

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



“Quack”. Photographer: Michelle Willis

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, 3 September 2008

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

Local News

Witness Links Charles Taylor to RUF's Issa Sesay / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 3
The State of Human Rights Abuses in Sierra Leone / <i>Standard Times</i>	Pages 4-5

International News

Liberia Wants Ex-Warlord to Testify / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 6
(Untitled) / <i>BBC World Service Trust</i>	Pages 7-8
War Crimes Court Will Undermine Liberia's Security / <i>The Analyst</i>	Pages 9-10
UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 11-12
Dr. Sawyer Recommends to TRC, Proud of Deeds... / <i>The Analyst</i>	Pages 13-16

Feature

By Olusegun Ogundeji

Foday Sankoh gave his blessings to Issa Sesay to take over the leadership of the RUF and told him to take all orders from Charles Taylor, says witness TF1-338 yesterday while being examined by prosecution counsel Brenda Hollis.

TF1-338 testified using voice and facial distortion and there were closed/private sessions when necessary.

Before the court adjourned on Monday, the witness stated that Issa Sesay had traveled to Liberia to meet with Charles Taylor immediately he took command of the RUF after Sankoh was arrested in May 2000. At this meeting, Taylor asked to know why Sankoh was arrested and someone who was present in Freetown when Sankoh was arrested gave an explanation.

On the invitation of Charles Taylor, Issa made another trip to Liberia in 2000 where the RUF delegation met with four West African heads of state namely Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, late Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Yayah Jammeh of The Gambia and Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali.

Witness TF1-338 said Taylor told them that they were supposed to discuss the change of leadership in the RUF at the meeting and he hinged the necessity on the fact that Sankoh was now old and was already under arrest.

The witness added that Obasanjo too, addressed the delegation and told them to maintain a good relationship with Charles Taylor as he is a very good leader and if there are ten other heads of state like him (Taylor), Africa will be a better continent.

But after the meeting, the witness said Taylor had a separate meeting with the RUF delegation between 11:00pm to 12:00 midnight. It was in that meeting that Taylor told them they should not be moved by the suggestions of the ECOWAS heads of state as they were British-elected presidents and were remote controlled by the western powers.

He said Taylor told them not to take what the heads of states said and that they should refuse if they were asked to disarm. Taylor told Issa

Witness links Charles Taylor to RUF's Issa Sesay



Former presidents Obasanjo and Taylor

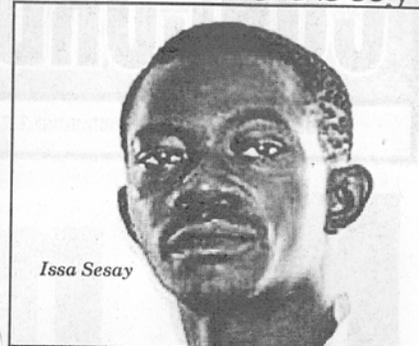
Sesay to work to keep the revolution together and assured them of his support. The witness said Taylor later gave Issa Sesay \$15,000.

The witness also narrated how diamonds were moved from Sierra Leone to Liberia. He said that on several occasions, Issa took diamonds to Taylor. He cited that the first time Issa took diamonds to Taylor, the former Liberian president told him he was going to keep the diamonds and hand them over to Sankoh upon his release.

He said it was that time that Issa told Taylor that they (RUF) were being disturbed by Kamajors and UN peacekeepers so while returning to Sierra Leone, they took along arms and ammunition and other materials for the RUF. The witness added that in early 2001, Issa took another set of diamonds to Taylor and he returned with arms and ammunition for the RUF.

In April/May 2001, when Issa took another set of diamonds to Liberia, Taylor cautioned him not to be traveling with diamonds to Liberia regularly because the UN were monitoring his relationship with the RUF. So Taylor devised a means of getting someone who will be getting the diamonds from the RUF and, in return, provide materials for them.

The witness said that during this visit, Benjamin



Issa Sesay

Yeaten introduced two Belgians to Issa. Though the witness said one of the Belgians introduced himself as Alpha Bravo, Issa identified the two of them as people who once traveled to Kono with Sam Bockarie.

