

**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:**

Wednesday, 6 May 2009

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

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SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, 5 May 2009

Special Court Prosecutors Train Northern Police Prosecutors

Prosecutors of the Special Court for Sierra Leone travelled over the weekend to the provincial



headquarters of Makeni to train more than 40 northern police officials in the theory and practice of police prosecution.

The training, led by Deputy Prosecutor Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara and held in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Police, focused on the fundamentals of police prosecution, including the management of witnesses and victims and dealing with gender-based crime.

“As the Court comes close to completing its mandate, we are looking to leave a legacy for the people of Sierra Leone, to strengthen the institutions of justice,” Kamara said. “This includes not only the judiciary, but also other institutions such as the police and prisons officials.”

The Office of the Prosecutor will conduct future trainings in the south and east of the country, and in Freetown.

#END

Women, Peace & Security

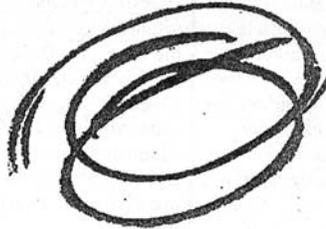
Actualising UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Sierra Leone

In war, men more often than not suffer only one consequence-death. On the other hand, in addition to being killed, women are subjected to the most despicable and horrendous violations including but not limited to rape, abduction, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, and at times forced conscription. These dreadful and ineradicable images from the civil wars of the 1990s that engulfed the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, among others galvanised women not only from war-torn societies, but around the globe to lobby and demand from national governments, sub-regional and regional organisations and the UN Security Council that women's rights should be protected not only in war but also during peace times. Their efforts resulted in the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" on 31st October 2000.

Although Resolution 1325 builds on previous conventions and treaties such as the Convention Eliminating Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations, among others, it is unique and historic because it is the first UN resolution to focus specifically on the impact of war and conflict on women's lives, as well as their contributions to peacebuilding efforts at the local level. The resolution seeks to protect women's rights in post-conflict societies as well as promote their participation in reconstruction and recovery processes. The resolution is being implemented by the Security Council, the Secretary General of the UN, Member States, non state actors including Civil Society Organisations and parties to armed conflicts. The 18 paragraph resolution focuses on four interrelated areas: the participation of women in decision making and formal peace processes, gender perspectives and training in peace keeping, the protection of women, and gender mainstreaming in the UN.

The resolution stresses the need to increase women's participation in decision-making levels in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. It emphasises the need to adopt a gender perspective in the design of refugee camps, in repatriation and resettlement, in post-conflict reconstruction, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. It further calls on parties to armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law and adopt special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape, end impunity and prosecute those responsible for war crimes including sexual and other violence against women and girls. It calls for the inclusion of women in UN field-based operations, especially as military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian officials; and the adoption of measures to protect and respect the human rights of women and girls, in the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

The significance of Resolution 1325 lies in the way it weaves together the impact of war and conflict on women on one hand, and promotes their participation in various peace and security mechanisms such as in peace negotiations, constitutional and electoral reforms and reconstruction and reintegration processes on the other.



pathways of women's empowerment

Resolution 1325 is relevant in Sierra Leone not only because it is a post-war country, it has the added advantage of being one of the first beneficiaries of the Peacebuilding Commission's funding. This means that Sierra Leone is no longer considered as transiting from war but as a country moving to consolidate peace and sustainable development. As a result, our assessment of the implementation of Resolution 1325 is justified.

The sentencing of senior members of the three main factions in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war by the UN-backed Special Court for rape and other acts of sexual violence against women was a step in the right direction.

Since the official declaration ending the war in January 2002, two general and two local government elections have been held in which women played a pivotal role. However that has not translated into an adequate female representation in governance. Women comprise only ten percent of the current cabinet while 124-member legislature is made up of only 13.2 percent of women. That is down from the previous cycle. In the 2002 - 2007 Parliament, women constituted 14.5 per cent, 14.2 per cent of Cabinet Ministers and 30 per cent of Deputy Ministerial Positions.

