

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office as at:

Wednesday, 9 July 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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New Citizen
Wednesday, 9 July 2008

US\$7,000 To Rehabilitate Magistrate Court

By Yankees

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is implementing a

\$ 7,000 United States Dollar rehabilitation project at the Bo Magistrate Court No. 1.

This important disclosure was made recently by the officer in

charge of the Legal and Justice Support Department, Daniel Bockarie Konneh at his office at the Bo police station.

He added that the rehabilitation project covers among others, the provision of modern steel windows and doors, toilet, water tank and three cells

for prisoners during court sessions.

Daniel Bockarie Konneh enlightened, "the rationale behind the

Contd. back page

Magistrate Court

From page 1

project is to provide an ideal environment in accordance with modern standards."

He showered praises on the newly transferred Magistrate; Adrian Fisher whom he said had presided over and completed twenty-two backlog cases in the court within three weeks, describing him as a no nonsense magistrate.

The Commanding Officer, Legal and Justice Support Department Bo police station also credited Magistrate

Fisher as the brain behind the provision of computers and other accessories including two new motor bikes and a 5 KVA generator to ease the operations of the court.

A group of Bo town residents who spoke to the New Citizen also shared similar sentiments about the young magistrate describing him as an accommodating lawyer who do not fancy people who would like to use the judiciary to punish the less fortunate and young men in the society.

Christian Science Monitor

Tuesday, 8 July 2008

Sierra Leoneans look for peace through full truth about war crime

Human rights activist John Caulker looks beyond the high-profile and costly prosecutions to village-level reconciliation.

By Jina Moore | Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

from the July 8, 2008 edition

Bomaru, Sierra Leone - Little but its history distinguishes Bomaru from other villages scattered across Sierra Leone's countryside. A quiet place with mud houses the same color as the dust kicked up by the occasional passing vehicle, it would seem, on an ordinary day, impoverished and washed out.

But today, women dress in freshly laundered wrappers ablaze in color; men wear regal Muslim gowns or their best T-shirts. An anonymous few sweat beneath layers of straw and fabric, in costumes like something from Sesame Street: They are – or are dressed as, depending upon your belief system – the village's local devils, whose appearance signals celebration; their rapid footwork leads a dancing procession to the village center.

Nearly 800 people from Bomaru and nearby villages have gathered for Fambul Tok, a grass-roots reconciliation initiative John Caulker wants to bring to every Sierra Leonean village. The phrase is Krio (English-based creole) -for "family talk," the old way of resolving disputes through conversations around bonfires.

Mr. Caulker, whose human rights organization, Forum of Conscience, developed Fambul Tok over the past three years in villages across Sierra Leone, wants the bonfire to be a space for confession and forgiveness for war crimes. Bomaru is the first test of whether the idea works — or whether anyone even cares.

Dozens of people have come to Bomaru 17 years to the day after the war began here in March 1991. They're here to recount crimes they committed after their abductions and forced conscriptions in the 1990s into the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group from neighboring Liberia infamous for chopping limbs off civilians. But by the time the bonfire is lit and the crowd settles in for storytelling, they've changed their minds.

Maybe it's coming face to face with the moment, maybe it's the half-dozen white people here to document it, but something has spooked the former war criminals.

"They are afraid that if they talk, they will be prosecuted," Caulker explains.

It's a legal impossibility; Sierra Leone negotiated its peace in part by offering fighters blanket amnesty. But here, legal promises can feel like borders – slippery when interests shift.

Caulker sends a film crew, print reporter, and intern – all white – away from the assembly briefly. He talks with the town chief and convinces them to proceed; the chief, a former RUF rebel, promises to offer the first testimony.

And so, the perpetrators talk one after another, until 2 in the morning. Mostly men speak, confessing atrocities they committed as unwilling soldiers forced to choose: kill, maim, rape, or be killed.

If any of the victims in these stories are present, they don't speak. Which is not what Caulker, whose career in human rights began with dangerous undercover research for Amnesty International during the war, had imagined. He'd thought he'd see perpetrators apologizing to victims, and victims reaching out in forgiving embrace.

"I don't want to make the mistake that this is reconciliation," he says. "This is not reconciliation. This is the beginning of the process."

