

**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:

Monday, 12 November 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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International Herald Tribune

Friday, 9 November 2007

The child as war criminal

By David M. Crane

Friday, November 9, 2007

SYRACUSE, New York:

It was a clear hot day. The meeting hall in the school for the deaf located up-country near Makeni rippled with the heat of over 500 persons. The meeting was one of many I conducted throughout Sierra Leone to provide a vehicle for people to talk about the war, the crimes, their pain and other issues related to our work. As I finished answering one question, a small arm was raised in the middle of the hall. I walked back to the student. He meekly stood up, head bowed, and mumbled loud enough for those around him to hear, "I killed people, I am sorry, I did not mean it." I went over to him, tears in my eyes, hugged him and said, "Of course you didn't mean it. I forgive you."

This exchange took place while I was in Sierra Leone as chief prosecutor of the international war crimes tribunal in West Africa, the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The young man was one of tens of thousands of children who had been forced into combat against their will. I chose not to prosecute any of them for the crimes they committed. It would have been legally and morally wrong to do so.

Only in the past 10 years has the international community begun to grapple with this scourge. A report to the United Nations secretary general in 1996 laid out a comprehensive program to protect children during times of armed conflict. The introduction declared:

"More and more of the world is being sucked into a desolate moral vacuum. This is a space devoid of the most basic human values; a space in which children are slaughtered, raped and maimed; a space in which children are exploited as soldiers; a space in which children are starved and exposed to extreme brutality. . . There are few further depths to which humanity can sink."

A child soldier named Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen, is about to be tried before the ad hoc military commission in Guantánamo. He is charged with the killing of an American soldier during a firefight in which Khadr himself was seriously wounded. He was 15 at the time. Now, at the age of 20, after years in detention as an "unlawful enemy combatant," Khadr is being tried for what he did as a child.

The use of children in warfare is not a new phenomenon. Children have followed armies for centuries as support personnel - pages, water carriers, drummers. In European navies, boys were assigned to warships by noble parents to embark on careers as officers; others were pressed into duty as sailors.

With the advent of the various Hague rules governing weapons in war in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the rules of warfare began to take on a universal status. With the two World Wars, attention shifted from weapons to the status of non-combatants.

The founding of the United Nations in 1945 established a voice for civilians in time of warfare, particularly for children. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 were devoted to persons who are "out of the

combat" - prisoners of war, the shipwrecked, civilians. Children finally gained special protection under international law.

However, the Cold War also saw the rise of Third-World conflict, in which children were once again the victims. In the 1970s, the Geneva Conventions were revised to reflect the realities of modern armed conflict. Once again the bar was raised, and most states agreed to the new standards.

The protocols of 1977 specifically prohibited the use of children in armed conflict. Using children in conflict was not specifically defined as a crime, but the implication was this was a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions.

The subsequent Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1990 was more specific about the use of children in armed conflict. By this time, the act of child recruitment as a crime had crystallized into international law.

The convention defines children as those below the age of 18, and among other things, it requires states to establish a minimum age at which criminal responsibility may be assigned. An optional protocol admonishes armed groups - as distinct from armed forces of the state - not to recruit or use children under any circumstances.

The detention of juveniles is also covered by international agreements. Juvenile offenders, like adult offenders, are to be awarded prompt due process. A child has the right to timely access to legal counsel, and the right to timely review of their detention. Detention should only be used as a last resort, in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest possible duration. In detention, juveniles must be separated from adults.

Despite the political and legal recognition that child recruitment is a universal crime, child recruitment has continued unabated. In 1996, the Marcel Report stunned the United Nations, highlighting the full extent of the problem. Millions of children died in the 1980s and 1990s. There were calls for action and a plan began to evolve to monitor the recruitment of child soldiers.

In the late 1990s the world once again sat down and began to develop a mechanism to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute, which created the International Criminal Court, specifically stated that the recruitment of children under the age of 15 is a "serious violation of international humanitarian law."

Yet the tragedy continues worldwide, particularly in Africa. Forty-two armed groups in 11 countries were specifically singled out in a UN report issued in February 2005. It called for monitoring and reporting of children in armed conflict to ensure that the law is complied with worldwide.

Introducing a witness before the international tribunal in West Africa, I described another tragedy in Sierra Leone's 10-year tale of horror, this one from the Kono district:

"The rebels took his younger brother and himself to Kaiama along with 13 other boys. The rebels lined the 15 children up and offered them a choice: Join one line if they wanted to be a rebel, another line if they wanted to be freed and allowed to go home. All 15 of these boys, and they were just boys, joined the line for freedom.

