

**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:

Wednesday, 26 March 2008

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

Tuesday, 25 March 2008

HRC-SL Hosts Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson

By Vidal Boltman

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) on Wednesday 19th March 2008 invited the Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson to deliver a paper on 'the Treaty Ratification Process and Domestication of International Standards in Sierra Leone' at the Commission's Conference Hall, Wellington Street in Freetown.

The chairperson of Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone (HRCSL) Mrs. Jamesina King said the commission needs to fully understand the process in Sierra Leone both in theory and practice.

She said having regard to Justice Thompson's expertise and

experience in that area, it was with pleasure that they invited him to deliver a paper on the subject. Mrs. King went on to say that given the complexity of the subject and its importance to HRCSL, it would be impossible to address all of the issues contained in one session. She therefore, respectfully suggested that another date be set to continue the session.

She ended by thanking Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson for accepting their invitation, and assured him that his assistance will immensely contribute to building the capacity of the commission in fulfillment of its mandate.

African Champion
Wednesday, 26 March 2008

Pa Kabbah To Face Special Court

Former president of Sierra Leone Mr. Ahmad Tejan-Kabbah will finally appear in the Special Court after repeated refusals to appear. Mr. Tejan-Kabbah according to reports was subpoenaed to appear in connection with an earlier invitation which he failed to honour. The African Champion reveals.

Contrary to fears expressed by a lot of Sierra Leoneans, Special Court sources state that Mr. Kabbah has not been indicted, rather he will serve as a witness in connection with indicted rebel leader Issa Sesay's defence. The former rebel leader's defence counsel is reported to be making a case that Mr. Sesay contributed in making the present peace in the

country a reality, and should therefore have a reduced sentence. The former head of state might be expected to give information about how Issa Sesay through his leadership helped to convince the rebel forces to disarm and disband. Which was the

prelude to the peace. It could be recalled that General Opande, the Kenyan born commander in chief of the then UN mission in Sierra Leone recently appeared in the Special Court to give evidence. He had been invited by the Special Court to give evidence in

connection with Issa Sesay's defence. The former general had first been invited to give evidence while he was heading the UN contingent in Sierra Leone. He had however refused, pointing out that he was under the mandate

of the UN. In the case of President Kabbah, he had been repeatedly named by the late Samuel Hinga Norman as one of his witnesses. Mr. Norman who served as a minister in Mr. Kabbah's government had repeatedly reiterated

that Kabbah is his principal witness and coconspirator in the crimes for which he was indicted. Kabbah who was then president had refused to appear in the Special Court, citing executive powers.

As an ordinary citizen, Mr. Kabbah cannot refuse the subpoena and already, a lot of people are expressing a desire that the former president should also be indicted as he was the principal sponsor of the war and played a significant role in the activities of the civil defence forces.

No definite time has been given for Mr. Tejan-Kabbah's appearance. "We will be there to see what Tejan-Kabbah has to say," said Desmond Kamara, a youth activist.

Standard Times
Wednesday, 26 March 2008

Within the last ten months or so, Alhaji Kabbah has been hounded with legal papers that have required his appearance either at the ECOWAS court or the Special Court. As indicated earlier, this writer is neither related to nor acquainted with the former President. However, this writer does have some real concerns over the way and manner in which ex-African President, Alhaji Kabbah (including one treated over what some have described as "legal harassment") at the "SCOP PRESS" restaurant, where this writer made the above observation, there was near pandemonium over what they described as "careless talk".