• • •

These days, reconciliation is not revolutionary territory. It's on what Caulker calls the West's "post-conflict checklist," which promotes reconciliation through institutions like truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs). More than 40 countries around the world have turned to TRCs for what, in other circumstances, might be the work of courts or civil society groups: exposing crimes, on the one hand, and promoting social cohesion on the other.

Until South Africa pioneered TRCs in 1995, the past was made public in courts, by definition sites of retributive justice that, experts say, can be at odds with community healing.

"Very often the adversarial process [of criminal justice] has ... effects that can interfere with or delay social reconstruction," says Martha Minow, a professor of law at Harvard University and author of "Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence."

Prosecution pursues questions of guilt, and in the process focuses on the rights of defendants, potentially leaving victims of mass violence feeling neglected. "It also invites the defendants to defend themselves, rather than build bridges" with those they offended, she says.

Perhaps the most difficult problem is the most obvious: Like the former rebels in Bomaru, war criminals fearing prosecution don't want to tell the whole story – which is what many victims say they want most.

Truth commissions are a kind of compromise. They often offer amnesty in exchange for testimony, theorizing that knowing the truth about the past is more important for individuals and societies than convicting criminals of what can be proved in court. Sierra Leone didn't have that choice: Its judicial system, in shambles before the war, didn't exist after.

"Most of the justice system was destroyed by the civil war, and to ask for justice was very, very difficult for our people," says Hassan Seika, who leads the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement in central Sierra Leone.

Then there's the peace agreement, which promised combatants amnesty, taking a trial off the table and with it the possibility of the courtroom as a space for truth-telling. That decision would eventually be partially reversed, and the country would set up a United Nations-backed Special Court with a \$100 million budget to try the nine leaders "bearing the greatest responsibility" for atrocities.

Meanwhile, Sierra Leone set up a truth commission, which Caulker calls "my baby." He led a campaign to establish the commission, then lobbied the Freetown-based institution to spend real time in rural communities, where the brunt of the war was felt. Caulker thinks it failed, and even its architects acknowledge that the TRC's consultations didn't live up to the hopes it raised.

"They were not as rooted in the communities as people had envisioned initially," says Priscilla Hayner, an expert with the International Center for Transitional Justice and a consultant to Sierra Leone's TRC.

"People think of a truth and reconciliation commission as the body leading to reconciliation, which maybe sets them up for disappointment in the short term because it's a much longer-term process."

Caulker wants to be part of that longer-term process, making it something he feels is more authentic than the Western institutions of justice brought to his capital. In the past year, he has used a bare-bones budget from the US-based foundation Catalyst for Peace to crisscross the rutted roads of rural Sierra Leone, inviting villagers to try reconciliation their way, with *fambul tok*, asking for and receiving forgiveness around bonfires and offering atonement to the spirits of the ancestors. It's frugal – each ceremony costs about \$300. Though it sounds simple, perhaps even silly, like catching a runaway jet with a rubber band, -village after village – 35 so far and 10 scheduled – embraced the opportunity.

In communities where perpetrators were frequently victims themselves, kidnapped as youth and often drugged before being asked – -or forced depending on your perspective – to commit heinous acts, residents say they want absolution.

"People will not forgive if someone does not come forward to them in person to acknowledge what they did.... Someone has to acknowledge that this person was hurt," Caulker says. "That restores dignity to the victims."

• • •

The rationale of truth commissions can come close to rhapsody: "A people is rising," the El Salvador commission proclaimed, "from the ashes of a war in which all were unjust." This is not the language the villagers who welcome Caulker would use. They speak of their desire to apologize, to forgive, to heal; yet these noble gestures aren't so unlike more ordinary human impulses. They are still, at some level, about what people need.

In the impoverished villages of Sierra Leone, people most often say they forgive to bring peace -not just for peace's sake, but because, they echo each other in saying, "Without peace, there is no development."

They forgive because tradition tells them it will improve harvests, and they will not go hungry. They forgive, in large part, because their bellies and their wallets are empty, and the old ways tell them that forgiveness can make them full again.

And so, to villages where every home had been burned down, where widowed women live with the memory and stigma of rape, men hoe fields with only one hand, and young people try to erase their childhoods as kidnapped soldiers, John Caulker goes to start reconciliation the old way, with some matches for a fire and a chicken for the spirits of the dead.

- Tomorrow: A farmer faces the rebel who amputated his arm.

