

**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
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UN envoy praises work of Mongolian peace keepers who protect the Sierra Leone Special Court

Monrovia, Liberia – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia (SRSG), Mr. Alan Doss, today travelled to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he awarded UN peacekeeping medals to 250 Mongolian troops serving with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) but currently deployed to provide military guard service for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Observing that the Special Court has continued its work “to prosecute those most responsible for crimes committed during Sierra Leone’s civil war and to help end the culture of impunity”, the SRSG reminded the Mongolian contingent that their support remained vital to the work of the Court.



SRSG Doss decorates a Mongolian officer with the UN peacekeeping medal

Earlier in the day, SRSG Doss paid a courtesy call on Sierra Leone’s President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

UNMIL has been mandated by the Security Council to provide a military guard force at the Special Court. Since January 2006, this is the third Mongolian contingent to serve in this capacity. During the ceremony, the Mongolian troops engaged in an impressive display of martial arts and military skills.



A section of the Mongolian contingent that took part in the medals ceremony

Also attending today’s ceremony were UNMIL Military Chief of Staff, Brigadier General John Forkuo, the Deputy Chief of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Brigadier Nelson Williams, Acting Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel and Commanding Officer of the Mongolian Contingent, Lieutenant Colonel Jambaa Badambasar, among other military, UNMIL and UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) officials.

Voice of America

Friday, 4 May 2007

Sierra Leone Trials Frustrate Activists

By Nico Colombant
Dakar

Proceedings against a former rebel leader have resumed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown, even as the court's slow pace is frustrating human rights activists. VOA's Nico Colombant reports from Dakar.

Revolutionary United Front commander Issa Sesay took the stand Thursday, saying he had been recruited by the late Foday Sankoh, thinking he was getting a job in a restaurant in Burkina Faso.

He now fights against 18 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the devastating 1990s war, marked by the use and abuse of child soldiers and the mutilation of victims.



Security officer at the prison dock in Freetown

With him in the Freetown dock are two other former rebel leaders, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbow.

The trial started nearly three years ago.

Sankoh died while in custody, but Special Court head prosecutor Stephen Rapp, says the case is still significant.

"We are dealing here in this case with people who were very important commanders according to the evidence that we presented of the RUF forces, very active in the command of that organization. Of course, for substantial periods of the war, Sankoh was in custody himself, so these were active leaders, according to our evidence," said Rapp. "It would be possible in this case for the story fundamentally to be told and for those who are living who were at the very senior ranks to be held responsible, if the judge so finds, based on the evidence that has been presented."

In addition to Sankoh, a main militia leader also died in custody, another rebel leader was killed before he was caught, while another infamous indictee, a former junta leader, is at large.

Sesay said Thursday allegations against him are rumor and folklore.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor, initially given exile in Nigeria but then arrested, is due go on trial next month. His trial was moved from Freetown to The Hague, due to security reasons.

London-based African human rights activist Ibrahima Kane laments the fact the cases have dragged on, that Taylor is being tried outside West Africa, and that there are so few indictees.

"A lot of money has been spent to try to deal with one of the biggest atrocities that Africa apart from the genocide in Rwanda has faced, but up to now there is nothing that has been done to show that we are really trying to sort out the problem in the country. Nothing. Nothing," said Kane. "Have you seen any important trial? Nothing, nothings has been done."

Kane believes West Africa should not let this historic opportunity pass.

"We cannot continue to just sit down and look at this tribunal failing to really prosecute and to really do its work. It is really important that if we create an institution to deal with an important problem like the atrocities committed in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, we have to make sure that justice is done," he said. "If justice is not done, all these commissions, truth and reconciliation commissions, will be rubbish. Because people will think that as far as these people are still there,

they may escape one day and start again what they only know, it is killing, it is abducting, it is raping, it is doing all these atrocities and today nothing has been done to change that reality."

Officials in Freetown invariably remind critics the Special Court's mandate is to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes committed in Sierra Leone after late 1996. They say that is being done with those caught and alive at the fastest possible speed, given the complexities of the court's set-up, problems with staff and funding.

Head prosecutor Rapp says many notable developments should actually take place in the weeks ahead.

"We are busy in Freetown for this case. We anticipate for this month or next month to have judgments in our two other big cases that we have tried over the course of a couple of years here in Freetown," he said. "So we will have those judgments and then if there are convictions then there will have to be sentencing proceedings and also presumably the appeals. So things will get very busy in Freetown at the same time that we are proceeding with the Charles Taylor trial scheduled to commence in the Hague on the fourth of June."

Court officials say they will try to make the Charles Taylor case as media accessible as possible to people in Sierra Leone, even if it will take place in Europe.

What is called a pre-trial conference is scheduled to take place Monday in Freetown and may continue into Tuesday.

