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**Global Crises:
A Summary for Jewish World Watch
June 6, 2007**

The purpose of this report is provide a quarterly update for Jewish World Watch of the most serious human rights crises in the world at this time. This supplements the report of March, 2007. These descriptions are taken primarily from Enough, Human Rights Watch (www.humanrightswatch.org), the New York Times and the International Crisis Group.

I have omitted any reference to the situation in Sudan/Darfur/Chad with the understanding that others will report to JWW on that situation. I have made no attempt to rank the following crises. Instead, they are listed in alphabetical order.

Burma

The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Burma's authoritarian military government, remains of major international concern given its intensely restrictive police state that denies most basic rights and freedoms. Continued military offensives against separatist ethnic rebellions have left hundreds of thousands of people, mostly ethnic minorities, internally displaced, while nearly 2 million more have taken refuge in neighboring countries such as Thailand. In January 2007, China and Russia vetoed a UN Security Council resolution, drafted by the US, urging Burma to stop the persecution of minority and opposition groups. In April of 2007, Burma restored diplomatic ties with North Korea. Human Rights Watch reported an April 2007 attack on civilian members of human rights organizations by "a group of approximately 100 men carrying clubs and other homemade weapons." According to the report, the attacks were carried out by members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a social welfare movement formed and supported by the SPDC. The local secretary of the USDA, U Nyunt Oo, was reportedly present at the incident and coordinated the attack. In May 2007, the Burmese government extended the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairman Than Shwe's main political rival, for another year.

Chad

Chad and Sudan have frequently accused one another of harboring rebel movements on their territory; i.e., Chad accuses Sudan of hosting anti-Idriss Deby (Chadian President) insurgents in Darfur, and Sudan accuses Chad of allowing Darfuri rebel groups to use Chad as a base of operations. The plight of tens of thousands of internally displaced peoples within Chad – displaced because of Chad's own instability and conflict – is greatly exacerbated by the strain put on land and resources by refugees fleeing the crisis in Darfur. The Janjaweed, backed by the Sudanese military, have reportedly begun targeting refugees and Chadian host populations over the border in Chad. Furthermore, there are reports of Minni Minawi's faction of the SLA, the only rebel faction to sign the DPA in 2006, attacking civilians and rival rebel movements over the border in Chad as well, likely with the support of the Sudanese government.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The eastern region of the DRC has regressed into some of the worst violence in years. In January the government agreed on a deal with the dissident commander Laurent Nkunda to bring an end to fighting since 2004. After a brief reprieve these troops attacked the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Rwandan militia with elements that committed atrocities in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Over a 100,000 people have been displaced and dozens killed. Nkunda's troops are members of the Tutsi community and the FDLR are by the Hutu. This has led to its own tensions. ENOUGH reports that the root cause of most of the violence is due to the weak state institutions that tax and abuse the local population but provide no security or social services in return. No human rights offenders have been put on trial and no solutions have been reached to increasing violence in the eastern region. Rape is rampant and used as a weapon.

FDLR rebels continue to attack the local populations. The Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels remain safe in Congo's Garamba National Park.

Kosovo

Kosovar Albanians and Serbia have struggled to reach agreement on the future status of Kosovo, despite frequent negotiations and consistent diplomatic efforts by regional and international players. Ethnic Albanians make up more than 90% of the 1.8m population, while ethnic Serbs comprise the last 10%. A UN plan, currently under discussion, would give the territory a form of internationally supervised independence. Kosovo would be able to join the UN, have its own flag and its national anthem. The newly independent Kosovo would be prevented from merging with Albania, and Serbian pockets would be prevented from splitting off and joining Serbia. Despite built-in measures protecting the Serbian minority population, Serbia has widely rejected this proposal, and violence has flared since the plan was unveiled. Two ethnic Albanians died after clashes between pro-independence protesters and police in the capital Pristina on 9 February. The BBC reports that on 19 February, an explosion in Pristina damaged several UN vehicles. A group calling itself the "Kosovo Liberation Army" - the ethnic Albanian guerrilla force disbanded after Nato's 1999 intervention - claimed it carried out the attack. The divided city of Mitrovica is regarded as a major flashpoint. In March 2004, violence flared up in Mitrovica and spread across Kosovo, as ethnic Albanian mobs attacked Serb communities and burned down churches. In all, 19 people died. There is grave concern for renewed full-scale violence if a compromise agreement is not reached.

Nepal

Human Rights Watch reported that violence continues to erupt in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal and along the Indian border. Some refugees are attempting to cross into Bhutan. At the end of May a group claiming to be members of the Bhutanese Communist Party attacked refugees who supported the US offer to resettle Bhutanese refugees. In response, Nepali police opened fire on the mob. HRW is urging Nepali police to protect the Bhutanese refugees and their views on resettlement or return. The US has offered to resettle 60,000 or more Bhutanese refugees. A group of refugees attempted a march to return to Bhutan. They were stopped by Indian police forces (Bhutan and Nepal are separated by a strip of land belonging to India). Indian police fired on the demonstrators killing one. The Bhutanese refugee crisis began in 1991 when Bhutan started to expel ethnic Nepalis, a policy that resulted in the expulsion of one-sixth of the country's population. So far, in complete violation of international law, Bhutan has not allowed a single refugee to return. The refugees have endured years in cramped camps with no prospects for solutions, conditions that have led to domestic violence and other social problems that have come after protracted periods in closed camps.

