

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



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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

International News

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United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 8 Jan. 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Dpa 01/07/2007 11:06:20

Liberian MPs seek speaker's removal over Taiwan contacts

Monrovia_ (Liberia) _ A political crisis is in the making in Liberia as legislators in the lower house of parliament begin signing a resolution to remove the speaker of the house "for acts incompatible with his status." The legislators have cited Edwin Melvin Snowe's attempt early last year to violate the "one-China" policy supported by the government by making contacts with Taiwanese leaders about reopening diplomatic ties.

International Clips on West Africa

01/08/2007 04:03:37

The Truth about Foreign Aid in Sierra Leone

Concord Times (Sierra Leone) via NewsEdge Corporation: If there were an annual global prize for governmental cluelessness, the perennial record holder would undoubtedly be a government from the long list of desperately poor African countries. Sadly, the successive governments in Sierra Leone since 1967 would be the favorite for the annual honor of the most clueless on earth. It is a testament to the depth of the hole from which our country has to climb that, here we are in the 21st century and the government still trumpets with clueless delight the most recent announcement of yet another foreign "aid" package from its undoubtedly well-meaning benefactors -- the very same, mainly

THE GUARDIAN 01/07/2007 20:21:54

UK class action starts over toxic waste dumped in Africa: 'Botched disposal

JOHN VIDAL, ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

Lawyers will today begin preparing the ground for one of the largest class actions heard in the UK over 400 tonnes of allegedly highly toxic waste dumped in the Ivory Coast from a cargo ship chartered by a London-based company. The legal team will start taking statements from thousands of witnesses. At least 10 people died and more than 40,000 sought medical advice after suffering from sickness and nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, breathlessness, headaches, skin damage, and swollen stomachs. Hospitals, health centres and the Red Cross were overwhelmed after noxious fumes drifted over the city. Amid angry protests and panic, the government temporarily collapsed.

Local Media – Newspapers

Speaker Snowe Faces Removal As Bribery Claim Emerges

(Liberian Express, New Democrat, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The Monitor, Public Agenda and Heritage)

- What appears to be a political crisis has begun at the House of Representatives as some lawmakers including Dr. Bhofal Chambers and Dr. Keterkumeh Murray have signed a resolution calling for the impeachment of the Speaker, Edwin Snowe.
- According to Article 49 of the Liberian Constitution, "The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority."
- The representatives want the Speaker impeached for supposedly meddling in the country's foreign policy and presenting a Lebanese national as a member of the Legislature during a conference he attended last year in the Arab Emirate of Qatar.
- At the same time, two lawmakers, Saah Gbollie and Samuel Bondo, claimed yesterday that they were given US\$5,000 each to execute a resolution to impeach the Speaker. Speaker Snowe had earlier accused President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of masterminding plans to unseat him, a claim the President has denied.

IRI Promises to Provide over US\$40,000 for Nimba County By-Election

(The News and Heritage)

- An American pro-democracy group, International Republican Institute (IRI) Liberia said that it would provide more than US\$40,000 for the pending Nimba County By-election. According to the Acting Country Director of IRI, Mohammed Boakai, the group would provide the money for the establishment of a resource center in Saclepea for the use of representatives of political parties who will contest the election.

One Million Bags of Rice Expected this Week

(The Analyst, The News, Daily Observer, Liberian Express, The Inquirer, The Informer, Independent and The Monitor)

- The Chief Executive Officer of the Sinkor Trading Company (STC), Eddie Brown, disclosed last Friday that 44,000 metric tons of the nation's staple food, rice, equivalent to one million bags is expected to arrive at the Freeport of Monrovia this week.

President Johnson-Sirleaf Makes New Appointments in Government

(The News, The Analyst, The Informer, Daily Observer, Heritage and New Democrat)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has made new appointments in Government. Those appointed included Mrs. Sedia Massaquoi Bangura, Ambassador designate to the Federal Republic of Germany, Counsellor Christiana Tah, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Mr. John Morlu, III, Auditor-General, Bureau of General Auditing and Mr. Samuel E. Hare, Deputy Minister for Youth Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports. An Executive Mansion release said the appointees are to assume their respective functions pending confirmation by the Liberian Senate.

