

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



Law Courts, in central Freetown.

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:

Thursday, 4 January 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local News

No local newspapers have been published this week, as members of the Sierra Leone Vendors Association have declared their annual holiday.

International News

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United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 3 January 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

'DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON MY COUNTRY'

Source: THE INDEPENDENT Date: January 03, 2007 --For a democratically elected leader, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's daily commute to work borders on the unusual. First come the armed outriders who order cars to the gutter. Then comes a blare of sirens as the President's convoy, complete with decoy limousine, barrels down the once-grand Tubman Boulevard. Nigerian United Nations soldiers armed with heavy machine guns take up the rear: the international community is taking no chances with Liberia's best hope of democratic leadership in decades.

Two failed states, united by a common grievance

Source: THE INDEPENDENT Date: January 03, 2007 --On the face of it, Somalia and Liberia have a considerable amount in common. Both nations, on either side of the African continent, have been classic "failed states". Somalia has been in anarchy for the past 15 years. For much of that same period, a vicious civil war has been tearing Liberia apart. Both countries also seem to be emerging from that chaos. The Liberian dictator, Charles Taylor, has been ousted and a US-educated economist, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, elected as President a year ago. In Somalia, the internationally-recognised government swept into the capital, Mogadishu, last week with the military support of neighbouring Ethiopia.

International Clips on West Africa

Sofla's New Year Message to Christians And Muslims

Jan 02, 2007 (The Independent/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --As Sierra Leoneans celebrated both the Muslim event of Eid ul Adha, (on December 30) Christmas and New Year, the Cultural Consul of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Sierra Leone Mohamed Reza Gezel Sofla has urged both Muslims and Christians to inculcate the good virtues of Jesus Christ and Abraham. Eid -ul- Adha is a period during which Muslims make sacrifices in observance of the covenant Abraham made with God. It is also a period during which pilgrims perform certain rites in the Holy Land of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Abidjan gourmets, deprived of game, turn to cat

ABIDJAN, Jan 3, 2007 (AFP) - As his clients watch impatiently, Nicolas Guede, better known in his working class Yopougon neighbourhood of Abidjan as Dabou Tcheke, wields his cleaver with the skill of a Chinese chef to slice and dice a cat. The animal will be seasoned and cooked in a spicy soup and Dabou Tcheke warns his eager onlookers that the dish has already been booked, brushing away swarms of flies anxious to share it. Among those disappointed is Leon Sery, 36, a regular client and a fan of cat, "better than beef or chicken" in his informed opinion. "Here in Abidjan it is hard to get hold of game. But the taste of cat reminds me of that of the brown owl we used to eat in the village," says Leon, who comes from the west of the country.

Children escape human traffickers in Mali

SANAKOROBA, Mali, Jan 2, 2007 (AFP) - A group of children apparently being trafficked from Mali for menial work in Ivory Coast were rescued after passers-by were alerted by their cries, witnesses said on Tuesday. "It was the cries of the children from a small lorry... that attracted our attention," Saliou Diarra, a local teacher, told AFP in a village south of the Malian capital Bamako. "There were 11 children crammed in the vehicle headed for Ivory Coast." Two men managed to flee but the driver, who was apprehended, confirmed that the children were being trafficked from Bamako and was headed to Ivory Coast where they were to work on farms or as domestic servants, two other witnesses told AFP.

Ivory Coast Rebels Reject Peace Talk Proposal

By Kari Barber
Dakar
02 January 2007

Rebels in Ivory Coast have rejected President Laurent Gbagbo's proposal to hold direct peace talks without the involvement of international agencies. A rebel spokesman says they will not sidestep the process laid out by the U.N. Security Council. Kari Barber reports from our regional bureau in Dakar. Ivory Coast rebel leader Guillaume Soro released a New Year's statement saying he will not accept President Laurent Gbagbo's bid for direct dialogue with the rebels. Observers say Mr. Gbagbo's offer, made in a December 19 address, snubs U.N. peace efforts to reunite the country. Rebel spokesman Siratigui Konate says he believes a U.N. resolution adopted in November provides the only viable framework for peace talks with the government. The resolution gives interim Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny a bigger role in reunifying Ivory Coast and organizing elections set for October.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberia and America in Big Economic Partnership

