

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Sunset over cape light-house at Aberdeen

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as at:

Friday, 18 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Swift move on Taylor

DAYS AFTER THE UN Security Council approved the transfer of former Liberian President Charles Taylor to face trial in The Hague, he was flown to the Dutch capital in a hush-hush operation. Civil rights activists and Taylor's lawyers, who were planning to challenge the decision, were taken unawares.

The idea that Taylor should be tried in Europe, because of fears that his presence in Freetown could cause instability in the region, was opposed by many who felt that Western countries with vested interests were pulling the strings behind the scenes.

Some, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), had suggested that if the trial could not be held in Freetown, it should be held elsewhere in Africa to strengthen the notion of the Special Court for Sierra Leone as an African court addressing crimes against Africans and the idea that Africa has the capacity to hold such trials.

The Court's founding documents permit proceedings to be conducted outside Sierra Leone. The agreement states that the seat of the court shall be in Sierra Leone, but "the Court may meet away from its seat if it considers it necessary for the efficient exercise of its functions, and may be relocated outside Sierra Leone, if circumstances so require, and subject to the conclusion of a headquarters agreement between the secretary general of the UN and the government of Sierra Leone, on the one hand, and the government of the alternative seat, on the other".

The Security Council resolution provides a legal basis for the relocation of Taylor's trial. It states that the Special Court shall "retain exclusive jurisdiction over former President Taylor during his transfer to and presence in the Netherlands".

In order to provide a basis for Taylor, who is under a UN Security Council-imposed travel ban, and any witnesses who may also be under the ban, to travel to The Hague for the trial, the resolution grants exemptions to these persons for this purpose. Regarding costs, which have been an ongoing challenge for the Special Court, the resolution provides that the costs will be borne by the Court and no

other party without that party's consent. The resolution, however, encourages states to continue to provide financial support to the Court.

The success of the Court and international justice mechanisms more generally is dependent on their ability to maximise the impact of a limited number of fair and expedient trials, says HWR. "This involves conveying a sense that justice has been done, building respect for the rule of law, and promoting stability in the country where the crimes occurred by enhancing the potential deterrent effect of the trials and the capacity of the domestic justice system," it adds.

In order to maximise impact, it is

critical to make the proceedings accessible to the communities most affected by the crimes. The Court's location in Freetown combined with its robust outreach and communications activities have made a major contribution to ensure that the people of Sierra Leone and West Africa are aware of the court's work, HRW notes.

It points out that having the Court sit in The Hague to conduct Taylor's trial creates significant challenges to maintaining the accessibility of the proceedings. The distance between Sierra Leone and the Netherlands risks contributing to a perception that the justice process is far removed and of limited significance to Sierra Leoneans and West Africans. It will also be difficult, if not impossible, for many Sierra Leoneans to attend proceedings in The Hague, HRW notes. ■

The Christian Science Monitor

Thursday, 17 August 2006

Forgiveness: more important than prosecuting war criminals

Helena Cobban

War criminals in Uganda may put down their weapons if given amnesty.

GULU, UGANDA – The round mud homes of the Unyama camp are packed close, allowing little privacy - or dignity - for its 20,400 residents.

As we walk between the huts, camp leader Odoki Raymond Lamaka tells me that seven of his 12 children have passed away in the 10 years the family has lived here. "We are constantly short of food, and the only health center is two miles away," he says.

All around the mud-brown camp, the hillsides are green from recent rain. Mr. Odoki, like many of the camp's residents, can point to where his family's homestead used to be. But he cannot live or farm there. In 1996, after nearby skirmishes between government troops and rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the government gave all the area's residents 48 hours to move into this camp. "They shot at people who tried to stay at home," Odoki said.

Since then, these internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been confined to the camp. Some 90 percent of the population of Gulu and two other administrative districts in northern Uganda that contain mainly Acholi people have been forced to live in such IDP camps for 10 years or longer.