Lawmakers Reveal Conspiracy to Unseat House Speaker

- In a press release issued in Monrovia over the weekend, House of Representatives Sahr Gbollie and Samuel Bondo said that there was a major conspiracy to remove Representative Edwin Snowe as Speaker of the House of Representatives and to that effect, Representatives Edward Ford, Alexander Tyler and Elijah Sieh gave them US\$5,000 each to implement the plan.
- Representatives Gbollie and Bondo noted that they received the amounts not with the intention of removing the Speaker but as “evidence.”
- However, Representatives Ford and Tyler confirmed holding series of meetings and that a “Resolution” was signed to remove the Speaker but denied giving money to any of their colleagues to effect the Speaker’s removal.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

UNMIL Reconditions Reconciliatory Meetings Room in Bomi County

- The Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Mr. Jordan Ryan on Saturday dedicated a building in Tubmanburg, Bomi County which is being used by local people and traditional leaders to hold reconciliatory meetings and conflict resolution forums. Mr. Ryan hoped that the building would play an important role in the future of Bomi. The Pakistani Contingent of UNMIL in Tubmanburg rehabilitated the building under UNMIL’s Quick Impact Projects at the cost of more than US\$13,000.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

JPC Director Entreats National Legislature to Scrap Unjust Laws

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission Executive Director, Cllr. Augustine Toe entreated the National Legislature to scrap unjust laws in the Constitution of Liberia and pointed out that holding news conference and condemning Government policies without taking concrete actions was unbeneficial to Liberians.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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

Senator Says “What Is the Law” is National Legislature’s Theme for 2007

- Grand Kru County Senator Blamo Nelson said that the National Legislature will have as its theme for 2007, “What Is The Law” asserting that all decisions taken by the Government in the new year should be guided by the theme.
- In an interview with Star Radio, Senator Nelson said that it was now time for everyone to live up to the true meaning of a country governed by the rule of law and not men.

Lofa County Lawmaker Wants “Agriculture Break” Stopped

- Lofa County Representative Eugene Fallah Kpaka called for the concept of “Agriculture Break” for members of the National Legislature to be stopped as the break contravened the actual work Legislators do when they are away. He suggested that the name be changed to Annual Legislative Break which would allow Legislators to visit their constituencies to solicit the views of the people and not just to make farms.

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

Spiegel Online

Monday, 8 January 2007

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,457930,00.html>

Ma Ellen, General Peanut Butter, and Liberia's Quest for Normalcy

By Jan Puhl

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first female president in African history, has had a successful first year. By Liberian standards. The street lights in Monrovia are back on, but a parliament full of warlords makes governing difficult.



Three decades ago the Ducor Palace Hotel was the place to stay, not just in the Liberian capital Monrovia, but on the entire continent. Indeed, it was one of only a handful of five-star hotels in all of Africa. It sat at the top of the tallest hill in Mamba Point, a well-to-do neighborhood in Monrovia. Businessmen from China, the United States and Europe sat around the pool sipping cocktails. The country that attracted them was an exporter of rubber, diamonds and wood, and its economy was thriving.

Nowadays the Ducor is a ruin. Like almost everything else in Monrovia and throughout this West African country, the decaying building has been looted and its walls are riddled with bullet holes. A greenish soup coats the bottom of the swimming pool and the lobby has become a temporary shelter for refugees from the north, who have divided up the room into individual spaces using woven mats as walls. It is pitch-dark and the air is acrid with smoke. Only a few wealthy families and foreign aid workers can afford generators, while the refugees in the Ducor must make do with wood fires.

The bridge spanning the St. Paul River is visible from the hotel. Three and a half years the crossing was a regular feature on news programs around the world. The civil war in Liberia was raging, and adolescent rebels waged their last brutal battles with dictator Charles Taylor's child soldiers.

Rocket-propelled grenades rained down on Monrovia for days until international pressure eventually forced those responsible for the slaughter into exile abroad. "God willing I will be back," Taylor said ominously before boarding a flight to Nigeria. But he was wrong. Taylor is now sitting in a prison cell in The Hague, pending his trial for war crimes before an international special tribunal.

Switching on the generator

A spark of life has returned to the ruins of Liberia since Taylor's ouster. About 16,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops are stationed in this nation of 3 million, together with a gigantic UN support operation. Symbolic of the new hope, the streetlights on Tubman Boulevard have gone on every night since the summer -- after having been dark for a decade and a half. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, 67, the country's new president switched on the generator in a festive ceremony that amounted to a minor miracle.

In November 2005, Johnson-Sirleaf won the first free elections since Liberia's founding in 1847, prevailing over popular former football star George Weah. She has been president for a year now and in that time has become a political star in her own right, even

earning accolades from the opposition. Visitors at the market refer to the president as "Ma Ellen" or "Grandma." Even the country's newspaper, *The Liberian Times*, refers to Johnson-Sirleaf by her first name in headlines such as: "Ellen Makes Case for Lifting of Liberia's Sanctions."



The first elected female head of state in African history faces the daunting challenge of cleaning up a huge mess. According to UN statistics, Liberia is currently one of the world's three poorest countries. Monrovia, with its wrecked streets and railroads, is like a ghost town. In the parliament former warlords debate the future of a country that, until recently, they had done their utmost to destroy.

