

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:

Tuesday, December 14, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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The New CITIZEN

TOLONGBO

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"NORMAN MISREPRESENTED ME"

— *Daramy Rogers*

Well known politician, former Minister in the All Peoples Congress party (APC) and former Civil Defence Force (CDF) member who played a leading role in the restoration of President Kabbah's overthrown government, Mr. Daramy Rogers, who is resident in Bo said in Bo over the weekend that it was not true that he betrayed Special Court

Norman or anybody else now standing trial at the Special Court in Freetown. Daramy Rogers was responding to a question posed to him by the New Citizen about the allegation made by Sam Hinga Norman in a letter addressed to Daramy Rogers that Rogers collaborated with officials of the Special Court to repress the pro-government militia Kamajor Chief, Sam Hinga

Norman, who also at one time doubled as Minister in President Kabbah's government.

Sam Hinga Norman was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2003 on an eight count charge, including crimes against humanity and rape.

Hinga Norman, a famous personality of the country, also provided leadership for the Kamajors

and the Civil Defence Force who fought to restore Kabbah's government after it was overthrown by the AFRC.

Daramy Rogers who was also a member of the CDF said that the allegations made by Sam Hinga Norman that he visited the Special Court premises in Freetown

were totally untrue when he said, "I had never visited the premises of the Special Court and it is not true that I connived with anybody to implicate Sam Hinga Norman."

The Southern Province politician further added, "contrary to the fears entertained

by Sam Hinga Norman, I have no intention to testify against anybody or in favour of anybody at the Special Court. Sam Hinga Norman unfairly targeted me in his letter, but since the matter is in court, I cannot make any comments but suffice to say that I am still a highly respected citizen in this country."

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... it to state that the young men on whom Hinga Norman placed all his trust are the same young men now prosecuting him. I have no quarrel with Hinga Norman."

Daramy Rogers who took part in the restoration of President Kabbah's government after it was overthrown by the military assured the New Citizen that he had no ulterior motive

"NORMAN MISREPRESENTED ME"

in participating in the activities of the Kamajors and CDF apart from the fact that he was interested in restoring democracy in President Kabbah's government

When asked why he himself was not engaged in atrocities during the war years, Daramy Rogers did not hesitate to say, "you go and run out for yourself." He however stated the let-

ter written by Hinga Norman, the Special Court indictee from prison and circulated to the media, was a deliberate attempt to tarnish his image and to create hiccups in his political career, but this effort has failed and as, "I am still effectively participating in my region and I am proud to state that I am still a highly respected citizen in this country."

12/13/2004 11:06:18

UN raps Nigeria over former Liberian leader Taylor

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 13 (AFP) - UN investigators on Monday sharply criticised Nigeria, where exiled former Liberian leader Charles Taylor remains at large despite being wanted for war crimes.

They also took **Liberia's** transitional government to task over an out-of-control budget with "misplaced priorities," and called for an enquiry into how money has been withdrawn from the government's accounts.

"Taylor still poses a threat to the future stability of **Liberia**," the experts said in a new report to the UN Security Council, saying the indicted strongman was free despite an indictment from a UN court in Sierra Leone.

"This raises questions about the efficacy of the application of the rule of law at the international level, particularly as Nigeria is a member of the United Nations and a member of Interpol," the report said.

Taylor took exile in Nigeria last year, bringing an end to 14 years of civil war in **Liberia** and clearing the way for the establishment of a power-sharing, transitional government headed by Gyude Bryant.

But the report said Bryant's government was making only a "feeble attempt" to implement a freeze on assets authorised by the Security Council, and that Taylor is likely still receiving money from **Liberia**.

The experts said Taylor appeared to be getting deliveries of cash from couriers while "rumours abound" that others on the sanctions list, including Taylor's wife, were still allowed to sell off their properties in **Liberia**.

"The general lack of any type of financial control, and rampant corruption in **Liberia**, make the diversion of money from any company or individual to Taylor extremely easy," they said.

