

**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:

Tuesday, 18 November 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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BBC World Service Trust

Monday, 17 November 2008

Report from The Hague

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was one of the candidates in the Liberian presidential elections of 1997. But did he at the same time operate the rebel group, the Liberia National Patriotic Front of Liberia, while he was a candidate? And who facilitated the return of former RUF fighters from Monrovia back to Sierra Leone after the SLPP government led by Tejan Kabbah was overthrown on May 25, 1997? Well, as Mariama Khai Fornah reports, there was a disagreement between the former RUF Strike Force Commander and the Defence team.

FORNAH: A Defence Lawyer of Charles Taylor, Morris Anyah, on Monday put on display in court the ballot paper of the 1997 Liberian presidential elections.

Mr. Anyah displayed the ballot paper in court to prove to the Judges that Taylor's NPFL fighters did not exist any more in May of 1997.

But the Prosecution insider witness, former RUF Strike Force Commander, Augustine Mallah who started his testimonies last week testified on Monday that NPFL Soldiers were still active in May 1997.

Here is Defence lawyer Morris Anyah trying to prove that Charles Taylor was a presidential candidate and not a rebel leader in May of 1997.

ANYAH: Mr. Witness, this is the ballot paper for the July 1997 presidential elections in Liberia, and the top left-hand corner you see the party acronym or alliance. In the middle you see the photograph of the respective presidential candidates, and you see, for the Unity Party, the current President of Liberia, Her Excellency Miss Johnson-Sirleaf. Below her, for the ALCP, All Liberian Coalition Party, is Alhaji Kroma of ULIMO-K – formerly of ULIMO-K – and right below Alhaji Kroma you see who's pictured there: Charles Ghankay Taylor. And to his left it says National Patriotic Party, NPP. Mr. Witness I put it to you in May of 1997 there was no longer an NPFL in existence.

MALLAH: Even through NPFL had been transformed into a political party, there were NPFL fighters. Those who had fought for the NPFL even before it was transformed to a political party.

FORNAH: The witness testified that after the Sierra Leone Army overthrew the government of Tejan Kabbah on May 25th, 1997, former RUF leader, Foday Sankoh admonished the rebel group to join the Junta.

The merger was later named the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, or AFRC.

The Prosecution witness on the stand said RUF fighters in Liberia at the time returned to Sierra Leone after Foday Sankoh had called upon them to join the AFRC.

Well, Mr. Anyah told the Court the former RUF fighters left Liberia without any assistance from their client Charles Taylor.

Anyah shifted the blame to the Sierra Leone ECOMOG contingent that was in Liberia at the time.

ANYAH: And all of this was done by the ECOMOG contingent from Sierra Leone. They were the ones who took you, and I'm putting this to you, they took you from Monrovia on trucks all the way to the Gbandiru crossing-point. Do you agree?

MALLAH: No, they did not take us in a vehicle right up to Gbandiru crossing-point. Mike Lamin spoke to some civilians. He paid them, from the Lofa area, the Lofa Bridge, that if they showed us a road, that is a bush path in that forest up to the point we will cross into Buedu, that he will give them whatever they wanted – money. And at that time some of them wanted single-barrels. He said he will give that to them. They were the ones who showed us the bypass.

ANYAH: Now on the way back to Sierra Leone. No C.O. Jungle to assist you. No Benjamin Yeatan to assist you. No Charles Taylor to assist you. Your evidence is Mike Lamin was reduced to begging Liberian civilians to show him the way through the bush. Is that your evidence, Mr. Witness?

MALLAH: Yes.

FORNAH: Accused former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been very busy assisting his lawyer with notes written on yellow and purple pieces of paper since this insider witness took the stand last Wednesday.

Defence lawyer Morris Anyah has been alone in Court on the Defence team.

Lead Defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths has been absent from Court. Mr. Griffiths, however, told the BBC World Service Trust that he's busy preparing for the defence case, which is expected to come early 2009.

