

**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:**

Thursday, 9 August 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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Al Jazeera

Thursday, 9 August 2007

## Sierra Leone puts hopes in polls

By Greg Norman in Freetown, Sierra Leone



Solomon Cooper was forced to have his right arm amputated several years after he was badly burnt and scarred during an RUF attack on his house in the town of Kono

**The West African country goes to weekend polls that could indicate if it is ready to leave behind its violent past. But Al Jazeera finds that the legacy is a heavy one.**

Three days before landmark presidential and parliamentary elections and the centre of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, resembles carnival time.

Chanting and singing proliferates on every street corner as young locals dance away to open-air sound systems.

This time it is supporters of the All Peoples Congress (APC) showing their colours – red and white – and bringing the traffic in central Freetown, hardly fluid at the best of times, to a complete standstill.

**Link**

Q&A: Sierra Leone votes

The energy being expended by the crowds at what is officially the APC's final rally reflects the optimism many in Sierra Leone hold for Saturday's parliamentary and presidential elections.

The hope is a new government will tackle some of the vast social problems facing the country and finally leave its violent past behind.

### Brutal past

But at the end of a two-hour slog past the throng out of town is a stark reminder of the legacy of that past.

Lamin Jusu Jarka had both his arms hacked off below the elbow during the country's brutal decade-long conflict between 1991 and 2002 when an estimated 50,000 people died and at least half a million were displaced.

Members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group arrived at Jusu Jarka's door in 1999. Fearing they would rape his teenage daughter he told her to escape through a rear window. His arms were removed as a "punishment" shortly after.

Jusu Jarka, now adeptly using prosthetics, heads a nationwide association helping amputees and other permanently wounded victims from the war.

He and 10 other families have been among the relatively lucky ones through a scheme in co-ordination with the Norwegian refugee council that has seen them relocated to a camp in the country and housed in former military barracks.

The accommodation is rudimentary but the amputees are able to work off the nearby farmland and scratch together a living, unlike many of the other estimated 6,000 people involuntarily missing limbs in Sierra Leone after the war.



**Supporters of the All Peoples Congress showing their colours**

Jusu Jarka says that despite efforts at reconciliation for victims made by the government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the outgoing president, the psychological scars are permanent.

"People are dying here," he says. "There is a lot of pain and suffering and people do not have medical facilities. They are asking themselves 'how can I live like this'."

Solomon Cooper was forced to have his right arm amputated several years after he was badly burnt and scarred during an RUF attack that set his house alight in the town of Kono.

A passionate dramatist and a part-time stand-up comedian Cooper says he believes strongly in an "ability and disability" and says he encourages fellow amputees in the towns of Bo and Kenema in the southeast of the country to make a life for themselves and not beg on the streets.

### **No compensation**

Yet, like Jusu Jarka, he says further development can only be attained for victims when they get the reparations he says are due.

A long-awaited report from the UN-backed Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation committee in 2004 recommended the government should pay compensation to victims and their families and provide them with trust funds and pensions.

Government reparations have not been forthcoming, however, and Cooper believes the "problem is they pay the perpetrators", referring to claims that former combatants in the war have received funds and training in return for disarming.

"It is sending the message that it is better to do harm than good," he says.

But both Jusu Jarka and Cooper are confident this weekend's elections could aid their development.



**The distribution of ballot papers and voter lists is taking place under tight security [EPA]**

"We are all very excited and we are registered," Jusu Jarka says. "This is democracy at work."

Sierra Leone has made efforts to reconcile itself with its violent past, primarily through the internationally-backed special court in Freetown.

Established after the ceasefire that ended the war in 2002 to try those who "bear the greatest responsibility for the atrocities", the court recently handed down its first verdicts against former militia leaders and is currently trying the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, in The Hague.

But as well as the more infamous figures of the war who have been indicted or died since the conflict ended, John Caulker of the Forum of Conscience, a Freetown-based rights group, says those who committed atrocities that the public is not aware of should be brought to justice.

Caulker, a student activist leader during the war who was threatened by one of the leaders of the RUF at gunpoint says all political parties have failed to fully acknowledge their roles in the war and that reconciliation cannot be achieved for victims until justice is done.

"Reconciliation is far from happening. Even with peace it is still a relative term, and many would say their life is deplorable."

### **Deep wounds**

While all the political parties say they are committed to the special court and the reconciliation process, Caulker says any new leader or government needs to be asked: "what will you do in your first 100 days?"

"Let's have this for the records," he says.

Across town away from the sea of red and white that has been colouring the capital for the APC rally, Abu Kamara's T-shirt shows his allegiance to the ruling Sierra Leone's Peoples Party.



**Caulker wants those who committed atrocities that the public is unaware of to face justice**

The party's green masks more wounds from the past.

Kamara's chest is a patchwork of bumpy scars, the legacy of an RUF rocket-propelled grenade attack on his camp when he was a member of the notorious West Side Boys.

