

**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:

Friday, 19 December 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Gallup

Friday, 19 December 2008

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/113491/>

Sierra Leoneans, Liberians Want Charles Taylor Convicted

One-third of Liberians support acquittal

Amid the continuing trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is accused of war crimes in Sierra Leone, Gallup found that 93% of Sierra Leoneans and 67% of Liberians say it is a good thing that Taylor is on trial.

Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, has been on trial since June 2007. He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's conflict, including abducting, murdering, and mutilating civilians; sexual slavery and violence; and abducting adults and children and forcing them to perform forced labor or become fighters.

When asked what they thought the outcome of the trial should be, 62% of Sierra Leoneans and 40% of Liberians say that Taylor should be convicted and get a jail sentence, but not necessarily a death sentence. One-third of Sierra Leoneans say he should be convicted and sentenced to death, along with 19% of Liberians who also support the most extreme punishment. Another 37% of Liberians, but a mere 2% of Sierra Leoneans say Taylor should be found not guilty and freed.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone moved Taylor's trial from Sierra Leone to the Netherlands over concerns about maintaining stability in West Africa. And with the wide diversity of opinions as indicated by the Gallup Poll, particularly that 95% of Sierra Leoneans say Taylor should be convicted but only 37% of Liberians say Taylor should be found not guilty and freed, there is reason to believe there could be a real risk of instability in West Africa after the trial ends. With the trial recessed until Jan. 12, 2009, and 10 witnesses still to be disposed, the trial is expected to end no later than spring 2009.

Survey Methods

Results are based on face-to-face interviews with at least 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, in Liberia and Sierra Leone in April to May 2008. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 5 percentage points for Liberia and ± 4 percentage points for Sierra Leone. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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

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

Newspaper Summary

Angry Ex-servicemen Protest Pay Delay ...Police Move in and Quell Riot

(Liberian Express, New Democrat, The Monitor, The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer)

- The New Democrat newspaper reports that hundreds of deactivated soldiers of the restructured Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Wednesday besieged the Ministry of Finance in demand of pension benefits alleged owed them by government.
- The Daily Observer newspaper reports that the ex-soldiers action brought the entire UN Drive to a standstill. In an interview, the head of the ex-AFL personnel, retired Colonel Wolo Nagbe said his men resulted to demonstration due to the failure of the Finance Ministry to pay on Monday as promised.
- The media reports that Police later moved in and fired at least two rounds of bullets to disburse the angry ex-servicemen at the Barclay Training Centre. Correspondents say the Finance Ministry's pay team left the scene but later returned and paid the ex-servicemen.

Armed Robbery on the Increase ...Police Inspector General Admits

(Liberian Express, New Democrat, The Monitor, The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, Heritage, National Chronicle, The Analyst)

- The media reports that the Inspector General of Liberia National Police (LNP) Beatrice Muna Sieh-Brown addressing the UN Mission regular press briefing on Wednesday confirmed the increase in armed robbery which she blamed in part to the recent jailbreak. The Police IG said despite the upsurge in armed robbery the security situation in the Country continues to remain calm and stable.
- Col. Sieh-Brown noted that 69 out of the 202 alleged criminals who broke jail recently have been rearrested. She said the remaining criminals are still on the run and are being pursued by the LNP.
- Also speaking, the Commissioner of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) in Liberia, Henrik Stiernblad termed the Monrovia Central Prison jail-break as very unfortunate and said with the support of UNMIL Military, a joint LNP/UNPOL Operations for the prevention and detection of crime and maintenance of peace and security in and around Monrovia during the holiday season has commenced. This is expected to last until the first week in 2009.

US Ambassador Gives US\$60,000 Grants ...Eight Counties Benefit

(The News, Liberian Express)

- The Ambassador of the United States of America to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield has signed a US\$600,000 grant for 15 projects with eight counties benefitting. During the signing ceremony of the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Programme, the Ambassador said there were 275 proposals but only 15 projects met the criteria set by the Embassy. According to her, the 15 projects lasting a period of one year will provide support to educational, agricultural and community development process in the country. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield urged the grantees to use the funds to make positive contributions to their communities.

US\$2.6 Billion Investment for Bong Mines

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The News)

- Barely a week following the arrival of Seaboard Corporation with an initial investment of US\$30million, another company has arrived in the country with a huge investment package. A Chinese company, China Union Investment Company, Limited has arrived in the country with an investment of US\$2.6 billion believed to be the largest investment under the administration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- China Union Company Limited is expected to invest in one of Liberia's most prosperous sites, the Bong Ranges formerly operated by the Bong Mines Company (BMC).
- The Chinese company recently successfully won a bid to operate Bong mines with a very high score. Speaking yesterday, the Chairman of the National Investment Commission (NIC), Dr. Richard V. Tolbert, described the US\$2.6 billion investment project as very important to the government of Liberia. Presenting a graphic description of the investment project, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of China Union, Mr. Yin Fuyou disclosed that his company will construct a 130MW Hydro Power Plant on the St. Paul River to supply electricity to Monrovia and other areas.

