

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



Sierra Leone's newly President -elect Ernest Bai Koroma

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:

Monday, 17 September 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local NewsNEC Releases Presidential Run-Off Results / *NEC*

Pages 3-4

International NewsCan Africa's Most Notorious Warlord Get a Fair Trial? / *The Nation (Nairobi)*

Pages 5-6

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / *UNMIL*

Pages 7-9

Liberia and Its Special Relationship / *Trinidad Express*

Pages 10-11



National Electoral Commission (NEC)
15 Industrial Estates, Wellington, Freetown, Sierra Leone



Statement from NEC Chairperson

NEC Statement to the Media - 17 September 2007

At our last briefing, we informed the media and the public that the National Electoral Commission (NEC) would undertake a series of investigations and recounts in order to finalize the results of the presidential election run-off. We are happy to report today that the Commission undertook the field work during the period established and is ready today to present its findings. We at NEC are satisfied with the verification process which was undertaken, and are very confident that the official results we are about to announce are indeed those recorded in the polling stations and accurately reflect the will of the voters.

Nevertheless, it is with regret that we report that, despite all the measures taken to hinder electoral malpractices, there were instances where malpractice and fraud were attempted. The system we have instituted at NEC makes it difficult for fraud to be successfully undertaken, but it cannot completely stop those who are intent on manipulating the results from actually trying. This is the reason why NEC needed to be careful with the tallying of results. We are pleased that we have been able to detect malpractices and have taken appropriate remedial action to limit the influence which such acts would otherwise have.

For example, during the verification process we discovered counterfeit results forms which were sent to NEC from polling stations throughout the country. It was not difficult to detect them as they contained a spelling mistake in the title, the word 'form' was spelled 'from'. Three such cases were identified at polling centres 07131 in Port Loko, 11153 in Moyamba and 13056 in Western Rural. The Commission responded by recovering the original forms issued to the stations that contained the true and accurate results. These were then entered into the tally.

There were also attempts at ballot stuffing and ballot-box swapping, but they were detected thanks to the measures put in place and the investigations conducted. Additionally, through the recounting process undertaken with party agents and observers, we were able to either confirm results or uncover various anomalies which were then addressed to accurately reflect the poll.

As reported earlier, the Commission noted polling station results with turn-outs of over 100%. It is impossible for voter turnout in excess of 100% to have taken place without fraud or illegal action. The Commission has been left with no option but to invalidate all results from polling stations reporting over 100% turnout. In all, 477 stations across the country have thus been invalidated, as follows: Kailahun: 90, Kenema: 65, Kono: 9, Bombali: 17, Kambia: 8, Koinadugu: 12, Port Loko: 2, Tonkolili: 6, Bo: 123, Bonthe: 2, Moyamba: 24, Pujehun: 113, Western Rural: 1 and Western Urban: 5.

It is extremely regrettable to have to invalidate even a single polling station, and it is a decision that the NEC did not take lightly. However, the responsibility for the act of invalidation falls on those who are responsible for the malpractices, it is they who should be held accountable for disenfranchising voters, as there were legitimate votes cast in these polling stations.

There is one important element to highlight: international election standards say that the invalidation of votes does not require a repeat of the polling exercise if the act of invalidation does not affect the outcome of the poll. The National Electoral Commission can confirm that in the case of 8 September poll these invalidations have NOT affected the outcome of the election.

NEC will continue to collaborate with the law enforcement agencies in the investigations of all electoral malpractices reported.

There is a very important message arising from these elections: there is no longer a place for fraud and malpractice in the Sierra Leone electoral system. The people of Sierra Leone deserve to exercise their rights in an atmosphere of freedom, fairness and transparency. This is what NEC strived to provide and

will continue to strive for in the future - nothing less will be tolerated. Those who cheated have succeeded in doing a disservice to their respective candidates. They also succeeded in disenfranchising fellow Sierra Leoneans. But they did not succeed in tarnishing either the results or the credibility of the process.

The results

- 5,679 polling station results were entered into the results database, representing 100% of all polling stations across the country, excluding those that were invalidated.
- The average national turnout is 68.09%.
- The total number of valid votes cast is 1,740,058.
- There are 43,793 invalid votes, representing 2.45% of total votes cast.
- The general summary of the results, as well as the detailed results, by station and by centre, will be posted on the NEC website: www.necsierraleone.org.

