

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



The staff of Court Management in Freetown.

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:

Tuesday, 12 August 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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New Citizen
Tuesday, 12 August 2008

Child Rights Act Workshop Ends In Freetown

By Ragan M. Conteh

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs on 7th and 8th August 2008 organized a two-day workshop on the Child Rights Act 2007 at the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) hall, Kingharman Road, Brookfields, Freetown.

The purpose of the workshop is to develop key strategy messages on the Child Rights Act for communication to the public with a unified voice.

Topics discussed included, 'What are Child Rights; The Child Rights Act (CRA); Priority Issues of The Child Rights Act; Key Structures and Systems; Roles and Responsibilities Stakeholders; Communication Approaches and Channels and Concepts of Messages and Materials Development.

Participants at the workshop were drawn from the police, Ministry of Health, UNICEF among other child related agencies.

The open session was performed by Mr. Kanneh of UNICEF who highlighted that the aim of the workshop is to brainstorm on how children's rights can be implemented in communities stressing that some members of the community are not au fait with the Child Rights Act 2007.

Another facilitator, Olayinka of War Child, dilated on the implementation of the Child Rights Act emphasizing that there are organisations dealing with children's affairs such as the National Commission for Children, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, District Councils, Child Panels, Family Courts, Child Welfare Committees and the Family Sup-

port Unit of the Sierra Leone Police.

She went on, "children, 15 - 18 years and above, are entitled to be employed while those who are 13 years old can be employed only to do light work," and mentioned child, community, parents and state responsibilities to children while Nana, a representative from UNICEF, expounded on the topic, Au-

dience Analysis and Segmentation.

Mr. Lahai, another facilitator from the Ministry of Health, tuitioned participants on how to communicate with members of the community highlighting the major communication channels and approaches, audience selection, audience segmentation, effective and barriers in communica-

tion channel among others.

At the end of the workshop, participants unanimously resolved that children should be entitled to birth certificates, to survival and quality health care, education, protection and access to the Child Rights Act in his/her local language, setting up of a monitoring system for child labour and safe homes.

Participants further professed that street children have a right to protection, alleviation of child poverty, access to property of parents, access to employment of children 18 years and above and banning of early marriage and that they are looking forward to government seeking donor assistance for the implementation of the Child Rights Act.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 11 August 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

ERU Will Be a Responsive Force - Says UN Envoy

(The News, New Democrat, Heritage, Public Agenda, Daily Observer)

- UN Deputy Envoy, Mr. Jordan Ryan says the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) of the Liberia National Police (LNP) would be a responsive force. He said the ERU must be “ever ready” to implement newly acquired skills and deal effectively with crime and law and order incidents. Mr. Ryan, who is also the UNDP Resident Representative for Liberia, made the remarks at the handover of a fleet of 18 new vehicles to the Liberia National Police (LNP) at the Liberia Police Academy.
- The US\$1.4 million donation by the Republic of Ireland, through UNDP, is part of a multi-sectoral project aimed at building the capacity of the LNP and addressing some of the systemic challenges impeding the ability of the police to serve the public.
- The Irish contribution funded the vehicles that will enable the ERU to execute crowd and riot control, curb crime and respond to emergency situations requiring high levels of professional skills. Of the 18 vehicles, 17 are pickups while one is an ambulance, equipped to deal with swift emergency responses.
- The remaining fleet of 12 vehicles is expected in Liberia at the end of August. Speaking during the ceremony, the Inspector General of Police, Colonel Beatrice Muna Sieh, thanked the Government of Ireland and UNDP for the donation, and appealed to other governments to support other sections of the LNP which she acknowledged “face many challenges in the performance of their duties, especially the lack of transport and other logistical deficiencies”.

Executive Mansion Dismisses Claims that President Sirleaf Wore Military Uniform during the war

(New Democrat, Liberian Express, Heritage, The News, The Informer, The Inquirer, The Monitor, Plain Truth, Public Agenda)

- The media reports that the Executive Mansion has denied claims by Mr. Jesus Alieu Swaray that he saw President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in military uniforms with Charles Taylor in Gbarnga during the civil war. The News newspaper reports the Executive Mansion expressed outrage over his statement saying it has absolutely no basis in fact and truth. “Mr. Swaray’s utterances contain a mixture of historical facts and fallacies, imagination and conjectures of rumours which he publicly alluded to.
- A release issued by the Executive Mansion says the President will appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and provide full information on her role in events from 1979 to present. The President was expected to have appeared a week ago, but that schedule was abruptly cancelled and a new date remains largely unknown. The Executive Mansion said President Sirleaf supports and remains committed to the TRC exercise and welcomes the latest stage of the process.