Pakistan

According to the International Crisis Group, instability and violence intensified as President Musharraf's crisis deepened. Supporters of suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Hussain Chaudhry continued to protest against Musharraf's rule. Over 40 people were killed in street violence after members of Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) party, Musharraf's local coalition partner, attacked opposition supporters of Chief Justice. Police failed to intervene and government refused enquiry.

Musharraf ruled out return of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif before end-year elections. Bhutto and Sharif insist they will return. Border clashes in Paktia province involving Pakistani and Afghan forces led to deaths of over 12 Afghans as well as one US and one Pakistani soldier killed by suspected local militia. Clashes followed NATO meeting on easing border tensions.

Somalia

According to the International Crisis Group, the UN's chief humanitarian officer, John Holmes, called Somali humanitarian and refugee crisis worst in world. Up to 400,000 have been displaced by fighting between ousted Islamists and clan militias against Ethiopian troops and Transitional Federal Government forces. Some displaced reportedly returning to Mogadishu. UN food aid was temporarily halted after ship attacked by pirates in May. The Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi escaped unhurt after his convoy targeted by bomb in Mogadishu. U.S. and AU urged Ethiopia to keep forces in Somalia until full deployment of AU peacekeepers:

Ethiopia and Uganda called for full deployment of AMISOM as pledged troops from Burundi, Ghana and Nigeria yet to arrive. Four Ugandan peacekeepers were killed by a roadside bomb marking first targeted attack of peacekeepers. Ethiopian troops killed five civilians in aftermath of roadside bomb attack on army convoy in western town of Belet Weyne. National Reconciliation Congress will begin in Mogadishu on June 14 amid concern over independence of organizing committee and participant selection.

Human Rights Watch states, abuses have been being perpetrated by all sides in this complex conflict: Ethiopian forces, Ethiopia's Somali allies in the transitional federal government (TFG), and those resisting the Ethiopian intervention, including militias loyal to the Hawiye clan and groups aligned to the ICU. But it is the Ethiopians with their superior weapons who are doing much of the harm in Mogadishu.

Ethiopia has also participated in a regional program of arbitrary detentions and unlawful renditions of individuals of interest to Addis Ababa and their allies in Washington. With Kenyan cooperation, Ethiopia has rounded up scores of "terrorism suspects" who fled the initial Ethiopian intervention in Somalia in December 2006-January 2007.

These "suspects" include many women and some infants as young as seven months. Although Ethiopia recently admitted holding forty-one people, mainly foreign nationals, and released five people, there are many more individuals languishing in Ethiopian jails without access to legal counsel or independent monitors.

Ethiopia is also using the crisis as a pretext to clamp down on its own domestic insurgents, lumping together its armed opponents in Somalia and Ethiopia alike in the convenient catchall basket of terrorism.

There is now a slight lull in the conflict.

Thailand

The military backed government continues to undermine free political debate and is delaying the return to democracy by barring access to many political websites, according to Human Rights Watch. The current government came into power after a coup in 2006 against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Thai authorities have been active in silencing cyber critics and dissidents. This is in stark contradiction to Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont's pledges to create an atmosphere conducive to democratization and political reform. The censoring of the internet is being executed by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MICT) and the Royal Thai Police in collaboration with the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT) and the Telecommunication Authority (TOT), which provide Thailand's international internet gateways. Since the coup, the MICT has employed around-the-clock "watchers" to monitor content on the internet to find information considered to be offending the monarchy (a criminal offense in Thailand punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment), threatening national security, disrupting public order, or being obscene.

Based on this continuous surveillance, officials from the MICT and the Royal Thai Police have distributed names of websites, both domestic and foreign, to government and private internet service providers (ISPs), telling the ISPs to block access to blacklisted websites.

Uganda

Peace talks between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) resumed in Juba, Southern Sudan. There was a renewed agreement to stop hostilities and a fast deal

Enough reports that evidence suggests that members of the Sudanese government (a longtime sponsor of the LRA leader) are continuing to support the LRA. And hardliners within the Sudanese government would like to keep the LRA in reserve as a "proxy force" that can be reactivated to help to destabilize southern Sudan and undermine Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The five point plan being currently negotiated at the Juba peace talks include:

1. Cessation of hostilities

2. Comprehensive solutions – signed on May 2 and outlines which helps the country heal from war and creates a follow-up forum in Uganda to be led by northern Ugandans
3. Reconciliation and accountability
4. Disarmament
5. Formal ceasefire

According to John Prendergast from Enough, four ingredients are essential to securing peace in northern Uganda: reform of the Juba process and support for its cessation of hostilities agreement; parallel facilitation of direct contacts between President Yoweri Museveni and LRA leader Joseph Kony to broker a security deal for LRA leadership; preparation for a wider process following the security deal to address the political, economic and social concerns of northern Ugandans; and increased leverage from the international community through carrots and sticks in support of a solution.

Cessation of hostilities has been agreed as of June 30, 2007. It does not seem likely to hold since in the past both parties have not held to their word.

Zimbabwe

According to the International Crisis Group, harassment of opposition continued with a new wave of mass arrests. Power has been severely rationed in much of the country to four hours a day. Eighteen hundred Zimbabweans who live illegally in South Africa were deported in mid May.