

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, December 22, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248
MOBILE: 232 76 645 914

THE INDEPENDENT

No. 142

Tuesday December 22 2004

Price: Le 500

Taylor receives money for another rebellion



Charles Taylor

Papers from receiving money from neighbouring countries to support an insurgency in Liberia to support an insurgency in Liberia. The paper claims that the former president has been receiving money from neighbouring countries to support an insurgency in Liberia. The paper claims that the former president has been receiving money from neighbouring countries to support an insurgency in Liberia.

report has revealed that it has evidence that former Liberian president Charles Taylor is still receiving money from Liberia.

The reports say even though there has not been any direct evidence suggesting that money, funds, or assets have been diverted to

former president Charles Taylor in Nigeria, information received by the UN Panel of experts shows that he is still receiving money from Liberia.

The paper also alleges that the financing of Charles Taylor is made in cash, using both male and female couriers. The couriers deliver the cash using international flights, but remittance is

made via another intermediary in order to avoid a direct route.

The papers states that presently, it is difficult to assess which individuals are currently supplying money to Taylor, the report noted. "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

Article is incomplete. Continuation was omitted by the publishers.

STANDARD TIMES

Wednesday December 22, 2004

Le500

For alarming child abuse case...

Special Court suspends staff

By [unreadable]

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has slammed a four-month suspension without pay on one of its international staff, Mandy Cordwell, for allegedly talking to the Australian press.

Mandy Cordwell, regarded by many as a controversial figure, gained prominence a couple of

months ago when she reportedly exposed an alleged child abuse case involving a fellow Australian, Peter Halloran, also of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Since then, Mandy has not been in the bad books of a good

number of her Special Court colleagues, most of whom were of the view that the allegation was simply a make-up story aimed at bringing the reputation of Halloran into disrepute.

Accordingly, Mandy now *CONTINUED BACK PAGE*

Special Court suspends staff

[The text in this column is mostly illegible due to heavy noise and low contrast. It appears to be a continuation of the article.]

[The text in this column is mostly illegible due to heavy noise and low contrast. It appears to be a continuation of the article.]

[The text in this column is mostly illegible due to heavy noise and low contrast. It appears to be a continuation of the article.]



[Illegible caption text]

[Back](#)

Sierra Leone: Amnesty International expresses dismay at 10 death sentences for treason

press release, 21/12/2004

Amnesty International is dismayed at the death sentences passed by Freetown's High Court yesterday against 10 men convicted of treason.

These death sentences come only weeks after Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended the complete abolition of the death penalty.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established by the government in 2000 to create an impartial historical record of human rights abuses committed during the armed conflict and to provide a forum for victims and perpetrators to recount their experiences. One of the key recommendations in its report, published in October, was enshrining the right to human dignity and abolishing the death penalty.

"The TRC's report explicitly calls for the immediate repeal of laws authorizing the death penalty, for a moratorium on all executions pending abolition, and for President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to commute all pending death sentences," said Tessa Kordeczka, Amnesty International's researcher on Sierra Leone. "President Kabbah should respond immediately to the spirit and letter of the TRC's report and commute all death sentences."

In addition to defying the public mood captured by the TRC, these death sentences go against a growing momentum within West Africa to abolish the death penalty.

On 10 December the Senegalese Parliament adopted legislation abolishing the death penalty, becoming the fourth member state of the Economic Community of West African States to outlaw recourse to capital punishment. In October, the National Study Group on the Death Penalty in Nigeria also called on the Nigerian government to impose a moratorium on executions and commute all pending death sentences where appeals had been exhausted.

"Sentencing these 10 people to death is an extremely retrogressive step which runs counter to the recent positive developments in West Africa," Tessa Kordeczka said.

In addition, there should be an end to the discrepancy between national courts and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is trying those accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law during Sierra Leone's conflict. The maximum sentence which can be imposed by the Special Court is life imprisonment, whereas the national courts may impose the death penalty.

