

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



A boy stands in the water streaming off the roof during a Makeni rain storm

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, 27 July 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Times
Friday, 27 July 2007

Special Court Warns Leaders

Prosecutor for the Special Court of Sierra Leone Stephen Rapp has said that punishment meted to the three AFRC indictees “reflects the horrific crimes for which each defendant was convicted for.” It would be recalled that Alex Tamba Brima, Santigie Borbor Kanu and Brima Bazzy Kamara were sentenced to 45 and 50 years imprisonment after they were found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. According to the prosecutor, the crimes the three defendants committed include murder and extermination, sexual violence and rape, amputation and mutilation, terror, slavery and pillage.

Amnesty welcomes Special Court Verdicts

Amnesty International, an international human right organisation has in a press release issued last Friday stated that the sentences passed on three former AFRC members by the Special Court for Sierra Leone should not be the end of the struggle for justice against terrible crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone during the last decade civil conflict.

The Exclusive
Friday, 27 July 2007

Special Court...

CDF Judgment August 2

By Musa Sesay

The Trial Chamber of the Special Court will deliver another verdict for the Civil Defence Force indictees who

were standing trial for war crimes and other serious breaches of international humanitarian laws in the course of the decade long conflict in Sierra Leone.

The judgment will be the second in the mara-
Contd. page 2

CDF Judgment August 2

From front page

tion trial of Special Court indictees including members of the RUF, CDF and the AFRC. It would be recalled that Ugandan born Special Court Justice Sibuntende slammed a 50 and 45 years sentence on

three AFRC indictees. So far, it is still not certain what kind of judgement would be handed down to the CDF although speculations are that they too will be giving a similar jail sentence like the three AFRC members.

The Special Court will

again take cognizance of the aggravating circumstance and also the mitigating factors in the course of their leadership positions in the CDF during the decade long war. The three include one Idrissa Kamara aka Leather Boot.

The Patriotic Vanguard

Thursday 26 July 2007

Sierra Leone: Angelo Condemns Political Violence

Press Release

Statement of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone at the Opening of the National Youth Dialogue Conference, 26 JULY 2007.



Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,
I am delighted to be asked by the Centre for Coordination of Youth Activity (CCYA) to make a statement at the opening of the National Youth Dialogue Conference.

My sincere thanks to the CCYA for organizing this very timely conference, which will focus on non-violence, conflict resolution and other critical aspects concerning the forthcoming elections. I have no doubt that it would contribute to a conducive political environment for the holding of the elections.

The elections, which are the second, since the end of the conflict, constitute an important phase in the consolidation of peace and security in Sierra Leone. It would therefore be paradoxical, to say the least, if political violence were to dominate or impede their success.

I should use this opportunity to restate, as we approach the elections, that the United Nations and its international partners will support all efforts to ensure that the elections are transparent, credible and free of any forms of violence. The support of the political parties, civil society, the media and all segments of the Sierra Leone society, particularly its youths, in achieving this goal is necessary.

As is well known from the very successful voter registration exercise concluded by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), a large number of the persons who have registered to vote are young persons. Of an estimated population of 5 million, 2.6 million have registered to vote in the elections. It is significant that 23% of these registered voters are between the ages of 18 -23; 17% fall within the ages of 23 to 27; 15% are between 28 and 32 while 11% are between 33 and 37. From these figures, 40% of the registered voters are under age of 27.

As against this background, young people, who, as is often said, are the future, will have an enormous influence on the outcome of the elections. It is appropriate to use this forum to call on the young persons to contribute meaningfully to the electoral process by ensuring that they vote and very importantly by not allowing themselves to be manipulated by anybody.

I urge all youths to avoid all forms of conduct that could result in a breach of the peace or a breakdown of law and order.

In (the) same vein, I appeal to all political parties to continue to abide by the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and avoid any inflammatory or provocative remarks that could lead to disturbances. You must all be aware of recent incidents of political violence. Continued occurrences of this nature are without doubt most unhelpful for the elections and I would like to

use this forum to request political parties to dissociate themselves from all forms of political violence. The political leaders have a special responsibility and should guide their supporters.

As I have mentioned, civil society has a crucial role to play in ensuring a credible election. Civil society organizations and political parties deploy observers and agents to all polling and counting stations. These observers, short or long-term, will add credibility as well as underline the transparent nature of the elections. The media must also vigorously promote the message of non-violence and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Journalists.