The New Vision (Uganda)

Tuesday, 8 July 2008

Lawyers back ‘mato oput’ - Ogoola

Publication date: Tuesday, 8th July, 2008



Adriko and Ogoola after the opening of the dialogue on peace and justice methods of resolving disputes,” Ogoola said last week.

By John Odyek

Although lawyers had mocked mato oput, the Acholi traditional justice system, they are now supportive of it, Principal Judge James Ogoola has said.

Ogoola said many lawyers were trained in the Western style of justice and could not understand the African concepts of justice.

“Many could not even pronounce it; they called it ‘Maputo’. I told them we should develop mato oput to make it part of the international justice system. Every lawyer worth his salt is now supportive of the traditional methods of resolving disputes,” Ogoola said last week.

This was during a seminar organised by the Advocates for International Law in Uganda at the Grand Imperial Hotel, Kampala.

The seminar discussed the promotion of peace and justice in light of the setting up of a special division of the High Court to try LRA rebels.

Ogoola said the three judges appointed to work at the war crimes’ division had done similar work in Sierra Leone.

He named them as Akiiki Kiiza, a senior judge who spent about three years in Sierra Leone, Ibanda Nahamya, currently working in Sierra Leone on attachment to the International Criminal Court and Eridad Mwangusha, who worked as a director of public prosecution.

“We have three judges who combine an international and local flavour of criminal justice. We are working to have a panel of five judges.”

Cabinet and Parliament, Ogoola said, were expected to make laws to try the suspects.

He elaborated that the principle of “double jeopardy” had to be looked into so that people would not be charged twice for the same offences, by the traditional and the western justice systems.

“The war has touched very many. Healing will be of utmost necessity. The emphasis should be restorative justice and reconciliation.”

Moses Adriko, the chairperson of the Advocates for International Law, said the outcome of the Juba peace process must include fair prosecutions of those responsible for serious crimes and accountability measures for lesser offences committed during the 20-year conflict.

“Ensuring that there is no impunity is essential to accountability and establishing durable peace. The war crimes court will contribute to sending signals about accountability and will stop violence.”

Lina Zedriga, a board member, said women should be given a bigger role to play in the traditional justice systems.

Dokolo MP Felix Okot Ogong said the only justice people in the North needed was peace.

“We need peace through dialogue. The war must end,” said Ogongo on behalf of other MPs.

Associated Press
Wednesday, 9 July 2008

Ex-Khmer Rouge minister loses appeal

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) -- A former female minister of the Khmer Rouge regime lost her appeal Wednesday for release from pre-trial detention by Cambodia's genocide tribunal where she is being held on charges of crimes against humanity.



Ieng Thirith's husband, Ieng Sary, also is being held by the tribunal on charges of crimes against humanity.

In their ruling, judges of the U.N.-assisted tribunal's pretrial chamber upheld the current detention of 76-year-old Ieng Thirith, who served as the social affairs minister during the rule of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s.

The "detention remains a necessary measure" for Ieng Thirith, said Prak Kimsan, the chairman of the five-judge panel, adding that her appeal was dismissed. He said investigating judges properly exercised their discretion in ordering Ieng Thirith detained in November.

The tribunal is seeking justice for atrocities committed by the ultra-communist Khmer Rouge when it ruled Cambodia from 1975-79, with some 1.7 million people dying from starvation, disease, overwork and execution.

Ieng Thirith is the wife of Ieng Sary, the Khmer Rouge foreign minister who is also being detained on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes. They are among the five suspects facing trial for their alleged involvement in atrocities during the Khmer Rouge rule.

Ieng Thirith, who took her husband's surname after marriage, has rejected all allegations against her as "100 percent false" and claimed she worked at all times for the benefit of the people.

She is also the sister-in-law of Khmer Rouge supreme leader Pol Pot, who died in 1998. Pol Pot married Ieng Thirith's sister, Khieu Ponnary, who died in 2003.

During a hearing in May, Ieng Thirith's defense lawyers argued for her release, saying she suffers from chronic mental and physical illnesses.

But the prosecution has insisted that she be kept in detention to prevent her from trying to influence potential witnesses.

Amnesty International

Friday, 4 July 2008

Press Release

Stronger Witness Protection Needed to Ensure Accountability for War Crimes

NEW YORK

Amnesty International yesterday expressed disappointment at the deportation from the UK of Sri Lankan national Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan, known as Karuna, who is alleged to have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka. He was deported following his conviction on immigration charges.

