

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



Kroobay. Photographer: Anne DeVoe

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:

Monday, 24 November 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 24 November 2008

Justice A. Raja N. Fernando Passes Away



Justice A. Raja N. Fernando, a Judge of the Appeals Chamber and former President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, passed away Saturday in Colombo, Sri Lanka after a short illness.

Special Court President Justice Renate Winter has expressed condolences on behalf of the Special Court Judges and staff to Justice Fernando's family. She praised Justice Fernando as an outstanding colleague and a good friend.

"On behalf of the Judges and the staff of the Special Court, I wish to express our deep regret on the death of Justice Fernando," Justice Winter said. "By his presence on the Appeals Chamber he helped to strengthen the Special Court and to enrich the jurisprudence of international criminal law."

"He served with great distinction, competence and efficiency, and always with complete modesty. He was not only an exceptional colleague, but also a genuine friend to each of the Appeals Chamber Judges," Justice Winter added.

Justice Fernando had served as a judge in Sri Lanka since 1992, and had been appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court. From 1995 to 1996 he served as Director of Public Prosecutions in Belize. Prior to 1992 he served as Senior State Counsel in the Attorney-General's Department in Sri Lanka, and as Judge Advocate of the Sri Lanka Navy at the rank of Commodore.

Justice Fernando was sworn in as a Justice of the Special Court on 10 March 2004. In May 2005 he was elected to a one-year term as Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber and President of the Special Court.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

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Produced by the
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Visit our website at www.sc-sl.org

The Sunday Times

Saturday, 22 November 2008

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/081123/News/sundaytimesnews>

Supreme Court Judge A. Raja N. Fernando passed away yesterday. He was 63. Hailing from Divulapitiya, Justice Raja Fernando was educated at St. Anne's College, Kurunegala and St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

He joined the Attorney General's Department in 1976 as State Counsel. While serving as a State Counsel he became a volunteer in the Sri Lanka Navy.

He was also appointed as the president of the Special Court established by the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone for the prosecution of Charles Taylor, who was indicted for war crimes (in Africa), stemming from Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.



The cortege leaves his Divulapitiya residence at 3.00 p.m. tomorrow. Burial will take place at the Divulapitiya Church cemetery.

Mid-Morning Session: Cross-Examination of Expert Witness TF1-358 Continues

12:00pm: Court resumed in open session and defence counsel Terry Munyard continued the cross-examination of Expert Witness TF1-358. Counsel asked some questions relating to the witness's description of the rebels, the chances of patients being injured by other fighting forces and the January 1999 invasion of Freetown.

Description of Rebels and Gun Shots

Defence counsel referenced the witness's statement made in May 2007 that some of the attackers could have been soldiers who were dressed in civilian clothes. He asked the witness whether his patients could have told him the same thing. The witness responded that his patients' descriptions of rebels were not limited to the kinds of attires they wore but also based on the way they behaved and what they said. He agreed with counsel that he also said victims referred to their attackers as soldiers during the junta period in 1997. He, however, said that only minority of patients could have said some attackers were soldiers. In his earlier statements, the witness referred to rebels as insurgents and members of the RUF. Defence counsel put it to witness that only recently, he said rebels were members of RUF and NPFL. Counsel asked the witness whether he thought the NPFL was still in existence in 1997. The witness said that to the best of his knowledge, that was the case. Counsel asked the witness to describe the situation in Liberia in 1997. The witness said that there was a civil war there but cant say when the war came to an end.

Counsel also referenced the witness's statement that patients who came from the Aberdeen and Murray Town areas told him that they were injured by ECOMOG shells. Counsel asked the witness how many patients approximately could have told him so. The witness responded that he cannot say the exact amount of patients. He said that he had his doubts as to whether it was true that patients were victims of ECOMOG shells. He said that is why he used the phrase that "patients claimed." Counsel disagreed with the witness. He said that he does not think that the patients were hit by ECOMOG shells.

Counsel referenced the witness's statement when he said that after treating the patients, he would know the history of their cases and that while some were hit by strong bullets, some were victims of ECOMOG shells. The witness responded that he wanted to make a distinction between high and low velocity weapons. He said that for some of the patients, based on the kinds of injuries that they had, he could tell they were victims of low velocity bullets and that their wounds could not have been as a result of ECOMOG shellings from a long distance.