I will conclude by inviting the youths and indeed all Sierra Leoneans to give their full commitment to achieving a successful, non-violent and fraud-free election. Sweet Salone deserves no less.

Voice of America

Friday, 27 July 2007

Uganda's LRA Rebels Say They Are Ready for Peace

By Peter Clotney
Washington, D.C.

Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels are blaming the accounting office of the United Nations mission in the southern Sudanese capital of Juba for been behind the postponement of next week's peace talks. The rebels say although they are not part of the peace process for monetary gains, their allowances and consultation fees have not been paid for one month. The LRA says the allowances were approved by the mediator and agreed upon in agenda item number two. The LRA denies pulling out of the current peace talks and reaffirmed that they are committed to finding a lasting peace to the over a decade long conflict in northern Uganda.

David Matsanga is a technical advisor to the rebels on ICC matters. He tells reporter Peter Clotney that the LRA is not using the issue of allowance to stall the peace process as has been speculated by some.

"That is completely stupid and narrow for anybody to say we are buying time. We are committed to a peace process, and I want to tell the international community that there is nobody in the LRA delegation, and in the LRA high command who is buying time. If there is anybody who is buying time it is the Uganda government and the donors who are conniving to buy time, not us," Matsanga noted.

He denied the rebels are undermining the peace process because the ICC (International Criminals Court)-issued warrants against the LRA's top leadership.

"I think that is a total misconception, and those people who are thinking like that don't know anything about an agreement, don't know anything about principles. They are naïve because they don't understand what we have been doing. We have been saying and the Ugandan government signed to the document and which we have. We signed a comprehensive solution, the comprehensive solution says one, we shall hold a stakeholders conference full stop. And this stakeholders conference is to gain knowledge about how we are going to deal with mechanisms implementation protocol," he said.

Matsanga dismissed speculations that the peace process has been postponed.

"Nobody has postponed the peace process; we have only said that there is a problem with the accounting system of the United Nations. The Ugandan government knows about what is going on in Juba. People are not looking for money; people have gone to Juba to look for peace," Matsanga pointed out.

He said the rebels are grateful for the international community's contribution towards the peace negotiations, but blamed the UN's mission for being the cause of the controversy surrounding the peace process.

“I want to tell you one thing, and tell the international community, those donors who are listening, (that) we appreciate the donation that you have contributed to the peace process. Dr. Rieke Marchar has done his best, but the problem is that the accounting of the United Nations that gives the money is where the problem is. We have not pulled out of the peace process at all. We are in the peace process, and we are going to engage the Ugandan government up to the last minute,” he said.

Matsanga said allowances meant for the LRA delegation have not been paid for sometime, and this he said would jeopardize the peace negotiations.

“Let me tell you the truth, you want the truth? Let the world hear. For two to three weeks the people have not been paid for their allowances. You want the truth? That is the truth now. They have not been paid their consultative money. You want me to tell you further that the UN mechanism in Juba is undermining the peace process. It is not the LRA; Dr. Rieke Marchar has tried to do his level best to make sure that he approves (allowances). When Dr. Rieke Marchar approves this thing it means they are genuine thing, he is the man in charge of the peace process. Why does the UN or anybody doubt Dr. Rieke Marchar? You tell me why do they doubt him?” Matsanga said.

The Wall Street Journal

Friday, 27 July 2007

In Liberia, Amputees Find Healing Place: Soccer Field

By MICHAEL M. PHILLIP

MONROVIA, Liberia -- What Dennis Parker likes most about being a soccer star is the way strangers greet him on the street with shouts of "Big Player."

Which is a lot better than a year ago, when they used to jeer and call him "Killer."

Back then, they'd see him -- a beggar with one leg -- and guess correctly that he had lost the other one fighting in Liberia's 14-year civil war. In that conflict, many boys and young men routinely raped, robbed and murdered in a drugged-up frenzy.

Now they see one of Liberia's best one-legged soccer players. "I love that," Mr. Parker says. "Soccer made me to be well known in Liberia."

The Amputee Football Federation of Liberia is a single, small answer to one of the most intractable questions in postwar Liberia: what to do with 100,000 former militiamen, many of whom started fighting as boys and grew up thinking that the unspeakable was acceptable. Similar questions echo through other African countries, from Uganda to Sierra Leone to Sudan, where children have been given guns and thrust into the breach.