Issa gave some diamonds to Alpha Bravo who, in turn, gave him \$300,000 of which Issa gave \$150,000 to Taylor for safe keeping and took the remaining \$150,000 to Sierra Leone, the witness said.

The witness mentioned that during a meeting between Taylor and Issa in Liberia, they discussed the release of UN peacekeepers that were held hostage. He said Taylor told Issa that he (Taylor) had been promised ECOWAS chairmanship if he can secure the release of the peacekeepers. And in that capacity, he will be able to offer more help to the RUF.

So after the meeting, Issa called other RUF commanders in Sierra Leone via radio set and asked them to take the Zambian peacekeepers to Manowa Crossing Point from where they were taken to Liberia and handed over to Taylor.

At another point in time, during one of Issa Sesay's visits to Liberia, the witness said that Issa said he told Taylor that the UN peacekeepers had spoken to him about the disarmament of child soldiers but Taylor told him not to allow the RUF to be disarmed.

He said Taylor told them that if they disarmed, they would be arrested later. On his return to Sierra Leone, the witness said Issa told other commanders that he was not going to take Taylor's advice and that he was going ahead to cooperate with the UN and disarm.

When the defence counsel asked to know the basis of the witness' knowledge of these events, whether they were based on hearsay or direct evidence, prosecution counsel explained that the basis of his knowledge will be determined without disclosing the witness' identity at some point in the course of his testimony.

At a point, prosecution made an application to continue the examination of the witness in private session as the questions she intended to ask will identify the witness. Application was granted and the court went into private session.

He said it was that time that Issa told Taylor that they (RUF) were being disturbed by Kamajors and UN peacekeepers so while returning to Sierra Leone, they took along arms and ammunition and other materials for the RUF. The witness added that in early 2001, Issa took another set of diamonds to Taylor and he returned with arms and ammunition for the RUF

Standard Times (web version)

Monday, 1 September 2008

The State of Human Rights Abuses in Sierra Leone

Posted by Santigie Kamara

Despite the fact that Sierra Leone is now dwelling on the exotic concept of democracy, Human Rights abuses continues in some parts of the country. Women and children are still prone to discrimination at the hands of the male folks.

Even though the gender and child rights bills have been enacted, there is still stumbling blocks on the part of government to fully implement these bills so that they can act as a guard to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in the country.

The right to education is denied most children is one of the requisite of good governance and development.

Unfortunately, parents in poverty stricken society and conservative settings do refuse to adhere to this concept due to the high cost of fees and extra charges imposed by the school authorities some immoral behaviours adopted that are contrary to their culture.

Recently, this columnist toured some Junior Secondary Schools in Freetown to ascertain exactly what obtaining in those schools. To his dismay, things are not going the way parents are anticipating. Children who have passed the National Primary School Examinations with the required grades might not be accepted in some of these schools as a result of the exorbitant cost of fees and other charges parents can not meet. School authorities are now demanding three to four hundred thousand Leones for those who have the government marks. While those who could not have the required grades are requested to pay more than that. Therefore, the access to education which is one of the key targets of the MDGS is questionable. How many parents can afford to meet with the high cost of fees and other charges in the country?

Madam Isata Sesay, a single parent informed this columnist that she only depends on granite cracking and that her only son made the required grades fro St. Edwards Secondary School but due to the high cost of extra charges , she cannot afford to send her son to school this year. “Where can I get three hundred thousand Leones?”

She is therefore calling on government to intervene into this matter so as halt school authorities from not only exploiting parents but also bring ssanity into the classroom situation.

Another aspect which this columnist will like to dwell is the Health Sector of this country.

Apparently, the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights gave special preference to health.

It proposes that everybody must have access to health irrespective of race, sex, religion, economic status or not. However, the right to health is questionable to a certain extent in Sierra Leone. Drugs are not available in most of Government Hospital and people are being forced to buy medicines in pharmacies at exorbitant prices. As a matter of fact, most of the Community Health Centres are in equipped to the imagination of everyone. Pregnant women are forced to pay fifteen thousand Leones on every clinic week with little medication at their disposal. Those who cannot afford to pay the said amount usually use herbs

as their only remedy till delivery period. Suckling mothers are also enduring the same extortion at the hands of the nurses on a regular basis. According to research, the country is still suffering from a brain drain. Most medical doctors have left the country for greener pastures as a result of poor conditions of service.

