

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



Prosecutor Steven Rapp donating Christmas gifts to amputees

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Wednesday, 7 January 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Independent Observer
Wednesday, 7 January 2009

REFLECTION



Tamba
Alex
Brima,
West Africa
Crime
prisoner

January 6th, 1999 would continue to be a day that would always live in infamy. Just as American and Japanese historians will never forget December 7th, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Attack), so, too, the people of Sierra Leone would not easily erase the disturbing event(s) of January 6, 1999: the day the rebel war struck the heart of the capital city of Sierra Leone. On that fateful day hundreds died, including my former colleagues in the media, and academics/professionals that I had known for a long time. Their bodies riddled with bullets, on top of the thousands who had been killed already, in the rural areas, and those who had fled fighting in the interior. On that same day, others experienced and endured painful maiming (long han or short han, they asked) and physical torture, while houses and business structures were razed and other private and public possessions, estimated at millions of dollars, destroyed or looted by rebel forces and other fragmented, gun-toting, trigger-happy, drug-ridden insurgents (including Westside Boys) masking as members of the Revolutionary United Front and disgruntled members of the Sierra Leone Military. Civilized societies settle internal political differences through non-violent means rather than butchering poor, innocent and defenseless people.

Remembering January 6th, 1999

This basic yet short, clear and simple retrospection is designed to refresh the minds of young Sierra Leoneans, both at home and abroad, of the eerie carnage and other flourishes of anarchy that befell our country, 10 years ago. We should never again allow such butchery and acts of barbarism to recur! Almost seven years after the conflict was officially declared over, there are semblances of development after recent completion of the recovery/reconstruction phase—a process familiar to any post-war situation.

Earlier this week, I recalled January 6th, 1999 just like yesterday. I had just returned from London, in December, 1998, after spending 12 months at Cardiff University, Wales, receiving training in advanced feature writing and international political news coverage, a project funded by the Thomson Foundation and British Council. While in London, I was glued to the radio, especially the BBC, to keep abreast of developments back home. Few of my friends/relatives in London, and a Ghanaian colleague, had asked me not to return to Sierra Leone because of the grim news and recent rebel gains and advances (edging closer to the city). I was eager to return home.

I arrived in Freetown on 12/15/99, and two days later, one of our secretaries received a call from the US embassy informing her that a colleague and I were the lucky recipients of two journalism fellowships, we had applied for, two years earlier. Like everybody who had received positive news in the past, we were elated, but our excitement was short lived. Two days to our departure (1/8/99) from Freetown, the rebels had attacked Waterloo, Hastings, Wellington, Portee, Kissy and Clock Tower. News of killings and indiscriminate torture of market women, my colleagues and people I knew was swarming in like a raging burning bush in the middle of March and April in rural Sierra Leone. Traumatic!

As an executive member of a Christian organization then, in the central business district of Freetown was helpful. Members of this group and some people I was good to over the years gave me cover, food and support. I witnessed, through multiple peeping holes, three harmless, hungry-looking, secondary-school age boys shot to death, after been accused of spying for ECOMOG (the West Africa Military Forces) by a unit leader who called himself "general wan yiy" (General One Eye). Also, two grown

men, in their relative 50s, were beaten and molested because they looked healthy. Looking healthy then meant they were members of the government, and they should be punished. Horrific stories of young rape victims trickled in daily. Screams of girls been raped at night were depressing.

As they say, a trained and hardworking journalist possesses intense curiosity. After few intense days in hiding from gun shots and the sound of mortar fire (by ECOMOG Forces); and even as I frantically explored multiple avenues to exit the country to pursue my journalism fellowship in the US, the 'reliable' rumor-mill disclosed of multiple bodies lying in decay at the Lightfoot Boston Street Mortuary entrance. We could not resist. I was stringing for an International News Agency then. I had to get the story out. A friend and I rushed down to the main hospital on Perceval and Lightfoot Boston Streets intersection. While on our way, we observed houses that were on their last stages of burning. People were searching for food, while a massive, constant flow of people, from the East was trekking to the West to avoid the ensuing bloodshed. It was chaotic!