One-hundred-thousand decommissioned soldiers, many hardly more than children, are the most burdensome relic of the slaughter John-Peter Pham, an American expert on Liberia, has called the "prototype of a failed state." With all this baggage Ma Ellen has her work cut out for her.

Johnson-Sirleaf, the granddaughter of a German businessman and a Liberian woman, clearly feels up to the task. She grew up in the country and rebelled against its corrupt and dictatorial rulers. She was forced to flee and went to the United States to study business administration. She acquired experience in international politics and a good reputation as a manager while working at the World Bank.

Ma Ellen plays it tough

Now she is back in Liberia. But even as a head of state, Johnson-Sirleaf never trades her traditional, colorful West African dress -- a long skirt, blouse and brightly colored headscarf -- for Western business attire. A mother of four grown sons, she spends as little time as possible at her office across from the beach in Monrovia, instead preferring to spend as much time as possible with her enthusiastic supporters. She shakes hands, listening to the concerns of teachers in Greenville and nurses in Buchanan.

But Ma Ellen, this friendly looking, round-faced mother of a nation, is just as adept at playing it tough. Shortly after taking office she marched into the finance ministry and promptly fired every official in the building. Only those who could prove without a doubt that they were not corrupt were allowed to return to their jobs. The message she is clearly conveying to international donors is that her administration is serious about "good governance."

The new president's energetic drive has tugged many Liberians out of political apathy, including Maruyah Fyneah, the chairwoman of the country's women's association. Fyneah believes that Johnson-Sirleaf is the best thing that could possibly have happened to her country. "The men truly drove this place into the ground; just take a look around." Fyneah waves her arm in a wide arc toward the window. Her office in downtown Monrovia is in a building that consists of little more than a concrete skeleton, with rusty metal framing elements protruding from the walls and crumbling stairs.

The country's newfound optimism could very well be justified. Nevertheless, the past has left an indelible impression. "This society is severely traumatized," says Jerome Verdier, 38, a sad-eyed attorney. Verdier survived the war in Monrovia, fending off starvation and hiding from marauding bands of child soldiers. As the director of the recently established Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he now shares an office in a ruined downtown building with five employees.

Rebels and government troops killed some 250,000 Liberians during the years of civil war. Almost half of all Liberian women were raped, and assets worth several billion dollars were destroyed.

Verdier's job is to process the country's horrific past. He wants to call the warlords to account so that they can confess to their crimes and show regret. Based on the South African model, Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission even has the power to pardon former war criminals. "We have no other choice," says Verdier. "We must live together and each of us must try to understand the other side's hatred and suffering."

MP General Peanut Butter

The civil war's foot soldiers were primarily adolescents who were armed to the teeth and high on drugs much of the time. They painted their fingernails and wore colorful wigs and the clothing of New York hip-hoppers. They wore magical amulets around their necks, believing the charms could ward off bullets. One rebel battalion routinely went into battle stark naked. Their leaders went by such strange names as Adolphus Dolo, also known as General Peanut Butter. He too is a member of parliament today.

In the carnage, the original goal of driving dictator Taylor from his palace in Monrovia was eventually forgotten, as the war became a means unto itself. Rebel leaders became war profiteers who assembled private armies to plunder mines and forests. They sold lumber, diamonds and rubber abroad, buying new weapons with the proceeds. The child soldiers robbed, murdered and burned in much the same way that their elders would do elsewhere. They ripped out and consumed the hearts of their dead enemies, in the belief that this would transfer the power of the vanquished to the victors.

The country that had descended into an orgy of violence was once the hope of thousands of slaves from the United States. Liberia's coat of arms bears the inscription: "The love of liberty brought us here." Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister, founded the American Colonization Society in Washington in 1816 with the goal of helping freed slaves to acquire their own country in Africa.

The first pioneers soon set sail for Africa on board American warships. The newcomers formed the upper class in Liberia from the beginning, imitating the lifestyles of their former masters and strolling through Monrovia in tailcoats and bowlers. Voting was restricted to the settlers and their offspring, who occupied the key posts in the country's government and economy.



This form of black apartheid proved surprisingly long-lived. It wasn't until April 12, 1980 that a group of rebel soldiers managed to occupy the presidential palace. Their leader, First Sergeant Samuel Doe of the Kran tribe, had the president slaughtered in his bed and promptly assumed his office. Once in office, the new president began learning to read and write -- and proved quick to fill all government posts with members of his tribe and drive the economy into the ground.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was one of those who fled from the reign of terror imposed by Doe's police force. She initially supported Charles Taylor, but the two soon quarrelled. Taylor then led a rebel force armed with Libyan weapons on Monrovia. The civil war had begun.