In 2001, the Security Council slapped arms and diamond embargoes, and a travel ban, on **Liberia** over Taylor's reported support for rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

It implemented an embargo on the timber trade in 2003 and authorised the asset freeze in March 2004.

Liberia has called for the lifting of the sanctions, saying it needs the revenues to help rebuild the shattered country, which was founded by former slaves from the United States.

The UN report, however, said there was "no semblance of budgetary control" by the transitional government, with foreign travel for officials 10 times over estimates -- and more than half of the budget gone to personnel expenses.

"There were large variations between the purposes for which amounts were sanctioned by the (Liberian parliamentary) assembly and the purposes for which the funds were actually spent," it said.

"The financial data supplied by government agencies is not necessarily accurate or reliable," it said -- and called for an independent enquiry to investigate where money has gone.



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Liberia-Sierra Leone: Consolidating Peace?

AfricaFocus (Washington, DC)

NEWS

December 12, 2004

Posted to the web December 13, 2004

Washington, DC

"The [multilateral] interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are failing to produce states that will be stable and capable of exercising the full range of sovereign responsibilities on behalf of their long-suffering populations. This is essentially because they treat peacebuilding as implementing an operational checklist, involving [quick] fixes to various institutions and processes" - International Crisis Group

In its new report released last week, the International Crisis Group criticized donors for delaying promised funds for reconstruction. It also argued that long-term commitments from the international community, as well as from politicians and citizens in the countries, were needed for strategies to address structural factors likely to lead to new conflict.

This contains a summary article on the report from the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), and the press release and executive summary of the report from the International Crisis Group (ICG). The full report is available on the website of the ICG (<http://www.crisisweb.org>).

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Liberia-Sierra Leone: International community needs to commit for long haul to stop return to war

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)

<http://www.irinnews.org>

[This material from IRIN may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies.]

Dakar, 9 Dec 2004 (IRIN) - Liberia and Sierra Leone risk tipping back into conflict if the international community does not commit for the next 15 to 25 years with a fresh approach to restore security and civil freedoms, according to leading think tank, the International Crisis Group.

"The interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are failing to produce states that will be stable," the ICG said in a report published on Wednesday. "A fresh strategy is needed if both are not to remain shadow states, vulnerable to new fighting and state failure."

The ICG criticised donors for not handing over promised and much needed-funds and said that post-war efforts were veering off course, as UN peacekeepers simply ticked off the standard elements in a one-size-fits-all recipe for peace.

"There is no simple and quick nation-building conveyor belt. If the cycle of 'collapse, partial recovery, new collapse'

is to be avoided, the international community needs to stay patiently involved with both countries for a generation, not for a brief post-conflict transition capped off by a first election," the Brussels-based group warned.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia witnessed brutal civil wars that spanned the 1990s and the images of young and often drugged-up combatants toting machetes and guns and mutilating innocent victims touched a nerve around the world.

The new ICG report, entitled "Rebuilding Failed States" (<http://www.crisisweb.org>), called for action to be taken by the United Nations, the British and American governments, international donors, and politicians and citizens in both West African countries to consolidate a real and meaningful peace.

It said judicial institutions needed not only to be repaired but reformed, new armies needed to be trained properly to win back the trust of civilians who often saw them as tainted.

Ordinary civilians should be pushing through to the frontlines of politics, and economic resources, be they diamonds and timber or government funds, should be put beyond the reach of criminals.

Sixteen months of peace for Liberia

Liberia's 14-year conflict finally drew to a close when the warring parties signed a peace deal in August 2003. Now a transitional government, made up of the three armed factions that fought the war and civilian society groups, is working to lead the country to free and fair elections in October 2005.

But infrastructure in the heavily-forested nation remains shattered, with roads still impassable and no power grid or water and sewerage systems in the capital, Monrovia.

Western diplomats have already blasted obstructionist elements within Liberia's interim government who are more bothered about the personal gains they can pocket as "gatekeepers" to various offices, than about moving the country forward. The ICG said next year's polls would be a crunch test.