House Pardons NIC Boss, Others - Reverses Decision on “No Vote of Confidence”

(Liberian Express, Daily Observer, New Democrat, Heritage)

- The plenary of the House of Representatives last Friday reversed its decision on the “vote of no confidence” cast in three senior government officials.

- It can be recalled that a fortnight ago the plenary of the House of Representatives declared a “vote of no confidence” in the Chairman of the National Investment Commission (NIC), Dr. Richard Tolbert, Deputy Justice Minister for Administration and Public Safety, Ceainah Johnson and Acting Finance Minister, Tarnue Mawolo for violating the investment law of the country. The plenary of the House of Representative found the three guilty of signing a US\$150 million agreement with the Buchanan Renewable Energies (BRE) and subsequently awarding the company a 100 percent tax waiver without the input of the National Legislature.

NDPL Threatens Lawsuit against Senators

(The News, New Democrat, Daily Observer, Heritage, Plain Truth, Public Agenda, National Chronicle)

- The Executive Committee of the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) has threatened to institute lawsuit against the Liberian Senate if that body fails to lift the suspension on Senate Pro-Tempore Isaac Nyenabo. The party’s National Vice Chairman for Administration, Mr. Hodo Marriam made the disclosure during a press conference held at the Headquarters of the NDPL in Sinkor.
- Recently, 20 senators signed a resolution to remove Senator Nyenabo from his position due to what they called “gross administrative ineptitude and political patronage.” Although Mr. Nyenabo was not removed, however, he was suspended for six months by his colleagues.
- He observed that the party was seriously concerned about the frequent disregard for the rule of law by certain individuals in the Senate who only want to promote their agenda regardless of the negative implication it may have on the government.

12,445 Students Pass Senior High WAEC Exams - No Candidate for Division One

(The Informer, The Inquirer, The News)

- The National Office of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in Liberia has released the result of this year’s senior high exams with 12,445 candidates passing the exams. At a news conference held last Friday, the head of WAEC National Office, Professor Thomas K. Gaie said out of this number 12,332 obtained Division III while 113 obtained Division II.
- He said unlike 2007, no candidate obtained Division I for this year’s exams. This, he said was due to the low level of education the students were being taught. Professor Gaie said a total of 295 schools accredited by the Ministry of Education, 19,405 candidates registered for the examination. He said of this number, 19,160 candidates sat the exams at 87 centres; “11,811 were males while 7,349 were females.” Mr. Gaie disclosed that the results are provisional because the council’s analysis showed that about 2,000 candidates duplicated or copied their colleagues ID numbers therefore, their results cannot be processed.

Erosion Hits “Cece” Beach, Other Areas

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer)

- Heavy storm last Saturday afternoon rendered several residents homeless in Banjor outside Monrovia. Concerned about such a catastrophe, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and some government officials paid a visit to the affected area around the Banjor beach area.
- According to residents of the area, a river close to the area overflowed its banks as a result of the torrential rainfall on Friday and Saturday of last week. That led to serious erosion thereby affecting businesses and residential areas and caused hundreds of inhabitants to flee the area for safety. By Saturday night, the Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS) and her international partners went to the disaster area to render assistance to those affect.
- Some of the beaches in the area including the famous Cece Beach experienced serious damage to thousands of dollars worth of properties. The manager of Cece Beach, Mr. Robert S. Sarwea said over US\$100,000 worth of properties on the beach was destroyed due to the flood. Several residents of the area are therefore appealing to the Government of Liberia (GOL), relief organizations and other humanitarian organizations to come to their aid as most of their houses were washed away by the flood.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 9:00 am)*

Flood Victims Return Home

- Reports said flood victims from the Virginia area have begun returning home.
- Hundreds of people fled the area Saturday when floodwater submerged their homes after two days of heavy rains.
- Government evacuated at least fifteen hundred people to temporary shelters but most of them have returned home due to reports of widespread looting in the area.
- Last month several communities suffered flooding following days of heavy rains.

