

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



Freetown's Cape Lighthouse, seen from out at sea.

**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, 27 December 2007

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

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 3-4
Otti 'Executed by Uganda Rebels' / <i>BBC Online</i>	Pages 5-6
Hariri Court to be Based in Former Dutch Intelligence HQ: official / <i>AFP</i>	Page 7
Military Commissions: Fair or Foul? / <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Pages 8-9

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
24 December 2007**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**Big Rush for X-Mas Celebrations as UNPOL and LNP Beef up Security**

*(Daily Observer, New Democrat, Liberian Express, The Inquirer and Heritage,)*

- Virtually almost all of the news stories which appeared in the newspapers exclusively on preparations for the Christmas holiday as the United Nations Police in collaboration with the Liberia National Police stepped up security as a means to combat and prevent the escalating crime rate during the holidays.

**Unity Party Candidate Wins Senatorial By-election in Gbarpolu**

*(New Democrat, Heritage, The Analyst, Liberian Express, Liberian Diaspora and Daily Observer)*

- A variety of media outlets also reported that the National Elections Commission on Saturday declared the Unity Party candidate *[Theodore Momo]* as winner of the Senatorial Bi-election election in Gbarpolu County, defeating Independent Candidate Kannie Wesso. Momo with 70.5 percent of the total votes cast, while the Independent Candidate obtained 29 percent of the total votes cast.

**Radio Summary**

**President Admonishes Female Police to be Vigilant**

- Speaking at the Liberia Police Training Academy when 105 female police officers graduated over the weekend, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf challenged female police officers to be vigilant and execute their duty with commitment, credibility, confidence and good moral character in that Liberia depends on their contribution for its development agenda.
- Also speaking at the programme, UNMIL Force Commander Isaac Obiakor lauded the police officers for taking up the challenge to serve their Country and admonished them to execute their duties within the framework of the democratic system.
- Meanwhile, the Academy's Commandant James Hallowanger announced plans to raise the Academy to a junior college status to enable fulfil the purpose for which it was established by an Act of the Legislature to train all security agencies in the Country since 1958.

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

**Prison Monitors Alarm about over crowdedness of Detention Places**

- Speaking at an event when his organization, the Prison Fellowship of Liberia distributed gifts to inmates at the Monrovia Central Prison, Rev. Francis Kollie said that most detention centres in the Country were overcrowded and called for speedy trial of inmates.

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

**Government Signs Concession Agreements with Oil Palm Companies**

- In an interview, Agriculture Minister Chris Toe said that the Government over the weekend signed two concession agreements with the Liberia Forest Products Incorporated, a subsidiary of the UK-based Buffal to operate the Butuo Oil Palm in Sinoe County while the Liberia Corporation, will operate in Grand Bassa County.
- Minister Toe said that under terms of the agreements, the two companies will provide basic social services including housing, schools, hospitals as well as water and sanitation. He added

that both companies have been given 50 years to operate and are expected to create a total of 5,000 jobs.

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

### **Students Request US Envoy to include Boys in Scholarship Scheme**

- Students of the Markey Lamptey Institute over the weekend called on United States Ambassador Donald Booth to include boys in the scholarship scheme for girls because some of them were clever students but lack the support to continue their studies.
- Responding, Ambassador Booth promised to include some boys in the scholarship programme as part of effort to enhance Government educational policy allowing every child to go to school.

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

### **Monrovia Suburb Residents Rocked by Stone Quarry Explosions**

- According to correspondents, the residents of Barclay Farm in Margibi County complained that stone quarry activities being done by CHICO, a Chinese company which is currently undertaking road works in Liberia were causing them serious problem in that they cause huge vibrations which are responsible for the breaking down of their houses.

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

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## BBC Online

Friday, 21 December 2007

### Otti 'executed by Uganda rebels'

The second-in-command of the Ugandan rebel movement, the Lord's Resistance Army, was executed by fellow officers, a diplomatic briefing has claimed.

The confidential document, shown to the BBC on condition of anonymity, says Vincent Otti was shot dead on 2 October at the home of LRA leader Joseph Kony.

The LRA has previously insisted Mr Otti was alive and under house arrest.