"It was the wrong choice. They were accused of sabotage to the revolution. To keep them from escaping, each was held down, screaming, and one by one had AFRC and/or RUF carved into their chests with the blade of a sword. The witness was now just marked property and treated as such. He will be in this very

chamber to tell his horror story and show you his scarred chest that to this very day bears the letters: A-F-R-C R-U-F."

Omar Khadr, a 15-year-old Canadian, could have been that child in Sierra Leone, but he was in Afghanistan, in similar circumstances, not of his making, not under his control, in an environment from which as a child there was no escape.

Legally, morally and politically the international community - including the United States - has separated children from the horrors of combat, to protect and nurture, to rehabilitate and support; not to punish.

No child found in combat should be held liable for his or her acts. That is the legal standard of the world community and of this country. What will take place in Guantánamo in the coming weeks is wrong.

David M. Crane, professor of practice at the Syracuse University College of Law, was the prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone from 2002 to 2005.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 9 November 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

INTERVIEW-Liberian leader urges UK's Brown to attend summit

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, Nov 8 (Reuters) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf urged British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to drop his threat to boycott next month's Europe-Africa summit if Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe attends. Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's only elected female head of state, added her voice to the growing number of African and European leaders calling on Brown to attend the summit in Lisbon, which she said was likely to focus on trade relations.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone police arrest 41 illegal immigrants in two-hour crackdown

FREETOWN, Nov 9, 2007 (AFP) - Police in Sierra Leone arrested 41 foreigners in a two-hour raid in the southern diamond-rich city of Bo for breaching immigration laws, an internal affairs ministry official said on Friday. Immigration officer Michael Bayoh, who coordinated the crackdown in the country's second largest city, 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the capital, said nationals of Britain, China, India, Pakistan and Lebanon, were among those nabbed.

New Sierra Leonean Leader Visits

Abuja, Nov 08, 2007 (Nigeria First/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The new President of Sierra Leone, Mr Ernest Bai Koroma on Thursday November 8 paid a one-day visit to President Umar Musa Yar'Adua at the State House, Abuja. The Sierra Leonean leader was accompanied in his visit by his minister of Presidential and Public Affairs, Hon Alpha Kanu and the Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe.

Cote d'Ivoire, China sign three economic, technical cooperation agreements

ABIDJAN, Nov 9, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Cote d'Ivoire and China have signed here three economic and technical cooperation agreements on loans and donations granted by China, according to reports. The agreements were signed Thursday by Cote d'Ivoire's Foreign Affairs Minister Youssouf Bakayoko, and the Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun.

Local Media – Newspaper

Police Fired for Burglary

(National Chronicle and Heritage)

- In a released in Monrovia Thursday, the Liberia National Police (LNP) said it has dismissed three police officers from active service for burglary while 14 others were suspended for time indefinite for desertion of posts. The measures were taken in order to bring credibility to the

LNP. Those dismissed from the force were T. Max Williams, Joseph B. Conneh and Martin K. Dunor.

Remains of Crash Victims Flown Home

(The News, Daily Observer and New Democrat)

- The remains of three crew members of the Russian MI-8 helicopter which crashed a week ago near the commercial town of Ganta in north-eastern Liberia have been flown home.
- The three men including the pilot in Command, Vitali Drozdov, Co-Pilot, Sergey Kolosov and Flight Engineer, Nikolai Zhorikov were flown home Thursday following a brief programme held at the Spriggs Payne Airfield in Monrovia.
- UNMIL Chief Aviation Officer Azzam Ayyat, in a tribune said the men were part of the peacekeeping family in Liberia. Although contracted by UNMIL,
- Mr. Ayyat stated that the deceased played a meaningful role in helping to keep peace, foster development and sustainable growth in Liberia.

UK and Canada Warn Citizens against Traveling to Liberia

(National Chronicle)

- [sic:] The Government of the United Kingdom is advising its citizens against essential travel to Liberia unless a citizen has made adequate security arrangement for accommodation and travel with a reliable organization in advance of his travel.
- According to the British Government, the main security risks are violent crime and public order incidents. The former is a particular risk in Monrovia after dark, and Britain recommends that its citizens should not walk in Monrovia at night. The British Government says the Liberia National Police (LNP) currently lacks the ability to provide effective security in any part of the country.
- For its part, Canada says the security situation in Liberia remains unpredictable. Mass movement of people aggravates the already poor economic conditions, especially in Monrovia and in other cities, where the presence of refugees is putting a strain on food and shelter resources. Looting and robbery, often at gunpoint, is being reported throughout the country.