"In practice, this means that a person convicted of the most serious crimes would face a prison sentence, whereas those convicted before national courts of offences which may be less serious could face the death penalty," Tessa Kordeczka said. "Many, including Sierra Leonean civil society groups and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, have expressed deep disquiet about this discrepancy."

"The government must follow the practice of the Special Court for Sierra Leone which reflects the international trend towards abolition of the death penalty," Tessa Kordeczka concluded.

Background

The charges against the 10 men sentenced to death - members of the former armed opposition groups, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and one civilian - related to an armed attack in January 2003 on the armoury at Wellington barracks, on the outskirts of Freetown, in an apparent attempt to overthrow the government of President Kabbah. Johnny Paul Koroma, former leader of the AFRC and an elected member of parliament, was said to be implicated but evaded arrest. In March 2003, Johnny Paul Koroma was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is trying those alleged to bear the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law committed after November 1996. His whereabouts remain unknown; rumours of his death have yet to be confirmed.

Those sentenced to death yesterday have the right to appeal against their conviction and sentence within 21 days. Of five other defendants in the same trial, one was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and four were acquitted. Another suspect had been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Special Court in September 2003.

Some 15 other people are reported to be under sentence of death in Sierra Leone. There have been no judicial executions since October 1998 when 24 AFRC members convicted of treason were publicly executed after an unfair trial before a military court.

Amnesty International believes that the death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It violates the right to life. It is irrevocable and can be inflicted on the innocent. It has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

[Back](#)

UN Security Council extends sanctions on Liberia

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 21 (AFP) - The UN Security Council voted unanimously on Tuesday to renew sanctions on Liberia as the struggling west African nation tries to rebuild after years of civil war.

Liberia's transitional government had been hoping for a lifting of the sanctions it inherited from indicted former president Charles Taylor, saying it urgently needs revenue from timber and diamond sales.

But the council voted 15-0 to keep in place a ban on timber exports for one year and diamond exports for six months -- measures adopted over concern Taylor's regime was using the money to fund wars and unrest in the region.

"Premature lifting of sanctions at this time would threaten the re-emergence of armed conflict," US envoy Stuart Holliday said after the vote.

"It is essential that these key resources and the revenue derived from their export be used responsibly in the future to improve the lives of the Liberian people, and not perpetuate the conflict as in the past," Holliday said.

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

A report by UN experts this month criticised the government, saying there was "no semblance of budgetary control" and calling for an enquiry into funds that had gone missing.

Bryant's government has made "only limited progress" in ensuring timber revenues are not being used to fuel conflict or otherwise diverted from the country's development needs, the council said.

Holliday said the United States was working with Bryant's government to restructure the timber and diamond sectors "as a means to expedite and not retard the eventual lifting of sanctions."

Liberia, founded by freed US slaves, is rich in natural resources but remains hobbled by both its long years of war and the corruption that was rampant under Taylor's chaotic rule.

Taylor is under indictment by a UN court for alleged war crimes in connection with the brutal civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, which he is said to have funded in part from the timber and diamond sales.

The Security Council, which also renewed an arms embargo and travel ban on Taylor's family and associates, said it would review the diamond sanctions in three months.



UN Moves On Two Fronts in Face of Worsening Crisis in Sudan's Darfur Region

UN News Service (New York)

NEWS

December 21, 2004

Posted to the web December 21, 2004

Facing a serious degradation in security and relief operations in Sudan's Darfur region which it has already called the world's worst humanitarian crisis, the United Nations today moved on both the political and aid fronts to halt the resurgence of violence and prepare for a possible new flood of refugees.

Meeting in New York, the Security Council enjoined all parties in the conflict, which pits the Government and militias against rebel forces - with more than two million civilians caught in between - to abide by previous ceasefire accords under threat of an unspecified "full range of options" to enforce compliance.

At the same time the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced plans to deal with a potential new influx into neighbouring Chad, while a major relief organization pulled out after four of its staff were killed in Darfur, where it provided health care, food support, child protection and education to some 250,000 children and family members.