**Mr Otti is wanted by the International Criminal Court**

Mr Otti is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes arising from the LRA's 20-year insurgency.

The briefing, based on witness testimony, says Mr Otti arrived at Mr Kony's home only to find it surrounded by the leader's personal guards.

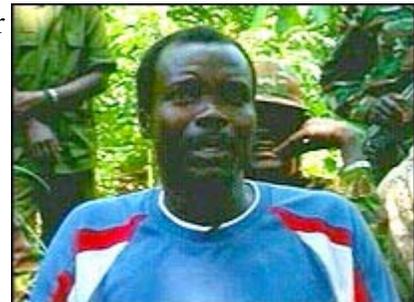
Sensing that something was wrong, Mr Otti phoned his boss, but was reassured that all was well.

### Blindfolded

When he went inside the house, Mr Otti was met by a group of senior commanders.

One of the commanders stood up and pointed a pistol at Mr Otti, saying he was now under arrest, the briefing says.

The others followed his lead and Mr Otti was stripped of his shirt, bound and blindfolded. He reportedly began crying, asking what he had done wrong.



**Mr Kony arrived shortly after Mr Otti's death, the document says**

Mr Otti was led from the house, and was shot while begging for his life.

Later Mr Kony appeared, and told the assembled rebel officers that he would not tolerate indiscipline, it says.

The rebel leader apparently told his followers Mr Otti had been attempting to kill him, after receiving foreign funds.

Rumours of Vincent Otti's death have been circulating since October, but have been repeatedly denied by spokesmen for the LRA.

In early November a northern Ugandan politician and peace negotiator, Norbert Mao, told the BBC that he had spoken to Mr Kony, who denied killing Mr Otti.

He said Mr Otti was under arrest, accused of being a government spy.

Mr Kony and Mr Otti are two of four LRA commanders wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes committed during their 20-year insurgency.

Mr Kony is in hiding in the remote north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The LRA were notorious for mutilating victims and kidnapping children to be fighters, porters and sex slaves but peace talks over the last year in southern Sudan have raised hopes that the conflict may be over.

But this week, President Yoweri Museveni said the LRA must sign a peace deal by 31 January or the war would be resumed.

## Agence France Presse

Saturday, 22 December 2007

### **Hariri court to be based in former Dutch intelligence HQ: official**

THE HAGUE (AFP) — An international court to try suspects in the 2005 murder of Lebanese former prime minister Rafiq Hariri will be based in a former Dutch intelligence headquarters, officials said Friday.

The municipality of Leidschendam-Vorberg, in the suburbs of The Hague, said the government had decided to house the court in the building once used by the AIVD intelligence service.

Alterations to the building and other preparations would begin next year, while the court would open in 2009 on a five-year lease.

Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende agreed in August to host the special court after some initial hesitation on security grounds. The Netherlands will be responsible for security.

Witnesses who cannot return to their own country for security reasons will not be able to live in The Netherlands after they have given evidence.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) will try suspects in the assassination of Hariri, a popular ex-prime minister who was killed along with 22 others in a massive explosion on the Beirut seafront on February 14, 2005.

The tribunal will also have jurisdiction over other attacks against anti-Syrian Lebanese figures carried out between October 2004 and December 2005 if they are linked to the Hariri slaying.

UN investigators probing Hariri's murder have identified several people who they say may have been involved in the slaying, but no one has been charged.

The Dutch government will take care of the six-year lease, according to the official statement. Lebanon will handle 49 percent of the expenses incurred for the tribunal, while voluntary donations from UN member states will pay the rest of the bill.

The Hague is already fast becoming the legal capital of the world, as the seat for several international tribunals such as the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Court.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has its headquarters in Freetown, has also moved the trial of Liberian former president Charles Taylor to The Hague.