At the local government level, in the 2004 - 2008 electoral cycle 11.8 per cent of elected councillors were women, while only one woman served as Chair of a Council and two were elected Deputy Chairs. In the paramount chieftaincy elections of 2004, women won 7.4 per cent of the contested seats. In the current 2008 - 2012 local government elections, the number of female councillors increased to 18.9 per cent, with three elected as Deputy Chairs but none as Chair. The low participation rate of women in governance and public decision-making positions is not only below the Beijing benchmark of 30 per cent, but has affected the way women's issues are articulated in policy discourses and programme implementation.

Sierra Leone's report card in relation to the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and abuse is much better than in the arena of governance. In 2001, the Family Support Unit was established within the Sierra Leone Police to respond to cases of domestic violence. Between 2003 and 2004 the Sierra Leone Law Reform Commission drafted a Bill on Sexual Offences. The Bill codified and modernised the law of rape, including marital rape, and made comprehensive provisions to deal with sexual offences. In 2007, Parliament passed the Domestic Violence Act. The Act criminalised domestic violence and provides protection for victims.

The sentencing of senior members of the three main factions in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war by the UN-backed Special Court for rape and other acts of sexual violence against women was a step in the right direction. However, the government's refusal to investigate the recent incidence of rape that occurred during political clashes in Freetown in March 2009 will roll back the gains women have achieved since the end of the war.

Sierra Leone's mediocre performance in the implementation of Resolution 1325 seven years after the end of the civil war and on the eve of the celebrated Resolution's 10th anniversary, demonstrates the need for a concerted effort to ensure government's commitment to implementing such an important international instrument for women's empowerment in post-war societies.

As a result, the Research Project Consortium on Women's Empowerment (RPC), which comprises a network of institutions and individuals based in West Africa, South Asia, Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East and the U.K, is taking the lead to launch a research project to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Resolution 1325 in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The research will critically analyse the activities and programmes of all actors responsible for the implementation of the resolution and make necessary recommendations to push the process forward.

The RPC seeks to ask new questions about empowerment through dialogue with a diversity of actors, from grassroots women's movements to international agencies. Its research seeks to ground emerging understandings of empowerment in women's everyday lives, tracing the trajectories of policies affecting such and exploring promising stories of change to find out what works and why. The RPC's research projects are built around four overarching themes: Conceptions of Women's Empowerment, Empowering Work, Building Constituencies for Equality and Justice and Changing Narratives of Sexuality.

Three projects are underway in Sierra Leone: Analysing Discourses of Empowerment, in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone, Women in Local Governance and Measuring the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. These are projects that should be allowed to succeed, if women are to get the foothold they deserve in the Sierra Leonean society.

Concord Times

Wednesday, 29 April 2009

Institute of International Law Established

Ibrahim Tarawallie

Concord — An institute of international law, established to promote an understanding of the principles of international law and its progressive development, has been unveiled at the Special Court in Freetown.

Sierra Leone's former ambassador for legal affairs at the United Nations Alieu Ibrahim Kanu told his audience that the institute would serve as a center for academic excellence in the development of public international law.

He said the institute would build upon an increased awareness of the principles of international law by the people of the country who have experienced both civil conflict and its aftermath.

"It will create a vehicle through which the interest of Sierra Leoneans and others in the sub-region on international rule of law can further be explored," he said.

Kanu noted that the Special Court is not responsible for the institute, but its presence in the country has greatly contributed to the interest of Sierra Leoneans across the country in international law.

A statement from the President of the institute, Judge Abdul G. Koroma reads: "The institute aims at disseminating and advocating respect for international law, particular human rights and international humanitarian law."

Relevant Links

"It seeks to cooperate with all branches of the government, especially the ministry of foreign affairs and international cooperation in discharging the country's international obligations within the West African sub-region."

One of the vice president of the institute, Justice Bankole Thompson said the establishment and launching of the institute marks the beginning of series of milestones to be achieved.

He thanked Ambassador Kanu and his colleagues for the vision and initiative in establishing the institute in the country.