January 1999 Attacks on Freetown

The witness said that sometime in late 1998, the international medical NGO he worked with stopped bringing patients from up country and told him to stop piling stocks as rebels were planning to enter Freetown. He said that when rebels eventually entered the capital on January 6, 1999, he received a phone call and after about 2 to 3 hours, he heard shellings and saw smoke in the air. Counsel asked him what he was doing during the intervening 2 to 3 hours when he received the phone call and heard shellings and saw smoke in the air. He said he was busy making phone calls to various people. He said that he later started seeing rebels in black attires advancing on the capital. Counsel asked him whether he saw any rebels in military fatigue but the witness said no. Counsel asked him whether he heard of SAJ Musa and in what capacity. The witness said he heard of him and that he was part of the NPRC which took over power in 1992. Counsel asked him whether he had heard of the STF but he said no.

Counsel referenced the witness statement made in May 2007 that after the military coup in 1992, things improved for soldiers in the country. The witness agreed with counsel saying that since he was working with an institution providing medical care for wounded soldiers, he saw less of them being brought for medical attention after the coup in 1992. Counsel asked the witness whether he had said that from 1991 to 1996, he had only provided medical care for soldiers and not civilians. The witness said that he was misquoted because he also catered for civilians but not for war related injuries. Counsel asked the witness why he did not correct that portion of the statement as well when he made his clarifications. The witness said that it was also an oversight.

Recent Meeting with Special Court Staff

Counsel asked the witness where he was about two weeks ago and the witness said that he was in Sierra Leone. He said that he was seen by SCSL staff and had a clarification session with them. Counsel put it to the witness that he also did not use that session to correct portions of his statement where he was misquoted. Counsel put it to the witness that all the oversights he claims were in his statement when he made clarifications were things that he had said and knew of them when he made his clarifications.

Court adjourned 30 minutes ahead of normal time as the judges had administrative matters to attend to.

Morning Session: Cross-Examination of Expert Witness TF1-358 Continues

10:00am: Court resumed in open session and defence counsel Mr. Terry Munyard continued the cross-examination of Expert Witness TF1-358. During the said cross-examination, defence counsel sought to establish several inconsistencies in the witness's prior statements as well as establishing that the witness only mentioned the presence of Liberian fighters among the rebel forces when it became apparent that he was going to testify against Charles Taylor.

Presence of Liberians among Rebel Forces

Defence counsel sought to know whether the witness had said in his earlier statements in 2004 and 2007 that his patients told him many of their assailants were people with Liberian speaking accents. Counsel told the witness that he made corrections to his 2004 statements in 2007 and still did not mention the issue of Liberian speaking people being part of the rebel forces. The witness responded that during those interviews, no questions were asked related to that issue. Counsel pointed out to the witness that at a latter stage, which was very recent to him testifying before the court, he volunteered the information without being asked about it. The witness said that he did not consider it necessary when he was not asked about it but later volunteered the information when it came to his mind. Defence counsel put it to the witness that he only said so when he was put up to it recently and that if his patients indeed told him so, he would have said it a long time ago. The witness disagreed with counsel.

2007 Interview Notes

The witness's interview notes of 2007 stated that he used to go to Cannought Hospital on a daily basis. Counsel asked the witness whether that was an accurate record. The witness responded that he was misquoted. Counsel also told the witness that in his statement about seeing rebel forces at Cannought Hospital, he said he saw a guard at the gate who happened to be somebody that he taught at an institution in Liberia. Counsel further said that he did not mention in the statement that he saw groups of rebels with Liberian speaking accents. The witness responded that he told the investigators so but that it was not recorded. The witness further said that it might be the case that he omitted certain minor details since he could not remember everything at the time he was interviewed.

Counsel asked the witness whether he knew the reason for which he was interviewed in 2007. The witness said that he was told he would be an expert witness at the trials before the Special Court but was not told

the person against whom he would testify. He said that he was only told sometime last year that he would be testifying against Mr. Taylor. Defence counsel put it to the witness that when he was interviewed in 2007, he knew he would be testifying against Mr. Taylor. The witness disagreed with counsel. Counsel submitted the witness's signed declaration that all he had said in his statements were correct to the best of his knowledge and belief. Counsel asked the witness to tell the court why he didn't make amendments to the statements before signing the declaration. The witness said he probably oversights certain things when he went through his statement. The witness said that when investigators obtained statements from him, they would make a recap of the statement on a daily basis before moving forward. When asked whether he had a recollection of the interview notes read to him before he signed his declaration, he said that the statements were not read to him but handed over to him so he could read them on his own.