How many Sierra Leoneans can boast of a medical doctor? Therefore, it is ridiculous for Dr. Soccoh Kabia, the Minister of Health to spend exorbitant of money on the Data Information System when drugs and qualified doctors are limited to the need of the suffering masses.

Government doctors are in the habit of requesting for money before undertaking a major operation even if the patient is at the point of death. These are same of the issue Dr. Kabia should be addressing so that those who are unfortunate will have better medical attention.

Another thorny issue which is yet to be address by the Justice Sector is the high rate of physical and sexual violence against women. Despite the fact that violence against women is one of the Gender Bills that has been enacted into law, women are still prone to violence.

Recently, this columnist caught up with Fatu Massaquoi, a victim of physical violence allegedly perpetrated by her husband. A report was made at the New England Ville police station and a medical form was issued to her. According to Fatu, she was asked to pay the sum of twenty-five thousand Leones at the police hospital before treatment will be given to her.

In the absence of money that her matter came to an abrupt halt. "Where should I get the money from" she questioned and noted that if the matter prevail to court, there will be no fund for her to pursue it.

Unlike Fatu, so many women in the provinces are still enduring physical violence at the hands of their husbands but how can they purse the matter when they are not financially strong.

Discrimination against women is on going as some men continue to frustrate them from occupying higher positions of trust under the guise that they are not educated. There are quite a considerable number of women who have attained university degrees and diplomas and yet, they are not given the opportunity. . Even the secret societies in some parts of the country seriously discriminate against women. Research indicates that women are being forced beyond their wish to join some of these societies and those who failed to yield will be forced to abandon their settlement.

Further more, the Sierra Leone Police force which is suppose to protect lives and properties is still kicking against this norm, police officers are in the habit of using excessive force on the civilian populace with impunity. The recent incident at the SLPP Headquarters at Wallace John Street and State House clearly indicates that the SLP violates the rights of journalists and party supporters of the opposition SLPP. Even though investigations are on going by a committee set up by the SLP and SLAJ, it is incumbent that the Inspector General of Police, Brima Acha Kamara to take the bull by the horn so that this ugly incidence is not repeated again.

Conclusively, some strides have been made in the enactment of the Gender and Child Rights Bills, the formation of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone to name but a few. However, the government of President Ernest Bai Koroma needs to ensure that the TRC recommendations are fully implemented so that the amputees and other affected individuals will have their reparations

Associated Press

Tuesday, 2 September 2008

Liberia wants ex-warlord to testify

MONROVIA, Liberia: The head of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said Tuesday he wants former President Charles Taylor to testify about his role in the country's brutal 14-year conflict.

Chairman Jerome Verdier said it is important for the commissioners to make "as much effort as possible" to ensure Taylor tells his side of the story. They have sent him several requests to appear.

"It is former President Taylor's prerogative to decide. The choice will be his — whether to speak to the commission and have his version of history documented and recorded for the people of Liberia to hear and read," he said.

If Taylor chooses to appear, he would be following the lead of other rebel leaders who have appeared before the truth commission in recent weeks, agreeing to tell their version of atrocities in an effort to put the past to rest. Critics have called the process toothless, saying that war criminals should face justice, not a microphone. They point to the fact that most of the perpetrators have denied wrongdoing. Few have shown remorse.

Taylor is viewed by many as the chief architect of Liberia's civil war. He is believed to have received training in Libya before leading the rebel army that invaded the West African nation in 1989. His men are accused of systematic rape, razing villages, targeted assassinations and cannibalism. He won a much-criticized presidential election in 1997 and led the country for five years, before being forced into exile in 2003 by a different rebel group.

He is now on trial at The Hague where he is accused of war crimes committed by rebels he allegedly supported in Sierra Leone, Liberia's neighbor.

Unlike Liberia, Sierra Leone opted to have a war crimes court as well as a truth commission. Several of the top rebel commanders have been sentenced. The highest profile case — Taylor's — is being held in the Netherlands because of fears that holding his trial in either Liberia or Sierra Leone could destabilize the region.

