

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, October 26, 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

The New Storm. Wednesday, 26th October 2005.

After 31 Months In Detention...

Hinga Norman, Others Freed On 5 Count Charge?

Chief Sam Hinga Norman, one time contender for the Leadership of the SLPP, and his CDF colleagues Moinina Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa on Friday last week had their Motions for Judgment of Acquittal unanimously dismissed by Judges of the Trial Chamber 1 at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Presiding Judge Hon. Pierre Boutet however, told the

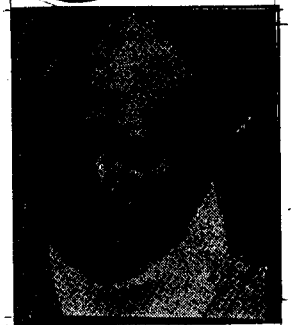
court that the Chamber have so far found no sufficient evidence capable of supporting a conviction against the three CDF accused in respect of a number of factual allegations in their indictment. This included allegations in respect of counts 1&2 (murder), counts 3&4 (inhuman acts and cruel treatment) and count 5 (pillage) as charged in the consolidated indict-

ment.

Defense counsels for the three CDF inditees including Dr. Bu-buakei Jabbi and PMDC presidential hopeful Charles Margai have earlier filed arguments of the motions in August and orally argued their submission before the Chamber on 20 September this year.

The motions for Judgment

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Hinga Norman

Hinga Norman, Others Freed On 5 Count Charge?

from front page

of Acquittal were brought under Rule 98 of the Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence. It provides that, if after the close of the case for the prosecution "there is no evidence capable of supporting a conviction on one or more count of the indictment" the trial Chamber shall enter a judgment of acquittal on those counts. However, the Chamber's decision on Friday was not a verdict, and judicial pronouncement on the guilt or innocence of the

former CDF warlords. Rather, it indicates that at this stage in the trial the court has concluded that Mr. Norman and Co indeed have a case to answer. Mr. Norman was arrested on 10th March 2003 while serving as a Government Minister and made his initial appearance in Bonth on the 15th of that month. Two days later he was arraigned on an eight count of individual indictment. Fofanah and Kondewa were later arrested on 29th May

2003 also on an eight-count charge. Mr. Norman later sacked his defense team and opted to defend himself but subsequently boycotted proceedings when the court jointly indicted the three of them (CDF), which indictment he always claimed has not been personally served to him. The court will hold a status conference tomorrow ahead of the commencement of the defence counsel to now argue their case.

The cost of impunity for Liberian Ex-Leader

Story: *Eric Wiwe in Luxembourg*

The failure to bring Liberia's former president to trial on charges of crimes against humanity will have wide-reaching consequences for the entire West African region.

"When Charles Taylor comes to Freetown, I will have my first good sleep since before the war," local civil society representative Abdul Gillen told staff of the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone before my recent departure this year as political advisor to its chief prosecutor.

Gillen is a "pa" - as Sierra Leoneans respectfully call men fortunate

To survive long enough to have grey hair - and a fixture at the war crimes tribunal.

A polio victim, he hobbles on crutches up and down a steep hill in the capital Freetown to observe three joint trials of nine warlords accused of bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the country's long and sadistic conflict.

One of the many benefits of having the court located in the same

Country where the atrocities were committed is that local people can readily exchange views with court representatives. Gillen and other Sierra Leoneans are demanding to know what we, the staff of the special court, have been doing to get former Liberian president Charles Taylor out of the luxury villas in Nigeria where he lives in exile, and into a courtroom to answer for his alleged crimes both in his own country and neighbouring Sierra Leone.

That question is on the lips of people right across West Africa, because Taylor's fate has come to be identified with the ultimate health of the entire region.

The UN special court indicted Taylor in 2003 for his central role in orchestrating the rampages of Sierra Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front, RUF, including "Operation No Living Thing" and "Operation Cut Hand".