The presidential run-off results by districts:

	Koroma – APC	Berewa – SLPP
Kailahun	11,631	111,695
Kenema	32,666	160,699
Kono	52,908	74,458
Bombali	125,419	14,095
Kambia	61,250	14,449
Koinadugu	42,178	23,130
Port Loko	132,287	17,789
Tonkolili	101,296	12,958
Bo	37,006	105,459
Bonthe	20,018	28,313
Moyamba	26,485	49,886
Pujehun	2,875	38,107
WA Rural	55,332	22,842
WA Urban	249,056	115,771
National results	950,407	789,651

In exercise of the powers conferred on the Returning Officer by section 37 of the Electoral Laws Act, 2002, I hereby certify that 950,407 valid votes were cast in favour of the candidate Ernest Bai Koroma at that election:

AND Ernest Bai Koroma therefore received the highest number of valid votes cast in the election:

Ernest Bai Koroma has been duly elected President of the Republic of Sierra Leone at the Presidential Election of 2007.

Any citizen of Sierra Leone may challenge the validity of the election of the President by petition to the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone, within seven days after the declaration of the Presidential results.

Christiana Thorpe, Chairperson, National Electoral Commission

The Nation (Nairobi)

Saturday, 15 September 2007

Can Africa's Most Notorious Warlord Get a Fair Trial?

OPINION

By Peter Mwaura
Nairobi

Charles Taylor has already been tried and found guilty of atrocities in the court of public opinion. He is as guilty as the Mungiki, and he should be shot dead.

But this won't happen - he is getting a fair trial.

Mr Taylor, Africa's most notorious warlord, is accused of Mungiki-like crimes, including murder, mutilation, rape and extortion.

He is being tried at the International Criminal Court building in The Hague, the Netherlands, because of security concerns in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Monrovia in Liberia.

Mr David Crane, the chief prosecutor of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, indicted the former president of Liberia on March 3, 2003, on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He later reduced the counts to 11 to make a "tighter, more concise instrument to hold this destroyer of two nations accountable."

Mr Taylor, who stepped down as Liberia's president on August 7, 2003, after the charges, initially sought asylum in Nigeria, but was arrested in 2006 as he tried to escape to Cameroon.

Prof Crane, who now teaches law at Syracuse University, described him as one of the mega-murderers of the 20th century behind Mao Tse-tung, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein.

He accused Mr Taylor of being among criminals who started the conflict in Sierra Leone for personal gain and geo-political control of West Africa.

Many observers have described Mr Taylor as the Hitler of Africa, and there is a lot of international pressure to try him expeditiously. Human rights lobbyists and victims of his war crimes, numbering over 1 million, are impatient to see him punished.

From what has been said and written about Mr Taylor, it would seem that a fair trial is not even within the realm of possibility. But he is getting his day in court and then some.

The trial, which opened on June 4 and has been adjourned and postponed three times, is expected to last until December next year, with judgement likely only by mid-2009. The adjournments and postponements have been done to ensure he gets a fair trial.

The case was supposed to start on April 2, 2007, but it was postponed to June 4.

After the first day of hearing, it was adjourned until 25 July when the accused, through lawyer Karim Khan, complained that there was no "equality of arms" between the prosecution and defence teams because the prosecution team was larger and had greater legal experience.

Presiding judge Sebutinde acknowledged Mr Taylor's complaints and agreed that "there has to be some equality of arms," and ordered adequate facilities be provided "without further delay" for his defence.

Equality of arms refers to the rule that in an adversarial system such as Kenya's court system where the prosecution and the defence in essence fight each other to convince the judges of their version of the truth, both should be evenly matched.

The court also requires that a suspect has the right to legal assistance of his own choice, including the right to have the aid provided by the court where the interests of justice so require and where the suspect does not have sufficient means to pay for it.

The court is paying for Mr Taylor's defence after he claimed that he had no money.

During the hearing, Mr Stephen J. Rapp, who replaced Prof Crane, indicated that although he "did not believe Mr Taylor is indigent," his office did not want to "hold up" the trial by litigating this point.

He stated that if substantial assets belonging to Taylor were later found, the money would be seized and used to pay his defence team.

When the court resumed on June 25, Mr Taylor pointed out that his defence team required "a leading senior counsel at the rank of QC to properly lead the case because of its complexity and the magnitude of the case".

He also wanted international investigators of the calibre of Britain's Scotland Yard and the Central Intelligence Agency of the US.

JUDGE SEBUTINDE WAS A TRIFLE peeved, saying that she did not understand "this fixation with Queen's Counsel."

But she knew Mr Taylor, as the accused, had rights. So she ordered that he be given enough representation.

By the time the court resumed on August 30, the former Liberian strongman had been provided with a new defence team, including Mr Courtney Griffiths, a QC, and two other world-class lawyers. The team has offices in The Hague and Monrovia.

The court is now paying \$100,000 (about Sh7 million) a month for Mr Taylor's defence.

