

**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:

Thursday, 18 December 2008

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

International News

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 3-5
Liberian President to Testify Thursday Before the Truth Commission / <i>Voice of America</i>	Page 6
Genocide 'Kingpin' Awaits Verdict / <i>BBC Online</i>	Pages 7-8
Security Council Extends Probe into Lebanon Killings for Another two Months / <i>UN News</i>	Pages 9-10

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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

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

Newspaper Summary

Committed UN Police Force Needed to Strengthen Liberia National Police

(The Parrot, Public Agenda, Heritage)

- UN Envoy Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj has said that in addressing the challenges in strengthening the rule of law in Liberia, UNMIL still needs a committed police force to continue to build the capacity of the Liberia National Police (LNP). She made these remarks during a ceremony to honor the Nepalese peacekeeping contingent for their role in strengthening the rule of law in Liberia.
- The contingent has undertaken medical outreach programmes as well as building bridges and roads in Liberia. "These will all have an impact on Liberians as they strive for the development of Liberia," the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) added. She urged the Nepalese awardees and all other UNPOL to "continue working hard to ensure that the Liberian police force develop the confidence they need to take up the baton as UNMIL departs."

In Economic Sabotage Case: Bryant's Poor Health Obstructs Hearings

(The Parrot, The News)

- Hearings into the economic sabotage case involving five former officials of the erstwhile National Transitional Government (NTGL) yesterday failed to proceed due to the poor health of one of the defendants, former NTGL Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant.
- The Judge of Criminal Court "C" Emmanuel Kollie however said the trial would resume Friday and hoped the defendant would have recovered and will be in court. "The case was postponed because we cannot conduct this trial in the absence of any defendant who is a party to this suit," he added.
- Recently, the case was again suspended when one of the defendants, Richard Devine, travelled to the United States on national assignment. The five former officials of the NTGL who are being tried on corruption charges are Edwin Snowe, Jr., former LPRC Managing Director and his deputies, Richard Devine, Siaka Sheriff; and G. Andy Quamie who were indicted in February this year for embezzling over US\$1 million from the corporation.

"Liberia's Prosperity Depends on Quality Education" ... U.S. Envoy Says

(The News)

- United States Ambassador to Liberia Linda Thomas Greenfield says it is imperative for authorities, parents, students and everyone to note that the future of Liberia and its prosperity greatly depend on quality education. Ambassador Greenfield spoke Monday when she and Mrs. Grace Cavert Nelson, wife of United States Senator Bill Nelson of the State of Florida presented additional 20 scholarships to 15 girls from the June L. Moore Public School and five boys from Cecelia Dunbar Public School in rural Montserrado County.
- The scholarships were provided under the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP) funded by American taxpayers through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The 20 scholarships awarded to primary school pupils bring to a total of 5,796 the number of scholarships awarded under the AGSP since its inception in 2004.

'Perpetrators Fired at Us' ... Claims State Witness in Timor Massacre Case

(The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer)

- One of the survivors of the June 7, Timor massacre in Grand Bassa County, in which 14 persons were killed, Vanjah Francis yesterday told the court that their attackers fired at them with single barrel guns, AK-47 rifles and also used machetes and acid water to kill the men. Vanjah said the number of persons killed during the massacre were 21 out of the total of 47 persons hired to brush a farmland in the area.
- He said during police investigation, 45 bodies were recovered while the villagers later found additional six bodies. The witness said following his escape he arrived in Kakata and saw Senator Kaine with the alleged ringleader riding in a vehicle marked "Sen. 22" heading towards the crime scene.

Radio Summary

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

Criminal Court "A" Denies Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus by JPC

- Criminal Court "A" has denied the petition for a writ of Habeas Corpus filed by the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission (JPC) against the government on behalf of 22 Liberian deportees.
- In its ruling, the Judge of the court, Boimah Kontoe said the motion was dismissed on grounds that it was filed in two courts in violation of the law.
- The JPC recently filed parallel petitions before the 7th Judicial Circuit Court in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Criminal Court A in Monrovia.
- On Monday, the 7th Judicial Circuit Court in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County also dismissed the JPC writ of Habeas Corpus citing similar concern.

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

UN Envoy Decorates Pakistani Peacekeepers with UN Medals

- Speaking at an award ceremony for over 3000 Pakistani peacekeepers serving in UNMIL, UN Envoy Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj lauded them for going beyond their call of duty by providing humanitarian assistance to communities in the country.
- Ms. Løj said they have helped the Liberian Government and UNMIL in the rehabilitation of major roads in the country.
- Also speaking at the programme, the Head of the Pakistani contingent, Ghulam Murtaza reaffirmed Pakistan's support to the peace process in the country and UN initiatives in the world.

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

Liberian Deportees Want Consulate in Washington Withdrawn

- Liberian deportees from the United States are calling for the withdrawal of the Consulate at the Liberian Embassy in Washington, Mr. Christopher Nippy.
- The deportees claimed that Mr. Nippy refused to visit or give them audience to explain their cases but immediately issued travelling documents for their deportation.
- Recently 22 persons were deported from the U.S. for various crimes they committed in that country.
- They are presently at the Zwedru Correction Palace in Grand Gedeh County undergoing rehabilitation before being release to their families.

