

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



Kroo Bay During Heavy Rain

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:

Wednesday, 27 February 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Salone Times

Wednesday, 27 February 2008

AFRC FIGHTERS LOSE APPEAL

Former members of the Armed forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) who were convicted at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Alex Tamba Brima, Briam Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu lost their appeal when a final ruling on their appeal case was made recently. The president of the Trial Chamber was Justice George Gelaga king.

Standard Times

Wednesday, 27 February 2008

UNIOSIL COLLABORATES WITH PRISON WATCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO ENHANCE PROTECTION OF PRISONERS' RIGHTS

The Human Rights and Rule of Law Section of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) is collaborating with Prison Watch and the National Commission for Human Rights in a two-day training of human rights monitors of prisons across the country, commencing 27 February 2008 at the GGEMS Hall on 57 John Street, Freetown.

The capacity building exercise targets monitors associated with human rights Non Governmental Organisations; and the Commissioners and Staff of the Human Rights Commission, aimed at enhancing the protection of the human rights of detainees based on knowledge and application of International

Human Rights Standards, as well as on the Code of Conduct for monitors of Human Rights.

A training manual will be prepared in the context of human rights based approach to prison monitoring in line with local needs.

In 2006, UNIOSIL conducted a comprehensive assessment of prison conditions country-wide in which the need for training in human rights standards and awareness raising became obvious, thus sparking off a series of training for prison officers. The training of monitors therefore, becomes crucial to ensure compliance.

The protection of prisoners' rights is a sine qua non to lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

By Abdul Rashid, at The Hague

RASHID: Defence lead lawyer, QC Courtney Griffiths says doctors ran several tests on Mr. Charles Taylor, but did not find anything wrong with his health.

QC Griffiths however told the court the doctors have advised that Mr. Taylor remain under their observation for the rest of the day.

The Defence lead lawyer made a submission to the Court for the trial to adjourn two hours before the usual closing time, which is 4:30 pm Netherlands time. The Prosecution made no objection.

GRIFFITHS: He'll be able [indistinct] to proceed tomorrow, and as far as we're concerned there's nothing to prevent this trial from continuing tomorrow with Mr. Taylor in attendance.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: Miss Hollis are you replying?

BRENDA HOLLIS: We have no objection to the Defence's request.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: Thank you Miss Hollis. As we've already noted, the rights of the accused Article 17 and Rule 60. Obviously we hope that the accused has a speedy recovery and we would agree in the circumstances that it's only proper that we adjourn until tomorrow morning. We note that there is no objection and the consent of the Prosecution. So we will adjourn the Court until 9:30 tomorrow and hope that Mr. Taylor is better then.

RASHID: In an interview, Courtney Griffiths assured Liberians that Mr. Taylor will not easily give up. He said the former Liberian leader will fight for justice to the end of the trial.

Meanwhile, the Defence team and the Prosecution have ended their cross and re- examinations of the Liberian witness, Foday Lansana alias CO Nyan. If all goes well according to the plans of the Court and the parties, Prosecution witness, only identified as TF1-399, will take the stand Wednesday morning.

Abdul Rashid for Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust, at The Hague.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

Taylor rushed to hospital

Written by Wellington Geevon Smith

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

Detained former President Charles Taylor was on Tuesday morning rushed to hospital for treatment.

Mr. Taylor complained to his lawyers that he was ill, twenty minutes into the commencement of the day's trial.

Taylor's lead Lawyer, Courtney Griffiths later told the court doctors ran several tests on the detained former President but did not find anything wrong with his health.

Mr. Griffiths however, said the doctors have advised that Mr. Taylor remain under their observation for the rest of Tuesday.

The defence lawyer made a submission to the court for the trial to adjourn two hours before the usual closing time, to which the prosecution did not object.

Mr. Griffiths assured Liberians that Mr. Taylor will fight for justice to the end of the trial.

Meanwhile, the defence team and the prosecution have ended their cross and re-direct examinations of the Liberian Witness, Foday Lansana, alias Co Nyan.

The Analyst (Liberia)
 Tuesday, 26 February 2008

Taylor's Lawyers Cross-examine Prosecution Witness Lansana

Charles Taylor Trial taking place in The Hague is gradually sailing to its end as both Prosecution and Defense counsels are plying

their legal know-outs. Having taken the witness stand, Today Lansana is being subjected to cross-examinations. Defense Counsel for the former

Liberian leader, Morris Anya, is cross-examining Lansana, taking him back and forth through his testimony of the previous three days concerning names, places and dates.