Taylor's pursuit of Sierra Leone's diamond wealth in the Nineties left many thousands dead, raped, and maimed. The overwhelming majority of survivors live in deep and desperate squalor, and now they want justice. The 17-count indictment in Sierra Leone charges Taylor with mass murder, rape and the extensive use of child soldiers.

The prospects for bringing Taylor to trial looked good until the middle of this year: an intense campaign was mounted, coordinated by the special court and involving governments and human rights and inter-governmental organisations around the world. In February, the European parliament unanimously passed a resolution calling on Nigeria to surrender Taylor, and the House of Representatives followed suit a day before Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo's May 5 visit to Washington.

Congressional pressure placed the Taylor issue at the top of the agenda for Obasanjo's meeting with Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Susan Rice.

The issue even earned a helpful mention from President George Bush.

This represented real progress. The Af-

rica Bureau of the State Department and Bush's Africa advisor at the National Security Council had previously been fighting the efforts of the Special Court for Sierra Leone to bring Taylor to trial. Their objectives were short-term stability in Africa, and maintaining the strategic partnership with West Africa's regional leader, Obasanjo, given Nigeria's vast oil wealth - with scant concern for the views of people in the region or their desire for justice and good governance.

In August 2003, two months after the Taylor's indictment was unveiled, the continuing war in Liberia - a country born of American slavery and the abolition movement - brought pressure for US military intervention. The Bush government, Britain's Tony Blair, the UN, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States prevailed upon Obasanjo to Offer Taylor asylum.

Though offering asylum to indicted war criminals clearly contravenes Nigerian and international law, the offer finally removed Taylor from Power - but it also took Liberia off the American headlines. Faced with an international consensus that traded justice for an interim peace among warlords, the court's chances of apprehending Taylor began to look bleak.

Taylor's exile, however, came with strings attached. He promised Nigeria that he would refrain from interfering in Liberian or regional affairs and from media communications.

His alleged violations of these terms included retaining control of Liberia's embassy in Nigeria, establishing businesses there to funnel proceeds to his supporters and insurgents throughout West Africa and deep involvement in Liberian party politics ahead of the October 11 presidential and legislative elections.

Through his irrepressible thirst for power, Taylor unwittingly played into the UN court's hands. He broke his pledge to Obasanjo, who warned him on at least three occasions that he had violated his asylum terms. The court also took heart from broad Nigerian public opposition to his exile and the appeals of human rights organisations throughout West Africa, Europe and the United States, as well as the mounting pressure from official quarters in Europe and Washington.

Yet all of this proved insufficient, and President Obasanjo remained obstinate in his refusal to deliver Taylor for trial. So in late May this year, the special court turned to the UN Security Council to pass a resolution that it was believed could compel Nigeria to relinquish Taylor.

The chances for getting such a resolution looked good. Britain supported it, and Denmark said it was willing to introduce the measure if Washington would agree to co-sponsor it and solicit support from the rest of the Security Council.

Because Bush and Rice had so recently pressed for Taylor's transfer, and given the strong bipartisan support in Congress, the belief grew among workers at the UN special court that Taylor would soon be arriving in Freetown to face trial. *Continued page 11*

The cost of impunity for Liberian Ex-Leader

From page 10

In West Africa, where the rule of law is at best fragile and where its general absence has been the major cause of brutality, misrule and corruption, accountability for the man accused of being the worst warlord of them all would have given new hope to desperate populations burdened with awful leaders. The optimism proved premature. In June, we began receiving news from Washington that Africa hands at the National Security Council and State Department were now raising the specter that transferring Taylor could spark renewed violence in Liberia, which would mean new pressure for American military intervention. The threat that failing to prosecute Taylor entailed for the international investment in West African peace was outweighed by the political exigency of avoiding near-term pressure for new US troop commitments, no matter how remote that scenario was.