"Many observers fear that the presidential election in October 2005 will be seen as an all-or-nothing affair, with the losers thoroughly excluded from power and thus left contemplating resumption of war," the report said.

Hordes of idle former fighters and hidden caches of arms which escaped a UN-led disarmament programme would provide a prime recruiting pool, and so the ICG urged foreign donors to stump up immediately the US\$ 42 million needed to reintegrate ex-combatants and help them adjust to civilian life.

The money is part of US\$ 276 million that was promised by donors but has yet to be paid. The funds for ex-combatants are crucial, especially given the outcome of a flawed disarmament and reintegration programme in 1997 during a pause in Liberia's civil war.

"The result was... continued pillage and abuse of the population and ultimately a resumption of civil war," the ICG noted. "Donors who promised money in February 2004 must disburse it immediately if Liberian ex-combatants are not to be let down again."

The group also urged the United Nations Security Council to maintain timber sanctions on Liberia until after the elections, despite pleas from Liberia's interim leader, Gyude Bryant, to lift the embargo. And the international community should take over the collection of revenues from ports, airports, customs and raw materials exports, to make corruption more difficult, the ICG said.

It called for no time to be wasted. "The clock is ticking for Liberia. After the October elections it will be much more difficult to take innovative approaches, as it already is in Sierra Leone."

Sierra Leone turmoil further in past

Sierra Leone is further along the peace path. Fighting ended almost three years ago and elections have already been held. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was overwhelmingly re-elected in May 2002, four months after the war was officially declared over.

Although peacekeepers from the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) have restored security across the country, they have delayed pulling out of the former British colony completely.

"Fears that the peace would not hold have prompted a decision to maintain a residual force of 3,500 soldiers and military observers until at least the end of June 2005," the ICG noted.

With Sierra Leone still mired at the bottom of the UN's Human Development Index and citizens not expected to live much beyond their 34th birthday, the outlook is bleak.

And the ICG says the efforts put into security, now have to be matched in the economic and political spheres where the sparks that caused the decade-long civil war have not been firmly extinguished.

To do this, a long-term commitment is essential.

Residents in the capital Freetown bemoan the fact that living conditions there have barely improved, that travelling elsewhere in the country is difficult because roads are so dire and that corruption still plagues the country.

Many normal state functions, particularly the provision of healthcare, are being carried out by non-governmental organisations and not the government.

"Institutions are focused on finding new sources of donor revenue, rather than managing at hand in a way that would develop autonomy and self-sufficiency. Policy is driven by what donors will fund," the ICG report said.

The consequences of either Sierra Leone or Liberia sliding back to war would be disastrous for an-already turbulent West African region.

Cote d'Ivoire, once the regional powerhouse, is currently reeling from the latest cycle of violence in its two year crisis. And analysts say Guinea, which shares borders with both Liberia and Sierra Leone, could ignite any day as the country crumbles under President Lansana Conte.

Liberia & Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States

Dakar/Brussels, 8 December 2004: The international interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are failing to produce stable sovereign states. A fresh strategy is needed if both are not to remain vulnerable to new fighting and state collapse.

Liberia & Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States, the latest report from the International Crisis Group, says peacebuilding in both countries is off track because it is treated as a straightforward matter of implementing a checklist of operational processes and does not tackle underlying political dynamics. Deeper -- and much longer -- engagement is required.

"The international community needs to make fifteen- to 25-year commitments to security and civil freedoms in Liberia and Sierra Leone", says Suliman Baldo, Crisis Group's Africa Program Director.

"It needs to invest the time to allow new political forces to develop".

A year after the inauguration of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the situation is improved, but peace is fragile. Monrovia has no power grid, no sewage or water systems, and no land line telephones. Crime is a major problem, and outside major towns and principal roads, UNMIL exercises little control. Civilians are still subject to abuses by ex-combatants, who continue illegal extraction of gold, rubber and timber.