Anya extensively questioned Lansana about whether or not promises were made to the witness by representatives of the Office of the Prosecution (OTP) in return for

Cont'd on page 10

Taylor's Lawyers Cross-examine



his testimony before the Court.

Promises such as early release from his 10-year prison sentence, protection for himself and his family, and financial recompensation such as the payment of school fees for his children are topping the counsels' inquiries.

Anya put before the Witness that in the timespan of 1990-

1997 Lansana's testimony about the many places he visited and was located as a radio operator for the many RUF/NPFL Commanders he met, was the result of conversations he had with other inmates during his time in prison and not the result of what happened to him personally. Lansana denied this.

BBC

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

Africa's test for international justice

By Olenka Frenkiel

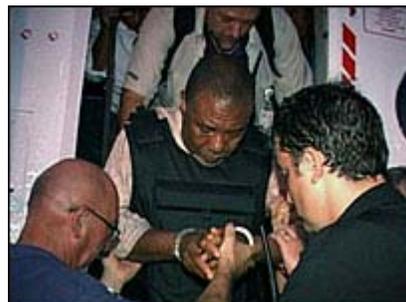
Reporter, BBC 2's This World

Charles Taylor's trial for alleged war crimes at the Hague is a test for international justice. Will it bring accountability to the continent of Africa or will it be seen as a new colonialism in what some Africans regard as "a white man's court"?

"A small unit of boy soldiers brought another small boy, crying and screaming. They put his right arm on a log, took a machete, and amputated it at the wrist," says the man in the witness box.

"The boy was shouting: 'What have I done that you are doing this to me?'

"They took the left arm again and put it on the same log and sliced it off. He was still screaming and shouting. They took the left leg and put it on the same log and cut it off at the ankle.



Charles Taylor has been on trial in the Hague since June 2007

"At last they took the right leg and put it on the same log and cut it off with the machete. They were swinging the boy. They threw him into a toilet pit. I was there. I saw it myself."

Pastor Teh, a small man with broken teeth is describing his capture by RUF rebels during the war in Sierra Leone.

He speaks in Creole while, from a booth, an invisible voice translates.

He is one of hundreds of witnesses being flown to the Hague to testify in the Charles Taylor trial.

The defendant, quiet and dapper in a dark suit, sits in the dock day after day, taking notes.

Diamonds

The former president of Liberia is charged with war crimes, though not for what he did in his own country, which is another story.

No-one here claims that he carried out the atrocities in Sierra Leone himself. The prosecution's case is that Charles Taylor armed the rebels in Sierra Leone to terrorise the population and win control of the country's diamonds.

The fact that he did this from a distance does not, the prosecution argue, mitigate his crimes. It does, however, make them harder to prove.

The case, according to the court's Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, rests on linkage.

"We have to show the connection to Taylor, that he knew the RUF was targeting civilians for murder, for mutilations, for rape, and sexual slavery. That they were recruiting children under 15 to commit horrible acts. If he knew that, and he nonetheless aided them, then he is guilty of the crime."

A lot to prove

But Mr Taylor's lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths QC, says backing rebels in a foreign country is not a war crime.

"Or else George Bush and Tony Blair would also be on trial. My case is he should not be on trial at all. He is being tried for his foreign policy. There is nothing to distinguish between what he has done and what other leaders in the West have done historically.

"Why start with an African? Why has it got to be a black man? Why not start with the Americans who have been misbehaving in other people's countries for decades?"

Moral equivalence - invoking Iraq or colonialism or Cold War dirty tricks - may feel like a weak defence but it carries weight in a world where international justice still has a lot to prove.

If Mr Taylor goes down, the prosecution argues, it will be an important signal to Africa's leaders - not just a step towards the noble goals of "good governance" and "accountability" - but a genuine result for the injured civilians, the amputees, and their children, for potential future victims, those for whom the idea of international justice and "never again" was conceived.

But it is for Africa that there is most at stake in this trial and all those watching from the wings.

"If Taylor's convicted, there will be an expectation of justice. That leaders will be held to account," says Stephen Rapp.

But will it be transparent, fair, and just - not only in the eyes of the world but for the country from which he comes?