Verdier said "all options are open" as far as how Taylor would testify. He need not return to Liberia, he said, and could instead testify before the commissioners inside his detention facility in the Netherlands.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 2 September 2008

The Prosecution 37th witness at the Special Court for Sierra Leone has testified to Charles Taylor's role in the release of some UN Peacekeepers captured by the RUF, the change of the RUF leadership, the supply of arms and ammunition and the safekeeping of the RUF's diamonds and money. BBC World Service Trust Joseph Cheeseman reports from The Hague.

CHEESEMAN: The insider witness, in a distorted voice being interpreted, said it was Charles Taylor's desire to become Chairman of ECOWAS that caused him to facilitate the release of the UN Peacekeepers in 2000.

He said Mr. Taylor invited RUF Commander Issa Sesay to the Executive Mansion in Monrovia and ordered him to release the captured UN Peacekeepers.

WITNESS: Charles Taylor said the United Nations was after him to talk to the RUF to release the UN peacekeepers. So because he had even been promised that if he spearheaded the release of the UN peacekeepers he'd be made the ECOWAS chairman. He discussed that he should help to release the UN peacekeepers that he had with him – that was Issa – and so if Issa released, he will help Issa in the struggle.

BRENDA HOLLIS: In what way Charles Taylor would help Issa in the struggle?

WITNESS: He said he would help him with anything that he asked for, because he had been promised to become the ECOWAS chairman.

CHEESEMAN: The witness testifying on direct examination, said on July 26, 2000, in the presence of four African Heads of State, Charles Taylor effected the change of the RUF leadership.

The witness named President Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia and Omar Konare of Mali. The witness said in a meeting held at the Executive Mansion in Monrovia with the four heads of state, Mr. Taylor stated why the RUF leadership should be changed.

WITNESS: Charles Taylor himself said that it was necessary to change the leadership of the RUF because he said Foday Sankoh was too old and that he was too stubborn and he was always being arrested and that he was a lazy leader so that he should be changed. It was necessary that he be changed. Augustine Gbao and Issa emphasised that "no, that should not happen". But Charles Taylor spoke with them to listen to what the leaders were telling them. So they went on and appointed Issa. First he suggested that he would want to take Mosquito back, and Issa said no.

The witness said when Issa Sesay was appointed leader of the RUF, he made several trips to Monrovia where he presented diamonds to Charles Taylor. He testified that after Issa made several trips to Monrovia with diamonds, Mr. Taylor told him to stop bringing diamonds.

WITNESS: When he went and handed over the diamonds, Charles Taylor told him that he shouldn't be coming frequently with diamonds to him. He said because the UN Observers and the international community was having eyes on him to see whether he had connections with the RUF, and that they were always bringing diamonds to him. He said Issa shouldn't be bringing diamonds to him, but that he was

going to try and present somebody to him who would be assisting him, when he got diamonds from him, to get certain items for him.

CHEESEMAN: The witness who continues his direct examination on Tuesday told the court today Sankoh or anyone in the RUF did not take back the 5,000 carats of diamonds and the 150-thousand United States Dollars that Charles Taylor kept for the RUF. The prosecution 37th witness however, said Taylor assisted the RUF with arms and ammunition, fuel, money and food.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Monday, 1 September 2008

War Crimes Court Will Undermine Liberia's Security

Monrovia, September 1, 2008 (TRC): The establishment of a war crimes court in Liberia will undermine the peace and security of the country, Monsignor Reverend Father Robert Tikpor has said.



Father Dr. Robert Tikpor said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia should not recommend the establishment of a court of international justice in Liberia at the conclusion of its process.

The Catholic prelate believes that such recommendation would not solve the country's problem.

"Do not waste your time my beloved commissioners. An international court will not give us peace," Father Tikpor said.

He was testifying Monday at Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Thematic Hearing on Historical Review in Monrovia.

He said the establishment of an international war crimes court in Liberia would ensure a return of the country to the path of confusion.

"We will not sleep if you recommend that. We will not sleep. They have their men around here. An international war crimes court will not heal the country. It will not heal the situation. We are a forgiving society. We are a healing society," he said.

He recommended that leaders of the former warring factions be granted amnesty so that the country can remain peaceful. "Let's ignore the heads of the former warring faction. It is God that will judge them," he said.