For the BBC WST, this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from The Hague.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Monday, 17 November 2008

Afternoon Session: Cross-Examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah Continues

3:00pm: Court resumed after lunch break and defence counsel Mr. Anyah continued the cross-examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah in open session. Defence counsel asked several questions about Jungle's trips to Buedu, Taylor's role in negotiating peace in Sierra Leone, Zigzag Maazah's testimony and the killing of the alleged Kamajors in Kailahun.

Jungle's Trips to Buedu

Defence counsel Mr. Anyah asked the witness about the various trips that he had earlier on said Jungle made to Buedu during which he brought arms and ammunition. The witness reiterated his earlier position that he only saw Jungle on two occasions in Buedu. He said that he saw Jungle come with arms and ammunition for the RUF and that on another occasion, it was Jungle who told him he had come with arms and ammunition but that he did not see the materials. Defence counsel asked the witness whether he knew Sallay Duwor. The witness said he knew no such person. The witness said that he never saw Sallay Duwor in Buedu. Defence counsel referenced another witness's testimony that Jungle went to Buedu with Sallay Duwor but the witness said he had no knowledge of that. The witness also cannot say whether Jungle was based in Buedu with Bockarie when ULIMO cut off the route between Sierra Leone and Liberia. Defence counsel also referenced witness's earlier statement in which he stated that he had seen Jungle on many occasions when he went to Buedu but that in court, he had said he saw him only two times.

Taylor's Role in the Sierra Leone Peace Process

Defence counsel sought to establish the role played by Mr. Taylor in negotiating Sierra Leone's peace process. In doing this, counsel referenced portions of the testimony of former Liberian Vice President Moses Blah and asked the witness whether he agreed with some of Blah's positions. Blah, in his testimony said that Taylor closed the Liberian/Sierra Leone border in order to stop the movement of RUF and NPFL fighters between the two countries. The witness responded that the said close of the border was only for the attention of the international community but that it was open to combatants from both factions. Blah in his testimony said that the border was closed to put pressure on the RUF but the witness said that this was not the case.

Defence counsel referenced a document from Sierra Leone news archives about Taylor facilitating negotiations between Johnna Paul Koroma and Foday Sankoh in the presence of members of the international community in Liberia. He further referenced Taylor's efforts in making the Lome Peace Agreement possible. The witness agreed with the provisions of the document but could not verify them independently.

Zigzag Maazah

Defence counsel asked the witness whether he heard any portion of Zigzag Maazah's testimony. The witness said that he heard just a small portion of it. He said that he heard Maazah say he killed Sam Bockarie on orders from Taylor. Asked whether he believed Maazah when he said so, the witness said that he originally did not believe that it was Taylor who gave such instructions but when he heard Maazah make such confession, he believed that was the case.

The witness in his testimony said he only saw Maazah in Buedu in 1999. Defence counsel referenced Maazah's testimony that he made more than 40 trips to Buedu with supplies for the RUF from Liberia. The witness said that while he heard a lot about Maazah, he only saw him once.

Senegalese

The witness was asked whether he knew a man called Senegalese. The witness responded that he knew Senegalese and that he saw him when they crossed to Bopolo, he saw him when they went to Ivory Coast and when they returned to Monrovia, and that he saw him in Sierra Leone. The witness said that Senegalese was a former ULIMO commander and that when he (Senegalese) went to Kenema, he (the witness) gave him money to travel to Freetown. He said that Senegalese had more association with Sam Bockarie than Mike Lamin. He said he did not see Senegalese bring arms and ammunition for the RUF.

Killing of Alleged Kamajors in Kailahun

Defence counsel asked the witness about the killing of civilians accused of being Kamajors in Kailahun. He said that Bockarie originally told him that some civilians had been captured and sent to Kailahun for investigations. He said that when they got to Kailahun, Gbao told them the people were Kamajors and they were executed. Defence counsel referenced the witness's testimony in the AFRC trial that the MP commander in Kailahun at that time was Joe Vandj. In his testimony in the Taylor trial, he said the MP was Joe Fatorma. Asked to clarify the discrepancy, the witness said that he was Joe Fatorma. The witness also retracted an earlier statement that Issa Sesay and Tom Sandi were present when the people were executed. The witness stated that he also took part in the said execution but he was scared that if he had admitted that to the prosecution, he would have been arrested. He said that he wanted to cover his role in the incident.