On the day of my own recent departure from Freetown, after two years as political adviser to the chief prosecutor of the UN War Crimes Tribunal, I humbly said goodbye to Abdul Gillen. I was rushing to tie up the loose ends of my life in Sierra Leone - a time spent largely in the inevitable expatriate bubble of air-conditioned offices and cars, isolated from surrounding realities.

Many Sierra Leoneans resent this. But the real danger for them, and indeed all Africans, lies in the much larger bubble to which I returned.

Back home, I watched as Live 8 gave rise to an outburst of western concern for Africa. The humanitarian impulse prodded American and European officials to reach for their old scripts. They once again set about crafting policy to mitigate Africans' desperation, while bowing to the wishes of African elites whose misrule is the main cause of it.

Accordingly, the G-8 leaders welcomed debt relief for Nigeria this July. And all the rhetoric about accountability, the summit made no mention of sending Taylor to the special court. Bush and Obasanjo smiled for the cameras, safe in the knowledge that the spike of concern for Africa had been blunted before difficult questions about African governance and US policy could cause them too much discomfort.

Various miseries continue to afflict the continent unabated, but Africa is again drifting out of American and European headlines. In West Africa, President Obasanjo still shields Taylor, whose political party could emerge from the

October election with substantial representation in Liberia's new parliament.

The international community intends the elections to be the culmination of the international effort at putting Liberia on its feet, and the beginning of the withdrawal of 15,000 costly peacekeepers. West Africa has seen such elections and international withdrawals before - and they have always been succeeded by renewed war.

Post-election Liberia could remain riddled by graft, largely ignored by the international community and once again preyed on by warlords, including Taylor. Indeed, Taylor has become the distorted symbol of international commitment to Liberia and all of West Africa - his continuing asylum representing either another bungled quick fix, or a mere delay in a concerted international effort to establish the rule of law in a region

where sustainable peace depends on it.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration and the State Department appear content to squander the US investment in Liberian stabilisation and once again await the flare-up of conflagrations that they could instead prevent.

Ed Royce, a Californian Republican who is chairman of the Africa Sub-Committee of the House of Representatives in Washington, has warned President Bush that Taylor's continuing freedom threatens freedom throughout West Africa. "Unless he's brought to the bar of justice, eventually all of West Africa will be in jeopardy," said Royce. "And Nigeria won't be immune."

Chronic short-term thinking still prevails at the State Department and white House. Unless this changes, Obasanjo, Taylor, and other presidents and warlords will continue to enjoy the restful sleep that eludes ordinary Africans like Abdul Gillen, who are still waiting for international help in holding accountable their leaders and tormenters who are too often one and the same.

In the bubble of European and American prosperity, the fleeting interest in Africa's difficult realities is waning, even as West Africans watch for signs of Taylor's fate and their own.

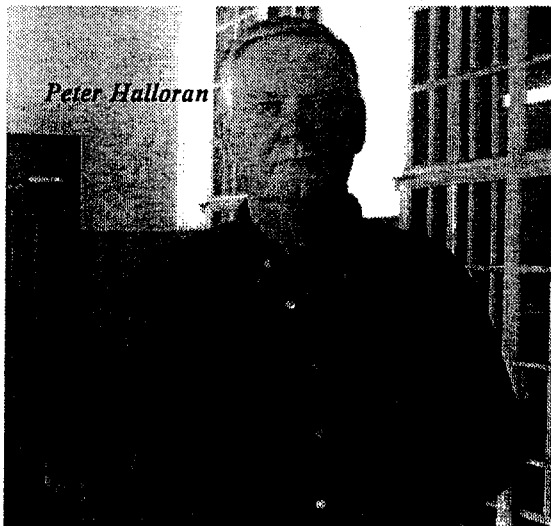
Eric Witte is a senior fellow at the Luxembourg-based Democratization Policy Council, a new trans-Atlantic initiative for accountability in the promotion of democracy.

Until recently, he was political advisor to the chief prosecutor of the UN Special War Crimes Tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Ilwoko. Wednesday, October 26th, 2005.

