

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



“Welcome to Freetown (2004)”. Photographer: Ray Cardinal

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

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

Local News

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Guest Writer

Yenku Sesay looks down where his hands used to be. He answers my question with a sickening quickness: "1998. May 6. 10am." That was when the rebel army, led by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), invaded Yenku's village of Kondembaya in northern Sierra Leone and took him prisoner. The rebels burned the village and gathered the civilians under the central cotton tree.

This was one of the places where the RUF began its practice of amputation on civilians during the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone. The RUF reasoning behind the amputations was that civilians had used their hands to vote for a corrupt president and they did not deserve to keep these appendages. Yenku pleaded with the rebels not to cut off his hands. But the rebels took a certain enjoyment from the process. Each prisoner was pushed forward for his or her punishment and had to choose slips of paper in a gruesome lottery. The paper either said "short sleeve" or "long sleeve." Yenku pulled two long sleeves. His hands were severed with a machete, first the left, then the right.

Many of the victims did not survive. Yenku would likely have soon died if his father had not taken decisive action. Yenku's father used the family savings to hire a motorbike to take Yenku for treatment in a hospital hours away in the country's capital city, Freetown. Though Yenku eventually recovered from the physical wounds, his life was destroyed. He was incapable of taking care of himself and eventually resorted to begging in the streets of Sierra Leone. At about 21 years old, Yenku's daily life had been reduced to asking for handouts, with little hope of change, little chance for something better.

Were it not for a microloan, Yenku is sure that he would still be begging today.

In 2006, Salone Microfinance Trust (SMT) approached Yenku about taking out a group loan with four other local borrowers. No other institutions were even willing to consider Yenku for credit because of his amputee status. However, through lengthy discussions with Yenku, SMT saw in Yenku natural business skills and a drive to be self-reliant. He was approved for 300,000 Leones from SMT, the equivalent of approximately \$100 USD. Yenku used this money to develop a modest retail business. At first the business was no more than Yenku selling small items in the street, such as packaged biscuits, soaps, and other sundries. Over the past two years, by reinvesting the

profits and building his credit with SMT, Yenku's business has grown to become a small shop selling an assortment of clothing, shoes, drinks, and other packaged food products. Though his shop may be considered small by US standards, the difference it has made in Yenku's life is dramatic.

When SMT took a chance on lending to Yenku, they were not giving him a free pass from poverty. Rather, Yenku accepted the responsibility of paying back every Leone he borrowed and fought to reclaim his life through his own hard work. Yenku dedicated himself to his business, and every month he made his repayments on time and often early. With the profits from his retail business, Yenku has recently expanded into livestock and agriculture. The result is that Yenku is now self-reliant.

Instead of being a burden to his family or the community, Yenku has become a provider. He is able to support his family. He can feed and clothe his three children. He sends both of his school-age children to primary school, and he even pays for his younger brother's education. I see the sense of pride in Yenku's smile. From raising a family, to relearning everyday tasks as a double amputee, Yenku is rebuilding his life. And the most critical tool for Yenku has been the microloan that SMT offered him in 2006.

Though in my eyes Yenku's story is extraordinary, his success is not uncommon in Sierra Leone. As a volunteer for the Kiva Fellows Program, I personally interviewed over 60 micro-entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone during summer 2008. Each had his or her own story, each with unique personal challenges and successes. I found this opportunity when I was exploring Kiva's website earlier this year. Kiva is a non-profit microfinance organization that raises money online in simple \$25 increments from everyday social investors around the world. To contribute 100% of the funds raised to micro-loans, Kiva often relies on the generosity of volunteers and the strength of its partnerships with microfinance institutions working at the village level. The Kiva Fellowship Program is a perfect example of that intersection.

Kiva places fellows throughout the world on 3- to 12-month assignments to strengthen the working relationship with their microfinance partners. Fellows

From machete to microfinance: a double amputee's recovery



Yenku Sesay in his grocery stall in Kundibaya village

such as Tajikistan, Cambodia, Uganda, and Guatemala, to name a few.

This summer I was the first fellow placed in Sierra Leone to work with Kiva's partner Salone Microfinance Trust.

