

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



Special Court Outreach in Eindhoven

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, 12 May 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko

Tuesday, 21 May 2009

Free Lawyers Scheme for the Poor Launched in Sierra Leone

By Saidu Bah

The Sierra Leone Bar Association has officially launched a Legal Aid Scheme to provide free legal service to indigent citizen who do not have the means to pay for legal services and access to justice.

The free legal aid is available to persons whose disposable income and capital do not exceed a certain sum.

The objective of the legal aid scheme is to provide free legal aid services to persons who cannot reasonably afford private legal services and who have reasonable grounds for taking or defending the proceedings when the need arise.

Legal aid scheme also gives advice either in writing or orally in conference on a legal problem or to represent the litigant in court or tribunal hearing for a high quality services to as many as possible, with a fixed expenditure to assist under – privileged litigants to find alternatives from going to court.

Speaking at the official launching ceremony yesterday at the British Council Auditorium in Freetown the President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association Fio Edwards Esq. said the essence of the legal aid scheme is to help the poor and under privileged to access justice, which came as a result of the

formation of a Human Right Committee at the Bar Association.

He expressed gratitude to the Bar and its partners like the United Nations Development Programme and the Justice Sector Development Programme for making the project a reality and hoped other partners will support the legal aid scheme.

Leon Jenkins – Johnston properly explained about the scheme and its back ground which started in July 2008.

He noted that UNDP funded the legal aid project with the sum of Le 192,000,000.00 One Hundred and ninety two million Leones.

He however lamented that implementation of laws in Sierra Leone is lacking.

Statements were made by representatives from UNDP, JSDP and Justice Patrick Hamilton while the Solicitor General launched the legal aid scheme; the ceremony was chaired by Joseph F. Kamara Esq.

Awoko

Tuesday, 21 May 2009

Freed West side boys meet with HRCSL

By William Freeman

Four out of seven West side boys that were released from prison on the 28th April 2009 have made a courtesy call on the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) to express their thanks and appreciation for the role the commission played in their release.

The Four men were led by the National Coordinator of Prisons Watch, Mambu Feika. In his presentation Mr. Feika stated that his organization has done its best to advocate for the release of the former soldiers but the Human Right Commission is the right body to handle the welfare of the released soldiers.

The four men were Samuel Kargbo aka Sami Raga, Mohamed Bangura aka Med Ghost, Foday Kamara-2 and Osman Sesay. They were released together with three others namely Foday Kallay, Mohamed Bangura and Alhaji Fofanah.

Explaining their plight to members of the Commission, one of the men said they suffered in prison for nine good years and now that they have been released they want to engage themselves in something developmental to enable them reintegrate in society.

The former soldiers told the Commissioners that they were ready to rejoin the army again to serve the nation if only their concerns are met. They all stated clearly that everything about them including their families have gone backward and would want the commission to help them regain their lives in society. In response, the Chairman of the Human Right Commission, Mr. Edward Sam gave some sort of courage to the boys stating that society has changed over the years and the country is now in a peace building process. He encouraged the West side boys to be patient

as the Commission will try as best as possible to address the matter. He told them to contribute to the peace building process.

The Vice Chairperson of the Commission said she is happy that at last the right thing has been done with the release of the seven Ex-soldiers. "Now that you are free men you have a lot to contribute to society" she added.

Commissioner Rev. Moses Khanu also advised the men to be patient while the commission tries to engage various stakeholders in addressing their issue.

UNMIL Radio Coffee Break Clipping

Monday, 11 May 2009

Also on Coffee Break, Courtenay Griffiths-Head of Lead Defense Council for Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has expressed disappointment over the R98 motion filed by the chamber judge in The Hague not to allow ample time to the defense to prepare witnesses for its defense trial. He termed the action to set the trial date to June 29 instead of August as requested by the defense council as a miscarriage of justice that might likely produce a verdict lacking credibility and with no concerns for resources to conduct a fair trial, adding that the right to fair trial was being curtailed by the June 29 trial date. He said the defense had requested that one of two approaches requiring the judge to get rid of all unnecessary allegations and focus on real issues in line with the robust approach had been denied by the court which insists on relying on evidence that were not strong enough to convict Mr. Taylor. In addition, the lead defense council said the judge had not clarified that the entire case was about aiding and abetting, only intended to conform to joint criminal enterprise which involves more than one person being found guilty for one crime. He at the same time lamented that the prosecution had been unable to set the proper nature of the case which claims that Mr. Taylor terrorized civilians in the region. Counsel Griffiths dispelled reports of the ICC requesting its tribunal being used for the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague as a flimsy excuse by the court to speed up the trial in The Hague, as the accused had not requested in the first place to go on trial there. Counsel Griffiths said although the defense council is not in the business of resulting to judicial disobedience, it will continue to employ the court to change the June 29 trial date to August for the defense to have much time in building its case as new witnesses are expected to appear at the trial. He wants Liberians to closely follow up the trial to see the quality of evidence being put forth against their former President.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 11 May 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian President drops in on Florida Schoolchildren

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Fidgety boys and girls in school uniforms gawked as the sport utility vehicles rolled up. Teachers snapped pictures; bodyguards stood watch and Liberia's female president stepped out of a car at a Tampa preparatory school.

