

**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:

Friday, 13 July 2007

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

Special Court Signs Sentence Enforcement Agreement .../ <i>SCSL Press Release</i>	Page 3
Liberia to Seize Taylor Assets / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 4

International News

Liberia 'to Seize Taylor Assets' / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 5
As Sentencing Approaches, Cynicism About Sierra Leone Tribunal Lingers / <i>Sierra Eye</i>	Pages 6-8
US Professors and Students Laid Groundwork for Charles Taylor Trial / <i>Voice of America</i>	Pages 9-10
UN Fund Approves Projects to Assist Peacebuilding Efforts / <i>UN News Service</i>	Page 11
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 12-15



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 12 July 2007

Special Court Signs Enforcement Agreement With British Government



The newly appointed Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Mr. Herman von Hebel, on 10 July 2007 signed a Sentence Enforcement Agreement with the British Government.

Minister for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the British Government Lord Mark Malloch-Brown signed on behalf of his government.

After the signing ceremony, Lord Brown said: "Signing this agreement enables the UK to give effect to our commitment

to imprison former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted by the Special Court and demonstrates again our strong support for the Court.

"I pay tribute to the Court's work in bringing to justice those accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war. This is making a major contribution to the cause of international justice and is an essential part of the process of restoring and maintaining stability in Sierra Leone.

"We must all continue to make clear that there can be no impunity for those who would commit these most serious crimes. I therefore urge the international community to maintain its support, financial and otherwise, for the Court so that it can continue this important work."

This is the third Enforcement Agreement for the Court. The other two are with the Government of Sweden and Austria.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

Produced by the
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Concord Times
Friday, 13 July 2007

**Africa
News**

Liberia 'to seize Taylor assets'

covers the property of
Mr Taylor's relatives



Charles Taylor has denied the war crimes charges

Liberia's government has started moves to seize the assets of former President Charles Taylor - on trial on war crimes charges in The Hague.

The bill, which also

and associates, has been passed to Liberia's parliament for discussion.

A BBC correspondent says the bill is extremely controversial.

Mr Taylor is accused of

backing rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone while in power from 1997-2003.

By submitting the bill, the Liberian government wants legislative power "to seek the assistance of other nations in tracking, freezing and confiscating the funds, properties and assets" of the ex-president and others concerned.

His assets held abroad

were seized by a UN order in 2004, following accusations that he was fuelling wars in the region. MP Blamo Nelson said the bill was unfair as Mr Taylor had not been convicted of any crimes in Liberia.

Serial rebel

Mr Taylor has been indicted on 11 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of

international humanitarian law over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone. Mr Taylor pleaded not guilty to all the charges when he appeared in court in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in March 2006. The RUF became notorious for hacking off the hands and legs of civilians during their decade-long war.

Mr Taylor started a rebellion in 1989 before being elected president in 1997.

He lost power in 2003 after rival militias rose up and forced him into exile in Nigeria.

He was deported by Nigeria last year in controversial circumstances and flown to The Hague to await his trial.

BBC Online

Thursday, 12 July 2007

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Sierra Eye

Friday, July 13, 2007

<http://www.sierraeye.blogspot.com/>

As Sentencing Approaches, Cynicism About Sierra Leone Tribunal Lingers

LONDON - Three militia generals found guilty for their roles in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war are expected to be sentenced Monday in the first step towards winding down the four-year, \$90 million proceedings at the ad hoc war crimes tribunal.

"The AFRC committed untold horrors -- mutilations, rapes, massacres, abductions -- throughout the towns and villages of Sierra Leone," Human Rights Watch researcher Corinne Dufka told WPR, who herself documented scores of cases of abuse by those under the command of the generals in custody.

"They effectively waged war against the civilian population, leaving a trail of loss and destruction in their wake. The guilty verdict will not only bring justice for the victims and their families, but also put future would-be perpetrators on notice that wars have rules, and these rules must be respected."

But with four of the five most important defendants dead and the fifth, former Liberian president Charles Taylor, in the dock in The Hague over fears he could still destabilize the fragile peace settled on West Africa, the cynicism and skepticism that greeted the court's opening in 2004 has not lessened with the guilty verdicts.