'Not justice'

In Liberia, Charles Taylor still has supporters who see him as a pan-African hero maligned by the superpowers in a neo-colonialist masquerade of justice.

He won a presidential election by a landslide in 1997 and many believe he could do it again.

In 2003, he stood down and took refuge in Nigeria, only to be handed over in handcuffs to the special court of Sierra Leone who flew him far away from his peers and countrymen to be tried in what some Africans regard as a "white man's court".

In The Hague there was some interest on the first day of his trial. But since the press moved on there have been weeks of unreported "closed sessions" where unnamed witnesses have given testimony in camera without press or public, or transcripts for the outside world to view.

Even his defence lawyer is forbidden from revealing the evidence which may convict his client for war crimes, evidence which may well send him to live out his days in a British jail.

"It is not justice," says Mr Griffiths. "But politics".



“ If Taylor's convicted, there will be an expectation of justice, that leaders will be held to account

Stephen Rapp, chief prosecutor



“ It is not justice but politics

Courtenay Griffiths, defence lawyer

"If he is convicted then I think it is a sad day for Africa.

"It is meant to set a precedent that in future the West will say to African leaders they don't like, such as Robert Mugabe, 'This is what is going to happen to you if you step out of line.'

"And if you don't do as you are told, as leader of a vassal third-world state like Liberia, we will arrest you, transport you to the Hague, and put you on trial in the ICC."

Mr Taylor may be a very bad man indeed, but Mr Griffiths is entitled to use any weakness he can find in the prosecution case. And when the good guys lose their moral authority it spoils it for everyone, except perhaps Mr Taylor.

International justice can only work if it is seen to be blind and fair, with each man equal under the law.

Would we accept the terms of this trial if it were Mr Rumsfeld, Mr Bush, or Mr Blair in the dock?

This World: Diamonds and Justice will be broadcast on Tuesday 26 February 2008 at 1900 GMT on BBC Two.

Legalbrief Today

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

War Crimes Court upholds Sierra Leone sentences

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Category: Criminal

Issue No: 2016

Sierra Leone's War Crimes Court has rejected an appeal by three former militia leaders against long jail sentences handed down last year for atrocities committed during the former British colony's civil war.

'The court finds no reason to interfere (with the sentences),' Presiding Judge George Gelaga King told the Special Court for Sierra Leone. According to a report on the News24 site, the UN-backed tribunal jailed Alex Brima and Santigie Kanu for 50 years each and Brima Kamara for 45 years for crimes committed during the diamond-fuelled 1991-2002 conflict. According to a Mail & Guardian Online report, Gelaga-King said the judging panel 'took into consideration the gravity of the crimes committed, as being the most heinous, brutal and atrocious crimes ever recorded in human history'. The three were convicted of 11 war-crimes charges, including terrorism, enslavement, rape and murder. Last year's ruling marked the first time an International court issued a conviction on the conscription of child soldiers, who in Sierra Leone were often drugged and forced into battle.

Full report on the News24 site

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
26 February 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

UNMIL Denies Contractors' Claims of Unfair Labour Practice

(New Democrat, The News, The Star, The Analyst)

- The U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has rejected claims by its Liberian contractors that it was engaged in unfair employment and discriminatory practices. Speaking to journalists Monday, UNMIL Spokesman Ben Malor said all individuals contractors (ICs) were recruited on a temporary basis to carry out functions which would normally be contracted to Liberian companies. Mr. Malor then confirmed reports that the services of the ICs would expire by the end of February.
- Dozens of Liberian contractors on Monday picketed before the mission's headquarters protesting unfair treatment and calling for salary increment. The News newspaper quoting a spokesman for the group, Henry Geetoe as saying that they were demanding their "just compensation" for the period ranging from 2003 to 2008.