Newspaper Claims Government Admits Error in Julu's Indictment

(The Inquirer)

- [sic:]The Government of Liberia has admitted making an error in the indictment of a former general of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Charles Julu, who is now being held at the Monrovia Central Prison for treason. The government made the assertion in a twelve-page count resistant responding to the defense counsel request for the dismissal of the charges on their client. Julu's defense counsel headed by Counsellor Dempster Brown earlier filed a motion to the Criminal Court "A" where the case is currently being tried requesting that the State drops charges on his client because according to him, the indictment at the time carried two crimes.

National Insurer Secures Loan to Fund Small and Medium Enterprises

(Heritage, The Analyst, The News, The Informer and The Inquirer)

- The Pan African Ecobank and Liberia's National Investment Commission (NIC) on Thursday signed a US\$250,000 Memorandum of Understanding to support small and medium enterprises (SME) in the country.
- Mr. Richard V. Tolbert, Chairman of the NIC signed on behalf of the Commission and praised Ecobank for its cooperation and assured that the money would be used for the intended purpose.
- Mr. Tolbert recalled that the small medium enterprise division of the Commission was created in 1979 to solicit funds for loans to potential Liberian businesses. He told the gathering that his administration would continue to seek funding from financial institutions to empower Liberian business people.
- He said the MOU was essential because it would play a vital role in building the Liberian economy, and challenged Liberians to engage in the private sector to sustain themselves. "Our vision is in line with government's policy to financially empower Liberians to invest in the private sector," Tolbert said.

- Ecobank Managing Director Manirenike Adepoju said the MOU was the beginning of the bank's assistance to the NIC for loan to small medium enterprises in Liberia.

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

President Sirleaf Makes new Appointments in Government

- Correspondents said that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday appointed former Information Minister Johnnie McClaine as Ambassador Extraordinary, Jeremiah Hinneh, Senior Aide Camp and Juliane Bodo, Junior Aide Camp. Others are Richard Wright, Aide Camp, Margibi County, Mannue Mannie, Aide Camp, Sinoe County, Abraham Dorbor, Aide Camp, Lofa County and Theophilus Nah, Aide Camp, Grand Kru County.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Police Sacked for Disorderly Conduct

- In a released in Monrovia Thursday, the Liberia National Police (LNP) said it has dismissed three police officers from active service for burglary while 14 others were suspended for time indefinite for desertion of posts, stressing that the measures were taken in order to bring credibility to the LNP. Those dismissed from the force were T. Max Williams, Joseph B. Conneh and Martin K. Dunor.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

World Bank Grants Liberia US\$24 Million for Road Works

- A Ministry of Public Works release said that the World Bank has disbursed more than US\$20 million to rehabilitate the Buchanan-Monrovia highway and to that effect, awarded the contract to CHICO, a Chinese road construction company to repair and resurface the most essential parts of highway.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

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.

CNN

Monday, 12 November 2007

Police arrest Khmer Rouge suspects

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (CNN) -- Ieng Sary, the foreign minister of the Khmer Rouge regime that ruled Cambodia in the late 1970s, and his wife were arrested by a U.N.-backed genocide tribunal Monday, court officials announced.

Ieng Sary, like other Khmer Rouge leaders, has repeatedly denied responsibility for any crimes.

Ieng, the brother-in-law of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, and his wife Ieng Thirith were arrested at their home in Phnom Penh after court officials delivered an arrest warrant early Monday, according to the Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia.

"They have both been brought to the ECCC facilities," the tribunal announced in a written statement. "Further details will be released tomorrow."

The special tribunal of Cambodian and international judges was established to prosecute ex-Khmer Rouge officials for the killings that accompanied the communist movement's 1975-1979 rule. As many as 2 million people were killed in the party's efforts to transform Cambodia into an agrarian utopia before troops from neighboring Vietnam overthrew the regime.

Ieng Sary faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, while Ieng Thirith -- also a member of the Khmer Rouge leadership -- is charged only with crimes against humanity, the court announced.

Police surrounded their home in Phnom Penh shortly after 5:30 a.m. (10.30pm GMT) and drove them away about 9:30 a.m.. The arrest comes despite a 1996 pardon issued to Ieng Sary by Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk.

Remnants of the Khmer Rouge continued to battle Cambodia's government into the 1990s before fragmenting in the middle of the decade. Ieng defected from the movement in 1996, taking about 10,000 guerrillas with him, and Pol Pot died of natural causes in 1998.

Another Khmer Rouge veteran, Kaing Guek Eav, is charged with carrying out mass executions and torture as the commandant of a notorious prison in Phnom Penh.

