

## WORLD BRIEFS

### \$10.7 MILLION NEEDED TO FIGHT DRUG TRAFFICKING

ABIDJAN, Cote d'Ivoire (PANA)—The fight against narcotics in Cote d'Ivoire needs 8 billion CFA francs (\$10.7 million) to be effective, according to the Ivorian Committee for Narcotics Control (CILAD). A recent national day for narcotics control was an opportunity for Ivorian stakeholders to discuss the national control plan officially presented in 2000. The implementation of the plan requires a total budget of 8 billion CFA francs, according to Fiacre Kili, general secretary of CILAD. Fifty percent of this budget should be contributed by Cote d'Ivoire, and the rest by donors, he said. Cote d'Ivoire, however, has not yet released its contribution share of the budget for some reason. As for development partners involved in the implementation of the anti-narcotics project, they are waiting for certain pre-conditions to be met before releasing the funds, Kili said. Currently, in order to reduce problems related to drug trafficking in Cote d'Ivoire, the number of drug control officers deployed along the main roads, the airport, port and other strategic spots has been doubled, and in some cases tripled. However, Kili added, the lack of funds, inadequate methods and outdated equipment made their work virtually ineffective.

### NIGER AUTHORITIES DESTROY MILITARY LIGHT ARMS

NIAMEY, Niger (PANA)—Niger authorities in Diffa, which is east of Niamey, have incinerated an assortment of military weapons turned in by individuals. The destruction of approximately 100 guns was carried out in line with an ongoing process of peace building and national concord, as recommended at a meeting prior to the recent international conference. At the international conference, the UN urged countries to proceed with a systematic collection and destruction of loose weapons, as well as surpluses in government armories. The international conference on illicit trade in light weapons was aimed at mobilizing support and interest in a weapons-destruction program, as well as the socio-economic reintegration of the former combatants. According to UNDP statistics, over 500 million small arms are currently in circulation throughout the world, a ratio of about one weapon for every 12 people. Small arms have been used in 46 of the 49 armed conflicts that have occurred in the world since 1990, and caused the death of 4 million people, 90 percent of whom were civilians—mostly women and children.

### AIDS SPREADING RAPIDLY IN THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

AIDS is the leading cause of death in the Caribbean for those aged 15 to 45, and the number of cases is growing, according to health officials. The rate of AIDS in the Caribbean is almost four times that of North America and South and Southeast Asia. Figures vary by island, but officials report at least one in every 50 people in the Caribbean-2 percent of the population-has HIV/AIDS. Here are some AIDS population statistics: The Bahamas—more than 4 percent; Haiti—13 percent (among urban adults). Certain population groups could have as many as one in every three or four persons, including those providing sexual services for tourists.

### PROTESTERS AND POLICE FIGHT OVER SOUTH AFRICA LAND

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—Police fired tear gas at hundreds of protesters, who stoned cars and blocked streets Monday, demanding land and houses. There were no reports of injuries, police spokesman Jacques Wiese said. In the past few weeks, poor people have tried to seize privately-owned land near this coastal city at least seven times. The authorities have swiftly evicted them. The land seizures followed heavy winter rains, which flooded several low-lying shack settlements. Since apartheid ended in 1994, the government has built 1.1 million low-cost homes, sheltering more than 5 million people, but 7.5 million South Africans still lack proper homes. The problem is particularly acute in the poor suburb of Phillippi, which has an estimated shortage of 50,000 houses, said Phillip Jacobs, a member of Parliament who represents the area. City officials said Monday that a rapid response unit with specially equipped trucks had been set up to pull down illegally erected shacks.

# Arafat asks Colin Powell for help

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pledging to do his part to restore calm, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is asking Secretary of State Colin Powell to persuade Israel to stop its assassinations and begin carrying out confidence-building measures.

In a letter to Powell signed by Nabil Shaath, a senior Arafat aide and Palestinian mediator, the Palestinian leader described the situation as serious. The letter said the Palestinian Authority was ready to implement the recommendations of the Mitchell Commission, Hassan Abdel Rahman, chief representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the United States, told The Associated Press Monday.



COLIN POWELL

The letter called on the United States "to move expeditiously to persuade Israel and Mr. (Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon to stop the killing, the assassination of community leaders and to stop illegal practices, such as

demolition of houses and the economic state of siege."

The report of the commission headed by former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell calls for a period of calm before implementing confidence-building measures. These include a suspension of construction at Jewish settlements on the West Bank and in Gaza and a halt to a weapons buildup on the Palestinian side.

The Palestinian letter to Powell suggests modifying that approach - moving simultaneously to implement the Mitchell commission recommendations and restoring calm.