The responsibilities of my fellowship allowed me field-level insight into the promise and difficulties of a microfinance organization. But it was outside the working responsibilities of my fellowship where my understanding of Sierra Leone was fundamentally changed. Before coming to Sierra Leone, hearing about a civil war in West Africa had sounded like a different world involving people very much unlike myself. Rebels, amputees, microcredit? It didn't sound real. Watching Indiana Jones in the movie theater was more relevant to my life than the struggles of Sierra Leoneans.

I expected to meet amputees from the war; the books I had read mentally prepared me for that. Crushing poverty, well-drawn water, generator electricity, and rampant malaria were not surprising when I began my fellowship in Sierra Leone. It was the astonishingly familiar interactions with the local Sierra Leoneans that caught me off guard, the simple conversations I might have had with anyone from my own hometown in the U.S. I didn't expect my neighbor Sheka to have his favorite hip hop songs set as ringtones on his cell phone. I didn't expect Aminata to ask me if she looked like Tyra Banks with her new hairstyle. I didn't count on 10-year old Antony coming home from school with a crayon drawing of his house and family that was uncannily reminiscent of drawings I had done when I was 10. I didn't think Mohamed would

Gmail account at the internet cafe. And I didn't expect Alhaji's obsession with his favorite football team, Arsenal.

Maybe these minor parallels to my own life don't surprise you. But for me, it was like flying halfway around the world, walking into a family's home as a stranger, and finding a photo of my own friends and family on their shelf! Wait a minute, that should not be here! What I was only able to learn through personal interaction, was that this brutal civil war, this unimaginable human suffering, this need for rebuilding a war-ravaged country, was not happening to the Sierra Leoneans I had read about in books or looked up on Wikipedia. Rather, if these people lived in the same zip code as me, we would be friends on Facebook, we would go out to Growlers Pub on the weekend, and we would play in the same football league. As my relationships with Sierra Leoneans evolved from acquaintance to friendship, the suffering this country has endured became dramatically more nauseating, more motivating.

My former travel experience has also taught me an unfortunate truth. I know that when I return to my life in the US, my memory of these vivid months will fade in the rush of new responsibilities. Each day I will remember Sheka's sense of humor a little less, Yenku's personal victory will become a little hazier. My impersonation of Mohamed's accent will become more muddled. But I'm optimistic that I can fight this trend. With cell phones and email I can stay in touch. Online global organizations like Kiva will allow me to make the developing world a daily part of my life. It's shockingly easy to reach Africa if I want to. For me, it's

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 10 September 2008

The death of RUF commander Sam Bockarie has sprung up again at the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. About two months ago, Taylor's Defence team blamed Bockarie's death on Taylor's successor, Moses Blah. But Mr. Blah disclaimed any responsibility. An insider witness testifying in The Hague has given a different version to the Judges. BBC World Service Trust Joseph Cheeseman reports.

CHEESEMAN: The Prosecution's 38th witness told the Court all the information she got regarding Sam Bockarie's death pointed responsibility to former Special Security Service Director, Benjamin Yeaten.

The witness said she was hiding in Monrovia when a man identified as "Papay Moriba" told her that Sam Bockarie his wife, mother and children had been killed by Benjamin Yeaten on the orders of Charles Taylor in a village in Nimba County.

She said Sam Bockarie's chief bodyguard, named "Toasty" later confirmed that Bockarie, several of his bodyguards and other people who came with him from the Ivory Coast, had been killed by Yeaten.

The former RUF radio operator told the court Yeaten's wife participated in the conspiracy to get rid of Bockarie and his family. The witnesses distorted voice is being interpreted.

WITNESS: It was "Baby Girl", Benjamin Yeatan's wife, who went and collected Hawa and the family. By that time [indistinct] Sam Bockarie's mother, his children and his wife Hawa, the family from Monrovia, and brought them to the village where Sam Bockarie was kept – that was the rubber plantation village.

The witness testified on Monday that after fighting in the Ivory Coast, Sam Bockarie and his bodyguards were refused entry into Liberia. She said the order to stop Bockarie and his men came from Charles Taylor.