The LRA is a violent group whose excesses have been well documented. Its leader, Joseph Kony, and his sidekicks have abducted tens of thousands of children from this region - including from within the IDP camps. LRA commanders have forced the abducted children to commit atrocities and used the captured girls as sex slaves. Then they tried to keep these traumatized youngsters in their fighting ranks. Many Acholis also accuse the government of trying to starve them in the IDP camps, and of destroying their culture. And they accuse some government soldiers and commanders of committing rape and other atrocities against the unarmed IDPs.

The Acholi people I talked to said they felt caught in the middle, victims of atrocious violence committed by both the government and the LRA. Above all, the Acholis want the long-running civil war that has incubated all this violence to end, so they can rebuild their homes and livelihoods in peace.

Their hopes for peace are now (cautiously) running high. In mid-July, the regional government of neighboring south Sudan opened peace talks between representatives of the Ugandan government and the LRA. The usually evasive Mr. Kony gave the talks a rare public imprimatur. Acholi community and church leaders played a big part in getting the peace talks started. One of those peacemakers was Norbert Mao, a longtime parliamentarian who is now chair of the Gulu District Council. In late July, Mr. Mao organized a groundbreaking "peace convoy" of Acholi leaders: They traveled to the border between Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to meet with Kony in person. "The LRA needs to know it was we in civil society who prodded the government to change its policies toward them," Mao told me. "It was we who pushed for the amnesty program.... It was we who pushed for the peace talks. But we are also the community that bore the brunt of the war...."

Mao and the other Acholi leaders I spoke with said their main aim is to "get Joseph Kony out of the bush." They fear that as long as the LRA's leadership remains intact in the remote rain forests where Uganda, Sudan, and the DRC all meet, then the civil war that has devastated the Acholis can be reignited at any time. And the way they want to bring Kony out of the bush is by bringing him back into Acholi society where, after undergoing traditional rituals involving social healing and truth-telling, he will be reintegrated into the civilian community.

Thus far, the Ugandan government has gone along with this plan. In July, it declared that it would include Kony and his colleagues in its longstanding amnesty program, and it has participated constructively in the peace talks.

But another shadow still looms over the search for peace. In 2004, the Ugandan government had referred the LRA's atrocities to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In mid-2005 the court issued arrest warrants against Kony and four other LRA leaders. Since then, it has been technically illegal for the Ugandan government to have any peaceful dealings with Kony. All the governments that support the court are simply supposed to arrest the indictees.

For now, the government is sticking with its commitment to the peace talks and its offer of amnesty to the LRA leaders. But Kony reportedly remains wary that the government might later change its mind and hand him over to the court in The Hague.

How will this work out? The peace talks are very important for Uganda, but the prosecutions against the LRA leaders are very important for the court. In a later column I'll explore this clash between "peace" and "justice" for Uganda and some of the solutions proposed for it.

- Helena Cobban's book, "Amnesty after Atrocity?: Healing Nations after Genocide and War Crimes," will be published next month.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Thursday, 17 August 2006

UNMIL to Ensure Law and Order at Guthrie

The Government of Liberia, in a move to restore state authority and the rule of law on rubber plantations that have been illegally occupied, yesterday formally re-possessed the Guthrie Rubber Plantation.

This was marked by a ceremony attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, the Minister of Agriculture and Chairman of the Joint Government of Liberia - United Nations Rubber Plantation Task Force, Dr. Chris Toe, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police (LNP), Beatrice Munah Sieh, the Deputy Executive Director of the NCDDRR, Ruth Witherspoon, and local representatives together with the UNMIL Force Commander, UN Police Commissioner and other senior UNMIL officials.

During his keynote address, Dr. Chris Toe said "today, we are taking a major step on Liberia's path towards national recovery, development and respect of rule of law.

The restoration of state authority on Guthrie marks significant progress Liberians have made in terms of building sustainable peace and addressing irregularities that have persisted from the time of our conflict." Speaking to the local authorities, Special Representative Doss thanked the members of the Rubber Plantation Task Force and all those involved, including the communities, for their joint efforts in making this day possible and noted that "this did not happen by chance; it was a result of a lot of hard work.

