

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, January 19, 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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At Special Court

Mad Witness Testifies

By Joseph Turay

Ann Michels, a psychiatrist working with witnesses at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has testified that she diagnosed a 14 year old prosecution witness who is also said to have been a former child soldier during the country's 10 year civil conflict.

Revealing her findings yesterday at the Court after the prosecutor Peter

Harrison had applied for the witness to testify via video link, considering the witness's age and vulnerable status, Ms. Michel

explained to the judges that she had earlier submitted a statutory declaration to the RUF and the Court which

was dated 16th December 2004 that the witness suffers from physical and emotional stress that would impact on

him if he testified in public. The psychiatrist told the Court that witness might not be able to control himself

under questioning by defence counsels for the three accused persons, Issa Sesay, Morris

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Mad Witness Testifies

From front page

Kallon and Augustine Gbao.

The psychiatrist she said she first met with the witness in March 2004. She

had interviewed him on several visits and stated that the boy suffered from symptomatic mental disorder. She had to help the witness with relaxation exercises.

The defence team supported the application of the prosecution for the witness to testify via video link, and the document was marked as exhibit.

The Exclusive

Wednesday Jan 19, 2005

Trying War Criminals is challenging

... Special Court Judge

By Abdul Karim Koroma

Special Court Judge, Benjamin Itoe Monday said that trying war criminals is a challenging task.

He made this statement whilst addressing three newly inaugurated judges of the Special Court.

The three, Theresa Doherty of Northern Ireland, Julia Sebutinde from Uganda, and Richard

Lussek from Samoa, are expected to try AFRC indictees for crimes commissioned during the decade old civil conflict.

Judge Itoe says the new judges would be equal to the task because of their wealth of experience.

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Trying War Criminals is challenging

From page 1

"Your arrival relieves us as it takes off the burden from us and we feel that with your presence we would be able to fulfill the mandate that has been given to us by the international community to wrap our activities," he says, adding, "this oath marks your formal integration into the Special Court."

He appealed to the Court's staff

members to give the newly inaugurated judges their support.

"You can count on the Court staff in order to be successful," he told the Judges, adding that judges of the Special Court remain committed to the rule of law.

"We would dispense justice without fear or favour, affection or ill will," he said.

Special Court's Registrar, Robin Vincent administered the oath.

Concord Times

Wednesday Jan 19, 2005



ABC Online

PM - Victorian police officer acquitted of sexual assault

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2005/s1284235.htm>]

PM - Tuesday, 18 January, 2005 17:50:57

Reporter: Ben Knight

TANYA NOLAN: A Victorian police officer has been acquitted of two charges of sexually assaulting a girl under the age of 14.

Peter Halloran is a Senior Detective who was seconded to work with the UN's War Crimes Tribunal in Sierra Leone.

But last year, he found himself in the dock, after a colleague – also a former Detective – suspected him of sexually assaulting a girl he'd employed as a nanny.

The girl has repeatedly denied that anything occurred, but despite that, there is still a charge of indecent assault to be dealt with, before Peter Halloran will know if he's a free man.

Ben Knight reports.

BEN KNIGHT: This was the result Peter Halloran, his family and friends, had been hoping for, or at least, part of it.

Having been cleared of the two key charges against him – of carnal knowledge and procurement of a girl under the age of 14 – Peter Halloran still faces a charge of indecent assault.

His case has dragged on since the middle of last year, and Tim Carrodus, who paid for Peter Halloran's bail and organised his legal team in Sierra Leone, says his friend is frustrated that it's still not over.

TIM CARRODUS: He's angry. He can't understand why he is facing court still after the evidence clearly showed that there was absolutely no foundation whatsoever to the charges.

BEN KNIGHT: It's not just Peter Halloran and his friends who have been concerned. The Australian Government has sent a representative to Sierra Leone to voice its concerns over the way the investigation, and the case, have been handled.

The National Forum for Human Rights in Sierra Leone published a report alleging that the girl was offered inducements to make the accusations and that her family was bullied by local police and legal officials.

During the court hearings, the girl herself denied she'd ever been abused or even touched by Peter Halloran.

Tim Carrodus says the court case is being deliberately dragged out.

TIM CARRODUS: Look I wouldn't be at all surprised with that because saving face is very important in some circumstances and I think that's probably part of this. That's my guess anyway. But you know, you can never prove that of course, it's just an opinion I have, and certainly if you look on this on the paucity of the evidence it's just reprehensible in every aspect that Peter still should be facing court, or have to face court over these matters, there's just absolutely nothing in it.

BEN KNIGHT: And it's not just the Sierra Leone legal system that's been under scrutiny.

The court that Peter Halloran was working for, the UN-backed Special War Crimes Commission, set up its own board of inquiry into the allegations, and published a report.

That report criticised another Australian detective working for the court, Mandy Cordwell, who shared a house with Peter Halloran, and whose suspicions led to him being charged.

In the trial, the girl said she had been told what to say by Mandy Cordwell, and retracted a statement she'd signed after being interviewed by her.

According to the tribunal's report, Mandy Cordwell's behaviour did not demonstrate a concern for the girl's welfare.

She's since been suspended without pay by the UN Special Commission. But Mandy Cordwell herself has told the media she cannot be interviewed.

