

**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, August 08, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.  
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact  
Mariama S. Yilla  
Ext 7217 / 7216

## COMMENTARY

By  
Chidi Anselm Odinkalu

### We Are Not Fugitives, Charles Taylor Is

This is a personal statement. It describes on going events affecting my colleagues and I here in Nigeria in relation to our work on accountability for fugitive former Liberian President, Charles Taylor. Some minutes after noon on Monday, 1 August, operatives of the Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) arrested Steve Omali and Michael Damisa at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja. Steve and Michael are professional printers.

They had printed a set of posters on the "Charles Taylor Wanted" campaign for the Coalition Against Impunity. The coalition brings together over 345 NGOs in 17 African countries and beyond campaigning to ensure accountability for international crimes for which fugitive former Liberian President, Mr. Charles Taylor, stands indicted. Also involved in the Coalition Against Impunity are the Open Society Justice Initiative, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Nigerian Coalition on the International Criminal Court, the Transitional Justice Working Group in Liberia, among others. I work on the African programme of the Open Society Justice Initiative and have been involved in designing and implementing the advocacy work of the Coalition. I am also counsel in on going judicial review proceedings to determine the legality of Mr. Taylor's asylum in Nigeria.

The Open Society Justice Initiative and Amnesty International are amici on record in those proceedings. The Court presided over by Judge Steve J. Adah, will announce a ruling on 13 September. The SSS have confiscated 10,000 copies of the posters. The poster merely reprints the Interpol Red Notice for Mr. Taylor which was issued in 2003. Nigeria is a member of INTERPOL. I will be sending to you under a separate transmission a soft copy of the poster. You may wish to bring it to the attention of other persons on your own network. About 15:00 hours on Monday afternoon, Matthew Damisa, Steve's brother, went to visit his brother in the SSS Headquarters in Abuja. The SSS also arrested him, like Steve and Michael, Matthew is detained as I write.

Tuesday, 2 August, two persons claiming to be staff of the SSS, led by one Mr. Igwe, visited our offices in Abuja to ask for me. They claimed that their Director had asked to see me in his office. They declined to give the name of their Director or to say where they were asked to take me. When my colleagues insisted, they indicated that it was in relation to the Charles Taylor Campaign and suggested that the SSS would be willing to trade the detained printers for me. This sounds like hostage taking by a State institution. The SSS is established by the National Security Agencies Act, first promulgated by Nigeria's then military regime as a decree in 1986. The Decree was later transformed unchanged and specially entrenched in Section 315(5) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution.

It can only be changed by the same procedure for amending the Constitution. The SSS is set up under this Act to prevent and ensure prosecution of crimes against Nigeria's internal security. The operatives of the SSS that came for me produced no identification. They had no letter nor warrant for my arrest. They did not allege that I or any of my colleagues in the Coalition or connected with the OSI, OSIWA or the Justice Initiative had committed any crime. They continued to harass my colleagues in our offices for my cellular numbers. At the time this was happening, I was in Lagos at the presentation of the annual report on human rights in Nigeria by Nigeria Civil Liberties Organisation.

My colleagues directed them to my friend, colleague and legal representative, Uche Onyeagocha who is also a Federal Legislator. They declined to speak to Uche. By the end of the day, I was advised that two SSS operative were staking out our offices awaiting my arrival in Abuja. Upon learning of the arrest of Steve and Michael and Matthew on Monday, I immediately formally informed Nigeria's Federal Attorney General and Justice Minister, Chief Bayo Ojo SAN, by letter. The Chambers of the Attorney-General signed in receipt of the letter. After they came for me, I updated the information to the Attorney-General's chambers. I have also lodged a formal complaint with Bukhari Bello, the Executive Secretary of Nigeria's National Human Rights Commission, and Justice E.O. Ayoola, the Chairperson of the Commission, who is incidentally also the Chairperson of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, whose Prosecutor indicted Mr. Taylor. In consultation with me and at my request, my colleagues formally wrote to the Director-General of the SSS, Col. Kayode Aregbesola, offering to arrange a mutually agreeable time for me to meet with him and his operatives, or, alternatively, indicating whether they were looking for me on in connection with any crimes known to Nigerian law. Nigeria is ruled by an elected President, Olusegun Obasanjo. Chapter IV Nigeria's 1999 Constitution contains elaborate guarantees of human rights. Nigeria is party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Convention against Torture. It is unlawful under any and all of these instruments to detain anyone for more than 48 hours.

As I write, our printers and their brother have been detained for over 48 hours without access to lawyers or visits. The SSS had previously arrested and detained two members of my family - Iheoma Obibi and our son, Dilim Odinkalu born in February 1997 - in 2000 and 2003. On both occasions, they briefly detained them overnight and confiscated their passports. Iheoma and Dilim are British nationals. The passports were later released following the intervention of the UK government. On both occasions the SSS interrogated Iheoma about her work with the UK charity, Alliances for Africa. They also interrogated her about my work. I should report that I am not presently in danger to life or limb. I wish I could say the same about my liberty. I am in good spirits. I am not a fugitive. I am not a criminal suspect. None of my colleagues in the Coalition against Impunity is. Nor are any of my colleagues in OSIWA and the Justice Initiative. The Fugitive is Mr. Charles Taylor. The tragedy in all of this is that the government of a supposedly democratic country has chosen to unlawfully deploy its security apparatus to prevent entirely lawful activities designed to ensure accountability for some of the gravest international crimes.