Court adjourned for the day.

Mid-Morning Session: Cross-Examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah Continues

12:00pm: Court resumed after mid-morning break and defence counsel Mr. Anyah continued the cross-examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah. Part of this session was heard in closed/private session. When court resumed in open session, defence counsel asked the witness about the presence of RUF commanders in Tongo as stated by a previous witness and made reference to statements made in the witness's previous testimony in the AFRC trial.

Inconsistency with Testimony of Previous Witness

Defence counsel referenced the testimony of a previous prosecution witness that Amara Salia Peleto was present in Tongo in 1997 together with Major Gweh. Witness Augustine Mallah stated that while Major Gweh was in Tongo in 1997, Peleto was not there at that time. He said that in 1997, both AFRC and RUF were in control of mining activities in Tongo and that when the RUF had exclusive control of mining activities after Issa Sesay became interim leader of the RUF, Peleto was assigned as mining commander to Tongo. The witness said that when Major Gweh was in Tongo, Capt. Yamao Kati was the mining commander in Tongo. He said that Major Gweh was assigned there to mine for Sam Bockarie. Defence counsel asked the witness how possible it was for Yamao Kati, a Captain to be more senior to Gweh, a Major. The witness explained that when Capt. Yamao Kati was commander in Tongo, Gweh was a Lieutenant at that time. He said it was only later that Gweh was promoted to the position of Major. The witness therefore disagreed with the previous witness that Peleto and Gweh were in Tongo at the same time.

Counsel also referenced the witness's previous testimony in the AFRC trial about being promoted by Sankoh while he was in Nigeria. The witness explained that Sankoh sent the list of promotions to Bockarie who issued the promotions to various commanders including the witness.

Court adjourned for lunch break.

10:00am: Court resumed in open session and defence counsel Mr. Morris Anyah continued the cross-examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah.

Continuing from where he stopped on Friday, defence counsel Mr. Anyah asked the witness several questions about his return from Liberia to Sierra Leone in 1997, Taylor's transformation from rebel leader to presidential candidate in 1997, the witness's time in Kenema after his return to Sierra Leone, and the possibility of him having spoken with other witnesses who have testified against Mr. Taylor.

Taylor's Transformation from Rebel Leader to Presidential Candidate in 1997

Defence counsel Mr. Anyah asked the witness about his time in Liberia after he had left Ivory Coast and was on his way to Sierra Leone. The witness had earlier testified that on his way to Ivory Coast via Liberia together with Mike Lamin, they had received assistance from Taylor after having visited him at his office in Monrovia where NPFL fighters were present. Defence counsel displayed a copy of the ballot paper in the 1997 Liberian elections and pointed at Taylor's photo as one of the presidential candidates. Defence counsel put it to the witness that Mr. Taylor had then ceased to be a rebel leader of NPFL and was now a presidential candidate of the National Patriotic Party (NPP). The witness disagreed saying that while there were elections, Taylor's fighters were still present around him during that period.

Defence Suggests that Sierra Leone ECOMOG Soldiers, not Taylor, Facilitated the Return of RUF Fighters from Liberia to Sierra Leone in 1997.

Defence counsel Mr. Anyah sought to establish that Sierra Leonean ECOMOG soldiers based in Liberia, not Mr. Taylor, facilitated the return of RUF fighters based in Liberia, to Sierra Leone in 1997. The witness testified that while in Liberia, RUF fighters received orders from Foday Sankoh that they should all join the AFRC soldiers who had overthrown the SLPP government in May 1997. The witness said that all the RUF fighters decided to return to Sierra Leone in respect of those orders. Defence counsel put it to the witness that the Sierra Leonean ECOMOG soldiers in Liberia put the RUF fighters in trucks and took them to the Gbandiru crossing point in order to join their colleagues in Sierra Leone. The witness disagreed, saying that it was Mike Lamin who gave some civilians in the Lofa area some money and asked them to show the RUF rebels the route/bush part in the forest leading to Buedu. The witness agreed with defence counsel that Mr. Taylor did not render any assistance to RUF fighters in Liberia on their way back to Sierra Leone in 1997.