"I am a victim of corrupt judicial system" - *Halloran*

Freed Victorian Police Officer and former Special Court investigator, Peter Halloran has said in Melbourne, Australia that he was a victim of a corrupt judicial system.



also disclosed plans to sue Mary Cordwell for raising the sex allegations and even pursuing it zealously. Halloran, granting an interview with an Australian Newspaper Herald Sun said; he would never forgive former Tasmanian Police

Officer Mandy Cordwell, two high-ranking Victoria Police officers and an Australian Federal Police agent. Apart from his plans of suing them, he had revealed certain disheartening development bordering on corruption during
Contd. Page 2

I am a victim of corrupt judicial system

From Front Page

his trial in Sierra Leone and is presently considering what to do with the dossier of evidence of government and judicial corruption in the country. In his interview he said, "if my appeal had failed then my next step was to try to persuade Sierra Leone President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to step in an clear my name." He went on, "I gathered substantial evidence, including secret tapes and sworn affidavits, that I believe would have convinced President Kabbah I was a victim of a corrupt judicial system" He

further emphasised, "corruption was endemic in Sierra Leone." The Victorian Police Superintendent who had been offered his post back revealed, "I was also approached before the trial by somebody who advised me that a senior government official wanted to talk to me about the case. It was made clear to me that the official would tell me how much money he would need to finalise the prosecution." Superintendent Halloran went on, "details of the conversations relating to payment the official wanted was secretly recorded by

me. I also spoke to two people who wanted to arrange payment to a judicial figure to finalise the matter." He went on, "the judicial figure nominated a sum of money he required, which would be shared with some people in the judiciary. Those conversations were also recorded." The former Special Court investigator who was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment revealed that it would have probably killed him, as the jail was one of the world's most disease-ridden and violence plagued.

Cocorioko website

http://www.cocorioko.com/special__court

COCORIOKO SPECIAL REPORT

SIERRA LEONE SUPREME COURT RULES THAT SPECIAL COURT IS CONSTITUTIONAL

Wednesday October 26, 2005

BY WIFRED LEEROY KABS-KANU

The historic case brought before the Supreme Court against the Special Court for Sierra Leone by three indictees who contended that the Special court was unconstitutional was decided on October 14 in favour of the UN-supported war crimes tribunal. According to the the Supreme Court, the Special Court is constitutional.

The plaintiffs in the case were Special Court indictees Issa Sesay of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Allieu Kondowa and Moinina Fofana of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) . They wanted the Supreme Court to declare that the creation of the Special Court was unconstitutional and therefore null and void and of no legal effect.

Also, the plaintiffs wanted the Supreme Court to order that the arrest and detention of the plaintiffs herein by the Special Court was unconstitutional and therefore illegal .

Thirdly, the said plaintiffs above wanted the Supreme Court to order the immediate release of the plaintiffs from the custody of the Special Court Detention Unit.

Fourthly, the plaintiffs sought any further order or other relief as the Supreme Court may deem fit and just.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs were : Meesrs A.F. Serry Kamal and Charles Margai .

The case was heard by the Hon. Chief Justice Mr. Justice Ade Renner and other justices of the Supreme Court : Mr. Justice E.C. Thompson-Davies, Mrs. Justice V.A.D. Wright and Mr. Justice Tolla Thompson as well as JA ,Hon .Justice Sir John Muria.

Editor 's interpretation : In the decision, the most relevant point raised by the justices, according to this writer , is that the Court's establishment is not unconstitutional because it is not part of Sierra Leone's judiciary system. The Supreme Court's verdict cannot be understood if this point is not thoroughly comprehended. The Special Court was not intended to form part of the Sierra Leone Judiciary system and therefore it is not bound by the dictates of the constitution of Sierra Leone vis-a-vis the legality of its establishment.