This cooperation demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together." Referring to this historic day, Mr. Doss said "Today, the Government of Liberia is taking back what belongs to Liberia." The Special Representative assured of UNMIL's support to the LNP in ensuring that law and order was maintained on the plantation.

"We have to make sure that the plantations remain safe so we can begin the task of rebuilding the plantations, including allowing for investments and aid to come in." The SRSG also urged the community dwellers to avoid violence and work with the Government. "Help us to rebuild the community and together we will make sure that this plantation will generate jobs for you and your children," he said.

The Joint Government of Liberia - United Nations Rubber Plantation Task Force was established in February 2006 to address ongoing tensions and significant losses of government revenue due to inefficient management of publicly owned plantations.

In order to enforce the rule of law within the plantation, the LNP has deployed officers to the plantation and, with the support of the United Nations Police (UNPOL), has been undertaking regular patrols.

The UNMIL Pakistani military engineers have constructed housing and office space within Guthrie.

In addition, an interim management team was also established by the Government of Liberia and the Rubber Planters' Association of Liberia (RPAL) as a temporary mechanism to regularize employment, promote labor standards and rehabilitate facilities, until a long-term management structure is established in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of the country.

Possibilities for reintegration assistance for the ex-combatants are also being explored by the NCDDRR with the support of UNMIL and other stakeholders.

At the end of the ceremony, SRSG Doss handed over a set of keys to the LNP Inspector General for a car to be used by the LNP detachments in order to strengthen their capacity in maintaining law and order in the Guthrie Rubber Plantation.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 17 August 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

There were no stories on Liberia in the major international media today.

International Clips on West Africa

BBC Last Updated: Thursday, 17 August 2006, 12:17 GMT 13:17 UK

Ivorian opposition to meet rebels

Leaders of rebel forces and the main opposition parties in Ivory Coast are to meet to try to agree on their response to possible election delays. New Forces leader Guillaume Soro, ex-PM Alassane Ouattara and ex-President Henri Konan Bedie are due to attend. On Monday, opposition parties rejected a plan by President Laurent Gbagbo to stay on if October's polls are delayed. The disarming of rebels and militias has still to begin and there are rows over the registering of voters. Last October, President Gbagbo had his mandate extended by a year by the United Nations as elections failed to take place. Some 10,000 French and UN peacekeepers monitor a buffer zone between the rebels who control the north and the government-held south. Smaller opposition parties are also expected to be represented at the talks in the eastern central town of Daoukro.

08/17/2006 00:15:27

Cote d'Ivoire Leader Expresses Sorrow over Flood Disaster

Addis Ababa, Aug 11, 2006 (The Ethiopian Herald/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- President of Cote d' Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo has expressed deep sorrow over the damages caused by the flood in Dire Dawa, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. In a letter to President Girma- Wolde-Giorgis, President Gbagbo expressed heart felt condolence over the loss of lives and property damages flood, by the Ministry said in a statement it sent to ENA yesterday. President Gbagbo also expressed sympathy for the victims of the accident.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Makes New Appointments in Government

(The News)

- An Executive Mansion statement said yesterday that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has appointed Martin Momo Sheriff as Assistant Planning and Economic Affairs Minister for Administration, Col. Gayflor Tarpeh Liberian National Police Deputy Inspector-General for Administration, William Mulbah, Liberian National Police Assistant Inspector-General for Administration, Kabineh Kamara and Liberian National Police Assistant Inspector-General for Operations among others.

Environmental Advocates Demand Information on Government Expenditure

(The Analyst)

- Green Advocates, a local environmental advocacy group, has urged the Bureau of the Budget to provide information on expenditures of government 47 days after the 2005/2006 budget year. The group added that based on the Liberian Constitution, no monies should be drawn from the treasury without legislative enactment and the warrant of the President of Liberia.
- Meanwhile, Finance Minister Dr. Antoinette Sayeh will appear before the House of Representatives today to explain how the government was being funded beyond the 2005/2006 fiscal year.