Doe was one of its first victims when he fell into the hands of rebel general Prince Johnson. Johnson ordered his soldiers to slice off the shackled president's ears, and Johnson's thugs spent the ensuing hours torturing the dictator. A video of the torture session is still sold today in Monrovia's markets. Despite the atrocities committed in his name, Prince Johnson is also a member of the current parliament. He will soon be summoned to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"Why Charles Taylor?"

Jewel Howard-Taylor will also likely have to make an appearance before the commission, which she holds in very low regard. Howard-Taylor raises money for the defense of Charles Taylor, to whom she has been married since 1997, although the couple is said to have separated long ago.

The ex-dictator's former wife is fond of the gaudiness of Rococo. Her office is filled with pretentious furniture in the style of Louis XV. A memento of her better days hangs on the wall: a photo op showing Howard-Taylor with Hillary Clinton during a visit to the United States. An energetic woman in her early 40s, Howard-Taylor manages her husband's political legacy and with the support of his party members, she has even managed to be elected as a senator.

"Why Charles Taylor?" she asks. "There are all kinds of people here who also deserve to be taken to court." Ominously, she adds: "Who knows if he'll even survive until the end of the case. Milosevic also died in custody under strange circumstances."

Howard-Taylor is critical of the Johnson-Sirleaf government for having dismissed too many people from the army and security forces too quickly. She also believes that Johnson-Sirleaf should proceed with caution when privatizing the country's mines and plantations, although she is in favor of the UN lifting its travel restrictions on the warlords as quickly as possible. These are all demands that play well with her former husband's supporters. Many in Monrovia believe that Jewel Howard-Taylor plans to run against Johnson-Sirleaf in the next presidential election.

Jenkins Steward would never vote for Howard-Taylor, nor would any of his friends, he says. "We are now for Ellen," he says. "Anyone else would bring us nothing but ruin." Steward fought with the Lurd rebel group and took part in the battle for Monrovia. He has been harvesting rubber since a group of about 3,000 rebel fighters took over the state-owned Guthrie plantation about 35 kilometers (22 miles) northwest of Monrovia shortly after the war ended. Many gained a foothold at the plantation and are still there.

The rubber trees are planted in straight rows, the groves connected by muddy roads leading through the forest. A group of boys keeps emerging from the underbrush; one has a large scar on his face and another is missing an arm. Steward, at 30-years-old, is one of the oldest. The war ended three years ago, and yet most former soldiers are barely 20 today. And most of them can never return home. During the civil war, they were recruited as children off the street and to make them subservient, the commanders forced the soldiers to rape their sisters or shoot their mothers.

Five dollars a day

In 2006, the young men were happy to have found a home of sorts once again. Steward lives with five "brothers" in a hut where the only wall decoration consists of a poster of Charles Taylor in handcuffs. There is no electricity. Every morning the men head out into the groves, where they use metal hooks mounted on long poles to scratch spiral-shaped incisions into the rubber trees. The spiral shape allows the white rubber sap to flow downward, where it is collected in coconut shells. Dealers pay \$500 for a ton of the material -- a lot of money in a country where the majority of people must survive on less than \$1 a day.

Jenkins Steward is proud of what he and his friends have built. "There is less crime here than in Monrovia," he says. "We have work and our wives live here. None of us wants to fight anymore." Guthrie's child soldiers created their own republic on the plantation, complete with its own executive council and makeshift parliament.

But the government in Monrovia, loath to tolerate this much self-determination, recently repossessed the plantation. A government agent now takes delivery of the harvest -- for a fraction of the price previously paid for the rubber. Some of the former child soldiers have left Guthrie and now are roaming throughout this destroyed country, stealing to support themselves.

Others have moved on to the neighboring Ivory Coast, which is now in the midst of its own civil war. The Ivorian rebels pay their new recruits \$5 a day.

Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

Thisday Online (Nigeria) (Excerpt)

Monday, 8 January 2007

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=67555>

2007: Challenges, Opportunities in Nigerian Law

CHIDI ANSELM ODINKALU examines critical factors which he says will shape the nation's legal landscape in 2007 and concludes it will surely be a year of enormous legal challenges and opportunities

-SNIP-

Fugitive former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, lost his safe haven in Nigeria and is now a detainee awaiting trial before the UN-supported Special Court for Sierra Leone where his trial will begin in April 2007. Also in 2006, the ECOWAS Court of Justice achieved take-off with some thumping jurisprudence that should make the leaders and courts of all 15 ECOWAS member States take notice and the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights was inaugurated.

-SNIP-

Professor Odinkalu is of the Africa Program, Open Society Justice Initiative