BBC

Friday, 4 May 2007

Sierra Leone to delay elections

Sierra Leone has said that it is pushing back the date of presidential and legislative elections by two weeks.

The polls, the first since UN peacekeepers left in 2005, had been scheduled to take place on 28 July.

But electoral officials said that the original date does not allow sufficient time from the dissolving of parliament to organise an election.



President Kabbah will not be standing in the election

The opposition criticised the president's original choice of date, saying it had been "arbitrary".

Test poll

The original date for the elections was named over a year in advance by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who will not be eligible for re-election.

The new date set for elections is 11 August which the electoral commission says will give them enough time to organise the poll, including obtaining all nominations and printing ballot papers.

Parliament will be dissolved on 26 June.

Correspondents say the polls will be a test of whether Sierra Leone is on the road to full recovery from the brutal 10-year civil war, which ended in 2002.

President Kabbah and his Sierra Leone People's Party secured a landslide victory in the May 2002 elections, held with UN peacekeepers still in the country.

Peacekeepers were deployed in 2000 to enforce a ceasefire between the government and the Revolutionary United Front rebel group, but it was only in 2001 that the UN force managed to secure formerly rebel-held areas.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 04 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

VOA 04 May 2007

Taylor Looks Forward to Start of His Trial, Lawyer Says

By James Butty, Washington, D.C.

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor is due to begin a month from Friday, June fourth in The Hague. Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in the Sierra Leone civil war. Both the prosecution and Taylor's defence lawyers are said to be busy preparing for the case. James Lavela Supuwood is the former Solicitor General of Liberia and one of Taylor's lawyers. He has just returned from The Hague to visit with Mr. Taylor.

Soros Makes \$5 Million Pledge To Fill Gap in Official Assistance for Education

Brussels, May 04, 2007 (Liberian Education Trust/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --Following is the text of a speech by global financier and philanthropist George Soros, delivered to the "Keeping our Promises on Education" conference organized by the European Union. Three months ago I stood in a slum in Monrovia, Liberia. War had taken its toll. Four years after the conflict ended there was still no electricity. There was no water.

American University to Support Education in Liberia

May 03, 2007 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --An American Institution, Langston University, has announced the establishment of a five year partnership to support President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's education initiatives in Liberia. Under the plan, the University is making available thirty-five thousand (\$35,000) United States dollars to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to support her education initiatives.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone ex-rebel chief begins testifying in war crimes trial

FREETOWN, May 3, 2007 (AFP) - Former rebel commander Issa Sesay began testifying Thursday in his war crimes trial arising from the activities of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

VOA 03 May 2007

Guinean Soldiers Fire Shots over Pay Disputes

By Naomi Schwarz, Dakar

Gunfire heard overnight across Guinea ended without external intervention. Witnesses say the gunfire came from soldiers agitating for unpaid back wages.

Local Media – Newspaper

Panelists Say Press Freedom Still “Farfetched” in Liberia

(Public Agenda, The Informer, New Democrat, National Chronicle, The News, New Vision, The Inquirer and Heritage)

- Addressing a forum marking this year’s celebration of World Press Freedom Day, human rights defender Aloysius Toe and Labour Minister Kofi Woods said freedom for Liberian press is still farfetched and that there was more left to be done by journalists, the Government and the public in order to achieve this goal.

Prisoners Break Jail in Nimba County

(The Inquirer)

- Twenty-nine inmates are said to have escaped from the Sanniquellie Central Prison in Nimba County. According to the County Attorney, William Kei, the issue of jail break was on the increase. Attorney Kei said this was the third time for criminals to escape prison in large number.

UNMIL Boss Urges Immigration Officers to Control Liberia’s Borders

(The Informer, Public Agenda and Heritage)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss has opened the first in a series of six workshops intended to strengthen the skills of Liberian immigration officers, urging the officers to carefully control the country’s borders and ensuring that those who came into the country did so for the right purposes in accordance with the Aliens and Nationality Laws of Liberia.

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

Journalists Group Lifts Ban on *The Independent* Newspaper

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Deactivated Soldiers Want Lawmakers Endorse Veteran Commission Act

- The spokesman of former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia Capt. John F. Kollie admonished the National Legislature to pass into Law the draft Act that seeks to establish a Ministry of Veteran Affairs which had been sent to the Lawmakers by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

President Makes New Appointments in Security Sector

- An Executive Mansion release said that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf appointed Lemuel Sherman as Deputy Minister for Operations of the Ministry of National Security, James Henry Pearson as Deputy Director for Operations at the National Security Agency, James Kanneh as Assistant Director for Special Services of the National Security Agency and James Zarwolo as Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Forum on National Food Security Starts in Monrovia Today

- Correspondents said that a major forum to build national consensus on food security got underway in Monrovia and was being conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Rights Campaigner Says Press Freedom Threatened in Liberia

- One of the panellists at a forum to mark this year’s World Press Freedom Day, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FORHD) Aloysius Toe hinted that press freedom was under threat in Liberia since the inception of the Unity Party-led Government.