Law Reform Symposium Ends in Monrovia

(The Inquirer, The Analyst and Liberian Express)

- A two-day symposium on the establishment of a law reform commission ended in Monrovia yesterday. The symposium was organized by the Task Force for the Law Reform Commission (LRC) under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice in collaboration with the Legal and Judicial Support Division on UNMIL. The LRC is to provide an effective mechanism for the progressive development and reform of law in line with the needs of the Liberian people.

Notorious Gang Kills Student in Monrovia's Suburb

(The Inquirer and The Analyst)

- A notorious gang of robbers, Isakaba Boys,--which roams Monrovia and its environs at night armed with cutlasses-- on one of its sprees on early Tuesday Monrovia attacked a house in New Kru Town, Bushrod Island and allegedly killed one of its occupants, 20-year-old Philemon White.

Human Rights Activist Petitions Lawmakers to Impeach Chief Justice

(Heritage and The Informer)

- Human Rights Activist Melvin Page said that he has petitioned the National Legislature to begin proceeding leading to the impeachment of Chief Justice Johnny Lewis for wrongfully dismissing Judge James Zota. Chief Justice Lewis had acted on a directive of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to suspend Judge Zota, but reinstated him following constitutional wrangling.
- Mr. Page told a news conference in Monrovia yesterday that Chief Justice Lewis failed to prove that he had been directed by the President to sack Judge Zota and thought he had lied on the President and deserves impeachment under the law.

Police to Institute Strong Measures against Power Theft

(New Vision)

- Inspector-General of the Liberian National Police, Beatrice Munnah Sieh told journalists yesterday that the police would institute strong measures against the habitual practice of power theft in Liberia.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

Human Rights Activist Petitions Lawmakers to Impeach Chief Justice

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Environmental Advocates Demand Information on Government Expenditure

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

President Makes New Appointments in Government

Anti-Corruption Bill Introduced at National Legislature

- An anti-corruption bill seeking to restore public confidence in the financial management system and alleviate poverty and safeguard public resources has been introduced at the National Legislature.
- Framers of the bill believe that if the bill is passed, it would manage the resources needed to improve the educational and health sectors of the country.
- Executive Mansion sources said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf would appoint a committee drawn from the Bureau of the Budget, Justice and Finance Ministries to ensure transparency and accountability.

Forestry Development Authority Raises Revenue from Pit-Sawing

- Forestry Development Authority officials appearing on a radio talk show yesterday said that the agency has so far collected US\$300,000 from pit-saw operators as a result of measures instituted to regulate the trade. The officials said that although pit-sawing was illegal, it provides timber for reconstruction.
- The officials also disclosed that the agency has generated additional US\$90,000 in revenue from charcoal producers and dismissed fear that massive production of charcoal was depleting the forests.

Universal Postal Union Consultant Says Liberia's Post Services in Ruins

- The visiting Universal Postal Union (UPU) Consultant, Gunter Bohme intimated that Liberia's postal system was in ruins and needs millions of dollars to restore its damaged infrastructure. Speaking to journalists yesterday, Mr. Bohme called on the Government of Liberia to lobby with UPU to attract support for rehabilitation of the country's postal service. *(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

Budget Talks Confine Lawmakers

- Joint committees of the National Legislature have been locked in discussions of the budget, seeking to reconcile allocations proposed in the draft budget by the Houses of Representatives which the Senate rejected. The House of Representatives had proposed a US\$1.7 million increment in a draft budget of US\$120 million, but the Senate rejected the projection prompting the contention stalling passage of the budget.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Envoy visits UNMIL drainage cleaning projects in Monrovia

Monrovia, Liberia – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, together with the Acting Minister of Public Works, Mr. Loseni Donzo, today carried out site visits to the Soniwein concrete channel in Monrovia, which is currently being cleaned as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Special Engineering projects in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works.

The delegation received a warm welcome by the residents of the Soniwein community, who thanked them for this initiative.



UNMIL Special Engineering Projects provide employment for skilled and unskilled labourers

Special Representative Doss recognized the hard work being done and noted “these efforts demonstrate how much we can achieve at a modest cost.” He encouraged the workers to complete the clean up programme and also urged the community dwellers to contribute to this project by keeping their environment clean.

