

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:

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Sierra Leone makes progress on peace but not on issues that led to war, UN says

23 September 2005 – With the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone winding down, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has commended the West African country's Government for its efforts towards consolidating peace, but said many root causes of the 14-year conflict, such as youth unemployment, have not been addressed.

"The Government of Sierra Leone has made commendable efforts towards the consolidation of constitutional order and State authority throughout the country. The effective devolution of State functions through decentralization has ensured that an administrative machinery is now in place, contributing to overall political stability in the country," he says in his 26th report to the Security Council on the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

Commendable progress has been made in licensing and substantially increasing the official exports of diamonds. The Government should be encouraged to generate additional revenue, including development projects for local communities, from the vital diamond-mining sector, he says.

Relations between the local councils and the traditional chiefdoms, while needing a legislative framework and clarification of financial control, are evolving satisfactorily, he adds.

Many root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone are yet to be addressed, however, and the long-term sustainability of the gains achieved so far will require international support, especially through joint efforts by the UN and the donor community, Mr. Annan says.

Such involvement will be particularly important for Government programmes addressing key socio-economic issues, including poverty, youth unemployment, illiteracy and lack of basic infrastructure, he says, adding that the successor to UNAMSIL, the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), will assist the Government in overcoming such challenges.

On the question of human rights, he says a culture of respect for those rights has yet to be fully established. UNAMSIL began a countrywide distribution of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) last month, but while the Government has published a White Paper reflecting most of the TRC recommendations, it "has yet to embark on concrete action towards implementing them."

The July summit of the 32-year-old Mano River Union, comprising Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, was a welcome development in the negotiations over the Yenga border between Guinea and Sierra Leone, but the failure so far to begin the agreed border demarcation proves that further efforts are required to help remove a potential source of conflict, he says.

In this regard, he has instructed Special Representative Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago to intensify his efforts to help both Governments reach a mutually acceptable solution before the closure of UNAMSIL on 20 December, if possible.

As UNAMSIL's mandate ends, "the Ghanaian battalion will depart by the end of September. The Pakistani battalion will be repatriated by the end of October and the Nigerian battalion, supporting arms and services, by 15 December," Mr. Annan says.