And the trial has been postponed until January 7 to allow the defence team to prepare for his defence.

The trial is an object lesson to Africa on not only impunity, but also the rule of law, fair trial and the presumption of innocence.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 6 September 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Embassy of Liberia to Host Investment Symposium in Washington, DC

Washington, D.C., Sep 14, 2007 (Embassy of The Republic of Liberia/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Government of Liberia, through the Embassy in Washington will on October 1st, 2007 host a "Liberia Private Sector Investment Symposium" in Washington DC; the second in a series of road show events in continuation of the February Private Sector Forum.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone opposition widens lead in presidential vote

FREETOWN, Sept 13, 2007 (AFP) - Sierra Leone opposition candidate Ernest Koroma widened his lead Thursday over outgoing Vice President Solomon Berewa in a run-off to choose a new president for the war-scarred West African nation, official figures showed. With three quarters of the 6,157 polling stations reporting, Koroma had 60 percent of the votes cast against 40 percent for ruling party candidate Berewa, according to figures released by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

INTERVIEW - Sierra Leone presidential frontrunner vows war on graft

By Katrina Manson

FREETOWN, Sept 14 (Reuters) - Sierra Leone's opposition leader Ernest Bai Koroma, who looks set to win the West African country's presidential election, says he will wage an implacable war on corruption and work to revive the war-scarred economy. With just over three-quarters of the votes counted from last week's run-off poll, Koroma of the All People's Congress has a commanding lead with 60 percent.

Ivory Coast elections likely in October 2008: electoral body

ABIDJAN, Sept 13, 2007 (AFP) - Long-delayed presidential elections in Ivory Coast could be held by October next year provided a voter listing exercise opens this month as planned, the electoral commission said Thursday. The suggested date is several months later than what was envisaged under a new peace deal reached early this year in Ouagadougou, the capital of nearby Burkina Faso.

Local Media - Newspaper

Lawmakers Pass Bill for Veteran Affairs Bureau

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

President Bush Extends Liberians Stay in the U.S.

(Heritage, Liberian Diaspora, New Democrat, The Analyst, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The Informer, Public Agenda, and National Chronicle)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has welcomed the decision by United States President, George Bush to grant an extension for some Liberians living in the U.S. to remain in that country for additional 18-months under the Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) policy.
- According to an Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia yesterday, the President believes that the decision by the U.S. President is a further testimony of the strong historic ties which have subsisted between Liberia and the United States.

House of Representatives Passes Veteran Act

(Daily Observer and The Inquirer)

- The House of Representative yesterday passed the Act creating the Bureau of Veteran Affairs after four months of consultation with stakeholders which led to an amendment to the Act.
- The draft bill known as "an Act to establish the Bureau of Veteran Affairs" was presented to the National Legislature by the Executive Branch of government with equal provisions made for former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) soldiers and ex-fighters of disbanded and dissolved warring factions.
- Attempts by the drafters of the proposed bill to link the former AFL soldiers with ex-combatants were quashed by the Legislative Committees of National Defense Security and Judiciary after careful study of veteran acts in the United States, Nigeria and other nations of the world.

UNMIL Turns Over New Police Station in Gbarpolu County

(Heritage, The Analyst and Public Agenda)

- The Deputy Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General, Jordan Ryan has handed over a newly constructed police station to the Liberia National Police (LNP) in Bopolu, Gbarpolu County.
- The police station which was renovated through the Quick Impact Project initiative of the UN Mission in Liberia is the first and only one in the county.
- Speaking at the turning over ceremony, Mr. Ryan said as the first police station in the area, the building represents a milestone for the restoration of the rule of law in that county and said it was also a reflection of the mission's current efforts to support the Liberia National Police in deploying officers nationwide.

UNMIL Peacekeepers Dedicate School Block

(The Informer)

- A new school building has been dedicated in Gbengbar Town along the Monrovia-Robertsfield Highway.
- The building valued at over US\$25,000 was constructed by soldiers of NIBATT-13 through their personal contributions.
- Speaking during the dedication, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Allan Doss praised the soldiers for going beyond the call of duty to provide an educational facility for the residents of the town.

