

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Wednesday, August 18, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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For the People
Wednesday August 18, 2004

KAMBIA!

Indict Gibril Massaquoi Now!

THE PEOPLE of Kambia were rudely shocked and offended by some recent intellectual dishonesty being circulated in some sections of the local press, attempting to exonerate a high-profiled war criminal (par excellence) like Gibril Massaquoi, over the horrendous atrocities he committed against the peace-loving people of Kambia, on Wednesday, January 25, 1995.

A so-called Moses Kanneh claiming to be defending Massaquoi, who called himself captain

Gibo when he led the first ever invasion of his Ruf murderers, rapists and arsonists in Kambia, disrupting the peaceful co-existence of a harmless people.

It was a chilly Wednesday morning. Office workers and school children were preparing for the day's routine when disaster struck by 8 am.

I was leaving in the part of the town called Thayiray which hosts majority of the town's schools including Kolenten Secondary School and from where the bulk of the rebels entered that morning, although, other pockets of them entered through other various points of the town virtually laying it under siege.

Nobody at the time knew what was exactly happening or who these "strangers," we saw trooping down town in droves where from that early morning. They didn't fire a single shot at first. They all had traveling bags on their backs and locked up and tag-tagged, with military

Everybody started questioning who these strange creatures were, and what was their purpose of coming to Kambia. They said nothing to nobody. Soon, we saw another band of them, among them the seven catholic nuns who were staying at the Polio Children's home, near Kolenten School.

By the turn of events, it was apparent the nuns were under hostage and were being paraded. They started telling residents to go in doors and lock.

By 8:30 am, there was the first shot from downtown and other shots around us.

Soon, there were gunshots all over the place, explaining the meaning of all the strange movements.

At this time the rebels started breaking doors and forcing residents out on the street.

Hundreds were held hostage including schoolchildren in uniform that were captured on their way to school that morning.

From my hiding place, I saw one of the nuns, Sister Andrena giving first aid to a Kolenten pupil in uniform who was shot in the arm by the rebels.

The killings, burning, looting and abductions ensued. Gibril Massaquoi who had commandeered a Red Cross X.I. Honda was



MASSAQUOI: questions raised about his acts

seen parading the length and breadth of the town with a white towel hung on his neck. The bike belonged to then Red Cross field-officer, Mr Adikali Edison Kamara, (now deceased).

It was an unpardonable lie by this Massaquoi cohort, Moses Kanneh, insinuating that there was an exchange of fire between Massaquoi's rebels and the RSLAF deployed there at the time under the command of one Major Tamba Abu. Not at all. The rebels pillaged the town virtually unchallenged by no force whatsoever. Not even by the then SSD commander of the district, the dreaded OC Scorpion.

As Gibril Massaquoi himself bluffed at the height of the siege; "we are effectively in charge of Kambia, and the people of Kambia are presently

at our mercy." The atrocities committed by Gibril Massaquoi on the defenseless people of Kambia that day are beyond imagination.

Apart from the fact that he physically abducted the seven nuns and more than 100 school children in uniform, scores of civilians were also murdered in cold-blood under Massaquoi's command.

I saw 18 year-old Isatu Bangura shot on her private part, leaving behind her then two weeks old baby boy.

Sembu, a veteran footballer and one of the town's best shoe makers was battered to death with sticks while his old father later died from gun-

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CRANE: did you check Gibril Massaquoi?

Indict Gibril Massaquoi!

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shot wound on his thigh. Manso, popularly known as "Actor" and one of Kambia's finest tailors was shot dead in cold-blood at his electricity road residence, a few metres from Sembu's.

Pa Sidikie, a veteran chieftom police was shot because they found his picture inside his parlour and was told to produce a pistol which he didn't possess in the first place.

How about 80 year-old Pa Alhaji Conteh of Yomrayah street. He was stabbed multiple times to death when he could not produce US dollars the rebels claimed were sent by the old man's numerous children abroad.

What about Yousif Zeghir, Dauda Kamara and Baby Amie Turay who were butchered by Massaquoi after they attempted to escape. Baby Amie died later at the Kambia Hospital after being stabbed an incredible 33 times!

If all these do not amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity which crimes did Massaquoi commit then?

Infact, what Massaquoi did to the nuns is a different matter. But for the school children he abducted that fateful morning, more than half never returned. The

he abducted at the time and turned his concubine. When Massaquoi emerged from the jungle after overthrowing the democratically elected government in 1997, he informed the girl's parents that she had died in the jungle. Under what circumstances still remain a mystery as the poor parents continue to mourn in silence till this day.