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

Circuit Courts Open For August Term Today

- Circuit courts throughout the country are expected to open today for the August term of court.
- Correspondents say although the docket has not been leaked to the Press but several high profile cases are expected to be tried this term.
- The murder case involving detained Senator Roland Kaine and sixteen others, as well as the economical sabotage cases against former transitional officials are also expected.
- Reports say what is not clear is whether any armed robbery case will be tried this term since Criminal Court "D" is responsible for such cases has not had a judge for more than three terms now.

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

UNMIL Pakistani Engineer Battalion Dedicates Bridge

- The Pakistani engineering battalion of UNMIL has dedicated the Kley Bridge in Bomi County.
- The turnover came after two days of installing the new bridge which was in an appalling condition.
- Bomi County Development Superintendent, Rebecca Benson praised UNMIL for the bridge saying it would ensure free movement of the people thereby bringing development to the county.

Three-Day Strategic Meeting on Condom Use Opens in Monrovia

- The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is expected to hold a three-day workshop on the development of a comprehensive condom strategic plan for Liberia.
- According to a statement, the workshop will discuss the global UNFPA female condom initiative and the situation analysis result of condom.
- The statement said recommendations on the use of condom to prevent HIV/AIDS and pregnancy in Liberia would also be developed.

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

Africa News

Monday, 11 August 2008

http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/19851

Liberian president accused of wearing uniform

Henry Boyd Flomo, Africanews reporter in Monrovia, Liberia.

The thematic and institutional public hearings by Liberia the Truth and Reconciliation Commission-TRC, has reached crowd pulling stage with chilling accounts of key players in the nation's body politics.



The hearings unfolding at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in the heart of the Liberian capital, Monrovia saw its latest guest claiming President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was in full military uniforms during the height of the Liberian civil crisis in 1990.

Mr. Jesus Alieu Swaray, appearing before the TRC Tuesday 7 August, said he saw Madam Sirleaf in Nimba County, in northern Liberia, fully dressed in military attire on a military base. "I can't tell what she was doing there, but I saw her, so please ask her", the former political officer of the defunct rebel movement of Alhaji Kromah, ULIMO to the TRC Commissioners at the jammed hearings.

However, Mr. Swaray also a member of the Progressive Alliance of Liberia-PAL, of the 1970s felt short of providing a definite date, name, and exact location of the military base that he spotted the current Liberia head of state.

Although President Sirleaf has incessantly been accused of participation in the Liberian civil upheaval, this is the first public testimony at the level of the TRC for a key actor to accuse her. However, the president once admitted she initially supported the rebel movement of jailed former president Charles Taylor. But later pulled out when wanton atrocities began to unfold.

President Sirleaf's turn to face the Commissioners was early this week called off by the TRC saying it had not finalized or confirmed the appointment of the president's appearance. The commission had earlier announced in a press release the Liberian leader would have appeared on Tuesday 5 August.

Appearing Wednesday 6 August, national security advisor, Dr. H. Boima Fahnbulleh, differed with a previous witness that Americans were involved in the assassination of the former Liberian president William Richard Tolbert during the April 12, 1980 coup.

Former chief justice in the regime of slain Liberian president Samuel Doe said in his testimony to the Commission on Tuesday 5 August the wife of the late president Tolbert, Victoria, told him it was a white American CIA who killed her husband, and not master sergeant Samuel Doe on the night of the coup.

Cllr. Chea Cheapoo also accused America of being behind the Liberian crisis, terming Americans as bad people. "Americans are not good people, I have a problem with them", he said.

In his marathon testimony, Dr. Fahnbulleh said it could be the Lebanese giving president Tolbert's involvement in the Middle East crisis at the time. He said the president had endorsed the Polisario Front. Besides, the national security advisor continued, the first consignment of arms to President Samuel Doe following the coup were AK-47 rifles coming from the Palestinian Liberation Organization-PLO, of Yasser Arafat.

Dr. Fahnbulleh served as minister of Education and later Foreign Affairs during the Samuel Doe led Peoples' Redemption council military junta that lasted from 1980 to 1985 when Doe was transformed to a civilian leader following the 1985 presidential election, widely believed to have been rigged. Before the coup, Dr. Fahnbulleh was a leading member of the Movement for Justice in Africa-MOJA, one of two leading political pressure groups that agitated for change in the 1970s.