The group, a splinter faction of the Armed Revolutionary Council that temporarily removed Kabbah in a coup in 1997 were renowned for their harsh tactics, alcohol abuse and their use of child soldiers.

Kamara is proud of his military time but says he will vote SLPP because it was the party that brought peace to the country and he could not risk supporting another movement for fear of reprisals over his past.

The former fighter, now shorn of his long hair, is another embodiment of the contradictions of Sierra Leone today.

Upon leaving the military again after being retrained by the British he, like many Sierra Leoneans could not find a job and now spends his days on the streets with his friends.

Yet he is also imbued with the spirit of optimism that seems to be spreading in the country before the elections despite the difficult conditions and disappointing governance.

"Elections are democracy," he says.

Caulker also remains hopeful thanks to the apparent narrow margin that separates the parties in opinion polls.

"Six months ago with this government we were saying we risked our lives for nothing," he says. "Now they are all doing everything to get power. This is democracy at work."



**Child soldiers were one of the grim characteristics of the Sierra Leone war [AP]**

## The Analyst (Liberia)

Wednesday, 8 August 2007

### **BBC Trust, ICTJ Training Journalists**

By Jonathan Browne

BBC World Service Trust in collaboration with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) started a two-week training program on communicating transitional justice for 20 Liberian journalists in Monrovia.

Participants have been drawn from both the print and electronic media, which include managers of several community radio stations outside the capital.

Another partner of the program is the Liberia Media Center Inc. a local media consultancy and training group.

The Project Director for the Communicating Justice program, Julia Crawford, said the program is supported by the European Union, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an American-based Ngo, Humanity United.

Ms Crawford said the two-year project aims to raise public awareness and debate around transitional justice issues in five post-conflict countries in Africa including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

The training in Liberia, which runs from August 6-17, comes at the time when the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) prepares to begin public hearing of victims and perpetrators of atrocities committed during nearly three decades of political unrest which left about half million people dead.

A BBC World Service Trust survey conducted in conjunction with Search for Common Ground recently in Monrovia indicated that eight out of ten adults in Liberia are aware of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but less than half are aware of its powers to recommend amnesties, prosecutions, and reparations.

"The household survey, carried out in June 2007 with Search for Common Ground, explores levels of knowledge and attitudes surrounding transitional justice issues in the wake of the civil conflict that ended in 2003.

The survey is based on a random sample of 1,600 adults (18-59 year olds) in eight diverse counties in Liberia", said a press release issued on July 31st.

It is also expected to empower working journalists to properly report on the pending trial of former president Charles Taylor in The Hague by the Special Court of Sierra Leone on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

According to the survey, whilst 94% of respondents are aware that former Liberian President Charles Taylor is on trial, 1 in 5 is not aware that the trial is conducted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Special Court indicted Mr. Taylor in 2003 for allegedly supporting the defunct rebels Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during its 10-year terror campaign against armed less civilians in that country, but the former Liberian president has denied.

She disclosed that a follow-up online training course will come up after the exercise in Monrovia and subsequently a website will be dedicated to enable journalists to post articles and news stories on transitional justice issues, which relatively is a new concept in Liberia.

The Project Director is being assisted by a trainer from South Africa, Karen Williams, who extensively covered the South African Truth and Reconciliation process as a journalist.

BBC World Service Trust is a charity which works with civil society, local media and governments to build long term development solutions.

"We produce creative programs to inform and engage audiences, strengthen the media sector by building professional capacity and skills, and measure the impact of our work using rigorous research", according to a mission statement.

Speaking on behalf of the International Center for Transitional Justice, an official, Paul James-Allen, said the ICTJ main focus is to assist societies coming out of conflicts by giving them tools that will enable them to properly handle justice in transition.

"By addressing the abuses of past regimes and establishing an historical record of what occurred, transitional justice can break this cycle of violence and impunity and set a country on a new path towards sustainable peace, democracy and the rule of law", said Mr. James-Allen.

## The Trial of Charles Taylor website

Wednesday, 8 August 2007

### ***Taylor's Lead Counsel Indicates Additional Time Required to Prepare for Trial***

Posted by Webmaster on August 8th, 2007

According to a Reuters article, Taylor's new lead counsel Courtenay Griffiths has "urged" the Court to again postpone the trial beyond the August 20 date on which it is currently set to resume. Griffiths told Reuters in an interview that "[r]ealistically there is no prospect of this trial starting on Aug. 20" and "[q]uite plainly the time that we have been allowed would be inadequate to prepare a case of this magnitude."