His Hon. The Chief Justice dealt exhaustively with that point and with regards to the first relief sought by the plaintiffs, the Supreme Court averred : "The first question to be answered by the court is whether by creating the Special Court for Sierra Leone pursuant to Articles 1 (1) of the schedule and preamble to the Special Court Agreement 2002 (Ratification) Act 2002 as ammended by the Special Court Agreement 2002 (Ratification) Ammendment Act 2002 is not a transgression of Sections 120 (A) 30 (1) AND 108 Act No.6 of 1991"

The Honourable Justice Renner-Thomas answered the question thus : " In the light of what I have already said about the legal meaning of Sections 30(1), 108 (3) to 180 (6) and 120 (4) of the constitution as well as that of Section 11 (2) of the Ratification Act which expressly states that the Special Court shall not form part of the judiciary of Sierra Leone , the question must be answered in the negative "

Editor's Interpretation of the court's argument : The creation of the Special Court did not contravene section 120 (A) 30 (1) and 180 (Act No.6) of 1991 because the Special Court was not intended to form part of the Sierra Leone judiciary.

The Supreme Court also ruled that there is nothing in the provisions of Section 30 (1) 108 and 120 (4) of the constitution that takes away from President Kabbah the powers vested in him by Section 40 (4) of the same constitution from entering into the same agreement as that which he concluded with the United Nations to establish the court.

SINCE THE LEGAL REASONING IS BURIED UNDER COMPLEX DICTA, THIS EDITOR WILL SUMMARISE THE OTHER PARTS NEXT. However, readers must bear in mind that some of the remaining answers to the relief sought by the plaintiffs are covered under the two reasoning already explained. If the Special Court was not meant to form part of Sierra Leone's judiciary or if nothing in the provisions of the relevant sections of the constitution precludes the powers of President Kabbah from entering into any agreement as that which led to the creation of the Special Court, the Supreme Court, obviously , will find no legal merit in the pleas by the plaintiffs that their arrest and detention be declared unconstitutional and illegal or that they be released .

It would appear to me from the reasoning of the honoured justices that if the plaintiffs were ever to prevail, they should provide clear and convincing evidence from the charter establishing the Special Court that the court was intended to be part of the Sierra Leone judiciary . Further, they should demonstrate by a clear and convincing evidence from the relevant portions of the constitution that President Kabbah's powers to enter into such an agreement was precluded, failing which , according to the reasoning of the justices, they did not make a case that the creation of the court was unconstitutional or illegal or that their arrest and detention was unconstitutional and illegal.

READ MORE TOMORROW

The Patriotic Vanguard website

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=172

Liberia: Politics and the Taylor Factor

- Monday 24 October 2005.

By Abu B. Shaw, London.

All the twenty-two presidential candidates in Liberia had one common denominator. Handing over former president Charles Taylor to the United Nations Special Court in Sierra Leone was a pre-election promise they never pledged. Analysts who feared walking along this dangerous path welcomed it unreservedly.

Two reasons were responsible for this action. The contenders feared mentioning Charles Taylor's name would be like committing themselves to the international community's eagerness to feed their Freetown court with said suspect. Secondly, and mostly importantly, they feared making any promise to bringing Charles Taylor to the UN court would tremendously drive potential voters away.

Liberia's presidential election is going second round, according to the head of Liberia's Electoral Commission, Frances Johnson Morris. The failure to have a clear-cut winner in the first ballot on October 11 was the reason why the run-off vote is now scheduled for November 8. Only two candidates would be vying for the presidency this time. Former Africa, European and World Footballer of the year George Opong Manneh Weah and ex-Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf are gearing up to gather vital votes from the 20 initial aspirants.

Mr Weah, 39, got around 29 % of the vote casts while 66-year-old Ms Johnson-Sirleaf, received nearly 20 % in round one. Third placed candidate Charles Brumskine got about 13 %. Reports confirmed that these figures came about after 2,781 polling stations out of 3,000 were declared for counting. Only a 51 % of votes would have got an outright winner in the first ballot.