(The Analyst, Heritage and The Informer)

- The President of the United States, George W. Bush last Friday signed the eligibility provision for Liberia's qualification for the Africa and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with the U.S.
- The signing of the act would pave the way for Liberian goods to be exported into the U.S. markets as of 1 January.
- Presidential Spokesman Cyrus Badio said President Bush's decision to sign the act was a direct result of one of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's visits to America.

Police to Remove Tainted Glasses from Vehicles Soon

(Heritage)

- Police Spokesman Alvin Jask said on Tuesday that the Police will this week commence an exercise to remove all tainted materials from vehicles plying the streets of Monrovia and other parts of the country.
- Mr. Jask said that the exercise is on the grounds that "dangerous things are taking place in some vehicles bearing tainted glasses."

Liberian in US Want Bryant and Ex-Warlords Arrested

(The Forum)

- [sic:] A concerned Liberian resident in Minnesota, USA, Mrs. Helena Livingstone, said former warlords and officials of the Gyude Bryant-led interim government should be arrested for allegedly stealing public money.

Ivorian Rebels Want Cestos Bridge Rehabilitated to Promote Trade

(The Forum)

- [sic:] The New Forces rebels occupying the western region of Cote d' Ivoire and the citizens of Loguatu in Gbehlay Geh District, Nimba County, are said to be discussing issues regarding the reconstruction of the Cestos Bridge linking Loguatu and Danane.
- The Immigration Commander and Chairman of the Joint Security at Loguatu, Colonel Simler Zeanbo, told journalists recently that the residents of Loguatu and the New Forces rebels commander of the Danane Region only known as Suahgeeh, have been holding talks to begin the process leading to the rehabilitation of the bridge between Bainta in the Ivory Coast and Loguatu in Liberia in order to promote border trade.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

War Crimes Court Advocacy Group wants President Johnson- Sirleaf Impeached

- In a release issued in Monrovia yesterday, a group advocating for a war crimes court in Liberia said it has petitioned the National Legislature to prepare an impeachment Bill for President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for alleged rampant corruption in government.
- The group cited the President's "Christmas Gifts" to the media, the printing of additional banknotes, corruption claims at the Governance Reform Commission, the controversial crude oil deal and government's failure to prosecute officials dismissed on corruption allegations in the country as reasons why it wants the President impeached.
- The group said it would host a peaceful demonstration in Monrovia on January 15, to pressurize the Legislature to submit to its quest.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Ultimatum to Marketers Expires Today

- A seventy-two hour ultimatum by the Liberia National Police for marketers and street peddlers to return to designated markets sites ends today, Wednesday.
- Police authorities yesterday warned marketers and street peddlers who took to the streets during the holidays to begin leaving and said its units will be reinforced to ensure they meet today's deadline.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

President Johnson-Sirleaf Issues Two Executive Orders

- An Information Ministry release said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has issued Executive Order numbers 6 & 7 banning the illegal use of fire arms and establishing the Liberia Macroeconomic, Analysis, and Capacity building Project (LINCPA).
- The release said the Project would be responsible to formulate the country's macroeconomic policy while Executive Order number six seeks to establish a fire free society until the security situation permits the introduction of appropriate and effective registration of private individuals to possess fire arms, weapons and ammunitions.

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Former Lawmakers Converge On Finance Ministry to Demand Salary Arrears

- Members of the Fifty-first Legislature yesterday converged on the office the Deputy Finance Minister for Revenue and Debt Management to demand some four point five million United States dollars as salaries and other benefits owed them by the Taylor's regime.
- The spokesman of the former Legislature, Mr. Martin Kerkulah, said they would continue their protest by taking permanent residence at the Finance Ministry until government sees reasons to address their plight.