Father Tikpor admonished Liberians to allow God to decide the fate of members of the former warring factions, saying, "Let God take our revenge."

He clarified that his recommendation was personal and not the position of the Catholic Church in Liberia.

Although he said he was not against the commission recommending prosecution, he was opposed to the setting up of a war crimes court in Liberia.

Under the theme: "Examining Liberia's Past: Reality, Myth, Falsehood and the Conflict", the hearing will provide a critical review and expert perspectives into Liberia's past not only for the purpose of understanding the historical antecedents to the conflict, but to ensure the country's history or national narrative reflected the experiences, beliefs and aspirations of Liberians of all backgrounds.

The hearing featuring the testimonies and presentations of historians, anthropologists, journalists, lawyers, politicians, diplomats and clergymen is intended to help Liberians rewrite their history by seeking to identify the issues that underpinned our history, divided us as a people and nearly eviscerated the state.

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events. The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 Accra Peace Agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005.

TRC was formed to promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation, and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
2 September 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Government Sets up Probe Commission for Cyber Scandal - PUL Declines Inclusion

(National Chronicle, Daily Observer, Heritage, The Inquirer)

- Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said government has set up a committee to investigate a "corruption" scandal involving aides of President Sirleaf and the Liberia Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR).
- Speaking to journalists in Monrovia, Mr. Badio said the committee comprising the National Bar Association, Press Union of Liberia, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and two independent investigators would firstly determine the authenticity of the email exchanges linking the President's office to corruption.
- Mr. Badio said the President has assured that whoever is guilty will face the full weight of the law despite their status. Meanwhile, the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) has reacted to its inclusion on the probe commission saying the media would be following and reporting the work of the commission and therefore could not form a part of the investigation.

Catholic Cleric Abhors Establishment of War Crimes Court for Liberia

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

- The media reports that Monsignor Robert Tikpor of the Catholic Church says the establishment of a war crimes court in the Liberia will undermine the peace and security of the country. Speaking at the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) historical review hearings, Father Tikpor urged the commission not to recommend the establishment of a war crimes court.
- Father Tikpor believes that such recommendation would not solve the country's problem but rather ensure a return of the country to the path of confusion. He recommended that leaders of the former warring factions be granted amnesty so that the country can remain peaceful.
- Meanwhile, the Catholic Prelate has clarified that his recommendation was personal, a view which is in direct contrast to the position of the Catholic Church in Liberia. The Catholic Church in Liberia officially declared its support for the establishment of a war crimes court for Liberia.

Police Arrest Three Armed Robbers

(Heritage, News, The Informer)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested three alleged armed robbers who broke into the compound of the Christian Evangelistic Ministry on 19th Street in Sinkor, Monrovia.
- Those arrested are Junior Joe, Jallah Massaquoi and Darren Wilkins. According to a release, the incident took place during the weekend and the suspects made away with several items valued at over US\$10,000. The items which include one 2.5kva generator, a 5kva generator, a nokia cell phone; eight pieces of lapper and six yards of lace material have been retrieved. Police say the three suspects have been charged with armed robbery and sent to court for prosecution.

Huge Quantity of Marijuana Seized in Margibi

(Daily Observer)

- The Margibi detachment of the Liberia National Police (LNP) has arrested a 26-year-old man identified by the Police as Roosevelt Sieh alias Rahim with 86 kilograms of marijuana with a street value of over L\$300,000 in Kakata. The Police Commander of the Margibi County, Col. Augustine Brown said the suspect was arrested with the drugs following a tip-off. Col. Brown said during police preliminary investigation, Sieh admitted to being in possession of the narcotics.

President Sirleaf Makes More Appointments in Government

(The Inquirer, Heritage)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has appointed members of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Liberia pending confirmation by the senate. According to an Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia, those appointed are Cllr. Frances Johnson Morris, Chairperson; Mr. Joseph Acquoi, Vice Chairperson; sman Kanneh, Moulai Reeves, and Madam Sandra Howard-Kendor. Others nominated yesterday are Miata Beysolow, Commerce Minister designate, Cllr. Ceaineh D. Clinton, Circuit Judge, 1st Judicial Circuit Court, Montserrado County; Cllr. Augustine Fayiah, Assistant Minister of Justice for Litigation and Cllr. Aaron B. Kparkillen, Assistant Minister for Taxation, Ministry of Justice.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:00 am)*