Contact with Previous Prosecution Witnesses in the Taylor Trial

The witness, during cross-examination, stated that he has heard brief testimonies of previous witnesses in the Taylor trial. Asked how he heard such testimonies, the witness said that he heard them on radio through daily reports aired all over Sierra Leone. When asked about the names of specific witnesses whose testimonies he has heard, the witness mentioned Abu Keita, Zigzag Maazah and Karmoh Kanneh, aka Eagle. Defence counsel asked the witness whether he had met Karmoh Kanneh since he returned to Sierra Leone after testifying in The Hague, the witness said that while he did not see Karmoh Kanneh in person, they have spoken on the phone. He said they did not discuss anything about that Taylor trial. When asked whether he knows Isaac Mongor, the witness said yes, but can't say whether he has testified in this trial.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
17 November 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

U.S. Announces US\$52M Health Package for Liberia

(National Chronicle, New Vision, Daily Observer, New Democrat)

- The United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and its Ambassador to Liberia has announced an assistance of \$ 47 million to Liberia with an additional \$ 5 million allocated for support of the United States Partner program (Rebuilding Health Services (RBHS)).
- U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas- Greenfield and Liberia's Health and Social Welfare Minister, Dr. Walter T. Gwenigale made the joint announcement at a ceremony Friday at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Monrovia.
- The amount according to the two officials is a five-year collaboration programme which will be implemented through the provision of basic health services to Liberians in mostly remote counties where proper health care delivery remains a problem.
- Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Greenfield said the United States remains committed to helping Liberia in various sectors during its recovery era.
- For his part, Health Minister, Dr. Walter Gwenigale warned local and international experts against corruption in the implementation of the programme saying that could undermine the health care delivery in the country.

Norway to Cancel US\$35M of Liberia's Debt

(The News, Liberian Express)

- The Norwegian Government said it will cancel US\$35million of Liberia's debt which constitutes 90 percent of the country's debt to Norway.
- The News newspapers quoting a statement posted on the Norwegian Government website, said the debt cancellation for Liberia was carried out without taking any funds from the development budget.
- The statement said as a result of that it wouldn't affect the development assistance provided to other poor countries.
- Liberia's remaining debt to Norway will be canceled when the country reaches the completion point defined under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPIC).

"Concern" PUL Members Urges Restraint in Headquarters Saga

(The News, The Monitor, Heritage, Public Agenda)

- The media reports that in a statement issued at the weekend, a group calling itself "Concern" members of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) have called on contending parties trading allegations in the PUL Headquarters saga to exercise restraint and cooperate in finding an amicable resolution to the misunderstanding.
- Confusion has erupted among some officials of the union over the implementation of the union's headquarters project.
- The President-elect of the Press Union of Liberia, Peter Quaqua recently warned the company that won the bid to construct the union's headquarters to stay clear of the project saying the Special Project Committee has no authority to award the contract.
- Reacting to the President-elect, the Chairman of the PUL Special Project Committee, Alphonso Toweh says Mr. Quaqua has no right to cancel the headquarters contract.

ZRTTI Turned Over to Liberian Government

(The Monitor, Daily Observer)

- Speaking at a programme after receiving keys to facilities of the Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute (ZRTTI) in Lofa County, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said that renovation of the campus was indicative of the strong partnership between Liberia and the United States.
- President Sirleaf challenged future teachers to see their training at ZRTTI as an opportunity to leave 'a quantifiable mark' on Liberia.
- For her part, U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield gave assurance of her Government's support in Liberia's reconstruction drive as demonstrated in its funding of the ZRTTI renovation.