Voice of America

Saturday, 10 November 2007

Congo's Child Soldiers Face Tough Road to Recovery

By Noel King

Muhazi, Rwanda *Voice of America*

Tens of thousands of children have been abducted and forced into service by a myriad of armed groups in Congo's chaotic eastern provinces. Many of them are Rwandan boys who were born in Congo following the genocide. On returning to their native Rwanda, the boys face a long road to recovery. Noel King has this report from Muhazi, Rwanda.

Like most children, the boys at the Muhazi center for demobilized child soldiers, just want to have fun.

But after spending years in the service of eastern Congo's armed groups, the biggest struggle for former child soldiers, is behaving like a child.

Habimana, 13, arrived at the center two days ago, after spending a year with a Congolese militia group known as the Mai Mai.

Habimana says he had the rank of private in the Mai Mai and was the armed guard for a captain. He says the Mai Mai did not abduct him, but that he joined the militia. After his father died one year ago, he had nowhere else to go. He says the Mai Mai was the safest place to be.



A child soldier in Rwanda (file photo)

Habimana left the Mai Mai after he was shot in a gunfight. The Mai Mai took Habimana to a hospital, where doctors handed him over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The ICRC works to find the families of Rwanda's demobilized child soldiers. Until their families are found, the boys stay at Muhazi camp, run by the Rwandan government.

Ally Mugema is a social worker at the Muhazi center. He explains that it is difficult for the boys to re-adjust to civilian life.

"When they are with the armed groups in the forest, they are brutal, they are aggressive, they steal using arms," he noted. "When they are looking for food, they have to use force. A long period in that kind of behavior, it tends to be conditioned. They cannot go in the community with such behavior."

Mugema told VOA that when the boys arrive they marvel at the things that the center provides, like their own shoes and mosquito nets.

The boys are taught how to brush their teeth and the importance of bathing daily.

The center employs teachers who provide the boys a basic education and counselors who urge them to talk about their experiences as child soldiers. Ally Mugema explains.

"We teach literacy and numeracy. We try to teach them how to read and write. They also do counseling for those traumatized," he explained. "We teach them how to do some home activities like sweeping, like washing clothes, like washing saucepans, so by the time they are in the community with their parents, if they are given such an activity, they don't find it so new and complicated."

Still, some habits exhibited by the former child soldiers are hard to break.

In the afternoon, the boys are released from school and they have an opportunity to play. Instead, they hang about in small groups. Unlike other boys their age, they seem unsure of what playtime means.

The Independent (UK)

Monday, 12 November 2007

Footballing heroes: from battles to ball control

The players in the amputee football world cup finals, which kicked off in Turkey yesterday, are not highly paid professionals – some are the victims of war. Sean Thomas tells their astonishing stories

The rules are simple. Goalkeepers are only allowed to have one arm. Outfield players may only have one leg. Penalties are given if the ball strikes a defender's crutch, or the stump of a goalie's arm, in the penalty box. The goal itself is half normal size. There aren't many headers in this version of football.

It may sound like a surreal television sketch but it's far more serious. This is amputee football, a testament to the resourcefulness of the human spirit, and the power of sport. And over the next fortnight, its world cup finals are being held in Antalya, southern Turkey.

Amputee football dates back 30 years to a group of El Salvadorean players, all injured in the country's civil war, who decided to create their own version of the game. Just because they had lost limbs to bombs and landmines, they saw no reason to forsake their favourite sport. So they made up their own rules, designed their own kit, and sought other maimed opponents.

Since then, the sport has grown in size and organisation – 12 national teams from four continents will be present in Antalya this week. The team with the most poignant story must be the one from Liberia, a country better known for "blood diamonds" and brutal civil war than sporting prowess.

One of the stars of the squad is Dennis Parker, 33, from Tubmanburg, a remote, diamond-mining hill town. In 1990, when he was just 16 years old, he was forced to fight for President Charles Taylor in Liberia's first civil war, which devastated the west African country from 1989 to 1996. After three years of fighting, he was wounded in a street battle in the capital, Monrovia. His right leg was shattered, requiring amputation at the knee. Incredibly, he fought on until the end of the war, then found himself begging on the streets.

"People used to see amputees as bad people, like animals. When the fighting in Liberia stopped there were thousands of us, a mob, on the streets, with nowhere to go and no one to take care of us," he says. "Taxis would not stop for a disabled man because the drivers would think we had been responsible for killing their families. Now all that is changing."