Press Union Declines Inclusion on Commission to Probe Email Scam linking Presidential Aides

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

More Changes in Government

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

Local Catholic Priest Opposes War Crimes Court For Liberia

Three Financial Experts Debate Draft Act to Place Budget Bureau Under MOF

- Three Liberian financial experts have given their backings to a Draft Act, seeking the merger of the Bureau of the Budget with the Finance Ministry.
- The financial experts made their positions known Monday during a hearing at the Legislature by the House Committee on Ways, Means and Finance.
- Deputy Finance Minister Tarnue Mawolo thought the passage of the Act would improve the technical efficiency and coordination of the budget process.
- Acting Budget Bureau Director, Julius Caesar stressed that with the draft act the financial system of the Country would be developed.
- The Dean of the Business College at the University of Liberia, Professor Jugbe A. Jugbe said he supported the merger but that the Department of Revenues in the Finance Ministry must be concomitantly scraped in the process.
- An Act of 1953 created the Budget Bureau within the office of the President of Liberia.

The Analyst (Liberia)

Friday, 29 August 2008

Dr. Sawyer Recommends To TRC, Proud Of Deeds As Interim President

The ongoing Thematic and Institutional Public Hearings are continuously taking dramatic twists with witnesses accounting on their roles in Liberia's brutal past that is set from 1979 to 2003.

Mandated to do their investigation covering these years, the TRC has become an arena for varying testimonies covering the incidents of this point of the national history.

Though many names are still been mentioned by witnesses, but some of the some key players have appeared and provided various insights into their works and undoings during the war time.

However, some of those who are providing testimonies have provided blatant lies thus provoking riotous receptions from the public to the point of sometimes boisterous sessions at the hearings.

Now, Dr. Amos Sawyer, former president of the Interim Government of National Unity yesterday mounted witness bench with poignant recommendations to commissioners that outright liars must not be spared prosecution for war crimes.

These and many others are what our TRC Correspondent Edwood Dennis, along with The Analyst Staff Writer has been looking at.

The former President of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) who shouldered political control of Monrovia between 1990 to 1994, Dr. Amos Claudius Sawyer has urged commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to recommend for the prosecution of witnesses who according to him are blatantly lying under oath against telling the truth.

"For the sake of justice and to ensure a sound basis for reconciliation, it is important that you commissioners ensure that people who take oath here and fabricate their own realities are sent for war crimes prosecution," he accentuated.

This is the only way to maintain the integrity of the TRC, he said. Sawyer did not call any names of previous or upcoming witnesses that have testified before the TRC and are found deserving of such prosecution.

However, some reflective segment of the population is aware that some previous witnesses chose to tie their tongues against straying towards the truth.

In a ten-count recommendation to commissioners of the TRC before he ended his presentation, Sawyer who is the current head of Governance Commission (GC) also suggested the need to account for all of those who died or are missing as result of nearly " a quarter century of violent conflict.

He believes that the identities of the victims must be known with a clear identification of the circumstances surrounding their departure. According to him, other nations take such exercise very seriously which requires that Liberians must follow suit.

He called for their memorialization in the history of Liberia, by presenting their relics, objects, symbols and ugly sides of war, and all that have associated with this period. He further believes that this will serve

as a lesson to the citizens of the country, especially children who need a reminder against repeating the past.

Furthermore, Dr. Sawyer recommended that for national unity Liberia's motto "the Love of Liberty Brought Us Here" is changed to his suggested "The Love of Liberty Unites Us Here."

In his recommendation, he provided enough information on the status of Mandingoes as citizens of Liberia. Apart from these recommendations, the former head of government said that he has been conducting stock of his administration and is generally proud of what he did.

He told the TRC that during the tenure of his government, the Liberian dollar was stronger against the United States dollar and that civil servants salary was regular, and bragged also that his government used the meager resources at its disposal to provide electricity to Monrovia.

The former dean of Liberia College at the University of Liberia explained that the Interim government was only Monrovia-based and had no means of generating revenues, except for the maritime money, which was used to operate the government.