If the Special Court is here to try those with the greatest responsibility of the decade old brutal war, Gibril Massaquoi should be prime suspect of course.

It is a pathological lie that the late Komba Gbundama led the 1995 invasion of Kambia. Komba was just a troublesome physically handicapped sergeant at the time and Massaquoi a captain and the "Commando Gibo!"

So Moses Kanneh or whosoever you are, the people of Kambia are not morons at all, and will sit by and allow you to make a no-case submission for Massaquoi by grossly distorting the facts at their detriment. Facts are abound for David Crane to rope Massaquoi as a war criminal. Any attempts to pamper him will surely undermine the objectivity of the Special Court, and erode its intent and purpose.

Kambia will be there to nail this war criminal!

Independent Observer

Wednesday August 18, 2004

Special Feature

By Lansana Fofanah

Culled from Inter Press Service

"Dogs of War and Hounds From Hell"

"This is the day I've been waiting for, the day when someone would be made to answer for what the rebels did to me," said 20-year-old Jabati Mambu, a student whose right arm was amputated by Sierra Leonean rebels during their invasion of the capital, Freetown, in January 1999.

"I am now handicapped and have lost the better part of my youth-hood," Mambu added, as the trial of three top officials of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) got underway earlier this week.

"The rebels attacked our house in the East of Freetown and abducted my two sisters after raping them. They then slashed off my arm with a blunt machete. I will never forgive those monsters and would only be satisfied if the court punished their leaders."

The RUF, formerly a rebel movement, terrorized parts of Sierra Leone during a civil war that raged for much of the 1990s, fuelled and funded by diamonds illegally sold on world markets.

The group's tendency to amputate limbs, notably those of civilians, became its trademark - and is one of the reasons why three RUF officials made their first appearance Monday, July 5, before a war crimes tribunal set up in Freetown (the "Special Court for Sierra Leone").

"These three war crimes indictees are dogs of war and hounds from hell. Their motive for fighting was less political and much more criminal," said David Crane, chief Prosecutor of the court, Monday.

"It is a chilling tale of horror, a joint criminal enterprise that spread beyond Sierra Leone and involved external players like the former president of Liberia," Crane noted.

The accused include Issa Sesay, who took over as leader of the RUF when its previous head - Foday Sankoh - was arrested in 2000. The group's chief of security, Augustine Gbao, and Morris Kallon - also known as Bilal Kareem - are the other officials to go on trial this week.

They are facing an 18-count indictment for war crimes such as unlawful killings, terrorising the civilian population, sexual violence and abductions - and the use of child soldiers.

While all three have asserted their innocence, they have also challenged the authority of the court to try them - and indicated that they will take the matter up with Sierra Leone's Supreme Court.

The war crimes tribunal, which has the backing of the United Nations, is funded by Britain and the United States. It was established in 2000, and observes local and international laws. It is also staffed by legal minds from both Sierra Leone and other UN states.

"This is a constitutional matter. I don't see how this court can be over and above even the Supreme Court of the country," a defence counsel for one of the accused told IPS Tuesday.

But, Sieh Mansaray - like Mambu - welcomes the trial. He had gone to search for food in the eastern diamond-rich city of Kono when he encountered the RUF, in 1998.

"They lined us up, 24 in number. Twelve of us were amputated and the rest shot dead. The rebels then told us to go to President Kabbah to fix our limbs because we voted for him," he told IPS.

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected president of Sierra Leone in 1996, but was deposed the following year by a group of army officers and RUF members. The intervention of regional troops enabled his return to power a year later - but in January, 1999, the RUF managed to re-occupy sections of Freetown.

peace deal signed later that year, unrest persisted. Si-

erra Leone's civil war was only declared over in January 2002.

The tribunal is the only war crimes court to be operating in the country where the abuses in question occurred. Its mandate is to try individuals who allegedly bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities perpetrated in Sierra Leone since November 1996, when Kabbah signed his first peace deal with the RUF.

To date, the court has indicted 13 people, including Charles Taylor who is currently exiled in Nigeria. Taylor is accused of being principally responsible for war crimes in Sierra Leone, for his role in arming the rebels in return for "conflict diamonds."

The other accused are drawn from a militia known as the "Kamajors", which backed the government during the war, and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council: the junta that overthrew Kabbah in 1997. Former council leader Johnny Paul Koroma is also on the run from the court.