In a democratic dispensation where the rule of law is dominant, nobody is above the law they transferred back. And indeed, examples abound to support their position. Former President Bill Clinton of the most powerful democratic country, the United States of America, was grilled under oath for hours by the Special Prosecutor, Kenneth Starr. Clinton was President at the time. Late President Pinochet was dragged to court in both London and Buenos Aires kicking and screaming about his poor health. While Tony Blair was Prime Minister he did give testimony under oath to the police. Charles Taylor is currently undergoing trial at the Hague. Why should Alhaji Kabbah continue to resist going to the courts? To this group, it was their view that leaders should "do well today because of tomorrow". Kabbah should not be intimidated if he has not done anything wrong. He is a human being who had the opportunity to serve as president. What is really amazing is that Alhaji Kabbah fought against appearing at the Special Court when the late Hinga Norman made the application for him to

Something To Think About

BY
DAVE
SIBON

Kabbah for ECOWAS and Special Court?

appear there. Justice Gbaga King and his colleagues ruled against the late Hinga Norman's application. The public was neither amused nor convinced. When a Mr. Wania filed a law suit against the Government of Sierra Leone and the former President, Alhaji Kabbah neither appeared nor was he represented by an attorney at all in the ECOWAS court proceedings. Again, former RUF strongman, Issa Sesay, requested for his appearance at the Special Court is being seriously resisted by Alhaji Kabbah. The statement that, "mucosa lies the head that wears the crown" is a realistic observation which may prevent the former Head of the Republic of Sierra Leone from having the peaceful retirement that he had prayed for. Some political analysts have proffered the view point that it is the national constitutions like Presidents B. Mugabe of Zimbabwe

appear there.

This writer hopes former President Kabbah will not decide to abandon his quiet home in beautiful Sierra Leone for a less legally contentious abode in Morocco.

Also, why is it that former President Kabbah, who is a UK trained Attorney, so reluctant to appear in any court? Is it because he is afraid of revealing state secrets that will destabilize the state of Sierra Leone? Is the former hesitant to appear for fear of implicating other Heads of State, local Ministers, external Ministers, traditional rulers and other personalities? Is former President Kabbah apprehensive to appear for fear of being exposed as an insensitive leader who cared only about his legacy? Is former President Kabbah reluctant to appear for fear of implicating himself for a possible future indictment? The powers are many and only Alhaji Kabbah can help himself now



mine what he should do in Issa Sesay's request for him to testify.

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and Y. Museveni of Uganda have done in order to ensure their longevity in office.

It is possible that the former president did not undertake such an exercise because he was absolutely sure that the SLPP candidate would win the

because he does not have access to the collective wisdom of his former cabinet and the National Policy Advisory Council (NPAC). This writer will not advocate the use of the former President's advisory groups in helping him to deter-

It has been reliably informed that the law firm of Bents and Berewa used to be retained as the former President's Attorneys. Will the former President continue to retain them through Solomon Berewa? These are all serious legal matters that re-

quire the expertise of great criminal Attorneys and Solomon Berewa is definitely one such lawyer. The retention of Mr. Berewa will create the opportunity for the two former partners and friends to bury their poisonous hatchets that are allegedly in their possession for use against each other. Both of them used to speak a lot about reconciliation. This is the best time for them to practice what they have been preaching.

The former President needs to do something to address the legal requests for his appearance in the various courts. His failure to do something will only continue to give the "opportunists" a field day to talk about him.

SEE PAGE 11

“The former President needs to do something to address the legal requests for his appearance in the various courts. His failure to do something will only continue to give the "opportunists" a field day to talk about him”

Washington Post

Wednesday, 26 March 2008

Sierra Leone Special Court's Narrow Focus

Well-Funded but Selective War Crimes Probe Draws Resentment of Impoverished Victims

By Craig Timberg
Washington Post Foreign Service

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone -- Behind concrete barriers topped with coils of razor wire sits an experiment in international justice, the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Built to accommodate a public accounting of atrocities committed during the latter years of the West African nation's civil war, the well-appointed courtrooms and walls of bulletproof glass form an unlikely landmark in this battered seaside capital.

The six-year-old U.N.-backed project also stands out in a country that, like many African nations that have endured intense civil strife, has a frail national justice system. It has already led to the indictment of 13 alleged war criminals, of whom five have been convicted, at a cost of more than \$150 million. But not everyone in this poverty-stricken country is convinced that the money has been well spent.