Finally, as my youngest brother, now 32, my younger sister, now 38, and my mother, finally found me, at my location, they informed me that our house in Kissy was set ablaze and my taxi was commandeered by a bunch of rag-tags. My family also informed me that my son and his mother escaped unhurt, but other family members were not so lucky. I was relieved but determined to leave the country. I left for The Gambia few days later, and ten years now in the US, I can say, very humbly, that God has been in control in all that I, and others who fled, have been able to accomplish, both in the US and in Sierra Leone. When one has been blessed assist thy brethren. I pray that Satan does not descend like that in Sierra Leone again, as I pray for peace for prosperity for our country. Photo: Alex Tamba Brima(alias Gullit), one of the "Westside Boys".

By Victor A. Massaquoi, USA.

Cocorioko

Tuesday, 6 January 2009

Sierra Leone commemorates anniversary of rebel invasion

Sierra Leoneans on Tuesday commemorate the 10th anniversary of the invasion of the capital Freetown, by rebels mainly from the disbanded Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Hundreds of families prayed in churches and mosques for peace and stability in the country, after an 11-year civil war that killed over a hundred thousand and left thousands more maimed and dispossessed.

“We prayed for the people to reconcile... victims as well as perpetrators. We prayed for peace and prosperity and we prayed that never again shall these events re-occur in our country,” says Sheik Amadu Kamara, an imam at a mosque at Kingtom, west of Freetown.

On 6 January 1999, RUF rebels along with their renegade allies from the national army, invaded Freetown and butchered about 3,000 people, amputated hundreds and razed down many homes and government infrastructure.

“Youth Arise”, a non-governmental advocacy group, is presently organising symposiums and public lectures at college campuses on the significance of the January 6 invasion of Freetown.

The group is also planning street processions in the coming days, with banners to educate residents of the capital about the event, says its national president Ahmed Ramadan Jalloh.

“We are saddened though that our people are easy to forget and by the fact that our government is not taking a pro-active stance and championing the commemoration,” Jalloh adds.

The group, like other civil society organisations, has been calling on the government to declare January 6 a national commemorative holiday but the authorities have so far failed to do so. The national coordinator of the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations, Charles Mambu, told APA Tuesday, they will soon forward a petition to the government on the issue.

Meanwhile, the Amputee Football Club, a soccer team made up entirely of amputee victims of the war, will be entertaining fans to a beach soccer match Tuesday evening as philanthropists visit camps for war affected people to dish out hand-outs.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
6 January 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

Nigerian Envoy Re-affirms Support to Liberia

(The News)

- Nigerian Ambassador accredited to Liberia, Ebenezer Ayodele Adigun has re-affirmed his country's support to the people of Liberia in their reconstruction drive. Speaking when he visited the National Investment Commission, Ambassador Adigun assured that his country was willing to provide training for employees of the National Investment Commission in the areas of project and micro analysis to build their capacity. The Chairman of NIC, Dr. Richard V. Tolbert thanked the Nigerian Ambassador for the visit and noted that government was prepared to welcome any investor who would come to create job opportunities for its citizens.

16 Break Jail in Sanniquellie

(Daily Observer)

- Sixteen (16) prisoners of Sanniquellie Prison in Nimba County yesterday broke jail and escaped to unknown locations. Two of the escapees later turned themselves over while one was arrested by the Liberia National Police (LNP).
- According to reports, the inmates escaped following a brawl between an inmate and one of the correction officers which left the prisoner wounded. The report said the inmate wasted urine on the prison guard who retaliated by hitting a bucket on his head. Following the incident, two of the three guards assigned at the prison took the wounded inmate to hospital leaving only a guard at the prison compound who was subsequently overpowered by the escapees.