A foregone conclusion; victor's justice; a salvo to the West: each of those scornful pronouncements was uttered by Sierra Leonean media and pundits in the wake of the June 20 verdict, even as human rights organizations hailed the decisive action taken by the three-judge panel that will on July 16 hand down what are expected to be life sentences.

"I was one of those who supported the idea of setting up the Special Court and I know that one of the reasons the war was so bloody, so murderous, was because there was a sense of impunity. So I supported the idea of prosecuting those who were behind the war. But I think that it has been failing very largely," said Lansana Gberie, a Freetown-based academic who authored "A Dirty War in West Africa" about the conflict that raged from 1991-2001 in the impoverished former British colony.

"It's a charade, frankly, put up by the British and the Americans and fancy human rights groups around the world to assuage their own guilt. It may satisfy them, but it doesn't satisfy Sierra Leoneans."

More Sierra Leoneans would have found some measure of satisfaction from an efficient and well-resourced Truth and Reconciliation Commission, argues Suleymane Tejan Cie, a former lawyer for Sam Hinga Norman, one of the court's indictees who died in custody.

But the commission that was established was overshadowed by the court, both financially and in its scope.

"The TRC was not successful because certain key people who could have testified were not allowed to because of the Special Court," he said. "People were not looking anymore at them as perpetrators or belligerents, people were looking at a united SL where everybody was saying sorry to everybody. That was the mood of the country and the Special Court just got rid of that and people became tense."

The court's funding mechanism -- largely donations from former colonial power Britain and the United States -- also elicits harsh criticism from residents of the country of some five million people, the vast majority of whom live in poverty without access to clean water, sanitation, education or electricity.

Disdainfully, critics contend that money could have been used to build schools and hospitals, to bolster the shattered infrastructure of a country where, at one point in the halcyon post-independence days in 1961, there were double-decker buses plying paved roads, carrying students in foppish coats and ties to university.

Such accounting becomes all the more damning when measured against the roster of just who has been considered to bear "the greatest responsibility" for a war that claimed more than 100,000 lives by conservative estimates, and wreaked havoc by pitting neighbor against neighbor for over a decade.

The eight in custody at the prison alongside the gleaming court building atop one of Freetown's rolling hills -- one of the only significant construction projects to be undertaken in the seaside capital since the end of the war -- represent the military junta that took power briefly in 1997, a pro-government militia known as the Kamajors as well as the rebel movement bankrolled in no small part by diamond-smuggling allegedly orchestrated by Taylor.

The crimes of their conscripts notwithstanding, the eight lack the notoriety of their now-dead leaders, who themselves participated in the wholesale torture, rape and murder of civilians and opposing forces: Foday Sankoh, the one-time wedding photographer who first thought of using drug-addled young boys to fight his battle; his first lieutenant Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie, who pioneered the use of amputations to bring villages into line; and junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma, who led a bloodless coup in 1997 that precipitated the country's hapless plunge back into civil war.

Sam Hinga Norman, the Kamajor leader who died in custody earlier this year, was considered a hero by a substantial subset of the population -- including a former British high commissioner for Sierra Leone -- for having beat back the rebels to end the war. His indictment was roundly criticized and also seen as a delegitimization of the court.

"My idea of the Special Court is more exalted than trying common criminals, thieves, and murderers. Certain standards have to be set. These people are not significant enough to justify a trial of this magnitude," said Gberie.

The three indictees from the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council -- Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie -- were relatively minor players in the military junta, rising through the ranks with every massacre perpetrated on the civilian population.

"A lot of the people in the army don't even know them; these are just very junior wayward soldiers," Gberie added. "Ask any person on the streets of Freetown who has suffered in the war whether they know anything about the AFRC people. They don't know them! It has absolutely no bearing on fighting impunity in Sierra Leone -- none whatsoever."

Such impunity still lingers in Sierra Leone, even as the country braces for elections many fear will only stir the longstanding faults seemingly endemic to the country: a lack of transparency, rampant corruption, nepotism and government by fear rather than rule of law.

Concrete effects of war, too, are lingering. Even now, six years since the end of the war, young women who were raped by rebels or army irregulars have been cast out from their homes, their offspring -- products of those rapes, most often at gun- or machete-point -- unwanted by those family members who remain.