Testifying further, the national security advisor said he has no regrets for his role in the Liberian crisis, saying "I could do what I did again if the same situation was to exist". The charismatic and flamboyant speaker who normally refers to himself as a militant, said the Charles Taylor led rebel war was a revenge mission by the oligarchy (Americo-Liberian regime) to eliminate key figures of native origin including him for the execution of the thirteen government officials following the 1980 coup. He however denied having a hand in the act despite serving in the junta.

Dr. Fahnbulleh's PDF rebel movement was in the late 1980s crushed even before entering the shores of Liberia by the Sierra Leonean government. Dr. Fahnbulleh termed the failure of his group in its embryonic stage as a conspiracy by the Charles Taylor supporters including the Ivory Coast and America. He said more than a 1,000 of his men died in Sierra Leonean jail, while others were slaughtered by Taylor.

The ongoing thematic hearings are being dominated by those referred to as political actors behind the paradigm shift of democracy in the country. It began with the head of MOJA, Dr. Togbah Nah-Tipoteh, who appeared on Monday of the week. He was followed by members of the other leading political pressure group, the Progressive Alliance of Liberia-PAL, headed the late Liberian political guru G. Barcus Mathews.

A classic historical event that normally brings PAL to the lips of many is the April 14, 1979 rice demonstration dubbed "the rice riot" in Liberian history, which saw the killing of hundreds of innocent civilians in Monrovia by soldiers of the Tolbert regime (according to the reports of the Brownell Committee).

It is still argued today that the killing of innocent civilians by the soldiers coupled with the wide-spread looting may have exposed the soldiers to bravery, thus translating it to the ousting of the Tolbert administration from power.

In a related story, the House of Representatives of the Liberia National Legislature has approved an extension request of the TRC mandate to nine months. However, the action needs the support of the upper House-Senate, for concurrence. The TRC, born out of the Accra peace talks in 2003, has a two-year mandate that folds this September.

The Commission is investigating and documenting happenings in Liberia from 1979 to 2003. It also has mandates to promote peace and reconciliation in Liberia. No one is exempt from appearing before the TRC giving its subpoena powers.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Friday, 8 August 2008

Ellen in Army Uniform! Witness Tells TRC, Fact, Fiction, or Misidentification?

The TRC process to which Liberian stakeholders accede in the search for peace and reconciliation is no doubt in full-swing. Past and present political activists have been appearing before the commission to explain their roles in the transformation or devastation of Liberia by omission or commission.

This is what was expected and many say it is healthy for peace and reconciliation in Liberia.

But analysts see a weird twist in the process. Falsehood, innuendos, outright arrogance, and conspiracy to soil popular images are finding their ways in the process and many are worried.

The Analyst picked up this mudslinging scenario at the TRC process Wednesday, this week.

The ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Thematic and Institutional hearings took a dramatic turn yesterday when a former member of the Progressive People's Party of Liberia (PPP) linked President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to activities of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), then headed by former President Charles Taylor.

Testifying to his role in the Liberian dilemma from 1979 to 2003, Mr. Jesus Alieu Swaray said opposition politicians including President Sirleaf gave support to Charles Taylor and the destructive operations of the NPFL.

Responding to Commissioner John Stewart's demand that he (Swaray) specifically name opposition politicians he earlier accused of responsibility for the madness visited upon the country and championed by Taylor, he said confidently, "I will disclose a name to you and then you can ask that person to name the rest of the people.

What I do know is that on several occasions, while Charles Taylor was leading the rebellion and while he was in Nimba County at the various military bases, I can remember, I saw Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in her complete military uniform visiting those military bases."

Swaray, who said he did not know what Madam Sirleaf was doing there, retorted to continue questioning, "But we all heard that as rumors".

Observers are however bemused over the contradiction of seeing Madam Sirleaf in military uniform visiting bases along with Taylor and simultaneously hearing rumors about the same person being present in Taylor-controlled areas.

The outspoken PPP official could not say when he was in "Greater Liberia", as Liberia outside Monrovia was referred to at that time, and how did he get out, but he insisted that he saw the "Iron Lady" as Madam Sirleaf is affectionately called, in full military regalia with Mr. Taylor visiting military bases in Nimba County.

His revelation of the involvement of Madam Sirleaf with the NPFL invoked barrage of questions from Commissioner John Stewart, urging him to establish the veracity of the issue.

But Swaray did not sway, maintaining that Madam Sirleaf, now President of Liberia, is the best person who can defend herself against the allegation of her involvement with the war.