The Security Council's call came shortly after Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned of deteriorating security in Darfur, where 1.65 million people have been displaced, and Janjaweed and pro-government militias stand accused of killing and raping thousands of villagers after rebels took up arms last year to demand a greater share of economic resources.

"The Government and the rebels must cease attacks and abide by their commitments," he said in an opening statement at his end of year press conference. "Ultimately, the Security Council must assume its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security," he warned, calling for the accelerated deployment of African Union (AU) monitors, troops and police.

He declined to be drawn by a question asking whether the Council should enact some of the targeted sanctions they have threatened, from an arms embargo to travel against certain individuals, or whether the issue should be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) set up to judge war crimes.

But he did say: "There comes a time when you have to make a reassessment as to whether the approach you have taken is working or not. And if it is not working, what other measures do you take?" he asked, noting that in the past the Council had talked of sanctions and that a majority of Council members would want the ICC to play a role, although the United States has a problem with any referral to the court.

In a press statement read out by its President for December, Algerian Ambassador Abdallah Baali, after consultations on Darfur, the Council condemned the repeated violations of the ceasefire signed by the Government and rebels earlier this year and recalled its earlier resolutions demanding an end to hostilities, the protection of civilians and full cooperation with international humanitarian and monitoring efforts.

"The Security Council is actively monitoring the situation and, in this regard, expressed its readiness to consider a

full range of options to exercise pressure on the parties to ensure full compliance," the statement said, also urging an accelerated AU deployment.

Deploring the deadly attacks that forced Save the Children UK to announce today that it was pulling out, the Council called on all parties to allow unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and urged the UN's own Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to increase its activities in Darfur.

Mr. Annan's Special Representative for Sudan, Jan Pronk, also reiterated "his strong condemnation of acts of violence targeting humanitarian workers," and paid tribute to the "valuable contribution of Save the Children UK and its dedicated staff in alleviating the suffering of victims of the Darfur conflict."

Anticipating a potential influx of refugees into Chad, UNHCR said the latest phase of its emergency airlift had enabled it to build up an overall contingency stock of relief items for up to 50,000 more people over and above the 200,000 who have already sought shelter in Sudan's western neighbour.

"But we are also extremely concerned about the capacity of eastern Chad to sustain any substantial new influx, given the chronic water shortage in an extremely arid region," agency spokesman Ron Redmond told a news briefing in Geneva.

The last in a series of 12 UNHCR flights from Belgium is due to arrive Thursday in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, with a consignment of portable warehouses. Other supplies, including blankets, buckets and plastic sheeting, were brought in on earlier flights. So far this year, the airlift has flown in 3,250 tons of aid and equipment on 88 flights from 11 different countries.

UNHCR is continuing to search for new camp sites either to decongest existing ones or receive any future influx. The viability of new sites depends first and foremost on the existence of a good water supply, and the results have often proved discouraging, heightening already serious concerns about the region's capacity to cope with more refugees, Mr. Redmond said.

Copyright © 2004 UN News Service. All rights reserved. Distributed
by AllAfrica Global Media (allAfrica.com).

[MotherJones.com](#) [News](#) [Commentary](#) [Arts](#) [Discuss](#) [Reader Services](#) [About Us](#)

To print this page, select "Print" from the File menu of your browser

.....

[MotherJones.com](#) / [News](#) / [dailymojo](#)

Trying Justice

Iyad Allawi wants to put Saddam Hussein's regime on trial. But his timing might undermine justice

Jeff Fleischer

December 21, 2004

Iraqi interim prime minister Iyad Allawi wants to get war-crimes trials underway this week for former members of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, with two pre-trial hearings started last weekend. While the trials are obvious a needed step in creating a legal system in the new Iraq, watchdogs see the timing of Allawi's announcement has a threat to the proceedings' legitimacy.

Allawi initially made his announcement to the interim National Council last Tuesday. While he declined to name which officials would first head to trial or release a timetable, he told the current government:

"I can now tell you clearly and precisely that, God willing, next week the trials of the symbols of the former regime will start, one by one so that justice can take its path in Iraq."