"Most of the conditions that fuelled the war are still in existence: widespread poverty, unemployment, a lot of anger against the elite," said Gberie. "There are still people out there who will find opportunities in war. You sit with them in their ghettos and some of them will wish any day for some kind of violence so that they can loot shops, steal food and money."

Such malaise could undermine any successes achieved by the court and the international interventions to restore justice to Sierra Leone, Dufka said.

"The success and failure of the court has to be based on the degree to which there are attitudinal changes; there needs to be a venting of the mentality that [so-called] big men can get away with whatever they want," she said.

"That is measurable when Sierra Leone itself is ready to hold leaders accountable for economic crimes, and the manipulation of power, when they take a closer look at the behavior of their elected representatives."

Voice of America

Thursday, 12 July 2007

US Professors and Students Laid Groundwork for Charles Taylor Trial

By Joe De Capua
Washington



Charles Taylor

The trial of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor is expected to resume next month. Taylor is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the long civil war in Liberia's neighbor, Sierra Leone. However, if it weren't for a legal opinion written by American professors and students, the trial might have never taken place.

Case Western Reserve University in the mid-western city of Cleveland is home to the Cox Center War Crimes Research Office. Office. It provides legal advice and opinions, not just to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is trying Charles Taylor, but also to five other international tribunals. These are the new Cambodia Tribunal, the International Criminal Court, the Rwanda and Yugoslavia tribunals and the Iraqi High Tribunal.

Law Professor Michael Scharf is the center's director.

"We prosecutors' offices. And every semester we have 20 students, who are working under the supervision of myself and two other faculty members, and we spend countless hours preparing very lengthy, usually 50- to 60-page legal memorandum; and we attach all the supporting documents. And those go to the tribunals," he says

Before then-special court chief prosecutor David Crane signed the indictment against Charles Taylor in March 2003, he asked for a legal opinion in the case. The question being considered was whether Taylor had legal immunity from indictment as a head of state.



**Michael Scharf,
Case Western
Reserve University**

"We prepared very a lengthy memorandum on it indicating that the Special Court for Sierra Leone was international enough that head of state immunity should not apply. And that was a very controversial question because the Special Court is actually a hybrid court. It's part domestic and part international. So the question of how international must a court be for there not to be head of state immunity was novel and cutting edge and difficult," he says.

Crane later used the center's memo to write his indictment, which then stood up to legal challenges and appeals.

"If the ruling had gone the other way then Charles Taylor would still be a free man, presumably causing mischief and problems for the Africa region to this day," he says.

Precedents for war crimes trials date back to the Nuremburg and Tokyo tribunals following World War Two. They were added to with legal rulings from the Yugoslav and Rwandan tribunals in the early 1990's, and the more recent International Criminal Court.

Scharf says, "The body of precedent in this area has grown at an exponential pace, such that it is the fastest growing area of international law - and probably one of the fastest growing areas of law anywhere on the planet."

A former student of the Cox Center War Crimes Research Office is now a legal adviser to the Rwanda Tribunal judges and another is on the prosecutor's staff in the Charles Taylor case.

"Going all the way back to Nuremburg, the idea of international justice has become one of the values that Americans hold most dear. It is very American to want to see people prosecuted for war crimes around the globe," he says.

Scharf and his team at Case Western Reserve University will now turn their attention to the new Cambodia war crimes tribunal. It will deal with cases involving the infamous killing fields of the 1970's.

Professor Scharf says the rule of law must be upheld, even when it appears a quicker and easier solution may be at hand.

"From time to time, trading justice for peace seems to be worthwhile. But I think what we're learning is that when you make those kinds of trades the people who used to be in power become recidivists. They continue to cause trouble. You can't trust them to be good world citizens. And it also sends the wrong message. It sends the message that if you are committing atrocities against your population you can trade accountability simply by agreeing to a golden parachute (favorable settlement) and going off into exile somewhere," he says.

That would create a culture of impunity, he says, that could cause people to forget what happened in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Bosnia or Cambodia.

UN News Service (New York)

Thursday, 12 July 2007

UN Fund Approves Projects to Assist Peacebuilding Efforts

The United Nations fund set up to help address the immediate needs of countries emerging from conflict today approved four new projects to support the ongoing electoral process and improve the judiciary, water, sanitation and health facilities in Sierra Leone.