Jurist Legal News and Research

Wednesday, 3 January 2007

Opinion

A Gallows in Baghdad: International Justice in 2006

JURIST Contributing Editor **David Crane** of Syracuse University College of Law, former Chief Prosecutor for the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone, says that the execution of Saddam Hussein for crimes against humanity brought to a close a watershed year for international justice characterized by only tempered success...



A trapdoor in Baghdad swung open on December 30, 2006, dropping to his death the convicted and condemned war criminal Saddam Hussein. In some sense, with this execution, the end of mankind's bloodiest century ended. During the 20th century, it is estimated that 215 million human beings perished, 135 million at the hands of their own governments. The likes of Hussein were a scourge upon that century. Importantly, this sad and tragic chapter in history was closed not by force but by the law. The trial of Hussein for the Dujal massacre was rough justice, but justice nonetheless. Is this a harbinger for the 21st century? Will the standard be that the law will bring down tyrants or will it be something else? The record is mixed, the way uncertain indeed, yet the year 2006 augers well for the future of the rule of law. How so?

Slobodan Milosevic died in custody, under indictment and on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. With his death, ended the long and drawn out agony of a trial that showed the world the monster that he was. This trial exposed the strengths and weaknesses of international criminal law. From this years-long trial will come lessons learned that will assist the advancement of the practice. The world faced down the butcher of the Balkans, the first head of state to be tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Charles Taylor, the first head of state in Africa indicted for war crimes, was handed over by an African head of state to an African based international tribunal via an African country for war crimes and crimes against humanity. As his helicopter touched down at the tribunal's compound in Sierra Leone, a country he personally destroyed, thousands of Sierra Leoneans cheered in the hills surrounding the compound. As he entered the court room several days later to be arraigned on those war crimes and crimes against humanity, Africans came to know that their lives mattered and that cynical African leaders could no longer take for granted their power. The beast of impunity was leashed in West Africa, and perhaps, over time, the continent.

Augusto Pinochet died a disgraced outlaw in his own country that he kept in utter terror for

decades. Chileans sent a powerful signal to their government and to all of South America that the old ways of absolute power are no longer acceptable. His passing reflects the end of centralized power in a dictatorial regime, bolstering the concept of good governance in Chile and within Latin America.

Saddam Hussein was tried, convicted, and executed by an American-backed Iraqi court set up to prosecute his regime for the deaths of his own people. Though the process followed Iraqi criminal law, the specter of justice delivered so swiftly by the Iraqis will always be an asterisk next to this court from an international point of view. As he was led to the gallows, the manner of his execution also showed the indignity by which he died as political partisans shouted insults. In some sense that execution was a final reflection of the sloppy mix of law and politics that floated around that Iraqi court. History will tell whether justice was done. All in all, the law prevailed.

Yet there are wrinkles related to international criminal justice in 2006:

Darfur is the festering and fetid wound that exposes the cynical politics that surrounds international criminal justice. With the limited successes at the end of the last century and the beginning of the 21st century, Darfur reminds us that the path of justice is rocky, strewn with practical and political obstacles that highlight the reality of how politics plays out along with justice at the international level.

In the former Yugoslavia, Messrs. Karadzic and Miladic continue to hide behind the protection of the Serbs, in some way hiding in plain sight. Their continued freedom will keep the tragedy of the Balkans an open chapter in a sad book of agony and horror. Without their handover for trial at The Hague, that tribunal's work will be incomplete. Closure and reconciliation continues to be fleeting for the victims.

The world's superpower, the United States, has stepped away from its responsibility of conducting its military operations in accordance with international standards and this administration is openly attacking the international criminal law regime set up by the Rome Statute. Without the moral leadership of the United States the global effort to face down impunity and international terror will continue to struggle. Only through the rule of law can this so-called ideological struggle against these terrorists be successful.

International justice is as much a political act as it is a legal process. The legal act can only take place after the political one is complete, which can be awkward and unsure to say the least. Darfur is just such an example, as well as Charles Taylor's sanctioned exile for three years. However, the international community is putting together a political framework which may allow the condition for justice to take place for the victims in Darfur; and the international community finally moved efficiently in March of 2006 to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone as the political atmosphere cleared for that to happen. He awaits trial in this spring, the first African head of state ever to be indicted for

violating international humanitarian law.