"The deportation of Karuna now means that the investigation by the UK authorities into these allegations has come to an end. Karuna is entitled to be presumed innocent, until and unless guilt can be proved beyond reasonable doubt in a fair trial. We will, however, be writing to the authorities of Sri Lanka to ask for an investigation to be started there into these allegations," said Amnesty International.

"We are also concerned that the investigation collapsed because the UK government did not dedicate the necessary resources to it and did not sufficiently reassure the victims or their relatives of their safety under a witness protection programme."

A number of non-governmental organizations had presented information to the Metropolitan Police (London's police force) relating to grave allegations of human rights abuses committed by Karuna. These included statements by victims and witnesses, and names of witnesses who were prepared to provide relevant details about Karuna's alleged responsibility for or involvement in Sri Lanka in incidents of torture, hostage-taking, and the recruitment and use of children as soldiers in combat.

Amnesty International had also received testimonies from potential witnesses, but they were unwilling to testify or present their testimonies to the Metropolitan Police for fear of reprisals in the UK and in Sri Lanka. The organization is aware of at least one witness in Sri Lanka who provided information to the Metropolitan Police and who is still in Sri Lanka, without having been given any protection in that country, or having been given the choice of being relocated elsewhere. Amnesty International is concerned that this witness may now face a real risk of reprisals for having given information to the police investigation into Karuna.

"We have expressed our concerns to the Metropolitan Police that not enough may have been done to protect witnesses, and reassure potential witnesses, as they conducted their investigation. We would like to see the UK authorities introduce new measures in the future to try war criminals and protect witnesses," said Amnesty International.

Amnesty International calls on the UK authorities to establish effective witness protection programmes for investigations into allegations such as these, modelled on the witness protection programmes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court. The organization also calls on the UK authorities to set up an independent and specialized police and prosecution unit with sufficient resources to deal with crimes against humanity, torture and war crimes.

Background

Karuna was a prominent leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed opposition group fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. He left the LTTE to set up his own splinter group, the Tamileel Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal, or People's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (TMVP), which also has a political wing. Since March 2004, the group appears to have been operating with the support of the Sri Lankan Army to challenge the LTTE in eastern Sri Lanka.

He was residing in the United Kingdom when he was taken into custody and charged by UK authorities in November 2007 in relation to immigration offences, for which he was subsequently convicted.

Although the allegations against Karuna relate to actions in Sri Lanka, the courts in the UK could have exercised jurisdiction over a number of the offences he is alleged to have committed:

* over acts of torture committed since March 2004 (the date when Karuna became allied with government forces), in violation of Section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988; courts in the UK can try any individual for this offence if committed by, or with the consent or acquiescence of, a public official or person acting in an official capacity, no matter what the nationality of the perpetrator or where the alleged offence was committed: it is an offence of so-called 'universal jurisdiction';

* acts of hostage taking committed since 1982, in violation of Section 1 (1) of the Taking of Hostages Act 1982: again, this is an offence of universal jurisdiction, for which the courts in the UK can try someone of any nationality, no matter where the offence was committed;

* war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since September 2001, in violation of the International Criminal Court Act 2001: by virtue of s.51(2)(b) of that Act, the courts in the UK can try someone for a war crime or crime against humanity committed outside the UK, provided that the person is either a UK national, a UK resident or a person subject to UK service jurisdiction, such as serving members of the UK armed forces. To the best of Amnesty International's knowledge, Karuna was resident in the UK, for the purposes of this Act, at the time of his arrest in November 2007.

Amnesty International wrote to the Metropolitan Police raising concerns about the investigation on 14 May and again on 4 June 2008 but has not yet received any replies to these letters.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
8 July 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Liberia's Truth Commission Cites Key Actors in Liberian Civil War to Testify

(The Parrot, Daily Observer, National Chronicle)

- Former leaders of Liberia's disbanded warring factions, politicians and other individuals believed to be knowledgeable of the causes and factors leading to the country's decade-long armed conflict are now being cited to give testimonies before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Monrovia. The commission's decision to cite the individuals follows continuing public calls for them to take the stand to help bring to a close the bitter chapter in the country's history.
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is among key actors who are expected to appear and give testimonies before the TRC. The President said few months ago that she will not appear before the Commission but would rather write a memoir detailing her knowledge about the Liberian conflict.

