

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:

Monday, January 17, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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The Exclusive

Monday, January 17, 2005

New Judges Take Oath Today

Three high-profiled judges who arrived last week are expected to be sworn in today at the Special Court, court room

No. 1

The new judges who will preside over the second Trial Chamber include

Judges Teresa Doherty (Northern Ireland); Juha Sebutiude (Uganda) and Ri-

chard Lussick (Samoa)

First Trial chamber judge Benjamin Itoe is expected to administer the oath to the new

judges.

It will be recalled that the ceremony was initially postponed from last Fri-

day to today due to travel arrangements for the judges.

The Independent

Monday January 17, 2005

Issa Sesay disobeys judge

By Abu Whyte Fofanah

The indicted former Revolutionary United Front leader Issa Sesay on Tuesday 15 January disobeyed the presiding judge's orders in the Special Court room. After making a three-minute submission, he was ordered to sit down but refused.

Issa Sesay quoted from the Lome Peace Accord, which gave all fighting forces blanket amnesty. Presiding Judge Hote stated that Issa's submission from the section of the Lome Peace Accord was "political" and had no connection with the rule

of law, which they were to defend. Issa Sesay, who was recalcitrant to sit down after the order of the judge, was later matched out of the court by security personnel.

He later submitted a letter through his lawyer stating that he would not be appearing in court but would be represented by his lawyer. Morris

Kallon, a codefendant of the RUF also did likewise. Augustine Gbowadong had long since stopped going to court. There was a ten-minute break to see how they could handle the court properly. Defence lawyer Mr. Wayne Jordash submitted to the court that the

court should see reason that Issa Sesay was not happy about the court and he was "politically frustrated". Judge Bankole Thompson said the accused person should not dictate to the court since the court is a

different body with legal proceedings. Issa Sesay and his colleague indictees have spent twenty-two months in Special Court cells after their indictment by the Special Court prosecutor. David Crane



Concord Times

Monday January 17, 2005

Crane appeals to Nigeria to handover Taylor

By Ibrahim Seiburek

Special Court Prosecutor, David Crane, Tuesday appealed to the visiting Nigerian delegation to turn over erstwhile Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Court.

"Taylor is still meddling in the political affairs of Liberia," Crane alleges, adding he is having

control over nine out of the eighteen political parties in that country.

Crane also reviewed the Court's activities to the delegation and called on them to surrender Taylor.

Taylor is wanted by Special Court to stand trial for allegedly supporting the Revolutionary

United Front in their ten-year brutal war.

The delegation was in the country to study the peace, disarmament and reintegration process of ex-combatants.



Charles Taylor - wanted by Special Court

RUF acts of slavery

BY THEOPHILUS S. GBENDA

Despite the fact that the smooth running of the trial process at the Special Court for Sierra Leone continue to face unending challenges, more and more facts bordering on alleged acts of human rights abuses perpetuated during the war, keep emerging.

Led in evidence by Swedish born, Anthony Robert Braun, the 19th Prosecution Witness in the RUF trial, TF2-304, recalled how he and a number of other inhabitants of the Tombodu were made the victims of forced labour by junta forces.

According to the 59 year old witness, one officer Med, who claimed to have been sent by the then RUF Commander General Issa Sesay, went to Bendutu, a village not far from Tombodu, and summoned all to a general meeting, where he informed them that diamond mining was to commence and that the gathering was to identify the diamond spots. The gathering, the witness went on, could however not identify the said spot as they were just emerging from their respective places of hiding.

meeting room of the court

Poised however to commence the mining, officer Med and his men, quickly mobilized the able bodied civilians, distributed the required materials amongst them, and led them into what he could only describe as "forced labour."

However as the going got tough, the witness stated, a number of the strong and capable workers, otherwise known as "manpower," fled the mines, unable to put up with the pressure and threats of death.

According to the witness, who said he was a victim himself, the rebels wasted no time in replacing the lost manpower by going into the nearby villages, and forcing more workers into the mines.

In most cases, the witness noted, the captured young men were stripped stark naked, with ropes tied to their waists and put under gunpoint before taken to the mines.

At the mines, the workers, he claimed, were forced to work to exhaustion with little food for their sustenance.

The diamonds found were sealed in a white sheet and handed over to Issa Sesay.

In cases where diamonds were not found, the witness said the rebels will abuse and maltreat civilians under their control, accusing them of witchcraft.

Complaints of such mistreatment including the elderly, were made to Issa Sesay but never took an action.

The witness who is expected to be cross examined by defence lawyers, also testified how the rebels destroyed an important bridge with the use of a caterpillar, for the purpose of mining.

Standard Times

Monday January 17,

2005

Amnesty International is dismayed at the death sentences passed by Freetown's High Court 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 conflicts 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 ensuring the right to human dignity and abolishing the death penalty.

"The TRC's report explicitly calls for the immediate repeal of law authorizing the death penalty for a moratorium on all executions 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.

Plein Tok

Amnesty International expresses dismay at death sentences

"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.

The government must follow the practice of the Special Court for Sierra Leone which reflects the international trend towards abolition of the death penalty

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.

"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.

Herald Sun (Melbourne, Australia) January 14, 2005 Friday

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January 14, 2005 Friday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 12

LENGTH: 131 words

HEADLINE: Ruling delayed

BYLINE: Keith Moor

BODY:

A DECISION on whether to throw out sex charges against Victoria Police Supt Peter Halloran has been put off.

Sierra Leone High Court Judge Samuel Ademusu had been due to make his ruling yesterday.

But he adjourned Supt Halloran's four-month trial to Monday without giving a reason for the delay.

Supt Halloran has been accused of sexually assaulting teenage girl Kadia Kabia in June.

His legal team has asked Judge Ademusu to dismiss the three charges on the grounds there is no case to answer.

If the judge rejects the application, Supt Halloran's legal team will begin its defence. Supt Halloran, who took 12 months leave from Victoria Police to work as commander of war crimes investigations with the UN-backed **Special Court** in **Sierra Leone**, denies the allegations.

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