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 8 August 2007

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **LIBERIA: Some fake orphans reunify with their parents**

MONROVIA, 7 August 2007 (IRIN) - The Liberian government says it has started reunifying hundreds of parents with their children who were placed in orphanages under false pretenses. "Under the laws of Liberia orphanages are only meant for orphans," Alexander Stemn, a pastor and head the Union of Liberian Orphanages, the umbrella organization of Liberian orphan homes, told IRIN on Monday.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

VOA 8 August 2007

#### **Presidential Candidates Debate Development in Sierra Leone**

By Naomi Schwarz, Freetown

Sierra Leone's leading presidential candidate, Vice President Solomon Berewa, boycotted country's first-ever pre-election debates. But the other six candidates were on hand and discussed employment, education, health and other issues before an invited crowd. Naomi Schwarz is in Freetown and has more. Presidential candidate Charles Margai caused a stir at the presidential debates when he arrived fully clad in his party's orange, more than an hour and a half late.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **Public Wants In-depth Investigations into Discovery of Ammunitions**

*(New Democrat, New Vision and National Chronicle)*

- Security appears to be the preoccupation of Liberians with many people viewing the discovery of assorted ammunitions in the provincial city of Gbarnga as scaring, encouraging UNMIL and state security agencies to launch a full scale investigation into the incident. The public and the media are sentimental about the discovery, saying that if the weapons are not available at the moment, then they are expected, for without weapons, the ammunitions are useless.

#### **Supreme Court Decides Former Transitional Leader's Fate Thursday**

*(The Inquirer)*

- The Supreme Court will on Thursday hand down its final ruling in the theft of property case involving former transitional chairman Gyude Bryant. Lawyers representing the defendant had argued that Mr. Bryant is immune to prosecution as a former head of state of Liberia while state prosecutors contended that he should not be exempted from any legal proceedings because he was not an elected president.

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

#### **Beninois President begins Official Visit to Liberia**

- According to correspondents, Beninois President Boni Yayi yesterday arrived in Liberia and was met upon arrival by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and an array of Government officials and diplomats, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Alan Doss.  
*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Supreme Court Halts Activities of Controversial Leaders of Civil Service**

- In her ruling to a Petition for a Writ of Prohibition filed by the embattled President of the Civil Service Association Jefferson Elliot, Supreme Court Associate Justice Gladys Johnson stopped the activities of the controversial Brown Slewion-faction of the Association because the faction is illegal.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Lawmakers Debate Bill to Create their own Legislative Budget Office**

- Correspondents said that the House of Representatives is currently debating a draft Bill to create a Budget Office in the central administration at the National Legislature to assist the National Legislature in the debate of future national budgets.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Bong Citizens Call on Security Forces to Investigate Arms Smuggling**

- In an interview yesterday, two key officials of the Bong County Citizens Union called on the security forces and UNMIL to investigate the smuggling into the County, of a huge cache of ammunition to identify the individuals that allegedly smuggled the guns and ammunition which was discovered in in Gbarnga on Sunday. The Union's General Chairman George Johnson and its National Coordinator Jerry Kollie condemned the act.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Collective Society Opens Secretariat to Protect Copyrights**

- The National Collective Society of Liberia yesterday opened a Secretariat to collaborate with the Liberia Copyrights Office to protect the authors of literary and artistic works. Addressing a news conference, the Coordinator of the Secretariat, Mr. Boba Johnson said that his Secretariat would represent and defend the legitimate interest of authors of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Star Radio** *(News culled from website today at 9:00 am)*

#### **Local People Vow to Resist Expansion of key Rubber Farm**

- During his induction as the new Representative of Grand Bassa County District #3 Byron Brown said that the people of the County would resist any attempt to take away the land of the Bassa people to expand the Liberia Agriculture Company, contending that the expansion is not in the interest of the people of Bassa.

*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.*

**UN Envoy and President of Benin emphasize importance of national security for Liberia's development**

**Monrovia, Liberia** – National security and generation of employment opportunities in Liberia were the main issues of focus today when President Yayi Boni of Benin met with Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss at the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) headquarters today.



President Boni commended UNMIL for helping to establish peace and security in Liberia and urged that the Mission continue to support Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her Government in bringing lasting peace to Liberia. For its part, he noted, Benin was prepared to contribute to efforts to stabilize Liberia and the entire region.

Government in bringing lasting peace to

SRSR Doss (l) and President Boni at UNMIL headquarters

"We want to support Liberia and UNMIL," he said. "We are prepared to send military engineers to Liberia and eager to set up partnerships with the private sector in this country."



President Boni stated that he had been accompanied by his Minister of Defense to discuss further deployment of Beninois military engineering assets to contribute to the reconstruction of infrastructure in Liberia. This would generate employment opportunities, especially for youth.

Liberia's Government was stable and that

President Boni (4<sup>th</sup> from right) with Mr. Doss and senior UNMIL military, UN Police and civilian members of staff

Outlining UNMIL's mandate and the progress of its work in Liberia to the Benin President, Mr. Doss noted that presently the country's security forces were being restructured. Ensuring stability and national security was paramount among the priorities of both the Government and

UNMIL.

"UNMIL will not leave before the national security services are ready to take over the job," Mr. Doss emphasized. He also stressed that the country faced serious challenges such as employment generation and the repair of roads.

President Boni is on a two-day state visit to Liberia and will meet with President Johnson Sirleaf and members of her Cabinet.