Government Resolute on new Transport Fares but Commercial Drivers Remain Adamant

(Daily Observer, The Analyst, The Inquirer, The News, New Democrat)

- In a joint statement issued in Monrovia Monday, the Ministers of Transport and Commerce said government remains resolute on the current transport fares released last week.
- The drivers began a strike action on Monday to protest the new transport fares. But the government said the strike action was not justified, warning that it is in violation of the General Business Law and other statutes of Liberia.
- Thousands of commuters on Monday took opted to use their feet for long distances as commercial drivers protesting state imposed transport fares parked their vehicles, blaming hikes in fuel cost.
- Some commercial drivers have been charging commuters exorbitant prices, particularly since the hike in the price of petroleum products. However, the government says it will not allow drivers to change the transportation fare arbitrarily.
- Meanwhile, the Federation of Road Transport Union of Liberia (FRTUL) described the strike action by some commercial drivers as an attempt to undermine government and warned against taking advantage of the situations to exploit commuters.

President Sirleaf Lauds Visiting US Congressional Delegation

(The Analyst, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The News, New Democrat)

- Speaking during a luncheon for the U.S. Congressional delegation, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf described the visit as a signal that the US Congress stands by Liberia.
- President Sirleaf praised the continuous support from the US in terms of budgetary appropriations.
- For his part, Mr. Berman assured that his delegation is leaving Liberia with a firsthand report of happenings and a passion to advocate for support for Liberia.
- Meanwhile, the United States Congressional delegation visiting Liberia has again assured that America will stand with Liberia in its post-war reconstruction.

- The delegation headed by Congressman Howard Berman of California yesterday paid acquaintance visits to the headquarters of the Liberia Electricity Corporation and the Ministry of Public Works.

On Juror Bribery in Sabotage Case - Justice in-Chambers Reserves Ruling For Wednesday (Heritage, Daily Observer, The News)

- Justice-in-Chambers of the Supreme Court of Liberia, James Howard-Wolokollie, yesterday reserved ruling on the petition for a writ of certiorari filed against the trial Judge S. Geevon Smith in the economic sabotage case. Late last month, Justice Wolokollie placed a stay order on the economic sabotage case involving Former Finance Minister, Lusinee Kamara, his Deputy, Tugbeh Doe, and three others Tapple Doe, Albert Quaye and Payne Wolo after a petition for a writ of Certiorari was filed against the ruling of Judge Samuel Geevon Smith at the Supreme Court.
- State lawyers had asked the Constitutional court to review the decision of the Criminal Court "C" to quash the prosecution's application that jurors were tampered with. The men are standing trial for allegedly stealing more than US\$3.6 and L\$11.6 million of public money during the National Transitional Government of Liberia headed by Gyude Bryant.

Three Suspects Turn State Witnesses in Margibi Murder Case (The Inquirer)

- Three suspects apprehended by police for their alleged involvement in the Margibi County massacre have been discharged as defendants and admitted as state witnesses. Witnesses, Gibson Kpinkpah, Emmanuel Cooper and Abu Daramy were acquitted due to what prosecutors described as insufficient evidence to convict them. During the preliminary hearing yesterday, the Inquirer reports that the courtroom was jammed packed. Meanwhile, Magistrate Peter Howard yesterday denied a motion filed by Roland Kaine's lawyers for police investigative report to be turned over to Defense lawyers

US\$8M Needed to Repair Executive Mansion – Says Budget Director (Heritage)

- The Director of the Bureau of the Budget, Augustine Ngafuan says it would cost the Liberian Government US\$8 million to renovate the Executive Mansion.
- Addressing the joint Legislative Budget hearing, Mr. Ngafuan said expert analysis on the renovation of the Executive Mansion has shown that the government needs to galvanize more financial resources to ensure the Executive Mansion is renovated. According to him, US\$3 million has been allocated in the draft 2008/2009 National Budget to begin the renovation of the Executive Mansion.
- The 4th floor of the Executive Mansion was gutted by fire in 2006 during programmes making the celebrations of Liberia's Independence Day. Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, John Kuffour of Ghana, Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo and former Sierra Leonean President Ahmed Tejan Kaba were in the country when the incident occurred.

Radio Summary

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

Government *Insists* on New Transport Fares

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

National Human Rights Centre Wants President Sirleaf Appear Before TRC

U.S. Congressional Delegation on Fact-finding Mission

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Ministry of Finance 'Professional Fee' Comes Under Scrutiny

- The Finance Ministry has been questioned over its decision to allot over US\$200,000 for

professional and non-professional services in the draft budget submitted to the Legislature for approval.

