

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:

Friday, October 28, 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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INSIGHT

Saffa Hindovei

The political wrangling presently affecting the SLPP has emanated from simple blunders made by their leaders. It has caused the fragmentation of the SLPP and its support base.

The people in the provinces are disgruntled with the present SLPP government and unless a very powerful mechanism is put in place to pacify the people on the arrest and trial of Hinga Norman, Alieu Kondewa and Moinana Fofana, the existing fragmentation within the Party will continue unabated.

The Civil Defence Forces (CDF) were the only group which bravely stuck out its neck to quell the brutality perpetrated by the Soldiers who had at the point of taking up appointment in the military sworn before God and man to protect the territorial integrity of our country.

NORMAN'S HEROISM

Chief Sam Hinga Norma, a retired soldier serving as local Chief was captured by the rebels but later escaped from them and surfaced in Freetown where he started to make moves to address the problem his people faced.

It was at Funkia I first saw Chief Sam Hinga Norma during a meeting held by the Lower Bambara Descendants Association (LBDYA) which was a normal way for arranging the affairs of the chiefdom.

After the brutal killing of Dr. Alpha Lavalie at Mano junction close to Kenema, for no plausible reason, Chief Sam Hinga Norman braved it out to lead the 'Kamajor' organization to fight alongside the government soldiers for speedy conclusion of the war.

He used his military tactics to close in on the junta fighters which overthrew the SLPP government of President Kabbah on May 25, 1997. While the rest of the SLPP big guns fled to neighboring countries, Europe and America, Hinga Norman, Alieu Kondewa and Moinana Fofana stayed behind to defend Sierra Leone

authentic and binding document which helped to bring the fighters to book. I blame the SLPP, the Parliament

madness.

I think everybody including Chief Norman forgot to critically examine the spirit and substance

The Special Court: The Mistakes of Parliament, SLPP and Norman

against rebel atrocities and to restore democracy.

'War Don Don'

Before the 2002 proclamation by His Excellency the President Alhaji Ahmad Kabbah, certain things happened which paralysed the movement of the rebels and gave respite to people. For instance, the 'Operation Black December' led by Chief Norman, the signing of the Lome Peace Accord, the Conakry Protocol which was never attended by the junta head, Major Johnny Paul Koroma.

BEREWA'S ROLE

Solomon Berewa with his Lawyer background and a peace maker urged Kabbah as the then Attorney General to travel and sign the Lome Peace package which was criticised by the entire populace of the country.

We became resolved that the government must not in any way sign the Peace Accord with the rebels but to fight them to our last breath.

My mother used to say that "one cannot put out a blazing fire with flammable liquid" meaning we would not have had a sustainable peace if Berewa and Pa Kabbah had not swallowed their pride to call the brutal faction to table.

SPECIAL COURT

The formation of the Special Court went through various protocols which were scrutinized by those who are the law makers and was made an

and the very Cabinet to which Hinga Norman belonged for the deliberate neglect of the amnesty enshrined in the Lome Peace Accord which was ratified by our Parliament. They were in position to know how the war was fought and who were fighting in the interest of the people along side of the government.

Chief Sam Hinga Norma, a retired soldier serving as local Chief was captured by the rebels but later escaped from them and surfaced in Freetown where he started to make moves to address the problem his people faced.

The Special Court document was to be carefully read and all its ramifications considered by Parliament before passing it into law. This would have given them the scope to give credit to those who helped government troops to genuinely fight the course of democracy which was at stake. Certain clauses should have been made to give a blanket amnesty to those who stood firm to defend the innocent civilians against the rebel

Forces key leaders, I blame the rest of those who wrote, read and proof-read the documents which brought the UN backed Special Court to Sierra Leone.

The battery of Lawyers prosecuting the indictees were not in Sierra Leone when we suffered and did not even know about the existence of this country before then. But now they are making huge fortunes out of our own unfortunate circumstances.

Salome Times. Friday, 27th October 2005.

Special Court Frees Investigator

By Isatta Tholly

The Presiding Judge of the first Trial Chamber at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Pierre Boutet acquitted and discharged and investigator attached to the defence team of the AFRC Brima Samura this week.