Roland Massaquoi, who contested the election under Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP), is reported to have kept mute when cornered about the possibility of his boss being arraigned before a court of law by any future government in Liberia.

The discourse about whether the eventual winner of Liberia's presidential election will force exiled Charles Taylor to face the music in Freetown is an ongoing and complicated one. The best way out of this crisis is to look for a solution that would serve the best interest of Liberia and the sub-region generally. There are those who believe that only justice would bring peace.

The Sierra Leone Minister of Justice, Frederick Carew feels that justice is the only way out of this crisis. He said from the evidence gathered so far, Charles Taylor was constantly using Sierra Leone diamonds to fuel the war in the country thereby causing

untold suffering and hardship to Sierra Leoneans. Mr. Carew is still unhappy that Taylor has dodged the UN court despite his indictment two years ago. The Minister's call is shared by many Sierra Leoneans but some are skeptical as they believe this could only lead to more bloodshed instead of bringing lasting peace in the sub-region.

On a softly, softly approach, Minister Carew told journalists in Freetown that Sierra Leone cannot force Nigeria to hand Taylor to the Freetown court. "We can only make requests as the Western powers do not want to be seen going back on a deal they helped broker in 2003."

The Chief Prosecutor of the UN court in Sierra Leone Mr Desmond de Silva has surprisingly shifted his stance about where Taylor should face the 17 counts of war crimes. The Chief Prosecutor suggested that Charles Taylor should be tried in The Hague because trying him in Freetown is a security risk as he is still immensely popular in Liberia. He said Taylor's supporters fear he would not get a fair trial in Freetown.

"Another problem is that the UN peacekeepers are due to leave Sierra Leone by the end of this year which makes any trial in Sierra Leone impracticable," Lawyer de Silva noted.

President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who has all along being reluctant to hand Taylor to the Freetown court, said handing over the former Liberian President would go against the terms of the deal under which he agreed to step down in 2003 to bring total peace in Liberia. "I am not ruling out handing him to the elected president of Liberia and that government will decide what they would like to do with him," Obasanjo disclosed.

Another high profile voice totally against Taylor's trial at this point in time is the former Nigerian head of state Abdul Salaami Abu Bakarr. Campaigners for Taylor's extradition were not happy about Abdul Salaami's comments. He called on the international community to give peace a chance in Liberia by leaving Charles Taylor alone. Abdul Salaami is currently head of Mediation Committee of the Economic Community of West African State ECOWAS.

The ECOWAS Mediation Committee chair pleaded: "Please, please, let give peace a chance. Taylor's departure to Nigeria was not accidental. It was a general agreement reached with the full endorsement of African leaders. This move was meant to usher lasting peace to Liberia after 15 years of bloody war. As a result that long awaited peace has been achieved in Liberia, thus paving the way for a free and democratic presidential election which has just been held."

Abdul Salaami Abu Bakr however suggested that Charles Taylor can still face trial in the future especially when absolute peace has been consolidated in Liberia. He reminded the international community of the many conflicts and wars we already have around us. "For us to create another one in the sub region is senseless," the African state man advised.

Touching on Charles Taylor's popularity in Liberia, Abdul Salaami reiterated that Taylor is very popular in his country and his supporters are capable of causing trouble if he is forced to make a court appearance.

It was under the auspices of the African Union that the South Africa President Thabo Mbeki and President Obasanjo, among other African leaders, who escorted Charles Taylor from Monrovia to Nigeria where he is currently housed in the south-eastern Nigerian city of Calaba.