Executive Mansion Apologizes for "Inconveniences" During Bush's Visit

(The Analyst, National Chronicle, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage, New Democrat, The News, The Informer, The Independent, The Star)

- The media reports that the Executive Mansion in Monrovia has apologized for the "inconveniences" some citizens and officials, including lawmakers, may have experienced as a result of the stringent security measures put in place by the Secret Service to ensure the safety of the VIPs during last week's visit of U.S. President George W. Bush to Liberia.
- Addressing his weekly news briefing Monday, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio told reporters that the security measures were to ensure that the U.S. President's visit was free of problems.
- Meanwhile, The News, Plain Truth, The Independent and New Democrat newspapers reported that corruption has denied Liberia from getting any financial commitment from U.S. President George Bush. Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said Liberia was lagging behind in meeting benchmarks set by the U.S. to get such financial assistance. Mr. Badio named the benchmarks as accountability, good governance, transparency among other democratic practices.
- The Inquirer, quoting Badio said President George Bush has no problem with the existing ties between Liberia and the People's Republic of China; this is in an apparent reaction to claims that the U.S was requesting preferential treatment or services over other countries.

Fire Guts Diamond Certification Office in Monrovia

(The Star, The Analyst, National Chronicle, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, The Informer, The Independent)

- Fire gutted the main building housing the Kimberley Diamond Certification Office at the main offices of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy on Capitol Hill late Monday afternoon. Reports say the fire gutted the conference room, library and the offices hosting the Kimberly Certification Scheme offices.
- Deputy Minister for Lands, Mines and Energy for Operations, E.C.B. Jones told journalists that they still have to access the damage done by the fire but said the only things that could have

been destroyed in the offices would have been computers, gemology equipment and office furnishings. Also likely to have been destroyed in the fire is a database application that includes both software and hardware for tracking diamond production and adherence to KPC requirement for acceptance into the KPC.

- Mr. Jones said the cause of the fire is still being determined and an investigation is expected to commence shortly into the cause of the fire. The United States Government constructed the Government Diamond Office and furnished it to help the Liberian Government become Kimberly compliant in order to have the diamond sanctions lifted last year.

Grand Bassa Superintendent denies her inclusion on Private Payroll

(The Analyst, The New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- The Superintendent of Grand Bassa County, Julia Duncan Cassell has described as incorrect reports of her inclusion on the payroll of the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC). Reacting to a report in the Public Agenda newspaper entitled "Bassa Officials In LAC Pocket", the Bassa Superintendent said at no time had she receive a cent from LAC or is on its payroll as is being insinuated by the paper.
- In a press statement issued by Mrs. Duncan Cassell, she said the story also carried by FrontPage Africa; a Liberian online news organ is incorrect saying that the interest of the Bassa people was paramount and that her administration will never betray the trust and will do all it can to seek and protect their wellbeing. The New Democrat however reports that documents leaked by FrontPage Africa indicate the contrary. The document showed that local officials of Grand Bassa County each received on a monthly basis between one to two 2 bags of rice and US\$500 to LD\$2000 respectively.

PPCC and World Bank to Hold Procurement Forum

(The Heritage, The Analyst, The Inquirer)

- The Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), in collaboration with the World Bank, will this week hold a two-day Annual Procurement Forum in Monrovia to discuss progress made with the implementation of the PPC Reform Programme of Liberia and the way forward.
- The forum which begins tomorrow, Wednesday, February 27 will address several issues including procuring methods, threshold, bidding process, monitoring, and compliance among others. It will be held under the theme: Public Procurement and Concessions Reform In Liberia: Challenges and Prospects, the Forum is expected to bring together senior officials of government, heads of procuring entities, civil society actors, the United Nations among others.

Liberia's only Medical College to Get New Building - US\$48,000 Targeted

(Heritage, Informer)

- A ground breaking ceremony for a new US\$48,000 classroom building took place on Monday at the A.M. Dogliotti College of Medicine in Sinkor. A University of Liberia press release said Mr. Ezzet Eid, President of City Builders and his family will fund the construction. Speaking at the programme, Dr. Conteh thanked the Eid family for the gesture and said the contribution will help to accommodate the freshman class of the medical school.

Radio Summary

UNMIL Debunks Report of Unfair Labour Practice

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Senate President Pro-Tempore 'Poised' To Be Suspended

- Quoting a highly placed Legislative source , Radio Veritas reports that Senate President Pro-Tempore, Isaac Nyenabo might be suspended today for failing to account for the spending of some US\$70,000 for the purchase of two 12-seater buses for staff of the Senate.

- The source said following a meeting Monday, majority of the senators agreed to suspend the pro-tempore for failing to account for the money which was earmarked for the purchase of two 24-seater buses instead of the 12-seater buses purchased.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Executive Mansion Denies U.S. Asking For Preferential Services

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Fire Guts Diamond Certification Office