The Special Engineering projects were established to support the peace building and government’s efforts to create employment opportunities for young people. UNMIL has allocated \$1 million for the rehabilitation of critical road corridors in Liberia, as well as the cleaning of the drainage and streets in Monrovia, using labour intensive methods. This initiative, which was launched earlier this year, contributes to the Liberia Emergency Employment Programme/Liberia Employment Action Programme (LEEP/LEAP), which is the government’s employment-creation framework.

The drainage cleaning of Monrovia streets and channels was proposed by the Ministry of Public Works to reduce flooding and deterioration of wearing surface, facilitating the movement of traffic and reducing accidents. The open channels that were identified by the Ministry for cleaning are approximately 6,120 meters long. A total of 204 skilled and unskilled labourers will be employed for the duration of three months to clean clogged drains in Monrovia.

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**UN Envoy meets with representatives of civil society organizations;
security remains UNMIL's core objective**

Monrovia, Liberia – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, together with other senior UNMIL officials, today met with representatives of Liberia's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).



SRSR Doss meets with representatives of Civil Society Organizations

Addressing the CSO representatives at the UNMIL Headquarters in Monrovia, the Special Representative stressed the importance of their contributions to sustaining democracy in Liberia. “Civil society has played, and continues to play, a significant role in the peace process. You have worked closely with UNMIL and this role must now be consolidated through regular dialogue and information sharing,” Mr. Doss said.

Special Representative Doss briefed the CSO representatives on the current security situation in Liberia and the priorities for UNMIL during the current phase of peace consolidation. “Maintaining a secure and stable environment remains the core objective of UNMIL,” he said. He recognized people’s concern about crime and outlined some of the measures that UNMIL has been taking to combat the problem. Mr. Doss also stressed the importance of strengthening the judicial system, creating economic opportunities for the large number of unemployed youth, and the importance of pursuing sound economic management policies. He also highlighted the importance of rethinking the traditional mechanisms used for delivery of development assistance so that local communities will have more of a say in Liberia’s development process. In concluding the SRSR outlined the steps that UNMIL and the United Nations were taking to prevent and deal with sexual exploitation and abuse.

During the meeting, the CSOs also had an opportunity to voice their concerns, which included security and crime, the Guthrie plantation, employment, sexual exploitation and abuse and developments within the sub-region.

Over 20 representatives from the various CSOs attended today’s meeting, including the Federation of Liberia Youth, the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, the Liberia Council of Churches, Women in Peace Network, Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia and the Group of 77.

BBC Online

Friday, 18 August 2006

Ivorian leader 'barrier to peace'

Leaders of rebel forces and the main opposition parties in Ivory Coast have accused President Laurent Gbagbo of being an obstacle to the peace process.

They denounced him for saying earlier this week that he would remain in office if October's polls are delayed.

Last year, Mr Gbagbo had his mandate extended by a year by the UN as elections failed to take place.

The disarming of rebels and militias has still to begin and there are disagreements over voter registration.

Some 10,000 French and UN peacekeepers monitor a buffer zone between the rebels who control the north, and the government-held south.

New Forces rebel leader Guillaume Soro and ex-Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara were among those who attended the meeting at the home of ex-President Henri Konan Bedie in the central town of Daoukro.

A spokesman for the Rally of Republicans party, Adama Tounjara, said the leaders had expressed their "strong disapproval" of the president who was "impeding the peace process with a clear intent to remain in power without an election".

"Mr Laurent Gbagbo is solely responsible today for the deadlock of the implementation of the peace agreement," he told the BBC's Network Africa.

"Consequently the leaders reject the idea of extending again the mandate of Laurent Gbagbo when it expires on 31 October."

Mr Gbagbo has said that he will remain in office if the UN postpones the elections.

But Mr Tounjara said that this was not possible as he was only head of state because of the UN resolution extending his mandate.



Laurent Gbagbo says he will stay on until elections are held