## Cocorioko website

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### NEWS OF THE HOUR

#### **HINGA NORMAN DECLARES INTENT FOR SLPP LEADERSHIP AND SIERRA LEONE PRESIDENCY ( BY PROXY )**

...Says his life is one of preparation and equipment to assume mantle of leadership in Sierra Leone

Sunday August 7, 2005

By Tamba Borbor ( In Freetown) and Wilfred Kabs-Kanu

The Sierra Leone political scene was a beehive of activities today as former Defence Minister and Coordinator of the Civil Defence Force ( CDF) , Sam Hinga Norman made his declaration for the SLPP leadership and Sierra Leone Presidency ( In absentia ).

With Norman incarcerated presently by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is trying him and two other members of the CDF for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, the declaration was made on his behalf in Freetown today by Mr. Duwai Mohamed Samu, who was a Commander in the CDF during the Sierra Leone war. Though Norman himself was absent, he was fully represented by his wives, family members, supporters and members of the CDF.

In a well-crafted speech with messianic overtones , a copy of which was faxed to COCORIOKO by Cub Reporter , Bassie Kanu, Chief Norman 's representative, Mr. Samu greeted the huge crowd with "The timeless words of the motto and chant of our beloved party ..One Country, one people ..One people , One country , One nation, One Destiny and One Destiny, One nation " ..He also asked the audience to join him in observing a few minutes silence "For the fallen heroes of our great and beloved party , the SLPP, whether they died in war or otherwise in the service of our people and our country "

Among the highlights of the declaration speech was Mr. Norman's confident assertion that "With your support, I will be able to take this party to greater heights ", and give the people a better life. and Sierra Leone a brighter future. Mr. Norman was also confident that There is a lot both in us , as a people and in the resources of the country, which , given a proper vision of leadership and better management will surely make this country a greater success and all our people a much happier lot " .

One of the most poignant parts of the Declaration Speech was the part where Hinga Norman, in an exciting sense , gave his whole mission a messianic colour by enumerating how his life had been "One of being prepared and equipped over the years to assume the mantle of leadership of our beloved country and people when the right time

comes. ".He said that "It seems that time has indeed come now , when I can lead our people and our country to greater things. "

Norman then invited his readers to just have a cinematic flashback over his humble life. The Chief said that during his birth on January 1 1940, at the height of the Second World War , at Ngolala , Monghere , Valunya Chiefdom Bo District, he was given "Three resonant names of great future import.".He explained : The name 'Sam' is that of Samuel , the Prophet in the Bible. As for 'Hinga', as you all know, it means 'So many men in one', that is to say, the embodiment of fortitude and courage , of great strength of will and purpose. As for 'Norma' , which mutated into Norman when I was entering the colonial army at age 14, it means "Very insistent , persistent and persevering , always saying no to failure in any shape or form and pitching camp with nothing but ultimate success....And various events in my life suggest that I am made of the right stuff for that role. Norman stated how on joining the army at age 14 in 1954, he volunteered to in the Royal West African Frontier Force ( RWAFF) and eight years later in 1962, he volunteered to serve in the First Sierra Leone contingent of United Nations troops to the then Congo Leopoldville , now D.R Congo.

The Chief further asserted : " And since then, my life my life had been one of soldiering on and on. In the process, I have always taken action in doing my little personal in the defence of my country and the service of my people. As my three names suggest , I never run away or flee from problems in my country nor do I sit idly by doing nothing when my people and my country are faced with a problem or threat requiring someone to do something to defend the people and save the country.I have sometimes have to do this at great risk to my life or in intlerable conditions " .

Norman then enumerated two significant events in his life , first when according to him, at the age of 27 in 1967, "I ventured into my first defence of the constitution of Sierra Leone , albeit as a soldier. The Independence constitution of 1961 stipulated that the Governor-General may , after a General Election , appoint a Prime Minister who seems to command the majority of elected members of parliament ".He explained that while he was ADC to the Governor-General, the latter tried to appoint Mr. Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister while the election was still on. .He said it was a violation of the constitution and he made bold to stop him and arrest him. Norman said that for that he was jailed "4 good years" , tried and sentenced to death and spent 13 months in jail where he was not allowed to bathe and had only one blanket riddled with flees. He however appealed against his conviction , won and was set free.

Norman's second significant event was when he said he decided to resist and stand up to the RUF and AFRC who were ruining and devastating the country.

HINGA NORMAN'S SPEECH WILL BE BROKEN DOWN IN VARIOUS NEWS REPORTS.

ALSO IN THE COMING DAYS, OUR REPORTER TAMBA BORBOR WILL TALK TO PEOPLE ON THE STREETS OF FREETOWN AND WE WILL BRING YOU WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY WITH REGARDS TO THE NORMAN DECLARATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICS IN THE COUNTRY AND THE SPECIAL COURT.