- The ministry's explanation that the money is intended to hire professional auditors to audit government's revenue base was a subject of debate with some lawmakers questioning the move to hire professional auditors with the presence of the General Auditing Commission (GAC).
- Addressing the budget hearing, Acting Finance Minister, Tarnue Mawolo however said the GAC has a problem of capacity and there was a need to commission professional auditors.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

City Corporation Employees Threaten Go-Slow

- Workers of the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) say they would embark on a go-slow action, beginning today, Tuesday.
- A workers spokesman said their action is in demand of salary increment and arrears owed them by the administration.
- Mr. Joe Karpeh alleged MCC owes the workers five months salary arrear since 2003, and that they have not received the US\$55 salary increment promised by government.
- In her reaction, Mayor Ophelia Hoff-Saytumah said though government was indebted to the workers she would not hesitate to fire anyone who is part of the go-slow action.

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United Nations  **Nations Unies**

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Newspaper Summary

Newspaper Says President Sirleaf Escaped Assassination Attempt

(National Chronicle)

- A key issue of security concerns was a disclosure in the National Chronicle newspaper regarding an alleged assassination attempt on the life of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the last cabinet retreat held in the western Liberian County of Grand Cape Mount. The paper interpreted an allegation of missing weapons within the presidential security detail to mean that an assassination was in the offing to get rid of the Liberian Head of State. The missing weapons, the National Chronicle newspaper said, were provided by the Chinese Government for the protection of the President.

“Arms, Ammunitions Discovered in Lofa County”

(The Monitor)

- [sic] Latest reports coming from northern Lofa County has however revealed that several rifles, RPG and live rounds were discovered under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Arms for Development programme in the provincial city of Voinjama in Lofa County. According to our correspondent in the county, a live RPG round was discovered on Friday, 4 July 2008 in a tree in central Voinjama within the vicinity of the former headquarters of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change(CDC) near the an entertainment center, Apulia Village. Our to UNMIL sources, the RPG round was apparently fired during the heyday of the Liberian civil war but did not explode. Reports from the area suggest that some residents in the vicinity were aware of the unexploded RPG round in the tree but only raised alarm because they that it could explode at any moment and cause havoc.

Justice Minister Banks Says Police’s Budget Can’t Fight Crime

(The News)

- Justice Minister Philip Banks says appropriation for the Liberia National Police in the draft National budget cannot effectively fight crime. Minister Banks told a budget hearing on Friday that the Budget Bureau sliced its budget from US\$30 million to US\$14 million. “We wanted US\$30 million to fight crime effectively, but the Budget Bureau reduced that amount”, he said. The Justice Minister also disclosed that the police do not have ‘quantity police officers’.
- He said 2,000 police officers were deployed outside Montserrado County, and that 30 recruits were currently undergoing training at the police academy. Although he said the police have 3,000 officers, the Ministry of Justice anticipates a budgetary allotment for a 5,000 police force.
- Meanwhile, The News and The Informer newspapers quote Cllr. Banks as saying that securities agencies were duplicating each other’s function. The Minister cited the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) as doing the same activities while the Ministry of National Security and the National Security Agency (NSA) were also doing similar jobs.

Police Raids “Dreaded” Criminal Hideout...Calm Returns to Area

(Liberian Express, National Chronicle)

- The Liberian Express newspaper reports that more than 100 suspected criminals were over the weekend arrested following a raid on several ghettos in Monrovia by the Liberia National Police (LNP). Police said cocaine and marijuana valued at L\$20,000.00 were also seized after the raid on the criminal hideouts. The National Chronicle and Liberian Express newspapers report that the notorious criminal hideout “Blagbah” located behind the Defense Ministry was also raided by the police. Police authorities say officers have been deployed in the area to ward off the criminals.

Drivers Protest New Transport Fares

(Daily Observer)

- Commercial vehicles drivers have begun a strike to protest government’s new transport price released last week. Under the new structure, fares to several locations around Monrovia have been reduced from those unofficially introduced by drivers owing to the rising price of petroleum products.
- Authorities of the Ministry of Transport, Commerce and Justice were due to meet today to discuss the emerging transport crisis in the country.