Awoko

Tuesday, 29 April 2009

Salone Institute of International Law Inaugurated

At the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leone Institute of International Law was inaugurated as a center intended to create a vehicle through which the interest of the country and others in the sub region on international rule of law can be further explored.

In his inaugural speech foundation member of the Institute Ambassador Allieu Kanu who was also the Chairman of the occasion said that the Institute of International law should also stand as a testament to the very impact that international law can have on the lives of individuals in the betterment of the human condition and on helping countries achieve sustainable peace and prosperity.

Ambassador Kanu stressed that a predictable legal system with a participatory law-making process, impartial law enforcement mechanisms and a fair, transparent and effective adjudication system is essential to the credibility of the law as a means to protect individuals against lawless acts of private individuals and organizations or the arbitrary use of State authority.

The Institute he went on will be a center for “academic excellence on International law in Sierra Leone and the region and will focus on the promotion of fundamental principles of international law and its progressive development.”

The Chairman said that a strong rule of law, requires a strong foundation and fair and effective application of legal rules, and it also requires strong institutions to develop, support, strengthen and defend legal rules. Ambassador Allieu Kanu added that the fact that the court’s legacy is something it has been concerned about from the very beginning sets the Special Court miles apart from any International court that has come before, and sets the bar very high for those that are coming after it.

He echoed that Special Court is not responsible for the Institute but its presence in the country has greatly contributed to the interest of Sierra Leoneans across the country in International law.

The President of the Institute Justice Abdul Koroma in his statement read by the MC Abdul Rahman Kamara, it was stated that because of the shocking civil war that it endured, the country made and continues to make, notable contributions to the international community’s efforts to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, efforts to combat the child soldier phenomenon, efforts to regulate and combat the global trade in conflict diamonds and develop credible systems of individual accountability to assist societies transiting from “collective trauma” to “collective peace.”

The aims and objectives of the institute President Kamara said was to “investigate and record our contribution to the development of international law. It also aims at disseminating and advocating respect for international law, particularly human rights and international humanitarian law, with a view to ensuring their respect and preventing their violation as we experienced during the civil war.” The Institute he went on also aspires to work with other institutions of human rights, international humanitarian law, international justice, and members of the country’s civil society to contribute to local and international dialogue, to advance the cause of human rights, justice and international rule of law in Sierra Leone. Justice Bankole Thompson one of the vice presidents of the institute said that the establishment of the institute as an autonomous institution, academic and professional entity can be perceived in a collateral context as the realization of a juristic vision of the architects of the Special Court, as an institution designed to arrest and eradicate the phenomenon of impunity that is now regrettably, the bane of modern civilization.

Cocorioko website

Monday, 4 May 2009

“We’re coming back home”

Written by Chernor Ojuku-Sesay : Information Attache : Sierra Leone Embassy, Brussels/EU

Monday, 04 May 2009

Sierra Leonean students in Holland universities have promised to return back home at the completion of their academic pursuit to help rebuild the country.

Rugiatu Conteh, a Medical student at the University of Nijmegen and ten others at various universities in Holland made the solemn promise on Saturday, May 2nd during a one-day symposium organised by members of the Sierra Leone Central Union to commemorate the 48th Independence Anniversary of Sierra Leone at the J. F. Kennedylaan in the city of Breda in Holland.

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The students appealed to the Sierra Leonean audience to encourage their children and their other dependants in Holland to pursue further education rather than just engaging themselves in underpaid factory jobs which, they insisted, are very difficult to come by now due to the global economic recession. “But with proper education, you are sure of getting a better and well secured job”, the students lectured.

Delivering his keynote address at the symposium on the theme, “focussing on government policy in strengthening the Diaspora contribution towards the country’s social and economic recovery”, Ambassador Christian Kargbo informed the audience that President Koroma’s top-most priority since assuming office is to encourage Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora to return home and help in the nation’s development.