Despite this, mankind, in general, recognizes that impunity must be faced down wherever it rears its ugly head, of that I am now convinced. Nothing that civilization has done related to atrocity has been precise, yet today we tend not to look the other way, but to act. Historians will look at the beginning years of this century, particularly 2006, with mixed feelings on how the international community dealt with atrocity. All in all, with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, it will either be the beginning of a new dawn for international humanitarian law or a more bleak future. Only time will tell. Regardless, 2006 will be looked on as a watershed year in the evolution of justice at the international level.

David M. Crane is a professor at Syracuse University College of Law, and former founding Chief Prosecutor for the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone (2002-2005).

Segye.com (세계일보 – South Korea)

Thursday, 3 January 2007

<http://www.segye.com/Service5/ShellView.asp?TreeID=1184&PCode=0007&DataID=200701031327000063>

Opinion

Diamonds are a ghoul's best friend

By Clarence Page (syndicated columnist)

Rory Anderson, a senior Africa policy adviser in Washington for World Vision, a Christian aid and development organization told me she had no problem believing the cruelty less-tutored viewers might find too bizarre to comprehend in the new movie "Blood Diamond," an adventure-in-Africa thriller starring Leonardo DiCaprio. Having seen the film in a special preview, she said she appreciates its "realism."

With its Hollywood star power, "Blood Diamond" also offers a welcome public education in the illegal "blood diamonds" or "conflict diamonds" trade. That's the United Nations' term for uncut gems that rebel militias illegally traffic to pay for their wars, quite often against innocent civilians.

The conflict in Sierra Leone, with its well-publicized amputations of men, women and children's hands and feet, looked like a war but it was also a big jewelry heist, a bloody fight for diamond mines and their easy-to-hide, easy-to-smuggle gems.

Indeed, it is important that Americans, who buy more than half of the world's diamonds, know where the glimmer on their pinkies or earlobes may come from.

The Sierra Leone war depicted in the movie officially ended in 2002. But similar battles for illegal diamonds continue in remote areas of the Congo and Ivory Coast, among other troubled spots.

Unfortunately, a September report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office confirmed that smugglers easily penetrate the supply chain with diamonds, which are small, portable and invisible to airport metal detectors.

And too many jewelers still give you a blank stare if you ask for diamond certification. When Amnesty International and the Global Witness two years ago surveyed 246 stores in 50 cities, 110 shops refused outright to take the survey.

Since 99 percent of the industry's \$60 billion annual trade is believed to be legal, aid groups like World Vision are not calling for a boycott of all diamonds. After all, most residents of diamond-mining regions are desperately poor and need the income and development legitimate mining can bring.

Evidence gathered by the United Nations Special Court in Sierra Leone indicates some illegal diamonds from that country fed the coffers of al Qaeda and other international evildoers before the September 11, 2001, attacks. To paraphrase an old song, diamonds can be a terrorist's best friend, too.

The Record.com

Wednesday, 3 January 2007

Opinion

It was not a good year for ruthless oppressors

The death of Augusto Pinochet, the former Chilean dictator whose secret police killed and tortured thousands of dissidents, helped seal 2006 as the most fateful year for war criminals and other human-rights violators since the Nuremberg trials of 1946. At the same time, the docket of human-rights crimes is growing larger and more ill-defined than ever.

Just as the nature of human-rights violations is evolving, so must the international community's response. The International Criminal Court at The Hague, in the Netherlands, will need extra resources to handle all its cases and adjudicate the messier ones. And regional and national courts deserve more support, because they are closest to the complexities on the ground. This year's successes should boost the world's momentum, even as human-rights matters are growing more complicated.

Consider, first, the relative clarity of the accusations against those heads of state who met their fate or had charges brought against them this year.