Mr. Samura was accused of knowingly disclosing the identity of a protected witness TF1-023 to the wives of AFRC indictees while she was giving testimony in court in March 2005. It was further alleged

that the ladies, namely, Aniga Kamara wife of Brima Bazy Kamara, Neneh Binta Jalloh wife of Santigie Borbor Kama, Margaret Fomba Brima wife and Esther Kamara friend of Alex Jamba Brima were invited outside courtroom No.2 where Mr. Samura revealed

the identity of the witness to them.

In his ruling, Justice Boutet said that he did not find Samura guilty of the offence.

It could be recalled that the wives of the indictees were discharged conditionally by the court on September 21.

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For Immediate Release:

Côte d'Ivoire: Government Recruits Child Soldiers in Liberia

U.N. Security Council Must Take Urgent Action on Investigation, Sanctions

(New York, October 28, 2005) — In anticipation of renewed fighting with rebel forces, the Ivorian government is recruiting Liberian children alongside hundreds of other former combatants in Liberia's civil war, Human Rights Watch said today.

Since September, Ivorian army officers and Liberian former commanders have been conducting a recruitment drive seeking ex-combatants in Liberian towns and villages bordering Côte d'Ivoire.

"The Ivorian government is bolstering its military manpower by recruiting children who fought in Liberia's brutal civil war," said Peter Takirambudde, executive director of the Africa division of Human Rights Watch. "The international community must do all it can to ensure that these children are demobilized and that their recruiters are prosecuted."

In October, Human Rights Watch interviewed 19 Liberian ex-combatants, including three children aged 13 to 17. All of them had been approached by Liberian and Ivorian recruiters to join a fighting "mission" on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire's government. Several of those interviewed, including the children, said that they themselves were involved in the recruitment of additional fighters. After Liberia's civil war ended in 2003, some 101,000 combatants—including 11,000 children—were disarmed and demobilized under a United Nations-sponsored program.

Children were among those who described to Human Rights Watch how they attended meetings in Liberia in September and October, during which former Liberian commanders offered them US\$300 to \$400 to go to Côte d'Ivoire to fight on behalf of the Ivorian government. Many described being given money, rice and clothing to encourage their friends to join.

Most of those interviewed had crossed into Côte d'Ivoire in September, but came back to Liberia to cast their votes in the country's October 11 general election. They also returned to identify additional recruits, for which they were promised additional remuneration. According to their accounts, Liberians are recruited from Nimba county and the southeastern counties of Grand Gedeh and River Gee, counties which border government-controlled areas of Côte d'Ivoire.

Interviewees said that after crossing into Côte d'Ivoire, they were taken to one of three militia bases in the west of the country: Toulepleu, Blolequin and Guiglo. They said each of these bases housed several hundred Liberians, most of whom, like them, had fought with the Liberian rebel group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), during Liberia's civil war. The majority of those interviewed said they received food, uniforms and, in some cases, weapons from Ivorian military personnel at the bases. Many described seeing dozens of Liberian children inside militia bases in Côte d'Ivoire.

Several interviewees identified two Ivorian military officers, one a colonel and the other a sergeant, who appeared to be coordinating recruitment on behalf of the Ivorian government. One ex-combatant gave a detailed account of a meeting of Liberian commanders in Guiglo in the first week of September, in which they were briefed on the military mission being planned.

In the past year, Human Rights Watch documented two other periods of intense recruitment of Liberians to fight alongside the Ivorian government: last October, just prior to a government offensive against the rebel New Forces (*Forces Nouvelles*), and again in March, before the parties met for peace talks in South Africa.

Almost all of those interviewed had registered in 2004 for education or skills-training programs being administered by the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program.

However, the U.N. and Liberian-administered program is currently facing a funding shortfall of US\$10 million needed to cover the reintegration of some 43,000 ex-combatants.

Several educational and vocational programs for ex-child combatants have opened in towns close to the border, but children said that pressure from the economic situation of their families had forced them to abandon the programs. Commanders appeared to have exploited this and used it as a tactic to encourage the child ex-combatants to fight in Côte d'Ivoire.

Human Rights Watch makes the following recommendations:

- The U.N. peacekeeping missions in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire should step up their monitoring of the recruitment and use of children by both the Ivorian government and New Forces rebels, and they should make their findings public. All information on recruitment and child soldier use should be provided to the monitoring and reporting mechanisms established under resolution 1612 (2005) by the U.N. Security Council.
- The Liberian and Ivorian governments and the New Forces rebels should conduct thorough investigations and prosecute those involved in the recruitment and use of child soldiers.
- The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, who announced on January 20 that he would send a team to Côte d'Ivoire to lay the groundwork for a possible investigation of war crimes, should include the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the scope of the ICC investigation. Under the ICC statute, the recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 is a war crime.
- The U.N. Sanctions Committee for Côte d'Ivoire should immediately activate travel and economic sanctions against individuals identified as responsible for the recruitment and use of child soldiers, pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1572.