This wasn't the first time Allawi has promised trials; he earlier cited October and November as target dates, and his announcement took even the State Department by surprise. But judges began questioning "Chemical" Ali Hassan al-Majid and former defense minister Gen Sultan Hashim Ahmed -- two of the 12 men (including Saddam Hussein himself) accused of war crimes and attempted genocide -- on Saturday, with these interrogations the first step toward a trial under interim Iraqi law. The charges against the 12 men stem from the infamous "Al-Anfal" campaign in the late 1980s, in which Hussein's government killed thousands of Kurds, including chemical attacks.

The sudden decision to speed up the legal process has drawn heavy criticism from Allawi's political opponents, who accuse him of timing the announcement to score political points for his underdog candidacy in the Jan. 30 national election.

"So far, we know nothing about the trials. No one knows how they took the decision or who took the decision," Kurdish politician Mahmoud Othman told the Associated Press. "Suddenly they break the news and provide no explanation. People won't take it seriously."

There's also the issue of whether an unelected government should even be making this decision, a concern some anonymous members of the Allawi Cabinet voiced to reporters. Even with the Saturday interrogations kicking off the process, the trial stage almost certainly won't come until after the elections, which only enhances the speculation that Allawi's trying to drum up votes with the move. As the AP noted:

Putting members of Saddam's old government on trial during the election campaign seems intended to rally all Iraqis behind the new U.S.-backed order, though some have said it could inflame ethnic and sectarian divisions. The Sunni Arab minority did well under Saddam, but elections will favor the long-oppressed Shi'ite majority. A senior Iraqi official, who asked not to be named, said he regarded Allawi's announcement as a pitch for pre-election attention and

that more time was needed to arrange the trials.

The need for fair trials is the other obvious side of the problem, with defense lawyers -- who report a lack of access to their clients -- given little time to prepare for hearings, and letting their anger at Allawi be known:

"There is no transparency and everything is mysterious," said Badee Izzat Aref, lawyer of former deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz. "They (the judges) are under pressure from the executive authority because of the elections."

"The Iraqi court will be in violation of the basic rights of the defendants, which is to have access to legal counsel while being interrogated and indicted," said Ziad al-Khasawneh, one of Hussein's Jordan-based lawyers.

For international watchdogs, the main concern is that the trial process produce a legitimate, viable result, which seems impossible in the current situation. Last year, Human Rights Watch found multiple problems with the Governing Council's tribunal system, and proposed standards to fix it. The system Allawi's currently using, HRW says, won't ensure an honest reckoning:

"The Iraqi Special Tribunal statute lacks significant fair-trial protections, including explicit guarantees against using confessions extracted under torture, and a requirement that guilt be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. At the same time, a suspect convicted by the tribunal may face the death penalty, which precludes the United Nations from providing the tribunal with much-needed technical assistance.

"The tribunal's statute also fails to require that judges and prosecutors have relevant experience trying cases of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity -- experience readily acknowledged to be lacking among Iraqi judges. The statute bars international experts from participating as prosecutors; while it allows for international judges, none have been approved. Given the complexity of prosecuting these types of cases and the current state of the Iraqi justice system, this raises concerns that the tribunal will lack necessary expertise."

Putting the former Ba'athist regime on trial is a noble goal, and (along with the ongoing Milosevic and Pinochet trials) belated justice for the numerous victims of dictators' atrocities. Allawi's sudden decision risks turning a potential watershed moment in international law into a political ploy that could undermine the very justice the Kurds and other victims deserve.

✉ [E-mail article](#)

.....

This article has been made possible by the [Foundation for National Progress](#), the [Investigative Fund of Mother Jones](#), and gifts from generous readers like you.

© 2004 The Foundation for National Progress

.....

[Support Us](#) [Advertise](#) [Ad Policy](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Contact Us](#) [Subscribe](#)