Across Africa, the long arm of international justice is attempting to end a tradition of impunity and to advance the process of reconciliation. But in some cases, such as Uganda, it has complicated homegrown efforts to achieve peace accords, which often rely on a measure of amnesty for those accused of atrocities in civil wars.

Here in Sierra Leone, resentment has arisen over the millions of dollars in donor money spent on the international court. Some Sierra Leoneans say those funds could be better spent on education, health care and other pressing daily needs, or to develop a functioning national justice system that would last beyond the court's scheduled closure in 2010.

Marianna Kallon, whose right leg was amputated above the knee after she was shot during the war, and others here are also frustrated by the court's failure to punish the foot soldiers who carried out the specific crimes against them.

"I hear about it, but I don't care about it," said Kallon, 25, a mother of three who hobbles to the fortresslike judicial complex each day to beg for spare change.

The government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations jointly formed the Special Court in 2002, in the waning days of an 11-year civil war whose signature atrocity -- the mass amputation of the hands of civilians -- became an international symbol of the torment caused by West Africa's many conflicts.

The war ended at a time when momentum was building to bring international standards of justice to the prosecution of war crimes worldwide. The International Criminal Court in The Hague was also established in 2002 following models set in the 1990s by international tribunals for war crimes committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

But elsewhere in Africa, the push for international tribunals has complicated the resolution of essentially national disputes.

This month, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni called on the International Criminal Court to withdraw indictments against Joseph Kony and other leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army so that traditional Ugandan courts, which emphasize compensation rather than retribution, can handle the cases. Kony has said he will sign a final peace agreement with Museveni's government only if the international court suspends its warrants.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is a hybrid of the national and international justice systems, but some Sierra Leoneans complain that the balance of power has gradually shifted toward the foreigners who are the court's most visible officials.

Funded mostly by international donations, the court is targeting not those who actually cut off people's hands, but those who bore, in the language of the court, "greatest responsibility."

The court has largely fulfilled its mandate to create a forum capable of trying political leaders. Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, the man most widely blamed for the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone, is behind bars, indicted by the court. (He and his trial, however, were moved to The Hague for security reasons.) Twelve other people -- a who's who of the conflict's leaders -- were indicted.

But some Sierra Leoneans say there have been missed opportunities to bolster the nation's own troubled national court system or to deliver a brand of justice that would make the war's victims feel their suffering had been avenged.

"They're psychologically detached from it, despite the geographical proximity" of the court, said Ansu B. Lansana, secretary general of one of Sierra Leone's political parties and a former attorney for two of the convicted defendants. "People really hardly talk about it."

The court's indictment of Taylor was crucial in forcing him from power in August 2003, bringing a long-awaited peace to neighboring Liberia, many analysts in the region say. Taylor's arrival in Freetown aboard a U.N. helicopter in March 2006, after a period of exile in Nigeria, is remembered as the emotional high point for the Special Court. Thousands of Sierra Leoneans lined the streets, even climbing onto rooftops to watch.

During its six years of operation, only a tiny percentage of Sierra Leoneans have ever visited the court, which is surrounded by walls and a series of heavily guarded gates. Those who do venture in find a place that looks and feels like a U.N. facility anywhere in the world, complete with gun-toting, blue-capped soldiers and a cafeteria menu dominated by pizza and hamburgers.

"The ownership is not there," said John Caulker, executive director of Forum of Conscience, who travels widely in Sierra Leone to speak with war victims. "There's no way you can call that a court for Sierra Leoneans when most Sierra Leoneans can't even access the court."

The type of justice practiced there, behind floor-to-ceiling bulletproof glass that makes the courtrooms appear like enormous aquariums, has also left many Sierra Leoneans puzzled.

Leaders of the Civil Defense Forces, regarded by many in Freetown as valiant defenders of their city against vicious rebels, have seen their misdeeds prosecuted with as much zeal as those of the attackers. And even the worst crimes cannot result in the death penalty, which is generally popular among Sierra Leoneans.