The deaths of RUF founder Sankoh and his notorious field commander, Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie, last year, have left some feeling that court proceedings are irrelevant. The men were considered two of the main architects of the destruction in Sierra Leone.

Sankoh's health declined after his arrest on war crimes charges, and he died of natural causes. Bockarie was killed while fighting in Liberia's civil war.

Adds James Conteh, a cab driver in Freetown, "If they can't rope in Taylor - and locate and arrest Johnny Koroma - what then is the use of the court?"

Court spokeswoman Alison Cooper told IPS Tuesday that every effort is being made to bring Taylor to justice. However, the tribunal can only appeal to Nigeria to hand Taylor over - not compel it to do so.

To date, Abuja has not indicated any willingness in this their country to review Taylor's right to asylum.

RUF's Eldred Collins

On The Run

By Arthur Caulker

Former spokesman for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Eldred Collins is on the run following an allegation that he has converted the Le65 million (sixty-five million leones) boat the rebel outfit benefited from the National Committee for Dis-

armament, Demobilisation and Re-integration (NCDDR). Former rebel commander, Jonathan Kposowa and three other ex-combatants, including 16-year-old Memuna Bockarie, yesterday reported the matter to Serious Crime 1(One) at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID)

headquarters, Government Wharf, Freetown.

According to Jonathan Kposowa, former NCDDR

Commissioner Dr. Francis Kaikai gave the boat to ex-

RUF combatants with the
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RUF's Eldred Collins On The Run

From front page
view to re-integrating them into society to enhance their daily survival.
The former rebel commander disclosed that

Eldred Collins had long converted the boat for the purpose of making money to support his household, relatives and friends.
The boat was launched by former NCDDR Commis-

sioner, Dr. Francis Kaikai, under the organisation - Western Area Progressive Organisation (WAPO) - with Eldred Collins as leader.

The Exclusive

Wednesday August 18, 2004

Security threat at Mano River

Bridge

Sallu Massaquoi reports

Reports received from impeccable sources just coming from the Mano River border state that security operatives manning all the five check points along the road leading to the Bo Water Side on which the Mano River Bridge is located are far removed from performing security related matters, but mainly concerned with extortion of money and food items from immigrants or passengers and businessmen.

A business woman, arriving from Liberia Fatu Sesay just reported to New

Vision of how flabbergasted and unbelievable it was that soon after the terrible carnage of civil war in Sierra Leone which was caused mainly due to poor and wretched security situation at our border crossings, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Royal Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and



Brig. Gen. Sam M'boma the Immigration Officer can relapse



Acha Kamara, IG into complacency and extortion of monies to the detriment of the

lives of Sierra Leoneans living around the communities along the border with Liberia.

Explaining further, Madam Sesay maintained, "Flash a few Leones or Liberian Dollars to the faces of security personnel then out

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you go from Sierra Leone or enter it to say the only word in the dictionary that the Sierra Leone Police or Military can understand is money and money all the way."

Based on this report, New Vision dispatched a reporter to the area over the weekend only for him to collaborate the report.

Our source further claim that these security operatives take foodstuff from poor farmers who go to sell their wares in what they refer to as 'specimen'

One of the checkpoints renowned for extortion of money and foodstuff is the Jendema checkpoint at the Mano River Bridge where security personnel collect fish, gari, palm oil, and other vegetables. Even travellers carrying official Government documents and identity cards were not spared in this joint 'taxation' to the extent of creating unprecedented awe in the minds of detraumatized business people and travellers in Sierra Leone.

Speaking to a senior police officer (name withheld), our reporter quoted him as saying, "my friend, we and our families have to live". It could be recalled that following persistent report of extortion by the joint security personnel, the Commissioner of Police, Southern Region paid an on-the-spot visit to the Mano River Bridge and according to reports monitored, his investigation into the alleged extortion had some officer netted with some minor disciplinary action taken against them.

But it appears some officers were still not commensurately punished as the practice continues unabated.

A further visit was reportedly made by the Sierra Leone Ambassador in Liberia, Mr. Patrick Foyah, warning them to be vigilant in the discharge of the security duties, but no sooner had he left for Monrovia than they recommenced their good old dirty tricks, the report added.

What is creating concern to the community people was that the extortion proclivities of the security operatives is on a daily basis, thus causing them to leave their border posts as a field day for smugglers of various goods including arms and ammunition, thus putting the security of the country at risk.