Sierra Leone, culturally, historically and geographically linked, has already had its elections, but the UN mission (UNAMSIL) that was scheduled to withdraw all peacekeepers by December 2004 will remain until at least the end of June 2005 for fear peace would not otherwise hold.

In both cases the operational checklist includes deployment of peacekeepers; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters; repatriation of refugees; judicial and security sector reform; and elections, as virtually the final step. Those are all necessary measures but more is needed, and the time frame of two to five years is unrealistically short.

A more radical strategy is required in both countries. After restoring security, the international community should more quickly give greater political responsibility, while simultaneously targeting its interventions to help build non-political and professional law enforcement and judicial institutions to establish the rule of law, protect civil rights and foster a public space within which citizens can hammer out their own solutions. In Liberia, where it is still possible, the international community should adopt a long-term revenue-collection trusteeship or management system that would simultaneously finance much of its engagement, take incentives away from spoilers and give the state significantly more money.

"These approaches can only succeed within a much longer time frame", says Mike McGovern, Crisis Group's West Africa Project Director. "Liberia and Sierra Leone took decades to decay, and it will take decades to restore sustainable security and political and economic structures".

The new Peacebuilding Commission proposed by the UN High-level Panel on 2 December 2004 could be the institutional vehicle to implement such long-term commitments.

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Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States

Africa Report N 87 8 December 2004

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are failing to produce states that will be stable and capable of exercising the full range of sovereign responsibilities on behalf of their long-suffering populations. This is essentially because they treat peacebuilding as implementing an operational checklist, involving fixes to various institutions and processes, without tackling underlying political dynamics. At best, Liberia is on the path Sierra Leone entered upon several years earlier. A fresh strategy is needed if both are not to remain shadow states, vulnerable to new fighting and state failure. The international community needs to make genuinely long-term commitments -- not two to five years, as at present, but on the order of fifteen to 25 years -- to enable new political forces to develop.

In both countries the operational checklist includes deployment of peacekeepers; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of fighters; repatriation of refugees; and judicial and security sector reform; with elections as virtually the final step. The time frame -- two to five years -- is too short. Individuals with criminal pasts are treated as viable political interlocutors. The judicial and law enforcement institutions never functioned effectively, and thus their repair without reform is no solution.

New national militaries are untested, and their adherence to constitutional order uncertain. Voices from civil society who could catalyse real change tend to be marginalised, while the economy is left vulnerable to criminal capture.

A more radical strategy is needed. After restoring security, the international community should more quickly give greater political responsibility, while simultaneously targeting its interventions to help build non-political and professional law enforcement and judicial institutions to establish the rule of law, protect civil rights and foster a public space within which citizens can hammer out their own solutions. In Liberia it should also assume

responsibility for revenue collection from ports, airports, customs, the maritime registry and export of timber and diamonds: because the collection of revenues is presently obscured from the beginning, it is easy to engineer corruption. But once funds begin entering the treasury transparently, it should be up to Liberians to decide how to use them, though international monitors, as part of independent and public oversight of procurement, should still be available to help civil society prevent gross abuse.

The same problem exists in Sierra Leone, but this prescription probably cannot be applied because its elected government is already in place and unlikely to give up so much control. Stop-gap measures there focus on trying to insert accounting mechanisms at the final stages of the revenue process, by which time much has already disappeared. However, the long-term security sector commitment has already been promised by the UK. Other steps needed are to protect freedom of press and expression better, to give the Anti-Corruption Commission prosecutorial powers, and to establish a public complaint mechanism applicable to newly-elected district governments.

The proposed approaches can only have a chance of succeeding within a much longer time frame than the international community has hitherto been willing to envisage. Liberia and Sierra Leone took decades to decay, and it will take decades to restore sustainable security and political and economic structures. The new Peacebuilding Commission proposed by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which reported to the UN Secretary-General on 2 December 2004, could be the institutional vehicle needed to implement the long-term commitments required in these countries, and many others around the world.