The most common complaint here about the court is the cost. More than \$150 million has been spent on prosecutions. By the time the court finishes its work in 2010, the total cost is projected to reach \$212 million -- a massive sum for a country that the United Nations ranks as the least developed in the world.

"The money they have spent for the courts is [worth] nothing," said Kallon, as her two older children, Christiana Johnson, 7, and Michael Johnson, 3, lingered nearby. "My foot is gone, and it's not coming back." It would have been better to use the money, she said, "to educate my kids."

Court officials say they have aggressively reached out to Sierra Leoneans through community meetings, radio broadcasts and information booklets that declare "No Peace Without Justice."

Lead prosecutor Stephen Rapp, an American, said Sierra Leoneans who want lower-ranked perpetrators brought to justice should urge their members of parliament to encourage the national court system to act.

Within Sierra Leone, however, there is little sign of the political will to try a broader group of war criminals.

Mamusu Thoronka, 41, a trader and mother of six, still vividly recalls how a small band of rebels retreating from Freetown in 1999 pressed her left arm to the floor and hacked off her hand with a machete. A second whack on her right wrist severely damaged but failed to fully detach her other hand, which was reattached by a surgeon several days later.

"The Special Court is there to ensure that what has happened will not happen again," said Thoronka, who has been selected as a possible witness in the Taylor trial. But like other victims, she has little faith that those who cut off her hand will ever face justice. Her far more urgent concern is figuring out how to feed her family, now that she has only two functioning fingers on a single hand. Washing clothes, preparing food, even dressing herself is a struggle.

Some Sierra Leoneans say that the vast majority of war crimes could have been prosecuted in the courts here with more international help, including bringing judges from other countries with legal systems derived, like Sierra Leone's, from British common law.

"In the outside world, you can think of Charles Taylor as the link," said Jabati Mambu, 24, secretary of the Amputee Association of Sierra Leone. "But here there are actual perpetrators. The actual people need to be punished."

Diamond Intelligence Briefs

Tuesday, 25 March 2008

<http://www.diamondintelligence.com/magazine/magazine.asp?id=6212>

Witnesses in Charles Taylor's Trial Receive Death Threats

As the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in underway is The Hague, witnesses testifying against him are said to be receiving death threats, which are frightening them from speaking out in open court. Three such witnesses, who were close to Taylor's regime and who will play a major role in linking him to atrocities in Sierra Leone, are said to have received threatening phone calls and letters, reports Reuters. The news source cites Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp as saying that the threats are presumably coming from Taylor loyalists.

Additional witnesses in Liberia and Sierra Leone have also been reporting cases of intimidation despite protection schemes, prosecutors say. As such, a number of them will seek to give evidence privately and anonymously instead of appearing in open court.

Prosecutors began their case in January after court proceedings were stalled in June 2007; they expect to finish in eight months. To date, 72 witnesses have been called and written evidence has been presented from an additional 70 victims, says Reuters. The trial, taking place in the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, is the first of its kind – where a former African leader is appearing before an international tribunal. The court is only trying people deemed most responsible. Reuters reports that prosecutors have had to assure some of those giving evidence that they will not be charged.

Taylor is being charged with 11 counts of committing atrocities against the people of Sierra Leone during the country's civil war from 1991-2002 in a quest to gain control of the country's mineral wealth, particularly its diamonds. He claims he is innocent of all charges.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
25 March 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Liberian Refugees Suspend Protest over Repatriation

(The News, The Informer, Heritage, New Democrat, Daily Observer, The Parrot, The Analyst)

- Hundreds of Liberian women living in Ghana have suspended a five-week sit-in protest over repatriation benefits. The women ended their demonstration at Buduburam refugee camp in the Central Region of Ghana following the intervention of the Liberian government.
- The protest was directed against a UN plan to reintegrate them in the Ghanaian society. Sixteen Liberian refugees were repatriated to Monrovia at the weekend. The Informer newspaper says the Liberian Government is seeking a diplomatic resolution to the refugee crisis in Ghana.