"The approval of these projects is timely and demand-driven," Christian Holger Strohmann, Spokesperson for the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), said following the action taken today by the UN Peacebuilding Fund's Steering Committee for Sierra Leone.

This brings the total number of projects approved by the Fund to date to seven, amounting to a little over \$16 million, according to UNIOSIL. Previously, the Fund approved three projects related to youth employment and empowerment, and support to the country's police and the National Human Rights Commission.

In March, Sierra Leone was allotted \$35 million from the Fund, established from voluntary contributions to aid post-conflict countries from slipping back into turmoil.

The projects approved by the Fund seek to address critical gaps in priority areas identified jointly by the Government and the UN, in consultation with other partners including civil society organizations.

Launched in 2006, the Fund supports countries before the UN Peacebuilding Commission, currently Burundi and Sierra Leone, but is also available to countries in similar circumstances as designated by the Secretary-General.

"While the Commission's engagement in the country was more medium-term and went beyond resource mobilization, the Fund concentrated on the short-term, making funds available for things that need and could be done at the present time," stated Frank Majoor, Ambassador of the Netherlands to the UN and chairperson the Commission's country specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, in Freetown, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Executive Representative, Victor Angelo, hosted representatives of political parties contesting the August polls to a second inter-party dialogue.

Together they discussed ways to build confidence and mutual trust, as well as other preparations for the upcoming general elections in the West African country, which after 11 years of civil war has now entered a peace consolidation phase.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 12 July 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

THE IRISH TIMES 07/12/2007 01:34:17

Liberia prosecutor sure they'll get their man

NETHERLANDS: The chief prosecutor in a trial linking former Liberian president Charles Taylor to atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's civil war is hopeful the landmark tribunal will stay on schedule despite a number of delays since it opened last month, writes Foreign Affairs Correspondent Mary Fitzgerald. "I think we're all set now with the idea that deadlines will have to be observed with only a little leeway," Stephen Rapp, a former US attorney in Iowa, told The Irish Times .

VOA 12 July 2007

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By Joe De Capua, Washington

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International Clips on West Africa

BBC Last Updated: Thursday, 12 July 2007, 09:36 GMT 10:36 UK

Probe call over Ivorian PM Attack

By James Copnall, Abidjan

The Ivorian authorities are to ask the UN to probe an assassination attempt against Prime Minister Guillaume Soro. Four people died when rockets were fired at a plane carrying Mr Soro after it landed last month in Bouake, the headquarters of his former rebel group. Mr Soro, who was unhurt, was named prime minister in April under a deal to end Ivory Coast's four-year division. There is intense speculation about who was responsible for the attack and how it will affect the peace process. Some blame dissident rebels, angry that their leader has joined hands with President Laurent Gbagbo. Others allege the president's camp was behind the attack.

Country Improving in Governance, Political Stability Still a Challenge - WB

Addis Ababa, Jul 12, 2007 (Daily Monitor/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Governance has improved in Ethiopia as in a number of African countries, according to a report released

by the World Bank, Tuesday. The report, "Governance Matters, 2007: Worldwide Governance and Indicators, 1996-2006", found that Ethiopia had made strides toward cutting corruption and improving governance, but political stability and voice and accountability remain to be tremendous challenges.

EU to send observers to Sierra Leone elections

BRUSSELS, Jul 11, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- The European Union will send observers to monitor the presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone due on Aug. 11 this year, the European Commission (EC) announced Wednesday. In a statement, the EC said the EU will deploy an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the polls in the West African nation. The EOM includes a core team of seven officers, 28 long-term observers (LTOs), who will be deployed during this month to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparations around the country, and 42 short-term observers (STOs), to be deployed over the election-day period to observe voting, counting and the tabulation of results.

AP 07/12/2007 11:26:03

EU tightens controls on waste shipments

BRUSSELS, Belgium - The European Union tightened controls on shipments of waste Thursday aiming to prevent the dumping of toxic products blamed for causing health and environmental problems in Africa and Asia.