Florida is not a hub for Liberian immigrants and most students at Berkeley Preparatory School knew little about the West African nation weeks ago. But they began studying up on the country after learning Africa's first democratically elected female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, would visit.

On Friday, a school chorus sang "Let there be peace on Earth" as the smiling leader clapped and posed for photographs in her traditional green dress and shawl.

David A. Straz Jr., an honorary consul to Liberia whose daughter attends the school, helped arrange the visit. Sirleaf was heading to Florida anyway to deliver next weekend's commencement address at the University of Tampa.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea junta chief promises to reform army, seeks help

By Saliou Samb

CONAKRY (Reuters) Mon May 11, 2009 - Guinea's military leader said on Sunday he would reform the armed forces, seen as a major cause of insecurity in the poor West African country. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara took power in the world's biggest bauxite exporter in a bloodless coup last December, but in April his authority was challenged by a group of soldiers who were later arrested on suspicion of plotting to overthrow him.

He is battling to maintain stability in the face of rising antipathy toward the army after reports of rights abuses by soldiers, including accusations of robbery, extortion and rape by witnesses cited in a Human Rights Watch report last month.

Local Media – Newspaper

LISGIS Releases 2008 Census Final Results - Legislature Set to Pass Threshold Bill

(The Informer)

- The government of Liberia through the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) has officially released the final results of the 2008 National Population and Housing Census.
- Releasing the results at a news conference Friday, the Chairman of the Census Commission, Planning and Economic Affairs Minister Amara Konneh disclosed that the total population of Liberia stands at 3,476,608 as of the night of March 20/21, 2008.

- With the announcement of the final census result it is now believed that the National Legislature will set the population threshold. They had argued that they will not pass the bill unless the final result of the census is released.
- Article 80 (d) of the Liberian Constitution mandates the Legislature to set a population threshold right after the conduct of the national housing and population census.

Liberia, Nigeria in firm Diplomatic Exchanges over US\$0.52 million seized from businessman

(The Monitor, New Democrat, Liberia Journal, Public Agenda, The Independent, The News, Heritage)

- Media reports say diplomatic consultations are currently taking place between the Liberian and Nigerian Governments aimed at putting to rest the controversy concerning the seizure of more than half a million United States dollars from a Nigerian businessman
- Chief Valentine Ayika was arrested at Liberia's main airport in 2006 while entering the country with the over half million United States dollars reportedly strapped around his body, a claim the accused has since denied. The government said it got a tipoff from Nigerian intelligence that Ayika, an alleged international drug pusher, was en route to Liberia, and was apprehended upon arrival at the airport with the huge sum of money.
- However, The Informer and the New Democrat newspapers said the Nigerian Ambassador to Liberia along with a letter from the Nigerian Attorney General contradicted the Liberian Government's claim that the confiscated US\$0.52m from a Nigerian was in consultation with and endorsement of the Nigerian Government.
- Reports attributed by the Nigerian Government in the newspapers said that government had demanded the return of the money.

Tension builds up over Eviction of Residents of Ducor Community

(The Informer, New Democrat and The Analyst)

- Tension is reportedly building up following efforts by the Government seeking the removal or eviction of the residents of the Ducor Community from the area to give way for the renovation of the Ducor Palace Hotel by the Libyan Company.
- Most media outlets including *The Informer* and *The Analyst* newspapers suspect a potential for violence as the residents are refusing to be vacated because, according to them, they legally obtained the land.

Liberian Government Suffers US\$11M Budget Deficit

(Daily Observer)

- The Government of Liberia (GOL) has suffered US\$11 million budget shortfall for fiscal year 2008/09, Finance Minister Augustine K. Ngafuan has disclosed. The budget deficit, according to Minister Ngafuan, is due to the global financial and economic crisis and delays by the National Legislature in ratifying certain major concession agreements that would have accrued revenues to Government.

Local Media – Star Radio (News monitored today at 09:00 am)

Government Says Over 2.3 Million Liberians Live below Poverty Line

- The Government has announced that sixty-eight percent of Liberians approximately 2.3 million are living in abject poverty, surviving on less than US\$1 a day.
- Announcing the final results of the 2008 National Population Census, Planning and Economics Affairs Minister Amara Konneh said these Liberians were facing extreme hardship, especially for people in the Western and South-eastern regions of the Country.
- Minister Konneh stressed that it was crucial for Government to direct its efforts to plan and implement development projects to zero down poverty.
- Meanwhile, the census result has put the population of Liberia at 3.4 million, a decrease of 0.4 percent from the preliminary figures of 3,489,072.