Liberian Senator Braces to face country’s Truth Commission

(The Inquirer, Heritage, Public Agenda)

- Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson has finally agreed to appear before Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Senator Johnson decision to testify before the Truth Commission followed a formal communication from the TRC for the Nimba lawmaker to appear before the Commission and explain his knowledge of the Liberian war.
- The spokesman of the Senate said Senator Johnson would give testimonies on the root causes that give way to the military and political dimensions of the conflict. According to Varney Gbessay, Senator Johnson would appear before the TRC next week upon his return from a workshop in Accra, Ghana. Mr. Gbessay hoped that the appearance of Senator Johnson would encourage other Liberians who played active role in the war to appear before the TRC.
- Senator Prince Johnson headed the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) that captured and killed former President Samuel Doe. The former rebel commander turned politician has since apologized to the family of the slain president.

Detained Senator Kaine Due in Court Monday

(Liberian Express, The Informer, Star Radio, The Inquirer)

- Detained murder suspect Senator Roland Kaine is expected in court today in Kakata, Margibi County. Sixteen other men accused in connection with the Timor district massacre are also expected at the Kakata Magisterial court. Magistrate Peter Howard on Saturday ordered the State to produce the accused in court after a Defense request. The court will also rule today whether State lawyers should provide copies of police investigative report to Defense lawyers before the pre-trial hearing begins.
- The Informer newspaper reports that the court room at the Kakata Magisterial Court was on Saturday under tight security when the pre-trial of murder suspects, Senator Kaine and others began in the city. The paper said the presence of UNMIL and the Liberia National Police were clearly visible. Meanwhile, the Liberian Express newspaper reports that the Defense team of the Senator has suffered a setback with a lead lawyer, Cllr. Marcus Jones withdrawing from the case.

Media Reports Claim Unpaid Ex-UNMIL Peacekeepers on Rampage

(New Democrat)

- Quoting reports in the Nigerian media, the New Democrat newspaper said hundreds of soldiers once serving UNMIL went on the rampage in demand of unpaid wages and benefits.

The reports further said soldiers of the 323 Artillery Regiment accused the army authorities of not paying their allowances since their return from Liberia in April.

Internal Minister Admits Errors at Budget Hearings

(The Informer, Heritage, New Democrat, The News)

- The Internal Affairs Ministry has admitted to several errors in its expenditure report of the 2007/2008 Budget. The errors were discovered in the report during a hearing into the Ministry's Draft Budget for 2008/2009. The Internal Affairs Ministry reported that it took a renovation work on the administrative and palace buildings in Nimba County. But Senator Adolphus Dolo challenged the report, prompting Minister Ambullai Johnson to describe the situation as cut and paste.
- The cut and paste remarks by Minister Johnson prompted laughter from the lawmakers and the public, a situation that angered the Internal Affairs Minister. Minister Johnson also failed to justify why the Legislature should approved funding for training of teachers and health officials, which is not the duty of the ministry.

Radio Summary

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

Stakeholders Meet to Discuss Transport Crisis

- Authorities of the Ministry of Transport, Commerce and Justice are meeting today to discuss the emerging transport crisis in the country.
- Commercial vehicles drivers have begun a strike to protest government's new transport price released last week.
- Since the hike in the price of petroleum products commercial drivers have been charging commuters at will but Commerce Ministry officials say they will not allow drivers to change the transportation fare arbitrarily.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Dwazohn Citizens Accuse Defense Ministry of Intimidation

- Citizens of Dwazohn in lower Margibi County have described as intimidating calls by the Ministry of Defense to halt the sale of land in the area.
- The citizens said the statement has put them in an embarrassing situation because they possess valid title deed to the property.
- A spokesman for the Dwazohn citizens claimed the land on which the Edward Binyah Kesselly Barracks was built was seized from their forefathers alleging that the Ministry has launched fresh efforts to take the remaining land from them.
- Last week, the Ministry of National Defense warned against the illegal sale of Armed Forces of Liberia land including those situated in the firing range to the barracks.

Detained Senator Kaine Due in Court Today

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

LEITI Decries Lack of Transparency in Extractive Industry

- The Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (LEITI) says there has been no transparency in the extractive industry of the country.
- LEITI Head of the Secretariat, Cllr Negbalee Warner said the companies involved in the industry have not adequately informed the people about their activities neither have they made public taxes paid by these companies into government's revenue.