WITNESS: At that time the Liberian soldiers who were under Charles Taylor's command, most of them came to the border area and they were deployed along the whole border area with all sorts of heavy weapons. They said they would not allow us to cross over at all. They said Charles Taylor said all of us who were in the Ivory Coast, who had crossed over to the Ivory Coast, who were fighting there, they shouldn't allow us to cross at all. No Sam Bockarie's followers to be allowed to cross to Liberia because they said the UN had come to the realization that Charles Taylor was the one who called Sam Bockarie to come to Liberia, and that Sam Bockarie had left Liberia and he had crossed over to Ivory Coast to fight there.

CHEESEMAN: Three photographs identified by the witness were submitted into evidence by the Prosecution. The first photograph showed Sam Bockarie along with Zigzah Marzah, a former bodyguard of Benjamin Yeaten. The second photograph carried Issa Sesay and "Jungle", a Liberian fighter who served as a liaison between the RUF and Charles Taylor's NPFL. The third photograph showed BenjaminYeaten in a military suit and holding a hand set.

After the Prosecution's direct examination, the Defence team of Charles Taylor will be given the opportunity to cross examine the witness to find out the truthfulness of the witness's testimony.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
9 September 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Former Country Manager of Kwaplah International Guilty of Embezzling US\$166,080

(The News, The Analyst, Heritage)

- The Criminal Court "C" last Thursday found Mr. Abednego Dahn guilty for embezzling US\$166,080 from the coffers of Kwaplah International. The 12 men jury came down with the verdict against Mr. Dahn on the day which became a joyful day for Kwaplah International but a mournful one for Mr. Dahn's friends and family.
- Mr. Dahn former Country Manager of Kwaplah International was accused of misappropriating thousands of dollars belonging to the company. According to court's documents, the Government of Liberia through the Ministries of Youths and Sports and Public Works independently awarded a contract each to Kwaplah for the supply of vehicles. According to the document, when the checks totaling US\$166,080 were issued as payment for the vehicles, Mr. Dahn without authority of the company took delivery of the checks and diverted it to his personal use.

Civil Society Wants Ellen Review Appointments of Anti-Corruption Commissioners

(The Inquirer)

- The recent appointment of Former Commerce Minister, Frances Johnson-Morris as Chairman of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) has once again come under sharp criticism, with members of the Civil Society Organizations calling on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to review the process of that Commission. Early last week, the Liberian Leader appointed Cllr. Frances Johnson-Morris and several others to serve as Chairman and Commissioners of the Anti-Corruption Commission that was set up to deal with issues of corruption within the society.

Libya Gives More Equipment for Agriculture

(The Inquirer, The News, Heritage, The Informer, The Analyst)

- Following recent visit to the People's Republic of Libya, by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf eight caterpillar-tractors have arrived in the country today on loan for use by farmers in country from the Libyan Government. The eight tractors which arrived at the Roberts International Airport (R.I.A.) came along with their implements, drivers and mechanics to insure its active use. According to the Libyan Charge de affairs, Mustafa El-Raash the Liberian government will direct the use of the tractors throughout the country at no cost.
- He said the Libyan Government will afford all costs including driver's salary and housing, fuel and maintenance. Mr. El-Raash further noted that their drivers will also use the time to train Liberians how to use the equipment. He said the arrival of the tractors is the result of recent visit by President Sirleaf to Libya, and also a promise made by Col. Mohammad Gadafi in a conference held in Bennie-Koutonue on June 16, 17 this year.

Prince Johnson Showed Me Doe's Skull" – Commany Wesseh Tells TRC

(The News, Heritage, New Vision, The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- The media reports that a prominent civil society leader, Commany B. Wesseh says Nimba County senior Senator Prince Johnson showed him the skull of slain former President Samuel Doe on his Bushrod Island base during the interim period. Testifying at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Thematic Hearings, the Ambassador designate to the United Nations said that the skull was revealed to him in the presence of Luvenia Ash-Thompson and Brownell Swen on a platter with remarks that, "that Doe man who wanted to kill you, I finish with him."
- The revelation of Mr. Wesseh brings is yet another version of how the body of the late former President was handled. It can be recalled that on August 26, 2008, the defunct INPFL leader appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission informing the public that the body of Doe was cremated.