“To demonstrate his commitment to this call, President Koroma immediately established an Office of the Diaspora right under his supervision at State House to actualise his dream. This is a novelty in the politics of Sierra Leone”, Ambassador Koroma stated.

Dr. Christian Kargbo informed the gathering about the transformation that has been carried out at the Registry Department, Customs and Excise Division and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to ease the process of business registration and clearing of goods at the quay.

He admonished Sierra Leoneans living in Holland to be united and law-abiding. “Always remember that you are living in a foreign land. There is no total freedom anywhere. Make sure you operate within the laws of your host country”, Dr. Kargbo concluded.

Speeches were also delivered by Michael Kalainkay, Chairman of WE CARE FOUNDATION in Netherlands and Solomon Moriba who spoke on the “effect of the Special Court for Sierra Leone on Sierra Leoneans living in Netherlands”.

The speeches were interspersed with cultural displays from the Sierra Leone Cultural Dance group in Tilburg (Holland) and the Sierra Leone International Gospel House of Worship Choir in Eindhoven.

By Chernor Ojuku Sesay
Information Attache

Sierra Leone Embassy

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 5 May 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

AfDB Supports Liberia's Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project

Tunis, May 05, 2009 (African Development Bank/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Board approved UA 6 million ADF and UA 0.5 million grants from the Fragile States Facility (FSF), for the Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project, which aims at increasing the income of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs including women, on a sustainable basis, as part of the country's efforts to provide food security and reduce poverty. An additional UA 6.0 million to cover the total ADF financing of 12.5 million for the project would be provided during 2010.

It will be implemented in six years under three components: Agriculture Infrastructure Rehabilitation; Agricultural Production and Productivity Improvement; and Project Management.

Eight of Liberia's 15 counties (30 districts) including rice producing counties in the eastern part of the country (Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru and Maryland counties); and major cassava producing areas to the north-west (Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Montserrado and Grand Bassa counties) will be served through the project.

International Clips on West Africa

ANALYSIS-Guinea stability rests on election promise

By Daniel Magnowski and Saliou Samb

CONAKRY, May 5 (Reuters) - Political stability in Guinea rests on the new military junta keeping its promise to hold presidential elections soon, otherwise its broad coalition of support could quickly unravel.

Captain Moussa Dadis Camara's National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) swiftly filled a power vacuum in the world's biggest bauxite exporter when former President Lansana Conte died in December after ruling for nearly 25 years.

The bloodless army coup relieved some observers who feared chaos would reign after Conte's death and, for now, opposition politicians, trade unionists and some diplomats appear content to let the military transition run its course.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberia's Biggest Prison Launches Agriculture Training for Inmates

(The Informer)

- UN Deputy Envoy, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has described an agricultural pilot project for inmates at the National Palace of Corrections "as a bold step towards institutionalizing active programs for rehabilitation of inmates." Ms. Mensa-Bonsu made this statement at the

weekend at the launch of the project by the Minister of Justice in Zwedru, the provincial capital of southeastern Grand Gedeh County, located on the border with Cote d'Ivoire. The programme sets the basis for the development of an efficient and effective rehabilitation and reintegration programme for prisoners.

LNP Seize US\$750,000.00 Counterfeit Notes

(Daily Observer)

- The Criminal Investigation Division/Crime Service Department (CID/CSD) of the Liberia National Police (LNP) in Margibi County has arrested a 43-year-old Malian national identified as Sekou Susuku with US\$750,000 counterfeit money. Police authorities in the county said the arrest followed a tip-off. Suspect Susuku has meanwhile admitted to the crime and he has been charged with facilitation of counterfeit notes.

Two Lawmakers Disagree Over Census Result

(Daily Observer, Heritage, The Parrot, The News, The Analyst)

- The media reports that Grand Kru County Senator, Blamo Nelson has differed with Maryland County Representative Bhofal Chambers on calls that the Threshold Bill be suspended for the next 10 years. Addressing a special Intellectual Discourse to commemorate World Press Freedom Day in Liberia, Representative Chambers said the prospect of holding elections in 2011 does not entirely hinge on the threshold bill.
- According to him, the population census results which should form the basis for setting the threshold for constituency delimitation are questionable. Also addressing the forum, Senator Nelson warned that Liberia is on the brink of electoral insecurity, disorder and chaos as activities leading to the conduct of the polls are being stalled due to delays in the passage of crucial electoral bills.