SAMFU, Global Witness on Firestone Agreement...But Management Says Beneficial to Both Parties

(The Inquirer)

- "The Liberian government needs to learn hard lessons from the renegotiation of the world's largest rubber plantation Company in the world", says Global Witness and the Save My Future Foundation.
- The statement was contained in a Global witness and the Save My Future Foundation (SAMFU) release issued Thursday on the analysis of a renegotiated contract between Firestone and the Liberian government. The two groups said the analysis suggests recommended actions for the Liberian government for future contract negotiations.
- But when Firestone was contacted, the company's Public Relations Manager, Mr. Rufus Karmoh said Global Witness and SAMFU are entitled to their views on issues saying the new Firestone Concession Agreement is "a win win" agreement

Radio Summary

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

US Announces US\$52M Health Package for Liberia

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

ZRTTI Turned Over to Liberian Government

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Liberia National Bar Association Elect New Corps of Officers

- The Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA) over the weekend elected a new corps of officers.
- Those elected are a one time Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Cllr. Wilkins Wright as President; Cllr. Cyril Jones, Vice President and Cllr. Kaine Wesso as Secretary among others.
- The election of officials of the LNBA followed a two-day convention of the association.
- In an address at the start of the convention, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Francis Kporkpor said there was a compelling need for reform in the judiciary especially in the lower courts.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

"Concern" PUL Members Call for Calm amidst Confusion over Headquarter Project

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Radio Netherlands

Friday, 14 November 2008

<http://www.radionetherlands.nl/currentaffairs/globaldevelopment/081114-victims-justice>

Reaching out to victims isn't easy

By Sebastiaan Gottlieb and Thijs Bouwknecht

Can there be true justice if courts ignore the interests of victims?

The international courts and tribunals in The Hague deal with some of the darkest pages of human history. Yet all too frequently the rights of the survivors of these mass atrocities - whether they are from the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone or the Democratic Republic of the Congo - are sidelined.

The court focuses on the rights of the accused and on bringing the trial to a swift conclusion. There is a growing consensus that the needs of victims need to be addressed, but opinions differ on how this should be achieved.

Evidence from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

Madeleine, a rape victim from Rwanda, is deeply disappointed in the way her case was handled. Years ago she gave her testimony to a team from the Rwanda tribunal. As a result, she started receiving death threats. She then gave birth to a daughter and discovered she had been infected with HIV:

"The tribunal has given me anti-retrovirals but I haven't received any other support for basic necessities such as food, housing and education for my children. The tribunal should have given us at least a place to stay, because if I die tomorrow or next month, where am I going to leave my children?"

Victims in the courtroom

There is an ongoing debate about whether victims should play an active role in the trials of those who committed crimes against them.

One of the main concerns is that if all victims of mass crimes were to have their say, trials would be never-ending. But today, with the ICC as the first court to allow victims to participate in proceedings, experts disagree on the role they should play in the courtroom.

Göran Sluiter of Amsterdam University is not particularly optimistic:

"Victims can participate but they can't bring in evidence. So there are a number of difficulties in the dual role of victim and a witness. In my view these tribunals are first and foremost about ending impunity. If you look at the ICTY (International Criminal Court for Former Yugoslavia), which now has more than 15 years' experience, you can say it's bad there were no victims participating in the trial. But if you look back honestly over the past 15 years, what would the trials have been like if we'd had victim participation and compensation to the extent now anticipated at the ICC? They would still be dealing with the first case."

Experienced jurists working within different tribunals and in the area of criminal procedure took part in a special debate in The Hague on 13 November.

It focused on how justice can be done to victims of serious crimes, how the problem is currently being confronted and, more importantly, how it should be addressed in the future. The key question: Is it feasible to tackle the problem within the confines of a courtroom in The Hague?

Reaching out

Liesbeth Zegveld from Leiden University has represented victims of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. She takes a more pragmatic stance:

"We are beyond the point of discussing whether or not the victims should participate. They are there and we have to deal with it."

The Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown has no arrangements for victim participation in its trials. Instead it has a special outreach programme for victims. As Gregory Townsend of the Court explains:

"The lesson we have learned from the ad hoc tribunals is that we need to incorporate victims by reaching out to them. They don't all have to come and testify. They don't all have to be participants, but they need to know that people like them that suffered are heard."

Little justice

The Yugoslavia Tribunal has a programme of its own for victims in Bosnia Herzegovina. One of the participants is Khadr Hodzic, who lost her son and her husband in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre:

"This is very little justice for us, the victims. I am surprised it took so long to prove this was a crime. It is so obvious and the punishments have been so minimal. The only justice is that it has finally been confirmed as genocide. However not enough people have been prosecuted. Many of the criminals who were on Potocari are still here, I know them."