PAE Accused of Economic Sabotage - Rights Group Calls for Investigation

(The News)

- [sic:] The Pacific Architectural and Engineering (PAE) Company, an American-based group contracted to assist with the Security Sector Reform (SSR) of the Armed Forces of Liberia has been accused of Economic Sabotage. The Independent Civil and Human Rights Center in a press statement issued Wednesday said PAE was utilizing its duty free privilege to import goods for some business entities thereby evading legitimate taxes to government. "We wish to inform the general public and the Government of Liberia that PAE which should be responsible for the Liberia Security Sector Reforms has gone out of its tract and is now involved heavily in what is considered as economic sabotage," Mr. J. Melvin Page Sr. indicated. He said his organization has documents including bill of lading to prove that PAE is involved in importing goods for top commercial business houses thereby misusing its duty free privileges by commercializing it at the detriment of the Liberian economy. "We request the Ministries of Finance, Justice along with all government agencies that are responsible for duty and fraud to swiftly investigate and bring to book for necessary prosecution all of those who are participating directly or indirectly in this syndicate," Mr. Page alarmed. "The center also calls on Mr. Jeff Gouga, Project Manger of PAE to clean up his entity since, according to our investigation, the purpose of its responsibility is to train security and not to get involved in acts which are tantamount to criminality," the human rights campaigner added.

President Warns Impersonators, NPP Chairman Emeritus Argues Otherwise

(National Chronicle, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has warned individuals in the habit of using her name for corrupt practices to desist or bear the full weight of the law. The President's warning followed a cyber syndicate allegedly linking her office to corruption. President Sirleaf said she is resolved to rid the country of corruption reassuring government's zero tolerance policy. She vowed to prosecute anyone found guilty of corruption regardless of status or affiliation.
- Meanwhile, the Chairman Emeritus of the National Patriotic Party (NPP), Chief Cyril Allen said he believes the Standard Bearer of the Unity Party is aware of the email exchanges saying Executives of the ruling Unity Party were part of the negotiation. But in response to Chief Allen claim, the Secretary General of the Party, Mr. Henry Fahnbulleh said it was unthinkable for people to insinuate that UP partisans are involved in the absence the outcome of an investigation.

President Sirleaf Launches High-Level Forum

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, New Democrat,)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has officially launched a high-level forum on "Working out of Poverty: a Decent Work Approach to Development and Growth in Africa" in Monrovia. The New Democrat reports that speaking at the opening of the forum, President Sirleaf admitted that the remaining three years of her term is going to be critical but vowed not to take the path of her predecessors who she said failed to provide basic social services and improve the condition of citizens.

- She said most of the important goal of her government during the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is to promote the creation of productive employment that will reduce poverty and ensure peace and stability. The workshop organized under the auspice of the Ministry of Labour deliberates on issues pertinent to the labour market, including employment, coherent policy for economic growth; improve social dialogue among others.

Detained Senator Pleads Not Guilty - Says Charges Are 'Lies'

(National Chronicle, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, New Democrat, The News, Heritage)

- The Daily Observer newspaper reports that imprisoned Margibi County Junior Senator, Roland C. Kaine and 16 alleged accomplices, Monday, September 8, 2008, entered a plea of not guilty to the murder charges levied against them by the Government of Liberia.
- The Informer newspaper quoting the Senator said the indictment lied on him and he was innocent. According to the indictment, on the 7th of June 2008, in Margibi County, the Senator and 15 other allegedly conspired to kill 14 of the 47 workers who had gone to brush a farmland belonging to Mr. Charles Bennie located in Timour, Margibi County.
- The Heritage says during earlier proceedings, prosecution lawyers asked Criminal Court 'B' to cancel an assignment for the murder case arguing that it is currently involved with several other high profiled cases. However, the lead Defense Counsel, Cllr. Francis Garlawolo called for the dismissal of the motion saying it violated trial procedures.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 8:00 am)*

President Sirleaf Cautions

Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Civil Society Groups Comment on Anti-corruption Commission

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

"Major Scandal" Unearthed at Freeport, PAE Implicated