- Mr. Toe catalogued attacks on journalists and abusers of press freedom and free speech stating that those who attack the press today do so with same motive as those who did so in the past to trample on free speech.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

So-Called Landowners Set to Obstruct Government Demolition Exercise

- Citizens of Duazohn in Margibi County said that they would unleash what they called: "Poro Society Devil" on Defense Minister Brownie Samukai because he was in the habit of demolishing their newly constructed houses without "justifiable" reasons. The spokesman of the citizens Roland Cooper stated that more than 1,000 men and women have been put on alert to prevent further demolition of their structures.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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.

Newsweek

5 April 2007 issue

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18422899/site/newsweek/>

One Woman's Rage Against Injustice

Carla Del Ponte on the fatal bombing that helped turn her into the U.N.'s top war-crimes prosecutor
By Carla Del Ponte

It was the evening of May 23, 1992. I picked up the phone and heard that the Italian judge Giovanni Falcone was dead. A mafia bomb had destroyed Falcone's car, killing him, his wife and three of their bodyguards. The message was clear: mess with the mafia, and this is what happens. I was stunned, terrified. I thought of quitting prosecutorial work and going back to handling divorce and commercial cases. Then I began to burn with rage—against the mafia, impunity, injustice.

Falcone was a fascinating and courageous man, an examining magistrate from Sicily who had waged war against organized crime and the culture of impunity that was sapping the vitality of his country. In the early 1980s, shortly after I was appointed examining magistrate in Lugano, Switzerland, I was asked to deal with one of Falcone's requests for assistance. This brought me into contact with arguably the most influential individual in my life. Over the years, I was to work with him on some of the most significant mafia cases. Watching him interrogate witnesses and suspects and pursue leads even when the road ahead seemed empty, I learned how to conduct dangerous and complex cases and to persevere in the face of criticism and threats. Falcone's murder reinforced my determination to pursue justice.

This pursuit took on new meaning in 1999 when I was appointed chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. I was stunned by the horrific crimes that confronted me: I had never seen death and destruction on such a scale. Thousands of victims had been killed, raped, maimed and displaced. Most of these crimes had been organized at the highest political levels—by presidents, prime ministers, cabinet members and top military brass—and committed by local politicians, party bosses, regular armed forces, paramilitaries and ordinary citizens. Entire societies had been destroyed. For the first time in my life, in addition to my professional responsibility I felt a deep moral obligation to do what I could for the hundreds of thousands of victims of these heinous crimes. I felt that I was their only official representative in these proceedings.

In the eight years that I have worked as an international prosecutor, we have won many victories against impunity, bringing to trial a sitting head of state (Slobodan Milosevic), military and police chiefs, numerous local warlords, political leaders and practically an entire government. We tried the organizers, and we tried some of the executioners. We secured the first genocide convictions since World War II. For the first time in history, we proved that rape is a war crime. Most important, we obtained some measure of justice for the victims. I say "some" because the job is still not done. It is not done in Rwanda, where investigations of possible crimes committed by the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front have been blocked by political pressure. The job is also not done in the former Yugoslavia, where Serbia—the first state ever to be found in violation of the genocide convention—openly protects indicted war criminals, yet is being embraced by the European Union.

At the global level, meanwhile, the fight for justice has barely begun. We continue to live in a world where double standards are the rule, not the exception. Some crimes are being prosecuted by international tribunals, but many are not. Some states are being held accountable for their violations of human rights, but others are not. Major powers continue to protect their clients and allies regardless of their criminal

records. Values like the rule of law are loudly proclaimed, but quietly disregarded when they clash with political or business interests.

I believe that we as citizens must raise our voices when our leaders make hypocritical compromises with dictators, criminals or states protecting génocidaires. In the United States, Europe and parts of Asia, civil society has the power to hold governments accountable. What an extraordinary privilege this is. It is one still lacking in too many nations. Those of us that have it, therefore, have a moral duty to use it. I, for one, plan to continue doing so.

Del Ponte is currently the chief war-crimes prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

The Guardian

Monday, 7 May 2007

Process remains fraught in decades-long wait for justice in Cambodia

The Khmer Rouge nightmare that terrorised Cambodia during the 1970s ended nearly 30 years ago.

In Rwanda and Sierra Leone, the wheels of justice turned quickly, with tribunals investigating events that kicked off within a few years of the mass killing.

For Cambodians, it has been an agonisingly long wait for justice. Since the Khmer Rouge tribunal was finally established in Phnom Penh last year, they have been kept waiting again, with legal squabbles over rules of evidence delaying the indictment stage, when some senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge would be formally charged under international law with crimes against humanity and genocide.