The quandary is especially vexing when it comes to amputees. Deeply impoverished, Liberia offers no welfare for the disabled, who find the few jobs that do exist beyond their grasp. "After 14 years of war, we're still grappling with the aftermath in all its different shades," says the Rev. Robert Karloh, one of the soccer league founders. He believes the sport helps make men like Mr. Parker, and Liberia itself, whole again.

Indeed, amputee soccer in Liberia is as much about reconciliation as it is about competition. Former fighters from enemy militias now wear the same uniform. Mixed among them are civilians who got caught in the shooting and slashing. Together they play, sing victory songs and share pairs of shoes, according to fellow amputees' needs.

One of the players is Richard Duo, a 21-year-old striker for the Paynesville Survivors. In 1990, when he was four, former President Samuel Doe's men massacred 600 people in a Lutheran church in Monrovia. One of the soldiers chopped off Mr. Duo's left leg with a sword.

SEE A PHOTO SLIDESHOW ▶



Michael M. Phillips

LASA's Samuel Tengbeh, right, races for the ball.

Mr. Duo won't even consider the possibility that one of his opponents, or maybe even a team-mate, might have wielded the blade that left him an amputee. "A game like this brings us all together and makes us feel like human beings," he said during a break in practice earlier this month. "This is the time for us to reconcile. It's not time to look at the past."

The amputee soccer league was born of an act of desperation. In late 2005, some 300 amputee fighters stormed the Monrovia headquarters of the political party of former president Charles Taylor. He had overthrown Mr. Doe and ruled for 13 years before

being ousted himself in 2003. Mr. Taylor now sits in a cell in The Hague, where he's standing trial for atrocities his men committed in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

The amputees who stormed the party headquarters had served in various militia groups during the war. They shared a sense of injustice and abandonment, and their anger was focused on Mr. Taylor's party. They had no jobs, no pensions and, with their empty sleeves and pant legs, no way to hide their past. They spent their days loitering around grocery stores or busy streets, begging for money. Many were still hooked on the drugs -- crack cocaine, heroin and others -- that their militia commanders had supplied to get them to fight more fiercely.

Mr. Parker, his front teeth missing and hair arranged in a swirl of tight plaits, emerged as a spokesman for the squatters. He had taken up arms for Mr. Taylor in 1990 at age 16, after then-President Doe's soldiers opened fire on civilians in Mr. Parker's hometown, Tubmanburg. Still, his enlistment wasn't entirely voluntary. "They kill you if you don't join," says Mr. Parker, who has a sixth-grade education.



Michael Phillips

Dennis Parker fires a shot against the Mighty Conquerors. He scored three goals in the 5-2 victory this month.

Taylor militia commanders gave him his first gun, an AK-47 assault rifle, and sugar-cane alcohol to make him brave enough to use it, he says. They assigned him to a special unit, called the Strike Force, which was sent to carry out missions others would not. "I killed my enemies," but not civilians, he says. "No, no, no." Pause. "Maybe mistakenly."

He admits to looting food, clothes and money from stores and homes, but denies taking part in the rapes he says he saw fellow militiamen commit.

One day in 1993, his platoon from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia met up on a dusty road with boys from the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy, one of several rebel groups. A round hit him in the right shin, shattering the bone. There were no medics, so his comrades put him in the back of a pickup truck and went looking for a doctor.

For the next year, he was in and out of hospitals. His leg worsened, and he remembers begging a doctor for a lethal injection. For months, though, he resisted doctors' advice that he undergo amputation. "It's not easy to decide to have a part cut off," he says now. Finally, one doctor gave him a magazine article about a man who refused to allow his cancerous toes to be cut off. The disease spread to the man's brain and killed him.

The cautionary tale convinced Mr. Parker. In April 1994, the surgeon cut off his right leg below the knee. After recovering, he made a living selling cassette tapes from a roadside wooden booth. But he rejoined the militia after Mr. Taylor was elected president in 1997 and assembled an unarmed unit of veterans wounded during his guerrilla campaign. Mr. Taylor made Mr. Parker a battalion commander, despite the fact that his leg ended a few inches below the knee and he didn't have a prosthesis.