Testimonies of Liberians interviewed in October 2005 by Human Rights Watch

A 14-year-old who was recruited in September, and has since recruited three friends around his age, described:

In mid-September I was talking to a friend when my former MODEL commander called us over. He asked what we were doing and talked to us about what was on in Ivory Coast. We told him that we wanted to go to school but that there was no money to go. He explained that he was pulling people together to go on a small mission. He said it was going to be a quick mission and that if we went we'd be able to get money enough to pay our school fees. He said he would be heading over in a few weeks, after the October 11 elections, and that anytime we saw our friends we should try to motivate them to come with us. He gave me 1000 Liberian dollars [US\$19] for us to buy food and new clothes and promised to give us a small thing if we brought more boys with us. So far I've found three friends to go; two are 15 and the other is 16. I bought them some new clothes with the money my CO [commanding officer] gave me. I don't have money in Liberia and if I stay here I'd probably be forced to steal and do other bad things, and if I do that and get caught I'll be beaten. I live with my brother and he told me he doesn't want me to go, but he can't tell me what to do. No. It's better I go to Ivory Coast and when I'm back I can go to school. I know it will carry me somewhere.

A 22-year-old mid-level commander who has been based in Bolequin since around March 2005 and returned from Côte d'Ivoire in early October to recruit other fighters explained:

I came a few days ago from the base with seven other fighters and we're heading back in a day or two. Most of my friends are heading over—in fact I came to encourage them to go. I tell them that on the other side we eat three times a day while here they're not doing anything. I also tell them that once things happen, anything they get is for them to keep. It's working okay so far. I've encouraged about ten of my friends to go, including some boys of about 14, 15 years old. I've even got a girl of about 17 to go so she can help us cook. All of us used to fight with MODEL. Several weeks ago an Ivorian officer arrived in Bolequin. He gathered some of the commanders together, drove us in three cars to the base in Guiglo and told us about

the mission. He said, "The mission will soon be on hand. Anytime we call you, you have to be ready to help us." He said that once things started he'd even put some of us on salary. There are so many Liberians there—maybe up to 200. I was given an AK-47 [assault rifle] by the Ivorians. We're just waiting for the Ivorian ceasefire to end.

A 19-year-old female combatant who crossed over into Côte d'Ivoire during the first week of September described how she was recruited:

In the first few days of September the one who used to be my commander in the MODEL days came to visit me in my house. He said, "I'm pulling people together to go to Ivory Coast. We have a mission going." He said he would pay me US\$350. For me, I don't have anybody here. I'm living with friends and don't know where my family is. My boyfriend died during the MODEL attack on Buchanan in 2003. I have nothing to keep me here. So I went. We left the next evening with a big group of us—about 50 including a few boys and other girls. My CO gave us money for transport to the border. Once there we split into three groups and then crossed over at night on a bush path. Once on the other side we joined up again and headed on to Guiglo base. While in the barracks we got a little training on how to lay low and avoid the rebels. They said our mission is to attack X. All I know is what my CO tells me. There are about 200 of us Liberians there including about 25 girls. Many of us came back from the barracks in Guiglo to Liberia to vote. I stood in line all day to cast my vote. My CO said I will be heading back tomorrow so I'm just waiting for the word.

This 18-year-old Liberian described why he declined efforts to be recruited:

In September I was walking through the street in town when a man named J called me over to talk with him. He said, "Hey, are you looking for a way to earn money? There's a mission on in Ivory Coast and money is there." He told me he was just waiting until after the elections and that after voting, he was going over. In fact, since that time three other people, including a few who speak French, have come over to encourage me to go. I listened to my heart: one part said I should go but the other part said no. I thought about my schooling—after disarming I signed up to study to be an auto-mechanic. I started the program but then it stopped because they said the learning materials weren't there. But I'll wait. In the meantime I'm blessed with a dog that helps me hunt bush meat [deer] and so I'm able to survive. I said no. I'm not going.

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