"To expect total calm in the present circumstances is not feasible," Rahman said.

The White House's reaction was cool.

The first step to carrying out the recommendations is to end the violence, said Sean McCormack, a spokesman for President Bush, who was at his ranch in Crawford, Tex.

"We call on both sides to cease the violence and that is the only way forward," McCormack said.

The director of the Central Intelligence Agency, George Tenet, brokered a cease-fire, but it has not stopped the bloody conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

On Monday, Palestinian leaders rejected an Israeli demand for arrest of seven they called main terrorists. The  
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## United States urged to apologize for slavery

GENEVA (AP) - After threatening to boycott a U.N. conference on racism, the United States moved closer Monday toward a compromise with African nations that are demanding an apology from former slave-trading nations.

African negotiators to the upcoming World Conference Against Racism have demanded that a draft declaration include "an explicit apology" and compensation from countries that benefited from slavery.

The United States has warned that it would skip the meeting in Durban, South Africa, if a compensation demand - and what it considers unacceptable criticism of Israel - remain on the conference agenda by the end of the week. The conference begins Aug. 31.

A new U.S. proposal does not include the word "apology" or call slavery a "crime against humanity" but would

denounce the practice. Diplomats say using the word "apology" could be used as a legal basis for future claims.

"We express our deep regret and profound remorse for the terrible suffering caused," the proposed U.S. wording says.

South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said she had yet to see the U.S. proposal and would have to study it before commenting.

But she said the African group was trying to compromise, and that the United States also had to be willing to make concessions.

"We will give, but we would also like to take," she told reporters in Geneva.

Ahmed Ben Bella, a leader of Algeria's drive for independence from France in 1962, said the West should acknowledge that the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a crime and compensate by forgiving Africa's current debt.

"The world community should recognize that the slave trade and the enslavement of Africans as well as colonialism constitute crimes against humanity," Ben Bella said Monday.

"The Holocaust, in which 7 million Jews died, has been recognized as a crime against humanity," he said. "The death of 142 million Africans during the slave trade was a holocaust too."

Ben Bella belongs to a group known as the Goree Initiative launched in June in Senegal to push the Durban conference to address the issue of slavery.

Goree, an island off Africa's west coast, is where captured Africans were held before being shipped across the Atlantic and sold into slavery in the Western Hemisphere.

The African group has proposed having the final declaration say: "The World Conference recognizes that

slavery, the slave trade, colonialism and apartheid constitute crimes against humanity."

It also would recognize "the urgent need" to address problems stemming from the past practices, and call "on those who have benefited from these practices to assume full responsibility."

Steps could include "enhanced remedial developmental policies, programs and concrete measures," the African proposal says.

U.S. officials also have said they were disturbed by proposed wording equating Zionism with racism, but Arab delegates have indicated they are willing to drop the criticism of the movement that led to the founding of the modern state of Israel.

Nonetheless, there are many other condemnations of Israel laced through the 88 pages of draft text, and the United States wants all of them removed as well.

## UNAIDS, IFAD sign cooperation agreement

PARIS (PANA)—The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS and the International Fund for Agricultural Development said they hoped to work together to ease the impact of AIDS on rural poverty and insecure livelihoods through joint efforts in promoting sustainable rural development.

According to a memorandum of cooperation signed after the two UN agencies held discussions, UNAIDS Executive Secretary Peter Piot cited food insecurity as being a major cause of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS pa-

tients. He said the impact of HIV was felt in reduced agricultural production, thus generating increased fragility of affected households.

Experts say AIDS has killed around 7 million agricultural workers in the 25 worst hit African countries.

"As links between urban and rural areas increase, trade and migration are rapidly pushing HIV prevalence rates upwards in rural areas," said Piot.

Areas earmarked for joint efforts under the cooperation agreement between the two

bodies will therefore include IFAD field projects where the best practice to IFAD's work will be applied, exchange of information on AIDS-related IFAD projects and technical assistance by UNAIDS to IFAD.

By working together the two organizations expect to help those whose lives are being devastated by the epidemic, they said in the statement.

IFAD President Lennart Bage indicated that the memorandum would provide a clear framework for their agencies' complimentary

roles. "Our goal in working together is to alleviate the impact of HIV and AIDS on rural poverty and insecure livelihoods and to reduce vulnerability to AIDS through sustainable rural development," said Bage.

The impact of AIDS on rural communities is said to be devastating, as it has struck people in their prime, reducing economic activity. And rural families hit by the epidemic are forced to sell productive assets to pay for funerals and health care, say health workers.