Recommendations

With Respect to Liberia:

To International Donors:

1. Pay quickly outstanding pledges for reconstruction (\$276 million), especially the \$42 million UNMIL needs to jump-start reintegration of ex-combatants who have been disarmed and demobilised.
2. Shift the focus of reintegration programs toward education and agriculture, including infrastructure (roads, processing equipment) that will support agricultural production.
3. Give greater political and operational support to civil society.
4. Fund independent oversight of government procurement as domestic professional auditing capacity is built.
5. Provide long-term funds based on implementation of a national strategy for law enforcement and justice sector reform.

To the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin:

6. Convene a working group to prepare the political, technical and administrative modalities of a mechanism to assume responsibility for revenue collection for a projected fifteen to 25-year period, including an oversight board with mixed international and Liberian composition but controlled by the former and supported by a team of experts (forensic accountants) and international customs officers.
7. Work with Liberian civil society leaders to organise a national roundtable conference to develop consensus on a national strategy to be pursued after the October 2005 elections.

To Liberian Civil Society:

8. Promote discussion between Gios and Mandingos to reduce the threat of ethnic violence.

To the National Transitional Government of Liberia:

9. Enact legislation to guarantee all citizens (including youths and women) equal access to land use and to prevent rights to such use acquired by working and improving land from being revoked by traditional authorities.

To the United Nations Security Council:

10. Maintain timber and diamond sanctions until after the 2005 elections, then subordinate these sectors to the new revenue collection mechanism.

To the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO):

11. Extend military observers' tours to one year, the entire period to be spent at a single site, so as to increase their ability to gather useful information.

To UNMIL:

12. Take more coercive measures to collect weapons now that the official DDR deadline for turning them in has passed.

13. Develop a program of targeted disarmament/ development projects for ex-combatants and the communities into which they are reintegrated based on the "StopGaps" program in Sierra Leone.

To the Government of the United States:

14. Give a long-term (fifteen to 25-year) "over the horizon" security guarantee to Liberia similar to that given by the UK to Sierra Leone.

15. Provide incentives for Liberians resident in the U.S. to participate in rebuilding their home country, for example by not interrupting green card or citizenship application processes if they leave the U.S. to participate in rebuilding, investment, and governance initiatives.

16. Target financial crimes committed by members of the U.S.-based Liberian diaspora, and block U.S. bank accounts in such cases.

With Respect to Sierra Leone

To International Donors:

17. Shift the focus of development funding to programs directed toward education and agriculture, including infrastructure (roads, agricultural processing equipment) and increase funding to security sector reform, especially in order to build barracks for army and police.

18. Give greater political and operational support to civil society and train district councillors in basic accounting and administrative skills to facilitate their ability to work transparently.

19. Provide long-term funds based on implementation of a national strategy for law enforcement and justice sector reform.

To the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO):

20. Extend military observers' tours to one year, the entire period to be spent at a single site, so as to increase their ability to gather useful information.

To the Government of Sierra Leone:

21. Give prosecutorial powers to the Anti-Corruption Commission on a temporary basis (five to ten years), provide it adequate financial and human resources, and move quickly to implement a comprehensive reform of the judicial system.
22. Publish all budgets from ministry level downward, using the model of the Local Government Act of March 2004, require candidates for public office to declare their assets both before and after assuming office, and assure freedom of the press, speech and association.
23. Work with donors to promote agriculture, first assuring self-sufficiency in rice production, and then shifting toward greater diversification, higher productivity, and local value-added processing.
24. Enact legislation to guarantee all citizens (including youths and women) equal access to land use and to prevent rights to such use acquired by working and improving land from being revoked by traditional authorities.
25. Establish effective control over diamond resources, applying Kimberly process procedures.

To the Government of the UK:

26. Confirm the long-term "over the horizon" security guarantee to Sierra Leone for a 25-year period.

Dakar/Brussels, 8 December 2004

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UN experts back extension of sanctions on Liberia

December 14, 2004, 04:30

More than a year after the end of a long civil war, Liberia's finances remain in shambles and it has yet to meet conditions for ending UN sanctions on its timber and diamond exports, a panel of UN experts reported yesterday.