At the time of his death, Pinochet faced unambiguous charges of ordering his secret police to kill at least 3,197 people and torture about 23,000. He died less than three months after Chile's Supreme Court lifted the immunity that had been protecting him.

Like Pinochet, Slobodan Milosevic died this year before the end of his trial. Also, like Pinochet -- but on a larger scale -- Milosevic controlled a large military and police operation that was responsible for many of the 200,000 deaths in the former Yugoslavia during his reign.

Saddam Hussein, by contrast, lived to see his sentence, and the charges against the former Iraqi president have been as unambiguous as those against Pinochet and Milosevic.

Saddam, always in strong control of the Baath Party and Iraqi armed forces, had been sentenced Nov. 6 to hang for crimes against humanity in the execution of 148 men and children from the Iraqi town of Dujail in 1982. Iraq's appeals court upheld the ruling on Dec. 26.

Also in 2006, Charles Taylor, the former Liberian dictator, was captured and sent to The Hague.

Additionally, former Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam was found guilty, albeit in absentia, of genocide after the 12-year trial of one of Africa's bloodiest governments ended.

That Pinochet, Milosevic and Saddam all met their fates -- and that many others are being brought to trial -- might suggest that the world is finally catching up with its war criminals and human-rights violators.

But these are the faces of yesterday's criminals. Those yet to meet justice are a different lot: greater in number and more difficult to define and prosecute.

First, governments have found a way to blur their connections with killers and rights abusers, particularly in poor countries.

In Sudan, government officials repeatedly deny that they support the Janjaweed militias that have killed roughly 200,000 civilians in Sudan's Darfur region and displaced several hundred thousand more. And, yet, the Sudanese government is widely believed to arm and otherwise back the Janjaweed.

Until Alvaro Uribe became Colombia's president in 2002 and empowered his armed forces, that country's administrations relied heavily on paramilitary groups to battle the leftist FARC insurgency. These paramilitary groups often engaged in more egregious killing and torture than the FARC rebels.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as many as six African countries have at times backed proxy militias in a struggle for power and natural resources. Those militias have contributed to a large share of the four million deaths in Congo since 1998.

More complex than these blurry relationships between governments and war criminals is the growing number of collapsed states. In these places, warring clans and ethnic groups account for most war crimes. Leaders of such groups are diffuse, and the killers often act independently.

In the past decade and a half of near-anarchy in Somalia, warring clans have engaged in "killings and reprisal killings of clan opponents, cases of kidnapping as well as detention, and torture and ill treatment of prisoners," according to a British report.

At the same time, reverberations were still being felt this year from the worst genocide of the 1990s. Simon Bikindi, a famous Rwandan singer, faces charges for writing lyrics that allegedly incited mass killings in 1994. Joining Bikindi on trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda are journalists and religious leaders, along with military commanders and politicians.

The Rwanda tribunal can't handle all the charges, because so many Rwandans led or joined the militias. Now neighbours are trying neighbours in a system called gacaca, which models itself after a traditional form of village-based justice.

Unfortunately, most crimes against humanity don't lend themselves to such creative, grassroots justice. Instead, the international community must seek strategies to identify and try war criminals and their backers in places such as Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Colombia, and, more recently, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Without more global attention and innovation, this year's successes are unlikely to be repeated. The International Criminal Court and related institutions at The Hague can't solve every problem, so regional courts, such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, may deserve more support.

Investment in national judicial systems would help, too, because local courts can best revise immunity laws as well as rebuild citizens' faith in local institutions.

Given all the human-rights abuses in weak and failed states, centralized institutions will need more resources and expertise.

For its part, the U.S. could boost the world's momentum -- and its own moral capital -- by ratifying the International Criminal Court.

Matters have grown more complicated in the 60 years since Nuremberg. While 2006 was indeed a successful year, let's hope the world doesn't have to wait another 60 years for its next big leap forward against war criminals and human-rights abuses.

John Rodden teaches at the University of Texas at Austin, and is an editorial board member of Human Rights Review and the Journal of Human Rights. Michael D. Kerlin, previously a development consultant in Rwanda, writes about international affairs.