UNHCR/UNOPS Dedicate Offices for BIN, LRRRC

(The Inquirer)

- The United Nations High Commissions for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in partnership with the Government of Liberia has continued to demonstrate in the reconstruction of war ravaged Liberia. This manifestation was clearly shown recently following the construction of new BIN & LRRRC offices at the border.
- In commemoration of the handing over ceremony of the newly constructed offices held at BO-Waterside at the Liberia Sierra Leone boarder yesterday, the Commissioner of Immigration, Col. Chris Massaquoi commended the UNHCR and the UNOPS including other interested parties for their excellent performance demonstrated for the construction of the offices.

UL Launches Confucius Institute Friday

(The Informer, The Inquirer)

- The first Confucius Institute in the country will be launched on Friday, December 19, 2008 on the main campus of the University of Liberia. The Institute which was established recently at the University of Liberia is offering foundation courses in Chinese Language, Culture and the colonial and contemporary history of China. Han Ban is a governmental organization, which supports more than 200 Confucius Institutes worldwide and will provide funding, teaching materials and professors for the institute in Liberia.
- According to a UL Public Service release, about 45 Liberians are currently undergoing the language training program, which when completed in ten weeks will enable students to speak basic Chinese and write the language using Pinyin.

Radio Summary

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

Police "Fires" Warning Shots to Disburse Angry Ex-servicemen

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

Finance Minister Remains Undeterred in Weeding out Corruption at Ministry

- Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan says nothing will deter his administration from affecting a clean-up at the Ministry and the entire government payroll.
- Speaking to journalists following a demonstration by ex-AFL personnel in demand of arrears owed them by government, Mr. Ngafuan said the payment would continue despite the problem.
- He however said the Ministry would ensure that the AFL payroll will be cleaned up in order for people to get their just pay.

- The media reported early this week that some retired soldiers had “fraudulently” taken more than one identification card under different names to receive payments from government.

President Sirleaf Fails to Appear Before TRC Today - But says she’s not aware

- Reports say President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf today failed to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) to give testimonies of her roles and experiences of the years of civil war in Liberia.
- TRC sources yesterday said the President was poised to appear before the commission to address among other things allegation that she wore military uniform in the controlled region of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebels.
- There were debates whether President Sirleaf would appear before the TRC in public or in camera.
- Addressing journalists today, the President said she was not aware of the invitation to appear before the TRC today saying as soon as the commission meets the condition as agreed by both parties she will appear.

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

LRDC Commences Monrovia Road Rehabilitation

- The Liberia Reconstruction and Development Company said all is now set for the commencement of the Monrovia street project.
- LRDC authorities said the World Bank sponsored project will cover major streets in the city centre.
- The company said the US\$400,000 project will be completed in seven months.

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

Ministry of Defense Announces Activation of Second Battalion

- The Ministry of National Defense has announced the activation of the second battalion of the 23rd Infantry of the Armed Forces of Liberia.
- Defense Ministry authorities said the activation ceremony will take place tomorrow at the Barclay Training Centre in Monrovia.
- The authorities said the battalion will consist of nearly 700 enlisted personnel representing five units and would be commanded by a Ghanaian, Major Emmanuel Gyadu.

Another Taylor Associate Removed from UN Travel Ban

- The UN Security Council Committee has removed an associate of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, Mr. Gus Kouwenhoven from the travel ban and assets freeze lists.
- The committee on Monday decided to remove the name of Mr. Kouwenhoven from the list of individuals subject to the travel restrictions imposed by the Security Council.
- Mr. Gus Kouwenhoven was placed on the travel ban and assets freeze list when he was found to have been an arms dealer in contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 1343.

BBC Online

Friday, 19 December 2008

Rwandan genocide jailing hailed

Survivors of Rwanda's genocide and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon have welcomed the life sentence given to its mastermind Theoneste Bagosora.

Bagosora and two co-defendants were found by a UN tribunal to have led a committee that plotted the massacre of ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Mr Ban said the sentences were a "major step in the fight against impunity".

It is the first time the Rwanda tribunal has convicted anyone of organising the killings.

More than 800,000 people were killed in Rwanda's genocide.

Along with Bagosora, former military commanders Anatole Nsegyumva and Alloys Ntabakuze were also found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and given life sentences.

RWANDA'S 1994 GENOCIDE

The head of Rwanda's genocide survivors' association Ibuka Benoit Kaboyi said the convictions showed the criminal masterminds would not go unpunished.