The transitional government that took power after President Charles Taylor fled into exile in Nigeria in August 2003 has not yet put a stop to widespread financial improprieties by the former authorities, the panel said in its latest progress report to the 15-nation UN Security Council.

The new government in the impoverished west African nation of 3.2 million people has been pushing hard for the UN sanctions to be lifted so it can resume diamond and timber exports to help rebuild its economy after 14 years of on-and-off civil war. The council imposed the export bans as well as an arms embargo between 2001 and 2003 after accusing then-President Taylor of fueling conflict in the region through an illicit guns-for-diamonds trade.

But "sanctions are not a long-term solution for Liberia", the experts said. "They must be lifted as soon as possible," once controls are in place to ensure the revenues from diamond and logging sales are used to benefit the Liberian people.

No work

In the meantime, unemployment of more than 80%, declining subsistence farming, the return of thousands of Liberians who had fled the war and an influx of refugees from unrest in Ivory Coast "threatens to overburden an already dire humanitarian situation in rural Liberia," the experts warned. Making things worse, the panel said, the transitional government had failed to address the country's urgent needs in its current budget and had not yet prepared the accounts for the previous two years' budgets, the panel said.

The government had also made only "a feeble attempt" to freeze the assets of former officials including Taylor and was unable to prevent their travel, as ordered by the Security Council, the experts concluded.

While they could not find direct evidence that money was being smuggled to Taylor, they said confidential sources had told them couriers regularly delivered cash to him in Nigeria. - Reuters

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Liberia: Thousands raped - no one prosecuted

press release, 14/12/2004

I was pregnant and running away from the camp near St. Paul bridge. Three government soldiers caught me and raped me. They beat me and my unborn baby died. All my belongings were stolen.

Testimony given to Amnesty International by a 29-year-old woman from Bomi County.

Amnesty International today insisted that the perpetrators of widespread and systematic rape during Liberia's civil war must be brought to justice.

"Thousands of women and girls have suffered rape and other forms of sexual violence, yet, more than a year on from the signing of a peace agreement, no one has been prosecuted and it remains unclear if, how and when those responsible will ever face justice. This impunity is a disgraceful betrayal of the victims of what are crimes against humanity and war crimes," Amnesty International said.

In a new report, *Liberia: No impunity for rape - a crime against humanity and a war crime*, Amnesty International describes through harrowing testimonies the sexual violence which is believed to have affected around two-thirds of the population. The report also shows the physical, psychological and social consequences of such violence.

"Lasting peace will not be achieved in Liberia unless those responsible for crimes under international law are held criminally responsible, truth is established and victims obtain full reparations," Amnesty International said.

"The National Transitional Government of Liberia currently has no policy to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes under international law. Neither has there been any expression of resolute commitment by the international community to end impunity for such crimes in Liberia."

"A long-term action plan to restore justice and the rule of law must be developed and implemented," Amnesty International said. "This must be a priority for the government, working in cooperation with the United Nations and the wider international community and non-governmental organizations."

The report describes:

- widespread and systematic rape and other forms of sexual violence, including gang-rape the rape of pregnant women and children, committed by combatants of all three parties to the conflict: the former government of Liberia, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia;
- health facilities unable to cope with the physical injuries and psychological trauma resulting from rape and other forms of sexual violence on a massive scale;
- the need for donor governments to honour fully the pledges made at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia in February this year; about half of the funds promised have still not been made available;
- the continued vulnerability of women to sexual violence and exploitation as a result of extreme poverty and vast numbers of internally displaced people remaining in camps.

"The protection of the rights of women and girls must be at the centre of all efforts to rebuild Liberia. Full and meaningful participation of Liberian women in their country's recovery is essential," Amnesty International said.

For a copy of the report, *Liberia: No impunity for rape - a crime against humanity and a war crime*, please see: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf340172004>

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Ivory Coast western militia say ready to fight

12 Dec 2004 17:59:52 GMT,

By Ange Aboa

TOULEPLEU, Ivory Coast, Dec 12 (Reuters) - A militia group in western Ivory Coast said it was in training and ready to help government forces in any renewed conflict against rebels who hold the north of the world's top cocoa grower.