Media Groups Urge President Sirleaf to Testify Before TRC

(The News, The Analyst)

- The Analyst and The News newspapers continue to carry articles encouraging President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to honour her pledge to testify at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) whenever she is requested to do so. President Sirleaf at the launch of the TRC public hearing last January pledged to face the TRC when she is asked to do so, but quite recently, the President told the nation that she would rather provide her experiences in a book form. The Analyst perceived that the President's failure to testify would undermine the TRC process and justify the campaign for a war crimes court in Liberia.

U.S. Marines, Sailors Administer Animal Vaccine in Monrovia

(The Informer, New Democrat)

- The Africa Partnership Station, a joint US military and NGO project has begun administering vaccine to animals in the Monrovia area. The head of the team, Dr. Brian Smith told reporters the animals are being given vaccines for rabies and de-worming medication. The vaccine and medication can keep a dog well for up to one year.
- Dr. Smith disclosed that the outreach is targeting up to one hundred fifty animals above twelve weeks old. Our reporter who visited the site saw several persons with dogs and cats lined up for the vaccines. Another group of thirty volunteers from the Africa Partnership Station is offering community service at the D. Tweh High School. The team is painting a portion of the building that contains ten classrooms.
- The Africa Partnership Station is also involved in maritime safety and security training, martial arts training and rescue operations. Meanwhile, the New Democrat reports that U.S. Marines and Sailors on board the USS Fort McHenry have completed the first phase of their maneuvers off the coast of the country.

Two Special Security Officers Undergo Probe for Being in Possession of Narcotics

(Daily Observer, The Informer, Heritage, The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- The media reports that two officers of the Special Security Service (SSS) have been arrested with a huge quantity of marijuana. The officers identified as Robert Carmo and Paul Krahn were nabbed on Sunday at the Iron Gate checkpoint in Gbarnga City, Bong County while en route to Monrovia with 7 bags of marijuana which street value has been put at 715 kilogram.

Speaking to reporters, the Director of the Special Security Service (SSS), Victor Helb said the two officers have been turned over to authorities of the service for internal investigation.

- He said dismissal awaits the officers if found guilty and that they would subsequently be turned over to appropriate agency of government for prosecution. He dismissed media reports that the men were forcibly taken from police custody in Gbarnga saying they were brought under special arrangement and that they would return for prosecution following investigation.

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

Margibi County Demands US\$5M Royalty from Firestone

- Eminent persons and opinion leaders of Margibi County have opposed the ratification of the new firestone agreement unless the company restitutes US\$5 million dollars as royalty.
- The citizens told the House committees reviewing the Firestone agreement the company has since 1926 occupied a large portion of the land without any benefit to the county.
- However, Agriculture Minister Chris Toe pleaded with the House of Representatives to ratify the new firestone agreement which he said considers the interest of Liberia.

USAID Donates US\$56,000 Workshop Vehicle to Public Works

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has turned over a Toyota Land Cruiser Mobile workshop vehicle to the Ministry of Public Works.
- The Acting Mission Director of USAID, Lucretia Taylor puts the cost of the vehicle at US\$56,000 and said the delivery is part of a larger package of equipment support provided to the Ministry of Public Works.
- Public Works Minister, Lusene Donzo described the donation as worthy and timely.

Stakeholders Brainstorm over new Investment Act

- The second round of public consultations on the Amendment of the Investment Incentives Act of 1973 took place on Tuesday on the main campus of University of Liberia.
- The consultations are aimed at presenting the merits of the Amended Act, which aims at ensuring an equitable business environment while empowering Liberian businesses. The consultations are also being held to solicit constructive suggestions for improving the Act for resubmission to the Legislature.
- President Sirleaf recently withdrew the Act in order to hold more public consultations with a series of stakeholders including members of the business community, private sector and academic institutions.