"I saw her and Charles Taylor at the various military bases, so I will suggest to you that you find out from her if she was in any way linked; if she is one of those," he told commissioners of the TRC and in packed hall of the Centennial Pavilion in downtown Monrovia.

Swaray's allegation may appear tangible given various cross-interests during the Liberian civil, but NPFL insiders who preferred to remain anonymous because lest they be seen as "crying more than the bereaved" say Swaray's claim is "outrageous because it is a lie".

"Had President Sirleaf ventured in the NPFL areas during the war, she would have been subjected to the same fate as NPFL secretary general, Moses Duopu who was killed summarily under the directive of Taylor for fear of undermining his chances for president with his (Duopu's) tribesmen, the Gios and Manos," said one insider.

He said he believed Swaray may have mistaken Agnes Reeves, Taylor's wartime mistress who roamed NPFL in military fatigue, for President Sirleaf.

"From the distance, they are somehow alike, you know. Agnes Reeves is bright and slim. She may have passed, in Swaray's sight, for President Sirleaf. But for all my days with NPFL up to 1997 - my days were numerous and I was almost ubiquitous - I never saw or heard of Madam Sirleaf being in Greater Liberia or meeting Taylor anywhere else. It seems a typical case of illusion and misidentify, you know," he said.

Whether that explains what observers now called "Swaray's illusion about the President" is not clear, but explaining how he got into the Taylor-Controlled areas during the war, Swaray said he sought refuge in the area when INPFL, a splinter military group of Taylor's NPFL, attacked Monrovia.

Monrovia was then the stronghold of remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) under the command of head of state Samuel K. Doe.

When asked as to his experience behind the lines as a member of the PPP, Swaray said he saw horrible things, which of course he did not delve into.

Swaray also said he was not attacked or harmed while in "Greater Liberia" because he did not think officials of the PPP were being targeted by the NPFL.

"We are no real problem to the NPFL. There were no differences in ideological outlook between NPFL and PPP," he said, adding, "If there were any, they would best be known to the two groups."

Swaray is the first witness from defunct Progressive People's Party (PPP), or the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) and Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) to testify to the alleged involvement of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in the military devastation of Liberia.

Former PPP members Oscar Jaryee Quiah and Chea Cheapo who earlier testified before the commission did not mention the involvement of Madam Sirleaf in the struggle for transformation, let alone her deeds with the NPFL.

Oscar Quiah however denied that the PPP had anything to do with the NPFL because the two institutions did not share the same ideology. Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh and H. Boima Fahnbulleh of MOJA, who also testified earlier, made no mention of Madam Sirleaf's connection.

In his testimony Fahnbulleh, who is regarded as a fundamental insider, said the NPFL was the dream of the late Thomas Quiwonkpa, one of the 17 military officers who took power after the fall of the Tolbert government.

Dr. Fahnbulleh said the political and military ideologies adopted by Taylor were fundamentally distant from the vision of the originators of NPFL.

However, top TRC insiders hinted to The Analyst yesterday that President Sirleaf will have her day to, like many Liberians, explain her role in the damnation of the Liberian nation. It was earlier said she would have appeared last week, but the TRC denied the information saying that its media people made an error.

At the same time, witness Swaray, a former political advisor of ULIMO-K also gave insight into the fragmentation of ULIMO into ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J, saying that the separation erupted from the sale of the faction's slot to its opponent.

Following the crack, he said, a meeting of the organization was convened in Robertsport during which Thomas Siah, a member of the Krahn element of ULIMO was replaced with Dexter Taryoh while Dr. El Mohammed Sheriff succeeded Maxwell Kabba.

On their way to Monrovia, according to ULIMO political advisor, the former chief of staff of ULIMO ordered that those fomenting terror in the organization be disarmed, but added that the order met stiff resistance.

In another testimony twist, Mr. Jesus Alieu Swaray questioned the true revolutionary nature of Dr. Boima Fahnbulleh, claiming, "He is not a true revolutionary."

He said when G. Baccus Matthews resigned as Foreign Minister for "policy differences" with President Doe and Fahnbulleh took over, he dismissed him (Swaray) from his assistant minister post on the basis that the two of them did not come from the same school of thought.

Swaray said Fahnbulleh told him that he could not work with him because "he is from the PPP and he (Fahnbulleh) is from MOJA."