TANYA NOLAN: Ben Knight reporting.

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Halloran's final hurdle in child sex abuse saga

By Martin Daly

January 19, 2005

The defence in Peter Halloran's child sex abuse case will tomorrow start its battle against charge that could send the Victoria Police superintendent to jail for two years.

Halloran won a victory this week when the High Court judge threw out two of the three charges relating to sex Halloran allegedly had with a 13-year-old schoolgirl.

The defence has maintained Halloran is innocent and that there is no evidence to sustain the charges, particularly as the girl changed her story and said her allegations were not true.

Halloran, 56, originally faced four charges relating to sex with a girl under 14, but this was reduced to three - unlawful carnal knowledge, procuring a girl under 14 and indecent assault.

An inquiry by the Special Court of Sierra Leone, where Halloran worked as Investigations Commander, also found insufficient evidence to support the girl's allegations and said that words implicating Halloran had been put into her mouth by investigators.

In his ruling on Monday, Judge Samuel Ademusu, said: "I am in agreement with the defence that there is not enough evidence on counts two and three and accordingly acquit and discharge him." But he maintained there was a case to answer on the sexual assault charge which has the same penalty as the other charges.

Defence counsel Nicholas Brown-Marke, who argued for an acquittal because there was no case to answer, was mystified as to why the judge dismissed only two of the charges. He must now decide on a defence.

The judge's decision was described yesterday by the secretary of the Victoria Police Association, Paul Mullett, as "finding sixpence but losing threepence".

He said the association had discussed the case with Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon, and she was keeping an open mind. "But we are disappointed by the lack of welfare support for a senior police officer in the Victoria force, who has an extensive period of service. To our knowledge, there has been little or no contact with him from Victoria Police command," he said.

Counsel . . . was mystified as to why the judge dismissed only two of the charges."

He said the association would hold Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to a promise to seek the help of British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to pressure the Sierra Leonean Government to ensure Halloran got a fair trial. He said the UK was providing \$23 million to improve the country's legal system and the Halloran case was a good indication that the system was not up to international standards.

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MX (Melbourne, Australia) January 18, 2005 Tuesday

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MX (Melbourne, Australia)

January 18, 2005 Tuesday

HEADLINE: Halloran off hook for rape;
CHARGES DROPPED

BODY:

Victorian police officer Peter Halloran has expressed relief after he was yesterday cleared of sex offences in Sierra Leone.

But Superintendent Halloran will front court again on Thursday, facing charges of indecent assault and conspiracy.

A court in Sierra Leone yesterday acquitted the Australian war crimes investigator of a charge of raping a teenage girl in the West African country.

Presiding judge Samuel Ademusu said prosecutors had failed to provide enough evidence against Halloran.

The former head of the homicide squad was on secondment to the UN-backed special court investigating crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war.

Ademusu cleared Halloran of procuring and having carnal knowledge of a girl aged under 14, the legal age of consent in Sierra Leone.

Halloran denied all the charges against him.

"I am happy I have been proved innocent of carnal knowledge, which was the most serious count against me," he said.

The judge also cleared a local man, the brother of the girl alleged to have been involved, of the procurement charge.

Victoria Police Association secretary Paul Mullett told 3AW today the dropping of the charges was good news.

"As we hoped all along we wanted fairness applied in the justice system in Sierra Leone," he said.

"The association's position has always been and it will remain that we want Halloran to get a fair trial and hopefully there will be no further delays."



Sierra Leone sends Liberian fighters home

Liberia - Sierra Leone will repatriate nearly 300 Liberian combatants who made their way over the border in the waning months of the west African state's civil war, diplomatic officials said Monday.

The fighters were all deserters who abandoned their units within the rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation Democracy (Lurd) or the armies of former president Charles Taylor as the fighting reached its apex in mid-2003, according to Sierra Leone's national security chief Brigadier Kellie Conteh.

"Sierra Leone has an international obligation to ensure that the deserting soldiers in the conflict in Liberia are processed and taken to safe areas to be protected until such time as the conflict has subsided in their own area," Conteh said.

"They are not prisoners of war because they were not captured in any conflict, nor can they be described as refugees and thus require special attention."

An eight-member Liberian team was in the Sierra Leone capital at the weekend to discuss the return of the former combatants, among the tens of thousands who took up arms for one of three warring factions in the second of two civil wars to strafe Liberia since 1989.

The United Nations (UN) mission in Liberia in December wrapped up a campaign to disarm and demobilise fighters and others associated with the warring factions, providing each former combatant with a stipend and access to vocational training or schooling.

The returning deserters will be eligible for the same benefits, Conteh said, as will any other former Liberian combatant residing in Mapeh or Mafanta camps in northern Sierra Leone.

Fighters routinely crossed the porous border dividing the impoverished west African neighbours during the simultaneous civil wars that raged in Sierra Leone until 2001 and Liberia until August 2003.

Taylor has been indicted by the UN-backed war crimes court in Sierra Leone for his alleged role in that war, accused of funnelling diamonds out to help fund one of the most brutal conflicts in modern history.

He was forced into exile in Nigeria to end Liberia's conflict, which claimed an estimated 200 000 lives and decimated the infrastructure of Africa's oldest independent republic, founded in 1847 by freed American slaves. - Sapa-AFP

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