian citizens and their president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, call for greater transparency. Liberia remained the only African state to support US involvement through AFRICOM, a US initiative to establish military bases throughout the region. Liberian refugees in Ghana (approx. 40,000) continue to demand repatriation or resettlement in a third country in opposition to Ghana's integration plan. The Ghanaian government repeatedly warned refugees against on-going demonstrations. With the help of UNHCR, the two governments reached an agreement this month.

Focus Areas:

Post-Conflict Situation

- Liberia: Defense Defines Who Qualifies as Veterans
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803030831.html>
- Liberia: UNMIL Humanitarian Situation Report No. 139 (25 February - 2 March 2008)
 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EGUA-7CDQAN?OpenDocument>
- Liberia: 200 AFLSoldiers to Begin Warfare Courses in Nigeria
 - <http://www.alternet.org/audits/77764/>
- Liberia: "Appoint Youth Advisor," Youth Groups Appeal To President
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803040673.html>
- President Johnson-Sirleaf Evades TRC
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803060598.html>
- The Importance of Children in Peace-Building
 - <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/SaveChAlli/a90c853e969a8ad4cf5f4d9dbb1cdd79.htm>

Women's Issues

- Secretary General of the UN Ban launches campaign to end Gender based violence
 - http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=193
- The International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Regional Office based in Nairobi, Kenya has donated a huge of laboratory equipment to the Family Planning Association of Liberia
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803030872.html>
- Africa: Tradition at the Heart of Violence Against Women and Girls
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803061047.html>

- Mothers in Liberia Face High Risks During Pregnancy
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-03-08-voa13.cfm>
- Liberia: Global Call to Action Detects Flaws in Domestic Laws protecting Women's Rights
 - <http://allafrica.com/stories/200803101307.html>

International Relations

- Liberia Says Ghana Agrees to Hold Off on Refugee Repatriation for a Year (04/01/2008)
 - <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2008-04-01-voa6.cfm>
- Agreement reached by gov'ts of Ghana and Liberia
 - <http://en.afrik.com/article12994.html>
- U.S. Militarizing Africa (Again)
 - <http://www.alternet.org/audits/77764/>
- Africom rejected by all but Liberia
 - http://www.peacereporter.net/dettaglio_articolo.php?idc=0&idart=10331
- IMF restores Liberia's status, approves financial aid
 - <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gBdsHKjiPa5-kH8XzMI6huGSWyUQ>

Colombia

Summary Analysis:

This month in Colombia showed key developments on national affairs, international relations, and economic indicators for the country's growth. Internal conflict and kidnappings between the Colombian armed forces and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the rebel group, continue to be prevalent, which President Alvaro Uribe hopes to alleviate through a signed decree that allows for a mass release of guerrilla members from jail in exchange for highly publicized hostages, like politician Ingrid Betancourt. Rising criticism has also developed for Colombian armed forces because of their questionable attacks on civilians suspected of associations with FARC without substantial evidence.

The Colombian government continues to face tensions with Ecuador and Venezuela and hopes to renew its diplomatic relations in the near future. The Colombian Free Trade Agreement is once again presented in Congress. In addition, the Colombian economy is witnessing fourth-quarter economy growths and an increase in oil outputs for export.

Focus Areas:

Conflict

- Colombia's President, Alvaro Uribe, signs decree to release FARC rebels in exchange for Hostage releases.

- http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/29/world/americas/29briefs-URIBEOFFERST_BRF.html?ex=1364443200&en=86b597d16e7ea952&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss
- Colombian armed forces face pressure for civilian killings.
 - http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/29/AR2008032901118.html?nav=rss_email/components
- Colombian government suspect FARC rebels of attacks on Colombian farmers.
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7315834.stm>

International Relations

- U.S. President promotes Colombia FTA as an urgent matter for Congress. He emphasizes the need for passage before the end of his presidential term.
 - <http://www.latinbusinesschronicle.com/app/article.aspx?id=2162>
- Strained Colombia-Ecuador relations highlight Andean conflict that could have serious repercussions.
 - <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5jOTzaavorQLO5eovQ2JJN34MLgeQD8VMURA00>
- Strained Colombia-Venezuela relations focused on associations to armed rebels and history of Venezuela's role in freeing past FARC hostages.
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/world/americas/30colombia.html?ref=americas>

Economy

- Prospects for consumer prices and annual inflation rate increase in March.
 - http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&sid=aUWJMzUJiOZU&refer=latin_americaColombian armed forces face pressure for civilian killings.
- Colombia's fourth-quarter economy has grown with illicit crops.
 - <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&sid=a1psAWaLqWE8&refer=news>
- Colombia's fourth-quarter economy has grown with illicit crops.
 - <http://uk.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idUKN2667212420080326>

- Colombia's Pharmaceutical market is expected to increase in the near future. This leaves questions on how the industry will also help provide resources for medical drugs to its own population.

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http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20080325005033&newsLang=en

Social/Cultural/Human Rights Issues

- Infrastructure deficits leave Cartagena's displaced women and children homeless and without necessary resources to re-enter Colombian society.

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http://dosmundos.com/welcome/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1573&Itemid=69