Education Ministry Purchases US\$4.5M Primary Textbooks

- Speaking at a news conference yesterday, Education Minister, Dr. Joseph Kortu said the ministry has purchased 200,000 primary school books valued at US\$4.5 million.
- The books which comprise reading, math and social science materials are expected to be distributed to schools throughout the country.

Star Radio (News culled from website today at 8:30 am)

Finance Ministry Vets Pensioners' Payroll

- The Ministry of Finance says it is in the process of thoroughly vetting the regular pensioners' payroll of government.
- In an interview, the Comptroller General of Liberia, James Boker said a lot of names exist on the payroll that should not be there.

- He indicated that the volume of the government's regular pension payroll has swollen beyond expectation, putting the amount of names presently existing on the payroll at 14,000.

Truth Commission Investigates Allegation Against One of Its Commissioners

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) has ordered an investigation into allegations that one of its commissioners was a member of the defunct rebels United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO).
- The TRC mandated its Inquiry Unit to immediately investigate the allegations that Commissioner Sheikh Kafumba Konneh served as a major supplier of arms to ULIMO.
- Former rebel General Ofori Diah who made the accusation said the commissioner recruited him into the group during the 1990s.
- The TRC said the allegation is the second against the Commissioner saying it initially received a letter this year from a Liberian in the diaspora claiming that Sheikh Konneh was a member of ULIMO, a claim he has since denied.

Reports Speak of Brewing Tension at Guthrie Rubber Plantation

- Reports from the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi County say unknown persons have burned down the security post in the area.
- In an interview, several employees said the guard post was set ablaze on Monday by the men.
- The employees claimed that tension is presently brewing at the plantation as most of the plantation Managers gave abandoned the area
- One report said a company vehicle which was enroute to the compound was recently turned back by angry men.

Labour Ministry Launches Major Clean-up Exercise

- The Labour Ministry in collaboration with the Liberia Emergency Employment Programme has launched a major clean-up campaign of Monrovia and its environs.
- The Acting Coordinator of LEEP, George Saah puts the cost of the campaign at over US\$70,000.

Voice of America

Thursday, 18 December 2008

Liberian President to Testify Thursday Before the Truth Commission

By James Butty

Sources in the Liberian capital, Monrovia said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will Thursday testify before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

It has been alleged that as an activist and politician President Sirleaf supported Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia rebel movement that eventually led to the overthrow of President Samuel Doe. The Truth Commission had since earlier this year asked the president to testify.

Peter Quoiquoi, president of the Press Union of Liberia, told VOA Liberians had been anticipating the president's testimony.

"We've heard from some radio stations that the president will appear today, but there are reports coming out of the mansion (presidential palace) that yes the president will appear but not today. But there is anticipation. Ever since people had been anticipating that the president would appear before the TRC to testify. And so it would be big news if she testifies today," he said.

Quoiquoi said the TRC wants to hear from the president because it had been alleged that as an activist and politician President Sirleaf supported Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia rebel movement that eventually led to the overthrow of President Samuel Doe.

"My guess is that there are people here who lived here when the President was active in activism. They believe that the President might have played a role in some of the conflicts from 1979 to this minute. And so she's a very important and key person. Of course, for us to do reconciliation here we have to talk from all levels. Some of the people who testified before the TRC mentioned the president, and I'm sure the public would be very eager to know what role the president played in any kind of conflict that occurred in our country," Quoiquoi said.

President Sirleaf came to the presidency on the platform of respect for the rule of law.

Quoiquoi said the president's appearance would bolster the Truth Commission's work.

"I would think it would validate the resolve of the TRC whenever they finalize their work. The other side of this is that a lot of people have appeared before the TRC and have made mockery of the whole process. And so whether the President's appearance would make a difference, we will wait to see. But there are those who believe very strongly that with the appearance of the president we certainly will have people accepting the resolve of the TRV findings," Quoiquoi said.

TRC hearings in the past had been broadcast live on local radio stations in Liberia. But Quoiquoi said concerns for President Sirleaf's security could make it difficult for her testimony to be carried live.

"There have been prior arguments from some groups of people that the President should appear in camera, and there are those who believe that the president should appear in open like others have done. I'm sure what might happen, because of the president's security, the TRC will allow the public to stay away and probably they have it broadcast later to the public. I'm sure that might be the route the TRC would take," Quoiquoi said.

He said the TRC must carefully balance the public's need to hear their president testify and her security.

BBC Online

Thursday, 18 December 2008

Genocide 'kingpin' awaits verdict

An international tribunal is due to issue its verdict on the man accused of masterminding Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

Theoneste Bagosora is charged with leading a committee of Hutu extremists that plotted the massacre of ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Mr Bagosora, a colonel who was cabinet director in Rwanda's defence ministry at the time, pleaded not guilty.

Rwanda's genocide left more than 800,000 people dead within the space of just 100 days.

According to the indictment at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Tanzania, Mr Bagosora and three former senior military officers all conspired to "work out a plan with intent to exterminate the civilian Tutsi population and eliminate members of the opposition".