He said the interim government was only able to collect an income totaling between US\$280,000 to US\$500,000 monthly, and used same to settle salary payment to civil servants.

According to Sawyer, his interim government stood the test of time, making reference to the NPFL invasion of Monrovia in 1992, and many other problems it was confronted with.

One of the things the interim government embarked upon was changing of the banknote because according to Sawyer "all the banks in Monrovia were looted and huge amount of money was in the hands of people without control".

Expounding on what necessitated the printing of new banknotes, he said bankers did not know how much of the money was in circulation when the interim government took seat.

He said had they not taken the decision to print new banknotes, people would have used a wheelbarrow full of money to buy a "loaf of bread." The IGNU, he said, treated the currency situation as a security issue, and that it was done with consent of ECOWAS, which was trying to restore peace to Liberia.

On the issue of the formation of fighting group, otherwise known as "Black Beret," Sawyer said it grew out the need to control the security situation which was fast becoming volatile, when people throwing grenades and the NPFL was planning attacks on the city.

According to him, the Black Beret was formed with the full knowledge of ECOMOG and ECOWAS and that they were trained in Guinea. He paid homage of the young men who lost their lives in the process of defending Monrovia and its residents against the madness of the NPFL.

As to why he ordered ECOMOG soldiers to stop further advances against NPFL during the early stage of his administration, he said there was a transition taking place in Ghana while ECOMOG was making frantic efforts to push Charles Taylor's NPFL forces beyond Kakata.

He said President Jerry Rawlings at the time was being pressured to bring their troops because of the casualties they were encountering during the fighting.

According to him, President Rawlings threatened to withdraw his soldiers if the fighting did not stop, so he had no alternatives but to take the decision he took at the time.

Besides, he said that there were efforts to get Charles Taylor to end his military campaign at a peace arrangement in Ghana. He said this would not be successful if settlement of the peace with NPFL still determined to fight the ECOMOG Forces.

Dr. Sawyer told the TRC hearing that a particular time he called to a special meeting at which time president Jerry J. Rawling confronted him by indicating that he no longer had the desire of keeping his troops in Liberia.

According to him, President Rawling then asked that Dr. Sawyer request the ECOMOG Force Commander at the time to stop persuading Taylor and the NPFL since things were underway to have Taylor in Ghana for another Peace conference. He said this caused the Interim government to have passed six months in an efforts to get Taylor on board.

“Prince Johnson Is A Pathological Liar”

Dr. Sawyer Testifies At TRC, Says Change of JJ Put Looters Out of Business

Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) changed Liberian banknotes because banks were looted during the civil conflict, former Interim President Amos Sawyer said.

Dr. Sawyer said banks around the country had been looted and looters were holding containers of money which precipitated the change of the JJ Roberts Banknotes in circulation before the incumbency of Sawyer’s transitional government.

Sawyer said he treated the currency issue as a national security matter and had consulted the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) before the decision.

“We treated the issue of our currency as a national security matter. We did it in consultation with ECOWAS and we put a lot of looters out of business by the change of banknotes,” Dr. Sawyer said.

Sawyer, now Chair of the Governance Commission was testifying before commissioners of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Thursday, at the historic Centennial Memorial Pavilion in the capitol, Monrovia.

Prince Johnson, leader of the defunct Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) told commissioners of the TRC Tuesday that during the reigns of the interim government he gave Dr. Sawyer US\$8.1 million, an amount he the government used to print new banknotes. He alleged the printing of the new banknotes was fraught with corruption.

Apparently responding to Johnson’s allegation, Sawyer said: “If I have to do it again, I will do it again. So all those who get hysterical and if they are hysterical because of pathology, then I am sorry for them. We were proud of that decision.”

But pressed by a question from commissioner Pearl Brown-Bull, Dr. Sawyer referred to Johnson as “a pathological liar” and said that at no time did he have such transaction with the then rebel leader.

He however clarified that the only transaction with Johnson was the change of the banknotes that rendered what “they (looters) had useless.”

“This was when we engendered rage and insults from Mr. Johnson and others,” the former interim president said. Dr. Sawyer said he did not want to dignify “the rants and raves” of Mr. Johnson.

Under the theme: “Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors,” the ongoing hearings will address the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions.

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005.

The TRC was established to “promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation,” and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.