During my recent visit to Sierra Leone, a top government official observed that the cycle of violence need to stop somewhere and if that could be achieved by delaying Taylor's trial then so be it. "We do not want to create an environment that would jeopardise the peace our country is presently enjoying." An opposition MP of the All Peoples Congress party in Sierra Leone told me that he does not support the continuity of protracted trials that benefit only the legion of foreign legal minds. "The people of Liberia and Sierra Leone need safe drinking water, food, hospitals, schools, housing, electricity, good roads, employments so on. It's a shame that most Sierra Leoneans cannot afford even a decent meal a day," the APC stalwart stressed.

photo:Former Liberian President Charles Taylor, still feared in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 25 Oct 2005**

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

International Clips on Liberia**Mrs Taylor backs Liberian hopeful**

The wife of Liberia's former President Charles Taylor has thrown her weight behind Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in next month's presidential run-off. Jewel Taylor was elected to the Senate in general elections this month. Her backing is a surprise as Mr Taylor and Ms Johnson-Sirleaf were bitter rivals.

Liberian soldiers block streets, demanding pay

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, Oct 25 (Reuters) - Scores of protesting soldiers set up barricades of bricks and tyres in front of Liberia's Defence Ministry on Tuesday, demanding severance pay in return for demobilising as a new post-war national army is formed.

Sierra Leone Praised for Peace in Liberia

Concord Times (Freetown) October 24, 2005

Tanu Jalloh

One time Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) in the United Nations Missions in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Alan Doss last week in Monrovia praised Sierra Leone for setting the pace for peace that culminated into Liberia's successful elections.

10/25/2005 04:06:30

Liberians in Nigeria Cry Out: Weah or Johnson-Sirleaf, We Don't Want Further Bloodbath

Vanguard (Nigeria)

As the world waits for the November 8 run-off between two frontrunners, former World footballer of the year, George Opong Weah and Harvard-trained ex-World Bank executive, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberians have great expectations and apprehension of what the future holds.

International Clips on West Africa**Cote d'Ivoire: Banker, diplomat, academic in running for crucial prime minister job**

ABIDJAN, 25 October (IRIN) - "Who will be the prime minister?" was the banner headline across most newspapers in Cote d'Ivoire on Tuesday. One thing is certain -- whoever is appointed Cote d'Ivoire's new prime minister will face the mammoth task of

building peace in a country paralyzed by three years of war. Only rebel chief Guillaume Soro has put forward his own name, on the grounds that his men control half the land. But some of the other potential candidates being mentioned again and again are a banker, a diplomat, an academic as well as the current Prime Minister, Seydou Diarra.

Local Media – Newspapers

Seven Political Parties Give Support to Congress for Democratic Change

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, New Vision and The New Broom)

- Seven defeated political parties in the 11 October elections yesterday expressed their support for the Congress for Democratic Change in the run-off election.
- The Union of Liberian Democrats, Progressive Democratic Party, Labor Party of Liberia, National Reformation Party, National Party of Liberia and the United Democratic Alliance said they believed that CDC standard bearer George Weah could unite the nation.

Former First Lady Declares Support for Unity Party in Run-Off Poll

(The News, The Inquirer and The Liberian Diaspora)

- Declaring support yesterday for Unity Party standard bearer Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in the run-off election, former First Lady Jewel Howard Taylor said that Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf was competent for the presidency and appealed that people should forgive her for her alleged past wrongs and vote for her in the spirit of national reconciliation.

Two U.S. Senators Praise Liberians

(The News, The Analyst and The Telegraph)

- United States senators Russell Feingold and Lincoln Chafee have issued a joint press statement praising Liberians for their overwhelming and peaceful participation in the 11 October elections, according to a U.S. embassy press release. The two senators were part of the U.S. government's official elections observers' delegation.

Two Political Parties Withhold Support for Candidates in Run-Off Election

(The Analyst)

- In separate press releases issued yesterday, the New Democratic Alternative for Liberia Movement of Dr. George Klay Kieh and Liberty Party of Cllr. Charles Brumskine said that they would not support any of the presidential candidates in the run-off election, saying their partisans were free to make their own selections at the ballot box.

UNMIL Commits to Peace and Stability in Liberia

(The Telegraph and The Liberian Diaspora)

- Delivering the special message of United Nations Secretary-General to mark the 60th Anniversary of the UN, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss assured Liberians that the UN would exert effort to maintain peace and stability in Liberia by supporting Liberia in the run-off election. He urged Liberians to turn out and vote in the second round on 8 November.