However, the BBC's Geoffrey Mutagoma in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, says many ordinary genocide survivors were unaware of the case.

Mr Kaboyi told the BBC this was because many had little faith in the justice system.

"The justice which cannot compensate them, the justice which only takes a few people to be prosecuted."

Earlier, the Rwandan government said it was "satisfied" with the court's decision to impose a life sentence on Bagosora.

Bagosora, 67, and the two senior military officers were found to have organised, trained and armed the Interahamwe militia, which was responsible for most of the killing.

They were also responsible for drawing up a list of Tutsis and moderate Hutus who opposed their vision of an ethnically pure Rwanda.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Tanzania, rejected the defence's argument that the killing was not organised, and therefore not genocide.

Bagosora's lawyer, Raphael Constant, said his client would appeal against the verdict.

Brigadier Gratien Kabiligi, the former chief of military operations, who was on trial with Bagosora and the two other men, was cleared of all charges and ordered to be released from custody immediately.

Mr Kaboyi said he hoped the prosecutors would appeal against this decision.

'Principal enemy'

In another verdict on Thursday, the tribunal 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.

Prosecutors said 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.

However, the indictment alleges that he began planning the massacre as far back as 1990.

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

Bagosora has been in custody since 1996, when he was arrested in Cameroon where he was in self-imposed exile.

The tribunal, which has come to play a key part in the process of justice and reconciliation, has so far convicted 34 people and acquitted six others.

Twenty-three remain on trial and eight trials have yet to begin before the tribunal winds up next year.

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

The Age.com

Friday, 19 December 2008

<http://news.theage.com.au/world>

Alleged Hariri killers face March trial

An abandoned gymnasium in a far-flung suburb of The Hague will host the trial of the alleged killers of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

"Along that wall will be a gallery with 150 seats for the press and public," gestured Robin Vincent, the registrar of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which is expected to open its doors in Leidschendam on March 1.

The tribunal will be housed in the former headquarters of the Dutch intelligence service, a colossal building with fortress-like security.

The courtroom is to be built in what used to be a spies' gymnasium.

"In the courtroom itself, there will be 70 seats," said the 64-year-old British registrar, who arrived from the United Nations in August.

"It will be able to accommodate several accused at the same time, their lawyers, the judges, prosecutors and the legal representatives of victims."

The tribunal will try those presumed responsible for a series of attacks on Lebanese political and media personalities, notably the assassination of Hariri in a car bombing in February 2005 that also killed 22 others.

NSW Deputy Police Commissioner Nick Kaldas has been appointed to head the UN investigation into the 2005 bomb attack that killed Hariri.

Kaldas will take up the position of Chief of Investigations for the Special Tribunal of Lebanon on March 1 next year.

It will also investigate a number of other assassinations that have had a significant impact on the political environment in Lebanon and the Middle East.

The attack on the Beirut seafront was one of the worst acts of political violence to rock Lebanon since the 1975-1990 civil war, and led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops after a 29-year presence.

The use of the building, which formerly housed 700 intelligence staff, is sponsored by the Dutch state - with some left-over furniture thrown in.

In one corner of the gymnasium, behind a row of windows, a body-building room will be converted into an interpreters' cabin, explains Vincent. Hearings will be translated into English, French and Arabic.

"The fitness equipment will be moved to the seventh floor and will be used by the security personnel ... for them to keep in shape," smiled the registrar.

"Of all the international tribunals in The Hague, the security concerns around this one are the greatest."

The budget of the court, known informally as the Hariri Tribunal, will amount to some \$US51.4 million (\$A75.3 million) in 2009, 49 per cent of it financed by Lebanon.

The construction of the courtroom on the first floor and six holding cells on the ground floor will cost \$US8.8 million (\$A12.8 million).

"Don't imagine that there will be six accused simply because we are constructing six cells," said Vincent.

"These are not detention cells ... they will be used simply to hold accused before their trials start (every morning) and at certain stages during the day."

Like all accused before international tribunals in The Hague - the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court - the future detainees of the Lebanon tribunal will be held at the Scheveningen prison in a separate wing rented by the UN from the Dutch government.

The facility already holds former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic, ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor and several Congolese warlords.

Currently, a staff of 18 are preparing for the tribunal's much-anticipated opening, including a legal counsellor, a language expert, and a defence adviser.

But in a year's time, the tribunal will have 305 staff, 105 of them in the service of the future chief prosecutor, Canadian Daniel Bellemare.

When in full swing, the court will employ around 430 individuals.

Eleven judges - four from Lebanon and seven from other countries - have already been nominated, said Vincent, but their names are being held under wraps for security reasons.