



PGA UN NEWSLETTER

March 2011

SUMMARY

Libya has been the main 'story' coming out of the United Nations in the past 4-6 weeks. First the referral by the UN Security Council of the situation in Libya to the ICC (of relevance to PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme) and then the No-Fly Zone resolution (of less relevance to PGA's work, but worthy of brief mention in this introductory paragraph). Other issues subject to deliberation in March 2011 have concerned Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone – all countries in which PGA has been deeply engaged.

The Second PrepCom for the Arms Trade Treaty also concluded on March 4, 2011. As it did for the first PrepCom, PGA Members actively participated in this second round of negotiations for a global Arms Trade Treaty, as integral accredited members of National Delegations.

1. Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February, 2011 on Peace and Security in Africa

The Security Council adopted this Chapter VII resolution at the end of February, just after the February 2011 PGA UN Newsletter was released and so is now being included in the March 2011 PGA UN Newsletter.

This Resolution is of critical importance in that it included a referral of the situation in Libya by the UN Security Council to the ICC, including, for the first time, with the affirmative vote of the United States, indicating a further maturing in the evolving relationship and *rapprochement* between the US and the ICC. This step by the UNSC highlights further the growing importance and relevance of the ICC as a key stakeholder in contemporary international affairs. **It also serves to emphasize the importance of the work of PGA's International Law & Human Rights Programme in advocating for greater universality of the Rome Statute and better cooperation with the Court.**

Also in the context of Libya, UN rights experts have sounded the alarm on a wave of enforced disappearances in Libya in the past few months – "**Enforced disappearances may amount to a crime against humanity** when perpetrated in certain circumstances," warned the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

This too is an issue of interest to PGA's International Law Programme, even if not one where the Programme would be directly engaged.

For further information, see: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37884&Cr=Libya&Cr1=>

2. Security Council Resolution 1974 (2011) off 22nd March, 2011 on Afghanistan

This Security Council resolution, while primary concerned with UNAMA and ISAF, also contained the following important operative paragraph, **of relevance in the context of PGA's ongoing working promoting greater accountability and gender equality:**

“...6. Also reaffirms that UNAMA and the Special Representative will continue to lead international civilian efforts in the following priority areas:

.... (d) continue, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to cooperate with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), to cooperate also with the Afghan Government and relevant international and local non-governmental organizations to monitor the situation of civilians, **to coordinate efforts to ensure their protection, to promote accountability, and to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights;...**”

3. Parallel Humanitarian Crises in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia

In a Press Conference held on March 17, 2011, high level United Nations officials stated that intensified humanitarian commitments were needed as the situations in both these countries were continuing to deteriorate. “*The humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is very serious and it is getting worse,*” said Ndolamb Ngokwey, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the West African nation. To date, there were some 45,000 displaced persons in the west of Côte d'Ivoire and 10,000 living with host families. In the capital of Abidjan — where a political standoff between former President Laurent Gbagbo and the newly elected President Alassane Outtara had been wreaking violence since December 2010 — the number of displaced stood at a staggering 300,000 *and could grow to 450,000*. Moustapha Soumare, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Liberia, also briefed members of the press corps on the implications of Côte d'Ivoire's crisis on adjacent Liberia. He said that an increasing tide of refugees entering the country was threatening Liberia's tenuous gains in democracy and development.

The situation in Cote d'Ivoire has deteriorated dramatically just in the past few days:

Nearly one million flee Abidjan amid fears of war, U.N. says

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/25/ivory.coast.violence/?hpt=T2#>

PGA, over the years and very recently, has been very engaged in seeking to bring greater political stability in both these countries, through improved dialogue and greater respect for the rule of law.

4. UN officials urge sustained support for Sierra Leone's post-conflict recovery

Senior United Nations officials on 24 March 2011 urged continued international support for Sierra Leone as it consolidates peace and advance development, and especially as it prepares for next year's elections, warning that any faltering now could risk the significant progress made so far.

For further information on this, please view:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37882&Cr=Sierra+Leone&Cr1=>

PGA has a strong, multi-party membership in Sierra Leone, who play an active and important part in PGA's Workshops in the Region and in key UN-related events in New York.

5. Second ATT PrepCom – 28 February- 4 March 2011

PGA actively participated in this second round of negotiations for a global Arms Trade Treaty.

For further information on this, see: http://www.pgaction.org/PrepCom_UN.html