Defence counsel went through several portions of the witness's statement and indexes under the photographs that were identified. In one of the photos, the records indicate that an amputated adult male was the witness's patient instead of the amputated toddler as stated by the witness during examination. The witness responded that those records were wrongly put and that it was an oversight on his part not to have corrected them. He further said that the indexes on photographs 45, 46, 47 and 48 that they were taken in 1999 were wrongly recorded. When asked whether he read through any of the statements before he signed the declaration, the witness responded that he just scanned through them very quickly. Counsel also referenced portions of the statement in distinguishing among photographs where he said that those handed over to him were taken by the minister of information himself. The witness again said that the records were wrongly put and that the investigators probably put it that way to refer to the minister's organization.

Clarification Interviews of August 18 and 19, 2008.

Counsel pointed out that the witness had clarification interviews on the dates specified above and asked the witness whether he read through those clarification statements. The witness responded that the statements were handed over to him on August 28, 2008 but he only scanned through them very quickly. Defence asked the witness whether he took the declaration seriously by just reading through the statements quickly. The witness said that he did take the declaration seriously.

Mention of Liberian Involvement in Witness's Statements

Defence counsel asked the witness whether he knew at the time of his last interview that he was going to testify against Mr. Taylor when he mentioned the involvement of Liberian forces among the rebels. The witness said he just amplified things that he had said earlier.

Counsel asked the witness whether he has been following the Taylor trial in the news. The witness said he has seen shots of it on TV on a few occasions but has not been paying keen attention to it. He said he has been very busy to even listen to BBC's Focus on Africa. Defence counsel put it to the witness that like many other witnesses, he only spoke of Liberian involvement when he was coming to testify against Mr. Taylor. The witness responded that he probably did not mention the Liberian involvement in his previous interviews because the focus of those interviews were on the patients he treated and not Liberian involvement. Counsel asked the witness whether it is a case that he cannot recall the things he said in his statements but the witness disagreed with counsel. Counsel questioned the witness about his definition of rebels as ragtag boys. He asked the witness whether kamajors were also in the same category but the witness said that kamajors were different from rebels.

Associated Press

Thursday, 20 November 2008

Ex-child soldiers in Africa launch UN network to help other kids

By JOHN HEILPRIN

UNITED NATIONS - Three former child soldiers from Africa announced the launch of a new U.N.-backed advocacy group Thursday to help other kids escape and heal from war.

The three survivors, all in their 20's and living in the U.S., say the group aims to create a global network of young people like themselves who can get rehabilitated with the help of education.

"The key was discovering I could do other things than just fight," said Ishmael Beah, who wrote a best-selling memoir about being pressed into service in his native Sierra Leone's civil war at age 13. "I learned to use my mind."

Beah, who also is a UNICEF's advocate for children affected by war, will lead the new U.N.-backed "knowledge-based advocacy group" against the use of child soldiers. He fought for almost three years before UNICEF rescued him.

The U.N. says the number of child soldiers around the world is estimated at 250,000.

Grace Akallo said becoming a child soldier taught her to "kill or be killed." She recalled being taken into captivity for seven months as a teenager, along with 139 other girls snatched from her school, by a rebel group in northern Uganda that forced them to fight against the Uganda government.

Kon Kelei, the third former child soldier, said he was taken into a camp in southern Sudan when he was just 5 years old and told that it was school.

"An AK-47 is not meant for a kid. It's not meant for a human being, let alone a kid," he said.

"Rehabilitation is actually what made me who I am and what I'm talking about today."

Radhika Coomaraswamy, the top U.N. envoy on children and armed conflict, said the group and their stories could serve as examples of "the power of resilience."

In February, she told the U.N. Security Council that 58 groups in 13 countries still recruit and use child soldiers and that children in several countries are also killed, maimed, abducted and raped and denied access to humanitarian groups.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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

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

Newspaper Summary

Former Taylor Associate Denies Committing Atrocities

(The Inquirer, New Democrat, Public Agenda)

- Testifying at the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation of Liberia (TRC) public hearings a former deputy director of police in the regime of President Charles Taylor denied ever committing atrocities during the civil conflict.
- Representative Saah Gbollie told commissioners of the TRC to direct inquiries into alleged atrocities of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to detained former President, Charles Taylor presently facing trial for war crimes in The Hague.
- The New Democrat reports that during his denial, Representative Gbollie threw invectives at Commissioner John Stewart.
- Meanwhile, Commissioner Stewart has vowed never to attend the ongoing public hearings saying the leadership of the TRC has refused to warn witnesses against unruly behavior before the body.
- Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions.