Court Continues Jurors Selection in Economics Sabotage Case

(The News)

- The Criminal Court "C" at the Temple of Justice has selected six jurors out of a total of 15 empanelled jury required to try the economic sabotage case involving five former officials of the erstwhile National Transitional Government. During the selection process Monday, the jurors were immediately qualified by both prosecution and defense lawyers and placed on the bench. According to the court, the selection of additional jurors would be completed later this week to ensure that the trial begins as soon as possible.
- The court has on two occasions suspended the case and juror selection process. The five former officials are NTGL Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant, LPRC Managing Director Edwin Swone, Jr., including his Administrative Assistant, Andy Quemie, Deputy Managing Director Richard Devine and Comptroller, Siaka Sheriff were indicted in 2006 for diverting over a million dollar public funds into their personal use.

Female Circumcision Decreases School Enrollment in Northern Liberia

(Daily Observer)

- School administrators in the Buuyao Chiefdom, Zoe-geh District in Nimba County, say their schools are experiencing a decline in student enrollment, especially female students owing to

a number of school girls abandoning classes for female genital mutilation (FGM) or the Sande society.

Lawmaker Questions Impact of County Development Funds

(Daily Observer)

- Nimba County District #4 Representative Nohn Kidau has questioned the impact of county development funds, saying since the Government of Liberia began allotting development funds to counties in Liberia, her Bain-Garr District has seen no impact from the funds that had been allocated to Nimba County.

Health Hazard Looms in one of Liberia's major Slum Communities

(Daily Observer)

- The densely populated slum community of West Point in Monrovia continues to face severe sanitation problems, including unsafe drinking water, lack of health care, improper waste management and insufficient latrines. Continual failure in providing these basic needs denies the community of West Point their right to a safe, clean and healthy living environment

Radio Summary

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

NEC "Snubs" Opposition CDC's Convention

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) has turned down an invitation to attend the ongoing congress of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC).
- CDC Secretary General, Eugene Nagbe said the party wrote the Elections Commission inviting it to its congress but said NEC declined to honour the invitation.
- Mr. Nagbe said the commission has also vowed not to recognize any leadership coming out of the congress.
- For some time now, the National Elections Commission and the CDC have been embroiled in whether or not to recognize the interim leadership of the party.
- While the party executives recognize the Geraldine Doe-Sheriff faction leadership of the party, the commission said it still recognizes Joshua Sackie as the legitimate Chairman of the party.

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

Opposition Politician Calls For Government of Inclusion

- Serving as keynote speaker of the Congress for Democratic Change National Congress, opposition Politician Counsellor Winston Tubman challenged President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to go beyond her narrow political base and include others to lift Liberia.
- Cllr. Tubman called for a government of inclusion and not people who he considered foreign players.
- He contested the 2005 presidential elections on the ticket of the one time ruling party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL).

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

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

More Arrests in Looting of Burnt Mattress Factory

- More than hundred suspected criminals have been arrested following the outbreak of a fire at the country's largest foam mattress factory, LIPFOCO.
- In an interview, the head of operations at LIPFOCO, Mahmud Gunde said the actual cause of the fire is yet to be established but said it could have started after a drum containing chemical exploded.
- The fire is believed to have started from the production room. Meanwhile, the LIPFOCO management has clarified that the fire which engulfed its facilities Saturday night has not extended beyond the factory.

TRC Warns Witnesses as Duration of Public Hearings Extended

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has warned of serious consequences for witnesses who lied under oath during their testimonies.
- The TRC said these witnesses stand to be charged with perjury if they failed to correct their lies.
- In an interview, a spokesman of the TRC, Mr. James Kpargoi said the Commission has given witnesses who lied under oath from now to February 15 to rectify their testimonies, saying they have the mandate to punish witnesses who gave false testimonies.
- Meanwhile, the Commission has announced the extension of the thematic and institutional public hearings from January 15 to February 15 for witnesses who have not testified to face the Commission.

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)***Volunteer Teachers Unhappy over removal of names from Government's Payroll**

- Several Volunteer Teachers from Montserrado County have expressed regret over the alleged removal of their names from the government's payroll.
- The aggrieved teachers said their names were earlier submitted and verified by the Ministry but was allegedly deleted and replaced.
- The teachers accused the Ministry of Education and a group called the Coalition of Volunteer Teachers of being responsible for their names being removed from the payroll