Emailwire

Tuesday, 18 November 2008

<http://www.emailwire.com/release/>

Opening of the seventh session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute

The Hague - ICC-ASP-20081117-PR371 - The seventh session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (“the Assembly”) opened on 14 November 2008 at the World Forum Convention Center in The Hague. The President of the Assembly, H.E. Mr Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, opened the session, which will last until 22 November.

Since the resumed sixth session in June 2008 two States, namely the Cook Islands and Suriname, had become Parties to the Rome Statute, bringing the total number of States Parties to 108.

At its first plenary meeting, the Assembly adopted its agenda for the session and agreed on the organisation of work. The main issues for consideration by the Assembly include: continuing the negotiations on the definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions for the exercise of jurisdiction by the Court, the Review Conference of the Rome Statute, the decision to finance the construction of the permanent premises of the Court in The Hague and the approval of a budget for 2009.

The Assembly was addressed by the President of the Court, Judge Philippe Kirsch, by the Prosecutor of the Court, Mr Luis Moreno-Ocampo, by the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims, Madame Simone Veil, as well as by H.E. Mr Jorge Lomonaco (Mexico), who introduced the report of the Oversight Committee on the permanent premises.

On 14 and 15 November, a general debate was held in which the following States took the floor: Mexico, France (on behalf of the European Union), Switzerland, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Luxembourg, Peru, Finland, Japan, Jordan, Norway,

Uruguay, The Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Barbados, South Africa, Sweden, Australia (on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand), Liechtenstein, Austria, Ecuador, Denmark, Argentina, Republic of Korea, Spain, Bolivia, Greece, Senegal, Slovenia, Portugal, Hungary, Croatia, Suriname, Lesotho, United Republic of Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Nigeria, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Uganda, Kenya, Colombia, Costa Rica, Sierra Leone, Botswana, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Chile, Egypt, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Guatemala.

In addition, at the fourth plenary meeting of the general debate, the League of Arab States and several non-governmental organisations addressed the Assembly.

The Assembly of States Parties is the management oversight and legislative body of the International Criminal Court. It is composed of representatives of the States that have ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute. The Assembly has a new Bureau, consisting of a President, two Vice-Presidents and 18 members, elected for a three-year term. The Vice-Presidents are H.E. Mr Jorge Lomonaco (Mexico) and H.E. Mr Zachary Muburi-Muita (Kenya).

Bureau

African States: Burkina Faso, Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Asian States: Japan, Jordan and Samoa.

Eastern European States: Estonia, Georgia, Romania and Slovenia.

Latin American and Caribbean States: Brazil, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Western European and Other States: Australia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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UN News Service (New York)

Monday, 17 November 2008

Thousands of Ex-Combatants to Take Part in UN-Backed Rehabilitation Scheme

More than 5,000 former combatants from Liberia's civil war will participate in the next round of the United Nations-led reintegration and rehabilitation programme for ex-fighters so they can successfully rejoin their former communities, a UN official says.

Andrea Tamagnini, the director of the reintegration, rehabilitation and recovery programme for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), told journalists in the capital, Monrovia, last week that just over 5,100 of an estimated 7,300 eligible former combatants can take part in the programme, which is due to finish in April next year.

Mr. Tamagnini said the programmes - which have begun in 28 locations across the West African country - are being expanded so that they directly benefit not just the ex-combatants, but the communities that host them as well.

Participants in the programmes work on roadside brushing projects, cleaning drainages, agricultural projects and other job schemes to help them back on their feet.

"The way forward is that the ex-combatants get back into their communities and they get jobs through their communities. The rate of success is pretty high," Mr. Tamagnini said, adding that studies by UNMIL indicate that when former combatants have jobs, even if they are only short-term, they do not resume fighting.

In a survey in Lofa county, which borders Guinea, "97 per cent of the ex-combatants said they were better off now than when they were fighting. Two thirds said they will not fight again. One third said 'yes, they will fight again.' The reason was unemployment and [the] economy."