Press Union of Liberia Gives Chief Justice 48-Hour Ultimatum

(Heritage, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Public Agenda)

- The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) has given Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis a 48-hour ultimatum to return the camera which he confiscated Thursday from journalist Sando Moore of the Daily Observer or face the wrath of the media.
- In an interview, PUL President, George Barpeen also requested an apology alleging that the Chief Justice Lewis is in the constant habit of intimidating journalists during their reportorial duties.
- The Chief Justice yesterday ordered the seizure of the camera for allegedly photographing him.

Court Begins Jury Selection in Detained Senator's Case

(The News, Daily Observer, Heritage)

- The selection of a 15-man empanelled jury to hear the murder case involving Margibi Senator, Roland Kaine and 14 others began yesterday at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.
- During Thursday's proceedings at Criminal Court "B" five out of the 15 jurors were selected with the balance 10 to be selected at a later date.
- Senator Kaine is charged with murder for his alleged involvement in the killing of 14 men during a farmland dispute in Kolleh Town, Timor District.
- Two other bodies were discovered in the river where the killings took place while 16 other persons are still said to be unaccounted for.

Criminal Court "C" Reschedules Economic Sabotage Case

(News, Democrat)

- Criminal Court "C" has rescheduled the economic sabotage case involving former Transitional Chairman, Gyude Bryant and four others for next week.
- The court's decision comes after both the Defense and Prosecuting lawyers cancelled submissions and resistance during Thursday's hearings.

- Meanwhile, State lawyers want the re-arrest and subsequent detention of Mr. Bryant and his co-defendants for failing to turn up in court during the hearing.
- The former Transitional Chairman and the four others are accused of embezzling over US\$1.1 million dollars from the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) during the rule of the National Transitional Government.

GAC Debunks Claims of Professional Impropriety

(Heritage, The Informer)

- The General Auditing Commission (GAC) has expressed concern about what it calls series of unfounded and sponsored attacks against the Commission.
- In a release, GAC Chief of Communication, Ernest S. Maximore said that GAC is not an enemy to any institution or government.
- Mr. Maximore said the GAC was only doing its work in assisting President Sirleaf to set up a unique control system that will produce an accountable government.
- The Movement for the Defense of the Down-Trodden has made series of allegations against the Commission as well as the Auditor General, John Sembe Morlu, II for what the group termed as acts of impropriety at the GAC.

Local Media-Radio VERITAS (News monitored today at 9:00 am)

Press Union of Liberia Gives Chief Justice 48 Hours Ultimatum

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. ELBC and Sky F.M.)

Criminal Court "C" Reschedules Economic Sabotage Case

Former Taylor Associate Denies Committing Atrocities

STAR RADIO (News monitored today at 9:00 am)

Global Financial Crisis hits Liberia's Micro-finance and Exports

- Microfinance and exports have been identified as areas in the Liberian economy that are experiencing the immediate impact of the global financial crisis.
- Financial experts in Liberia say most Liberian-based companies have lost credit lines from overseas banks, which are not replaceable by local banks.
- For exports, revenues from rubber and other products are decreasing as a result of the decrease in commodity prices on the world market.
- The financial crisis is also predicted to have impacts on investment, aid and remittances in the near future.
- The comments were made at a one-day economic round table chaired by President Sirleaf on the impact of the economic financial crisis on Liberia.

Local Official Reports Security "Threat" in Bomi County

- In an interview, the Commissioner of Klay district in Bomi County, Alfred Zinnah says there is an imminent security "threat" at the Klay Checkpoint following the departure of the UNMIL Pakistani contingent.
- Commissioner Zinnah said since the departure of the Pakistani contingent, Klay and its environs have been in darkness saying electricity would help drive away would-be criminals and gangsters.

Liberian Senate Urged to Prioritize Training

- Speaking at the a one-day workshop for the Research Bureau of the Liberian Senate yesterday, the Director of Research, McCarthy Weh spoke of the need to prioritize training as a key component to building a professional bureau.
- The workshop for 25 Researchers and Analysts was sponsored by the National Democratic Institute with funding from USAID.

Truth F.M. (News monitored today at 10:00 am)

Court Begins Jury Selection in Detained Senator's Case