This hybrid tribunal, with international and Cambodian judges sitting together as co-prosecutors, was also adopted by the Sierra Leone tribunal. A special UN mission is in charge of legal assistance to the tribunal.

The final hurdle - the legal fees to be paid by foreign lawyers defending the accused (senior Khmer Rouge leaders) to the Cambodian bar council, has just been sorted out.

The original demand, that foreign defence lawyers should pay around US\$4,900 (Bt170,177) a year for the privilege of addressing a "Cambodian court", has been knocked down to a reasonable \$500 fee.

The international judges threatened a boycott against "extortionate" fees that might have undermined the right of the accused to choose foreign counsel (the prosecution is led by a Canadian lawyer with a Cambodian co-prosecutor).

French lawyer Jacques Verges, who has made his mark with his energetic defence of notorious clients including Klaus Barbie and Carlos the Jackal (Ilich Ramrez Snchez), has promised to appear at the tribunal on behalf of Khieu Samphan, president of the Khmer Rouge regime and, as it happens, a former student classmate of Verges in Paris.

Why such monumental procrastination over Cambodia? In the aftermath of the Pol Pot bloodbath, international lawyers were largely silent, when, in 1979 and the early 1980s, Cambodian survivors publicly called for an international tribunal.

The US and some western governments preferred to support the bloody credentials of the Khmer Rouge - keeping them in the Cambodia seat at the UN - rather than the cause of international justice. Many observers in the 1980s and even the 1990s predicted that a Cambodia tribunal would never happen.

It was only in 1997 that the UN belatedly recognised that these terrible crimes should be addressed. Even then, UN-Cambodia negotiations dragged on for six years until a final agreement in 2003.

Certainly no other tribunal has endured so many obstacles and so many governments vehemently opposed to the cause of justice.

Finally, a tribunal was announced (officially known as ECCC - the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) and set up last year. But even this glimmer of justice is under threat from many quarters.

The purveyors of doom and gloom have cast a pall of pessimism over proceedings. Rumours abound of international judges about to walk out, the tribunal on the verge of collapse, or speculation that Prime Minister Hun Sen's government is hell-bent on sabotaging the whole thing.

But the Phnom Penh reality is far more complicated and nuanced. The decades of cynical neglect during which time several Khmer Rouge leaders have died, including Pol Pot, and the tortured history of negotiations has made this a uniquely complicated tribunal from the outset.

No one is more deeply committed to a tribunal than Khmer Rouge victim Chhang Youk, who today heads the internationally respected Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-Cam) the genocide research centre set up in 1994 after US Congress passed the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act.

Chhang said: "I am very satisfied with the prosecution, with both Cambodian and international lawyers. They are working just fine together, there is no conflict here. They are a model of cooperation for the rest of the tribunal." DC-Cam has released more than 58,000 documents to the prosecution, including vital telegrams and communications sent by top leaders.

Unfortunately, arguments over legal fees and rules of evidence have obscured the impressive progress made by the joint prosecution team led by Canadian Robert Petit.

Petit, an international prosecutor who served in war crimes tribunals in Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone, is among the most positive. "We've made a lot of progress, more than other tribunals [at this stage]. We have a pretty good record, especially considering the limited resources we have."

The prosecution team is ready to proceed with indictments. The tribunal has not run aground, but it continues to sail through turbulent waters. As one insider who is trying hard to make the tribunal work describes it: "Some international judges seemed to have a hard time understanding anything about Cambodia, [and] more than a few Cambodian judges do not understand much beyond the borders of Cambodia." This is a recipe for acute misunderstanding.

It has been suggested that keeping this tribunal on the rails and on time to deliver justice requires a special UN envoy. The existing UN body is headed by Michelle Lee, a UN coordinator who runs the administration of the international component.

In most UN missions, New York appoints a credible diplomat to head the mission and mediate any conflict with the host government.

The history of UN-Cambodia negotiations over the tribunal has often been acrimonious. In 2002, the UN legal affairs team staged a unilateral walkout over the negotiations, which delayed the formation of the tribunal by at least a year.

The tribunal has also faced hostility from China, who, it seems, never wanted it to happen in the first place. Flip-flops from Prime Minister Sen and his tribunal task force are partly explained by intense pressure from Beijing to save face from damning facts that will come out in the trial concerning their complicity and support for the Pol Pot regime.

The struggle to ensure this tribunal abides by international standards and solves conflicts quickly is crying out for dynamic mediator. The UN needs to appoint an outstanding diplomat or former statesman to help both sides avoid further deadlock.

This tribunal will continue to be plagued with bottlenecks and problems until the UN finds a respected mediator, acceptable to both sides, to expedite the process.

Tom Fawthrop
The Guardian
Phnom Penh

Tom Fawthrop is a freelance foreign correspondent based in Southeast Asia.