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

Government Commences Survey of "Contentious" 11-Acres Rock Hill Land

- The Government has begun conducting a survey of the land residents of Rock Hill Community and the Ducour Palace Hotel management are tussling over.
- The survey of the eleven acres of land commenced at the weekend by a team from the Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy but residents of the community say they will not give credence to the ongoing exercise terming it as "illegal."
- The survey is expected to be completed in 10 to 14 days.

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

Finance Minister Optimistic of Presenting 2009/2010 Budget to Legislature Today

- The Finance Ministry says it hopes to present a proposed 2009/2010 National budget to the Legislature today.
- Finance Minister, Augustine Ngafuan said all the technical details have been completed and has been send to the President for her input.
- Minister Nguafuan said following the President's input the budget would be submitted to the Legislature for scrutiny and subsequent approval.

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

President Sirleaf Secures Re-commitment from U.S. Millionaire

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has secured re-commitment from American millionaire and philanthropist, David A. Straz Jr. to complete the construction work on the Sinje Technical College in Grand Cape Mount County.
- An Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia said the decision to provide financing for the project was part of an understanding reached between the President and Mr. Straz in return for honouring an invitation to address this year's commencement convocation of the University of Tampa, Florida.

Several Institutions, Individuals Win PUL Awards

- The Press Union of Liberia on Sunday issued its 2008-2009 awards to several media institutions and individuals to climax the celebration of World Press Freedom Day.
- Star Radio was named the News and Information Station of the year, while the New Democrat newspaper and Power TV were named the Newspaper of the year and TV Station respectively.
- The "Truth Breakfast Show" remains the Talk show of the year for the second time running, while Truth FM's Zenu Miller was named Newscaster of the year. Star Radio's Judicial and Legislative reporters - Bruce Boweh and Julius Kanubah - were also named Judicial and Legislative reporters of the year among others..

UNICEF

Monday, 11 May 2009

Press Release

Ankara hosts international symposium on children in conflict with the law

ANKARA, Turkey, 11 May 2009 – Experts from four continents have recommended that all countries set up national child-information systems to identify children at risk, as well as the risks they face. The recommendation was made in the concluding statement of a three-day international symposium on children at risk and in need of protection, which took place recently in Ankara.

The symposium, held 27-29 April, was organized by the Turkish Parliament and the Turkish National Police with technical support from UNICEF. ‘Children in Conflict with the Law’ was its main theme.

Participants included academics, judges, public officials, psychologists and other experts from countries as far apart as Azerbaijan, Germany, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Oman, Serbia, Sudan, Turkey and the United States.

Child-friendly justice systems

“The issue of children at risk is one of the most important social issues of our age, and we must all face up to it together and find solutions,” declared the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Köksal Toptan. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and five other Turkish Government ministers also sent messages of support.

“If society looks at the child in conflict with the law as a criminal machine, then we will drive him deeper into crime,” noted the General Director of the Turkish National Police, Oguz Kagan Köksal.

Earlier, UNICEF Representative in Turkey Reza Hossaini had spoken of the need to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into practice.

“On the 20th anniversary of the Convention, we need to renew our commitment for a child-friendly and child-specific justice system for children. This should include specific legislation, specific institutions and trained personnel,” Mr. Hossaini argued. He went on to underline the point that “a successful justice-for-children programme should have a strong preventive component.”

1 million child detainees

Over a million children worldwide are thought to be in detention – notwithstanding governments’ obligation to ensure that children are only detained as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

Most of these children have been involved in minor or petty crimes and are first-time offenders. Typically, they have not been convicted but are awaiting trial in detention centres where they are likely to be beaten, painfully restrained and subjected to humiliating treatment. Contrary to the CRC, detention of children with adults remains routine in many countries.

The President of the Special Court of Sierra Leone, Renate Winter, emphasized that good laws are not enough and that governments must provide the means to implement them.

“It costs less to establish prevention programmes with the participation of families and communities than it costs to have a child in conflict with the law or in a closed establishment and stigmatized, who will never work and never become a tax payer,” she said.

Looking ahead to 2010

The symposium’s concluding statement was the outcome of a series of workshops during which the participants exchanged information about best practices in the areas of prevention services, intervention strategies, and monitoring and evaluation activities.

“It has been one of the very few events bringing together different countries from the North and the South to discuss one of the most important challenges we and our children face,” said Child Protection Advisor Jean Claude Legrand from the UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, in an address delivered on behalf of Regional Director Steven Allen.

Finally, a decision was taken to make the symposium an annual event incorporating regional preparatory workshops and a forum to which high-level politicians and officials, including the UN Secretary-General, would be invited. In 2010, the symposium will focus on the prevention of violence at schools and ensuring safety in learning environments.