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

Airport Security Intercept Ghanaian Soldier with over a Million Dollar

- According to correspondents, joint security officers at the Roberts International Airport (RIA) yesterday intercepted one Lt./Col. Abdullai Nyesuah of the Ghana Army who entered Liberia with over US\$1 million in cash without documents authorizing him to travel with such an amount. Liberian financial officials said that it is forbidden for anyone to enter or leave the Country with such a huge amount of fiscal cash. Lt./Col. Nyesuah reportedly said that he was a Paymaster of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

- The Customs and Excise Commissioner Alphonso Gaye who allegedly alerted Deputy Finance Minister for Revenue Afreda Tamba in a memorandum, complained that an attempt by customs and security officers at the RIA to confiscate the money from the Ghana soldier was violently resisted by UNMIL Nigerian and Ghanaian soldiers at the Airport.
- Commissioner Gaye also said that while customs and security officers were investigating the man, the National Security Advisor to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Dr. H. Boima Fahnulleh Jr. allegedly ordered one Yank Zuba of the Customs Bureau to receive and turn over the money to the Ghanaian.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Public Schools in Bong County Empty as Children Shun Schoolroom

- The Principal of the Bong Mines High School (BMHS) in Bong County reportedly told the visiting Bong County Senior Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor that public schools in the former mining community cannot begin as only 50 students have so far enrolled for this academic year.
- The Principal, identified as Madam Stewart, said that most students are reluctant to enrol because they are engaged in scrap business.
- For her part, Senator Taylor who donated 5,000 Liberian dollars to the BMHS, encouraged parents in the area to send their children to school in that education of the youth is the key to nation-building.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Lawmakers Pass Bill for Veteran Affairs Bureau

- Correspondent said that the House of Representatives yesterday passed a Bill to establish a Bureau of Veteran Affairs and subsequently submitted it to the House of Senate for concurrence. The Lawmakers had reportedly disagreed on the inclusion of ex-combatants as veterans whose welfare the Bureau will also seek, because they fought in the various warring factions and pillaged the State during the civil war.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC 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.

Trinidad Express

Saturday, 15 September 2007

<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article>

Liberia and its special relationship

Basil Ince

When Tony Blair was prime minister of Britain we often heard of the special relationship between his country and the US. President Bush also spoke of that special relationship. The term "special relationship" was first used by Winston Churchill in 1946 in his famous Iron Curtain speech at Fulton, Missouri. Churchill was describing Anglo-American ties that had developed during World War II. The term has also been used to describe the ties between the United States and Liberia, the West African country which has been independent since 1847.

Both Liberia and the United States acknowledge the special relationship. This relationship, however, was only partially forged by World War II when Liberia became strategically important in the prosecution of the war in the North African theatre. Liberia's importance to the Allied cause became evident early on after Malaysia and Singapore fell to the Japanese. Liberia became a primary source of latex rubber for the allies. This was not the sole way that Liberia became vital in the Allied cause. A South American- Liberian air corridor was opened up to facilitate the transport of soldiers and supplies across the Atlantic, thus avoiding German U-boats which were lurking in the North Atlantic.

The special relationship between the oldest independent nation in Africa and the United States goes back even further than World War II. It began way back in 1822 when American slaves returned to settle in Africa. Quakers and slaveholders formed the African Colonisation Society and collaborated in sending the slaves back to Africa. The Quakers hoped that the slaves would have a better chance to live free in Africa, while the slaveholders wanted to avoid bloody slave rebellions as had happened in Haiti.

Returning Africans, now called Americo-Liberians, wished to model the new nation along the lines of the United States, hence the name Liberia, which means the Land of the Free. Other American symbols followed. The Liberian flag resembles the American flag, there is a pledge of allegiance, and Liberia's official language is English. Liberia's capital, Monrovia, was named after former US president, James Monroe who sent aid to free the slaves.

But tensions arose immediately between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Africans. The tensions stemmed from religious differences, social customs, and cultural standards rooted in the ante bellum American South on the part of Americo- Liberians. Naturally politics exacerbated the situation when Americo-Liberians over the years grabbed the lion's share of governmental posts, including the presidency.

Today, Liberia is a despoiled country, the result of civil wars that have taken a heavy toll on the nation's development.

Interestingly, it was an individual of purported Trinidad roots who precipitated the first civil war and was involved in the second. The father of Charles Taylor, a warlord who became president of Liberia, lived at Point Fortin and later went to Africa and threw in his lot with the Americo-Liberians. Taylor, the former president, who is now facing trial before a UN-backed war crimes tribunal, is the father of Charles "Chuckie" Taylor who spent time in Trinidad before he was arrested in Miami after attempting to enter the United States on a forged passport.

Liberia's civil wars have left its economy in shambles and the US Congress has appropriated \$840 million to help in the country's reconstruction. Liberia's first woman president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Africa's first, has described the US role in helping Liberia as "critical." Consequently, she has asked the United States for debt relief. US assistance may certainly be forthcoming in that respect. After all, that's what special relationships are all about. It will be difficult for the US to forget Liberia's cooperation during World War II, including declaring war against Germany and the Axis powers at its behest.