If he is found guilty, it will be the first time the Rwanda tribunal has convicted anyone of actually organising the killings.

In its first verdict on Thursday, the Rwandan court sentenced Protais Zigiranyirazo, 57, to 20 years in jail for his part in the genocide.

Mr Zigiranyirazo, a brother-in-law of former President Juvenal Habyarimana, was accused of ordering Hutus to kill 48 people in two incidents.

Mr Bagosora, 67, has been in custody since 1996, when he was arrested in Cameroon.

He faces 11 charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The prosecution says he played a key role in plotting to exterminate the Tutsis and moderate Hutus, and that he also set up the Interahamwe - gangs of Hutu extremists who carried out much of the slaughter.

'Principal enemy'

Prosecutors say Mr Bagosora assumed control of military and political affairs in Rwanda when President Habyarimana's plane was shot down in 1994 - the catalyst for the genocide.

He is said to have distributed the arms and machetes that became the chief tools of the genocide.

The indictment alleges that he set out to "prepare the apocalypse" as far back as 1990.

The following year, Mr Bagosora helped draft a document circulated within the army that described Tutsis as "the principal enemy".

Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, head of UN peacekeepers in Rwanda at the time, described Mr Bagosora as the "kingpin" behind the genocide and said the colonel had threatened to kill him with a pistol.

His defence says there is no hard evidence to link him to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Rwandans.

Mr Bagosora's lawyer has also challenged the basis for the case, arguing that prosecutors failed to prove that the slaughter was organised and therefore failed to prove that it met the legal definition of "genocide".

His co-defendants are: Lieutenant-Colonel Anatole Nsegyumva, the former commander of Gisenyi military region; Brigadier Gratién Kabiligi, the former chief of military operations; and Major Alloys Ntabakuze, the former commander of the Para-Commando battalion of Kigali.

The trial, which began in 2002, was expected to last two years.

The effects of the genocide are still being felt in the region, in particular across the border in DR Congo.

Some of the Hutu militias involved in the genocide fled to DR Congo, where Tutsi rebels, allegedly with some Rwandan backing, refuse to lay down their arms, saying they are being attacked by the Hutu fighters.

Some 300,000 people have fled their homes in DR Congo this year because of this conflict.

UN News

Thursday, 18 December 2008

Security Council extends probe into Lebanon killings for another two months



Daniel Bellemare, Commissioner of the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission in Lebanon

The Security Council today extended for a further two months the mandate of the independent probe into the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri and several other political killings in Lebanon.

The 15-member body set up the International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) for Lebanon in April 2005 after an earlier United Nations mission found that Lebanon's own inquiry into the massive car bombing that killed Mr. Hariri and 22 others was seriously flawed and that Syria was primarily responsible for the political tensions that preceded the attack.

The Beirut-based Commission is mandated with investigating 20 other attacks and has found additional elements linking some of them to the network behind the Hariri assassination.

The Council voted unanimously to extend the probe – whose mandate was set to expire at the end of this month – until 28 February 2009, as requested by the head of the Commission and former Canadian prosecutor, Daniel Bellemare.

Briefing the Council today prior to the vote, Mr. Bellemare said the extension will allow the Commission to continue to function until the day the international tribunal being set up in The Hague to try those responsible starts to operate on 1 March.

“It would allow the momentum of the investigation to be maintained,” he noted. “The extension would also provide a period of time in which the Commission could gradually transfer its investigative operations away from a Beirut base to a base in The Hague.”

After the vote, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said there would be a coordinated transition of IIIC staff from Beirut to The Hague. “The Secretary-General underlines his firm commitment to ending impunity and to the need to bring to justice those responsible,” a statement issued by his spokesperson said.

Speaking to reporters following the meeting, Mr. Bellemare reiterated that the investigation will continue even after the Tribunal begins its operations on 1 March.

“The indictments... will be presented to the Pre-Trial Judge for confirmation when I am satisfied that I have enough evidence to meet the threshold that is provided by the statute of the Tribunal, which is guilt beyond a reasonable doubt,” he stated.

In its latest report to the Council, published last week, the Commission said it has acquired new information potentially implicating additional individuals to the network that carried out the suicide car bomb attack that killed Mr. Hariri.

“Progress has also been made in relation to identifying the geographical origin of the suicide bomber in the Hariri case and extensive work has been concluded in relation to our inventory of exhibits,” Mr. Bellemare reported today.

In relation to the other attacks, he said there had been two main developments: first, the Commission had found additional elements to corroborate the links already found between the Hariri case and some of the other attacks; and the Commission had found elements to link one additional attack to the Hariri case.

He stressed that it is not possible to say when the investigation will be completed or dictate its progress. “I cannot predict when all the various elements of evidence required to support an indictment will be discovered.”

At the same time, he pledged to “stay the course” on all the cases within the Commission’s mandate.

“Fast food justice is not on the menu. And, let me be clear, there will be no indictment of convenience.”

He added that, as well intentioned and committed as it is, the Commission cannot conduct its inquiry without information, resources and expertise from countries. “Member States that can help must share the responsibility in the investigation; they have an obligation to help the investigation.”