Demobilized Soldiers Demonstrate Over Severance Benefits

(The Telegraph)

- Hundreds of demobilized soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia yesterday set up road blocks before the Defense Ministry in Monrovia to demand additional severance pay.

Unity Party Sympathizes with Nigeria

(The News)

- In a telephone conversation with Nigerian Ambassador Eniji Onogu, Unity Party standard bearer Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said the party was deeply saddened over the death of the wife of President Olusegun Obasanjo and a plane crash in which over 100 Nigerians died.

UNMIL Reconditions Roads In Monrovia

(The Analyst)

- UNMIL Pakistani contingent has commenced the reconditioning of Monrovia's potholed streets. The contingent has also been rehabilitating roads in other parts of the country as well as providing other community services outside its mandate.

Local Media – RADIO VERITAS *(News monitored yesterday at 06:45 pm)*

Seven Political Parties Give Support to Congress for Democratic Change

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Demobilized Soldiers Demonstrate Over Severance Benefits

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Transitional Government Bans Importation of Beef

- Deputy Agriculture Minister John Samuels said yesterday that the Liberian Government has suspended the importation of poultry products from Brazil and Romania with increasing concerns about the spread of bird flu and foot to mouth disease.

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

UNMIL Commits to Peace and Stability in Liberia

(Also reported on Star Radio)

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Former First Lady Declares Support for Unity Party in Run-Off Poll

Two Political Parties Withhold Support for Candidates in Run-Off Election

UNDP Says Liberia Must Strive to Achieve Development Goals

- Speaking at a ceremony to mark the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations, UNDP Country Representative Steve Ursino said that infant and maternity mortality and illiteracy were factors that would impede Liberia's ability to achieve the Millennium Development goals. He said that the performances of past governments created the urgent need to reform institutions, structures and practices, saying that Liberians should demand political and socio-economic development from their leaders.

WHO Holds Workshop on Gender and Sex Violence

- The World Health Organization started a workshop in Monrovia yesterday to develop a national plan of action on Gender-based violence in Liberia.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.

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Mrs Taylor backs Liberian hopeful

The wife of Liberia's former President Charles Taylor has thrown her weight behind Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in next month's presidential run-off.

Jewel Taylor was elected to the Senate in general elections this month. Her backing is a surprise as Mr Taylor and Ms Johnson-Sirleaf were bitter rivals.

Ms Johnson-Sirleaf will face former international football star George Weah in the second round on 8 November.

The elections were the first since the end of Liberia's 14-year civil war.

Election observers praised their conduct, noting the absence of violence.

Rebel backing

However, analysts say the real test will be whether the loser of the run-off accepts defeat.

It is feared that some of the 100,000 fighters hid some of their weapons rather than hand them over to the UN peacekeeping mission.



Mr Weah got 28% in the first round, compared to 20% for Ms Johnson-Sirleaf.

Mr Weah has meanwhile secured the support of the fifth-placed candidate in the presidential race, Varney Sherman, according to Mr Weah's spokesman.

Sekou Conneh, the leader of the Lurd rebels who drove Mr Taylor into exile, has also backed Mr Weah, along with another former warlord, Prince Johnson.

Mr Conneh got just 0.6% of votes cast.

The man who came third, Charles Brumskine, has refused to back either candidate.

Many young people and ex-combatants back Mr Weah, while the educated elite and women support Ms Johnson-Sirleaf, an economist who used to work with the World bank.

Mr Weah, a high-school dropout, says his lack of education would not be a problem if he was elected.

He says those with education have only brought corruption and warfare to Liberia.

Mr Taylor is in exile in Nigeria after stepping down in August 2003.

A UN-backed court in Sierra Leone has indicted him on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly backing Sierra Leone's brutal rebels.