New Vision
Wednesday August 18,
2004

Soldiers arrested in combat uniform for armed robbery

By Jay Willie

Three serving soldiers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and three other former members of the

RSLAF have been arrested for armed robbery in various parts of the city. According to reliable Police sources; SLA 2325/99 Abu Bakarr of 29

Lunar Street Kissy, SLA 2219/99 Yusifu Turay of 45 Adesanya Street Brookfields and SLA 2051/99 Abdul Rahman Conteh of 19a Parsonage

Street Garden View at Kissy- all presently serving in the Army, were arrested in full combat uniforms, together with Abubakarr Jawara, a

former 'Westside' soldier with registration number- SLA 181750/95 and of 45 Naimbana Street. It was disclosed that Abubakarr had just recently been released from Pademba Road Prison. Also arrested in the gang were, Mohammed Komboh Kamara, an AWOL soldier with number- SLA 18171377 and of 3 Water Lane, Upper Mountain Court and another AWOL soldier St.A 181719/75 of

9 Personage Street Kissy. They were caught within the central area of Freetown around the PZ/Rawdon Street vicinity in full combat uniform whiles Abubakarr Turay, Santigie Mansaray and Abdul Conteh were armed. The others who were in the gang had all been involved in various robberies around town stealing generators, stabilizers, TV sets, drinks and other valuables which were found

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Soldiers arrested in combat

From Front Page

in their possession. Also arrested in possession of drugs. (Indian hemp) was Mohammed Komboh Kamara. All of these men are presently at the Central Police Station awaiting to be charged to Court shortly. A source close to the Police told Awoko that the men were arrested following complaints from the public about harassment and

robberies in different parts of the city. As a result, the Police mounted a surveillance in the area and netted the culprits. Meanwhile, the Police authorities, yesterday started a full-scale investigation on the Awoko story published yesterday about the three OSD personnel who were stabbed while carrying out an alleged illegal raid on a 'brown-brown' joint at

Roberts Street. Unconfirmed reports say that one of them had died at the Emergency Hospital at Goderich. Inspector General of Police- Brima Acha Kamara and Acting Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police in Charge of Operations (SACOPS)- Chris Charley directed that a full investigation be made on the matter

Awoko

Wednesday August 18, 2004

Independent Essence

Wednesday August 18, 2004

Message of Solidarity in Commemoration of the August 18th 1997 Student Uprising Against the AFRC

As we join patriotic Sierra Leoneans both at home and abroad including other well-wishers in celebrating August 18th in sad memory of the student uprising against the now defunct Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) seven years ago in 1997, we hereby doff our hearts to the brave students who defied the desperation of the AFRC in seizing power through the force of arms in their bid to torpedo the hard won democracy we as Sierra Leoneans fought for in the year preceding the infamous coup of 1997.

Indeed, the deaths of colleagues like Vaffie Konneh and Morrie Kallon of the N'jala University College and the National School of Nursing respectively are still a sad recollection hence they symbolised the deaths of the many other students yet to be accounted for.

In the light of this year's celebration, we call on all progressive Sierra Leoneans to

Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS) if only the aspirations that embody our struggle for democracy, human rights and good governance are to be realised and impacted our brave resistance to the AFRC junta, the forces that stood against democracy in our beloved country.

To this end, we still hold the inherent belief that any form of celebration of August 18th would only have the desired effect if only we know who was (were) responsible for the deaths of our colleagues. As such, we hereby repeat the clarion call for the SLPP led government to institute a commission of inquiry in order to determine who really killed our colleagues then.

To the entire student body, we should not be seen in any way to compromise the NUSS' constitution. Rather, students should be seen to be the solid voice of the moral conscience of the society.

To the families of all those who lost their loved ones during the August 18th 1997 student demonstrations

against the AFRC and their cohorts, we still continue to extend our sincere condolences. And to those who still continue the struggle for a decent Sierra Leone free from the cleavages of corruption, nepotism and lack of accountability and transparency in government, we salute you.

And, in spite of the thousands of miles that divide us apart, our moral support is still with you until such a time when we shall have returned home to join in the struggle.

LONG LIVE NUSS! LONG LIVE STUDENTS' SOLIDARITY! LONG LIVE SIERRA LEONE!
DONE IN TORONTO ON AUGUST 18TH, 2004 IN COMMEMORATION OF THE AUGUST 18TH 1997 STUDENT UPRISING AGAINST THE AFRC.

SIGNED:

Ibrahim Bashir Jalloh
(NUSS President 1996 to 1998)

Abdulai Bayraytay
(NUSS Secretary General 1996 to 1998)