When Mr. Taylor's regime faced a fierce rebellion of its own, Mr. Parker and his men rearmed and manned checkpoints.

After Mr. Taylor fell and United Nations peacekeepers took control of the country, Mr. Parker found himself sleeping on the street with his girlfriend and two of his children, begging for change. Now 33, he has fathered seven children, whose lineage he recites with great concentration. "I born two from Jatu. I born one from Cleo. I born one from Mary. One from Yata. One from Gbesay, and one from Mirma."



By the time he and the other amputees occupied the Taylor party headquarters, he was a desperate man. He still admired Mr. Taylor, but was angry that the party had done nothing for the men who had given them power. The building "belonged to us, especially the veterans," he says.

The amputee occupation dragged on for months, with the party threatening to use force to oust the squatters. The man eventually sent to negotiate with them was Mr. Karloh, a 43-year-old Pentecostal minister and deputy executive director of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration.

Mr. Karloh, stocky with bushy eyebrows, found Mr. Parker one of the most aggressive of the amputees. He was bitter and depressed, and sometimes spoke of taking his own life. "I'm willing to die," he told Mr. Karloh.

The reverend fired back from the Book of Jeremiah: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

During the month Mr. Karloh negotiated with the squatters and fended off the more belligerent plans of Taylor party officials, he added his own message to the one-legged men: "The amputation does not remove God's purpose for you."

Last August, 10 months after the occupation began, Mr. Karloh negotiated a settlement in which Mr. Taylor's party paid each man \$30 and the amputees agreed to leave quietly.

The incident drew Mr. Karloh to the amputees' plight. Since the fighting stopped in 2003, the U.N. has disarmed 103,019 Liberian fighters, out of a total national population of about three million. The U.N. provided each fighter with a \$300 demobilization payment and free basic and vocational education. Still, with Liberia's economy a shambles, 75,000 of the former fighters remain jobless, according to government estimates.

The amputees are among the worst-off. "A disabled man is useless to society," says Eric Myers, 39, who lost a leg to shrapnel wounds while fighting for Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Karloh had heard of war amputees playing soccer in Sierra Leone, and he thought a similar program would be therapeutic for Liberia's veterans, too. Last September, a month after the standoff at the Taylor party headquarters ended, Mr. Karloh, Mr. Parker and a few others met at Mr. Karloh's office and founded the country's first team, Liberia Amputee Sports Association, or LASA.

On New Year's Eve, LASA played its inaugural match, against a team from Sierra Leone, and was soundly trounced. But the team placed second of five teams at a tournament in February, and, after they returned home in glory, the U.S. government donated \$30,000 in uniforms, cleats, crutches and other goods. The league has since expanded to 150 players and six teams, including the Brewerville Young Invaders, the Monrovia Giants and the Island Warriors of Bushrod Island.



The rules of amputee soccer differ from those that govern the regular sport, and they start with this: In the land of the one-legged, the one-armed man is goalie. The goal is half as wide as a regulation net. But the goalie can't leave the box and he can touch the ball only with his intact arm, not his stump.

The other players each have one leg and play on metal crutches with arm braces; few Liberian war amputees have prostheses. Touching the ball with crutches is the equivalent of a handball. A free kick results if the infraction takes place outside the box and a penalty kick if it occurs inside. Teams practice almost daily and have games about once a week.

LASA is the unrivaled league powerhouse, and Mr. Parker is the team's dominant striker. He scored a hat trick in LASA's 5-2 victory this month over the Sinkor Mighty Conquerors, two goals on powerful drives from the left wing and another on a penalty shot after a defenseman's crutch-ball in the box.

When Mr. Parker takes a shot on goal, he resembles a gymnast on a pommel horse, suspended from his crutches and swinging his leg through the middle like a pendulum. When he races for the ball, his stride is a cross between a gallop and a hop, a motion that is both graceful and athletic. After he scores, Mr. Parker performs a joyous, airborne jig and bumps torsos with another LASA player.

With soccer success, other parts of his life have begun to turn around, albeit in small ways. For \$5 a month, he rents a room in a house on the outskirts of the city, where he lives with his girlfriend and four of his children.

When he's not playing, he makes a bit of money by buying palm oil in villages and reselling it in Monrovia. He is no longer ashamed to ask his family for help.

But Mr. Parker no longer begs.

"I see myself as a big player now," he says.