Local Media – Newspaper

World Bank Gives Liberia High Marks for Ensuring Rule of Law

(New Democrat)

- The World Bank in a recent report rated Liberia amongst countries ensuring the supremacy of the rule of law among a few African countries.
- The report said since the 2005 elections, no journalist, politician or human rights activist has been arrested, something which it interpreted as a clear departure from the recent past when harassment of journalists, summary executions and disappearances were common. This is the first time in decades that Liberia has received such rating.

President Sirleaf Makes Changes at Information Ministry

(Heritage, The Analyst, New Vision, and the National Chronicle and Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made a number of appointments affecting the Ministry of Information. The appointments, according to a release, are subject to confirmation by the Liberian Senate. The changes followed the President's long awaited plan to reshuffle elements within her Government.

Run-Off Imminent in Grand Bassa County By-election

(The National Chronicle, Daily Observer, The Analyst, Heritage, The Inquirer and The News)

- Preliminary results from the District Number Three by-election in Grand Bassa suggest an imminent runoff between candidates of the Unity Party and the Liberty Party. The election was well organized and conducted peacefully, despite the poor turnout. *The News* quoted election workers in Grand Bassa County as claiming that Unity Party candidate, Abel Moses Nyounbol, was disqualified for using a fake voter registration card.

Ex-Militia General on the Run for Rape

(The Monitor)

- Local authorities in Nimba County and protection agencies are in pursuit of an ex-militia general, Youhn Gblorgbay, who reportedly raped a 13-year-old girl in the border town of Nyor Display. The accused committed the act since May this year and has escaped arrest on at least three occasions.

UNHCR Says Liberian Refugees Might Be Repatriated

(The News and Daily Observer)

- Despite the expiration of the June 30, 2007 deadline for the repatriation of Liberian refugees from the sub-region, UNHCR-Liberia Resident Representative says the Commission would still repatriate Liberian refugees who will express willingness to return home. Ms. Renata Dubini said approximately 70,000 Liberian refugees are still residing in neighbouring countries.

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

President Appoints New Officials at Information Ministry

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Elections Commission Declares Preliminary Result for Bassa By-Election

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Inspector-General Denies Being Slapped during Bloody Riot

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh on Wednesday told reporters that she was never slapped by an Officer of the Liberia Sea Port Police during a bloody riot at the Freeport of Monrovia on Monday. Inspector-General Sieh also denied media reports that she discharged firearm during the episode, but said that she was held hostage by some officers of the Sea Port Police when she called in LNP officers for rescue.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Seminar for Journalists and Public Officials Opens Today

- In its release yesterday, the Press Union of Liberia announced that a three-day seminar for journalists, government officials, civil society organizations and security agencies opened in Monrovia today. The seminar is being held under the theme: "Media Relations and Democracy Building in Liberia".

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Health Minister Calls for Shared Responsibility in the Family

- Health and Social Welfare Minister Walter Gwenigale challenged men to share responsibilities with their wives to develop a wholesome society free of immorality.
- Speaking at a programme to mark World Population Day yesterday, Dr. Gwenigale stated that the time had come for men to recognize that their role should extend beyond just providing for their homes and should partner with their wives in protecting under-aged girls from rape, early pregnancy and early marriage.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government Releases Itinerary for National Day Celebration

- According to Foreign Minister George Wallace, this year's celebration of the 160th Independence of Liberia under the theme "Liberia at 160 – Reclaiming The Future", will feature the Executive Director of the Youth Action International Kimmie Weeks as the National Orator while the special guest will be the President of Benin Yahya Bonnie and his wife Chanta Bonnie.
- Minister Wallace added that China will turn over the Samuel Kanyon Sports Complex which it renovated, to the Liberian Government on Saturday 21, July while that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf would confer honors upon distinguished personalities and launched Arcelor/Mittal Steel Brand and Logo signaling the merger of two of the world's largest steel companies.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Senator Expressed Frustration over Colleagues who Float Senate Rules

- Grand Cape Mount County Senator Abel Massallay told reporters that he was frustrated with his colleagues for their alleged continuous violation of the Senate Standing Rules and that the situation was creating serious problem in addressing issues at the Senate.
- Senator Massallay said his statement was prompted by Tuesday's session in which his colleague James Momoh alleged that the Senators violated the Senate Standing Rules by confirming Counsellor Jamesetta Wolokollie as Associate Justice. He warned that if this ugly act continues at the Senate, it would be difficult for the Senate to progress.

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.