Parker and 300 other amputee fighters took action in late 2005, storming the party headquarters in Monrovia of the now-exiled former president Taylor. The amputees had served in various armies during the war, but they shared a savage sense of injustice. They had no jobs, no pensions and, of course, were missing limbs. Some were drug addicts, hooked on the crack and heroin once given them by the militias to keep them loyal; almost all were beggars. They spent their days loitering around grocery shops and on street corners.

Into this tense and potentially violent stand-off stepped Reverend Robert Karloh, a warm, smiling, thick-set Pentecostal minister. Mr Karloh had spotted the potential therapeutic value of amputee football in neighbouring Sierra Leone while he was working there as deputy director of disarmament. One day, he

saw wounded soldiers kicking footballs around streets that had recently been their battlefield. Realising that the game could be harnessed to help others, he joined the African amputee football movement.

At the party headquarters in Monrovia, he persuaded the protesters to quit the building and try to rebuild their lives through sport. Starving, suspicious and initially belligerent – as he himself admits – Parker was a pretty unwilling recruit. But Mr Karloh charmed and encouraged him to create the Liberia Amputee Sports Association, the Lasa club, one of six in the Liberia league, which has more than 150 players.

Parker is now a genuine football hero, a regular player in a Liberian national team. "We found soccer, and soccer allows us to be renewed," he says. He looks across the pitch at his team warming up, some of them wielding crutches, some of them running as fast as many a two-legged player. "This kind of football has helped me go to places I would never have dreamt of going before. I have managed to see Freetown in Sierra Leone. I've been to Europe, even to Russia. When I walk on the streets, these days, people know me. We are able to live again."

Lasa's first match was a defeat. But then Liberia qualified for the first All-African Amputee Football Championship, held last February in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In the event, Liberia lost a thrilling final by 4-3 to Ghana, whose Collins Gyamfi was the tournament's top scorer. Sierra Leone's Amadu "Bob Jones" Kamara was voted the event's best player. But Liberia's strong performance prompted the US government to donate \$30,000 (£15,000) to the country's amputee football movement.

That relative triumph brought home a truth. Parker and his Liberian team-mates realised that their efforts – and victories – had helped them regain a level of respect among their countrymen. As Mr Karloh put it: the rattle of an AK-47 had been superseded by the roar of a football stadium.

For the minister, the benefits of amputee football stretch far beyond the pitch. The popularity of the players is not only good for them as individuals, but is a vital element in national reconciliation. "There is a tendency for people to reject these men who fought the civil wars. Now everybody comes along to see them play football, and cheers for them. This sends a message: 'I have forgiven you.' It's a form of healing, if you like."

Among the ailments being treated by the sport are the divisions between former combatants. "We have people who fought gun battles against each other who are now playing on the same side," he says.

And now Liberia are in the biggest event of all: the Amputee World Cup in Turkey. The teams which have qualified for Antalya include well-financed squads from countries such as England and France, as well as the Third World. The European teams have medical back-up, trainers, special kit, and comparatively good facilities.

Amputees are just one of six disabled groups which stage their own international football tournaments. The others are people with cerebral palsy, the blind, the deaf, the partially sighted and those with learning disabilities. All of them share the same aim, and the same spirit, says Jeff Davis, the national football development manager of disability at the Football Association in Soho Square, London. "When we started these cups in 1998, our main aim was to give everybody an opportunity to reach their potential. That may just be playing locally but it may not. The overall idea is to develop a hierarchy and a network.

"Put it another way. At the beginning, the aim for the players is just to kick a ball around. But like any sportsman, as they progress, it becomes a really serious competition – and the players want to be the best players they can. And it doesn't get much bigger or better than a World Cup, whether you are Wayne Rooney or Cristiano Ronaldo, or some poor guy with a war wound from Freetown."

The world in which Mr Davis works in Europe is very different to the one in which Mr Karloh functions in Africa. But Mr Davis strikes a similar chord when he says: "Before I joined the FA, I worked for a disability organisation and I saw that sport could be really powerful for these guys – to help them with rehabilitation or just to help them as an extra activity, something to enhance their lives. This is sport as a healing process."

As for the eventual World Cup winners, Brazil are the favourites, with England, who finished third in the inaugural tournament in Manchester in 1998, expected to do well. Some of the cognoscenti look to the teams from the east: Uzbekistan and Ukraine are highly rated and Moldova are thought to be useful.

Maybe one of the teams with women in their ranks (amputee soccer is a gender-neutral sport) will strike a blow for sexual equality. But if sheer guts are anything to do by, then Liberia are definitely in with a shout. As Parker leaps off the bench to join his teammates, it's difficult to see any disability. Just talent. And courage. And sheer sporting fun.