The West African country has been split in two since rebels seized the northern half after failing to oust President Laurent Gbagbo in September 2002.

Thousands of militiamen fought alongside government troops in the ensuing civil war.

"My men are still in training even though the fighting has stopped now, so we will be ready to respond to any rebel attack," Denis Maho Glofiei, head of the Great Western Liberation Front (FLGO), told Reuters in an interview.

"We control all the main towns in the region and will remain active until the rebels have been disarmed," said Glofiei, some of whose men fought alongside government troops in 2002.

Impatient to recover the north as a peace process crawled forward, Gbagbo's warplanes bombed rebel-held towns for several days in early November, shattering an 18-month ceasefire.

The attacks came to an abrupt end when former colonial power France crippled the Ivorian air force after a raid killed nine French peacekeepers in the rebel stronghold Bouake.

Glofiei, a former village chief and cocoa farmer, said he had 7,000 armed men ready to go to the front line and the same number again in reservists. His fighters trained in a camp east of Toulepleu, which lies close to the border with Liberia.

Civilians who fled to Liberia during Ivory Coast's latest round of bloodletting reported seeing former fighters from Liberia, itself struggling to emerge from a decade of civil war, coming the other way into Ivory Coast to work as guns for hire.

Some regular soldiers in western Ivory Coast say lawlessness among the militia, many of whom wear the same military uniforms as they do, makes them a burden.

"There are hold-ups, thefts and complaints of all kinds of abuse but when we find out militias were involved, we file away the report and try to come to an amicable arrangement," said one military police officer near Toulepleu, shrugging his shoulders.

"There's not much else we can do. We struggle to do our job properly because of the militias who look just like us and take on our role," he said.

The militias are supposed to disarm at the same time as the rebels under a French-brokered peace plan signed in January 2003. But disarmament has not yet begun as both sides argue over the political solution to the conflict.

One of the key questions is whether the constitution will be changed to remove rules barring northern opposition politician Alassane Ouattara from running for president.

Gbagbo has taken a step in this direction by sending the proposed amendment to parliament, but insists such a change can ultimately only be made after a referendum, itself only possible once the country is unified.

CONCORD TIMES

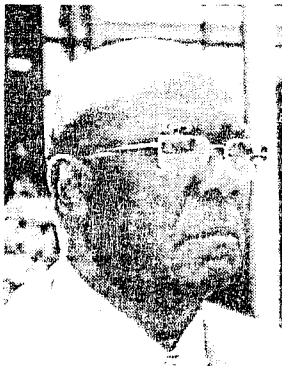
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December 14, 2004

Price: Le500

ICG warns outbreak of fighting in Salone

By Chernoh
Alpha M. Bah



President Kabbah peace is still fragile

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has warned that Sierra Leone and Liberia may likely become shadow states vulnerable to new fighting and state failures if the International Community fails to make long-term commitments that would enable the development of new political forces in both countries.

"Sierra Leone and Liberia are failing to produce states that will be stable and capable of

exercising the full range of sovereign responsibilities on behalf of their long-suffering populations," the ICG observed in its December 2004 Report.

ICG says both countries have failed to tackle underlying political dynamics. "Individuals with criminal pasts are treated as viable political interlocutors, and the judicial and law enforcement institutions aren't functioning effectively making their repair without reform a no solution."

(Continued page 3)

ICG warns

From page 1

the Report stated, adding that new national militaries are untested and their adherence to constitutional order remains uncertain.

The Group says a more radical strategy is needed because voices from civil society activists who could catalyze real change are marginalized while the economy is left vulnerable

to criminal capture.

ICG calls on the International Community to give greater political responsibility by helping to build non-political and professional law enforcement and judicial institutions that would establish the rule of law, protect civil rights and foster a public space within which citizens can hammer out their own solutions.