# Los Angeles Times

Wednesday, 26 December 2007

## **Military commissions: fair or foul?**

**A former prosecutor responds to a blowback by his ex-boss.**

By Morris D. Davis

Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Hartmann, who responded negatively to my Op-Ed article explaining my resignation, had an opportunity on Dec. 11 to appear with me and engage in thoughtful debate, under oath, at a Senate hearing on the rights of Guantanamo detainees. An order issued by the Office of the Secretary of Defense on Dec. 6 prohibited me from accepting Sen. Dianne Feinstein's invitation to testify. This latest action to silence me was consistent with the gag order Hartmann gave me on Oct. 4 after I resigned, expressly forbidding me to communicate with anyone in the news media about the reasons for my resignation. In a figurative sense, I suppose I'm not the first person associated with Guantanamo to be bound and gagged before having cold water poured on him, although in my case it is intended to induce me not to talk.

I'm not going to get into a tit-for-tat with Hartmann, but I do want to address a few of his main points. Before doing so, I want to emphasize three things. First, I have the utmost respect for the dedication and integrity of the men and women I worked with on the military commissions. Second, I believe the Military Commissions Act is an excellent piece of legislation that provides the framework for full, fair and open trials. My concerns are centered on the implementation of military commissions within that framework. Third, there are some incredibly bad men at Guantanamo, including a few that I believe deserve to be executed if found guilty. The problems with the military commissions process do not negate their culpability.

Hartmann states that he directed me to evaluate cases — including evidence, charges and preparation — more carefully. Had it been as simple as that there would be no problem, but instead, convening authority Susan Crawford's staff, including her legal advisor, inserted themselves into these prosecutorial matters. Hartmann is right that his actions were deemed permissible by an independent panel, but I respectfully disagree. Their conclusion was based on analogy to ordinary court-martial practice in which the convening authority (the commanding officer) and his or her lawyer (the staff judge advocate) have an active role in the court-martial process.

But even where courts-martial are concerned, active involvement has been criticized. A report prepared for the National Institute of Military Justice in 2001 said:  
(T)he far-reaching role of commanding officers in the court-martial process remains the greatest barrier to operating a fair system of criminal justice within the armed forces.... The combined power of the convening authority to determine which charges shall be preferred, the level of court-martial, and the venue where the charges will be tried, coupled with the idea that this same convening authority selects the members of the (jury) to try the cases, is unacceptable in a society that deems due process of law to be the bulwark of a fair justice system.

Involvement is defended on the grounds that the convening authority, as the commanding officer, is responsible for the mission readiness of his or her organization, which depends on the morale, good order and discipline of the troops. The accused on trial in a court-martial is one of the convening authority's own and the disciplinary action is intended, in large part, to promote good order and discipline. That justification is subject to criticism in court-martial practice; it is nonexistent in military commissions practice. Crawford is not responsible for the mission readiness of Al Qaeda, and she owes no duty to

Osama bin Laden. Military commissions are about retribution, not readiness. To permit the convening authority's staff to intervene in prosecutorial decisions perpetuates the perception that military commissions are rigged to secure convictions. The prosecutors in the U.N.-sanctioned war crimes courts in Sierra Leone and Cambodia are assured independence. Prosecutors in military commissions conducted in the name of the United States should be too.

Hartmann claims that the military commissions are moving forward "fairly and transparently," and he notes that the accused will be allowed to review everything that goes to the jury. Permitting the accused to see the evidence — a right that only came at the insistence of Congress — goes to the "fairly" part, but not the "transparently" part. He and I appear to have different perceptions of what transparency means. In my view, the trials will not be transparent if the courtroom doors are closed to the media and other observers for significant portions of the proceedings. Telling the world, "trust me, if only you had seen what we did in court today, you would have been so impressed," is doomed to failure.

Working through the classification review process in an effort to get evidence declassified for use in an open proceeding is tedious and time-consuming. My prediction is that you will see charges brought against some of the most notorious detainees very soon, for whatever reason, and before all of the evidence has gone through classification review. That will get some noteworthy cases into court, but largely behind closed doors and out of public view. That is not transparency.

Hartmann says the military commissions are consistent with an American military justice system that is the envy of the world. Apparently he's privy to some worldwide polling data I haven't seen, because it appears to me military commissions have created worldwide enmity, not envy. To overcome that, there must be two assurances from the highest levels: One, that evidence derived from waterboarding will not be introduced before a military commission, and two, that all reasonable efforts to keep the proceedings open to the media and other observers will be exhausted before closing any portion of any trial. That's the minimum American justice demands.