Malaysian Investors Take over Guthrie – President Sirleaf Signs US\$800 Million Deal

(The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed a US\$800M Agriculture Concession Agreement for the rehabilitation and expansion of the Guthrie Rubber Plantations. The project is to be undertaken by the Sime Darby Company of Malaysia.
- The agreement represents another step in Government's efforts to develop the agricultural sector of the country and provide more employment opportunities for Liberians, President Sirleaf said during the signing ceremony in Monrovia.
- An Executive Mansion release quotes the President as saying Government was very keen on getting back Guthrie given the Company's impressive track record in Liberia.
- The agreement, the Liberian leader said, sends a strong signal because it demonstrates that the right policies being adopted by Government are attracting investment to the country.
- Guthrie is the country's second largest rubber plantation, covering much of Bomi County and part of Grand Cape Mount County in western Liberia. Guthrie provides employment opportunities and short-term jobs to tens of thousands of Liberians before the civil war erupted in 1989, causing the company to shut down in 1990.

Liberia Allots US\$5M for 40 Primary Schools

(The Informer)

- The government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education has announced that US\$ 5M has been put aside to construct 40 primary schools in the fifteen counties before next academic year which begins September 2009.
- Minister Joseph Korto said each county will benefit at least two and the most populated counties with limited primary schools will benefit more than two.

- The initiative is part of an effort to enhance the much publicized Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in the country which education happens to be one of the key components.
- He disclosed that since the funds were raised from partners abroad, the money has been deposited at the ECO Bank in Monrovia, ahead of the commencement of the construction work.

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

Lawmakers Divided Over key Electoral Bill

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

President Sirleaf in Sinoe County

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is in Sinoe County to hold meetings with county officials and residents on government's development initiatives.
- According to an Executive Mansion release, the President is expected to dedicate a city hall, an official residence and a guest house in Bilibokree, Juarzon Statutory District.

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

VP Boakai Presents €10,000 to Liberia's Medical School

- Vice President Joseph Boakai has presented a check for ten thousand Euros to the administration of the University of Liberia(UL) for use by the A.M Dogliotti College of Medicine.
- Vice President Boakai said the money was donated to the Medical College by an Italian philanthropist, Varo Junior Macchi who was moved by the condition of students at the medical college.
- Receiving the check, UL's President Dr. Emmett Dennis said the university appreciates the donation, especially at this time when the medical school is a priority for the post-war country.
- The medical school at the University of Liberia is named after an Italian.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 May 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Court dismisses Charles Taylor's acquittal motion

ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Source: AP Online Regional - Europe Date: May 04, 2009

THE HAGUE, Netherlands_Judges on Monday rejected a request by former Liberian President Charles Taylor for an immediate acquittal on war crimes charges, saying he must answer allegations that he was part of a campaign to terrorize Sierra Leone's population through murder, rape and mutilation.

The U.N.-backed Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone ordered Taylor's trial to resume on June 29 with the opening of the defense. Defense attorney Courtenay Griffiths said he will call Taylor to the stand to testify in his own defense.

Prosecutors concluded their case against Taylor in February. The defense then asked the court to acquit Taylor, arguing that prosecutors had presented insufficient evidence linking him to atrocities for the trial to proceed.

The judges, however, cited testimony from 91 witnesses alleging that Taylor, along with Sierra Leone rebels, recruited child soldiers and sent them to kill and mutilate civilians; that he had people killed who interfered with his plans; and that he was responsible for sexual slavery, cruelty and pillaging.

The court "dismisses the defense motion in its entirety," said Judge Richard Lussick. Prosecutors had presented evidence "capable of supporting a conviction" against Taylor on all 11 counts he is facing, the judge said.

War Crimes Court Rejects Taylor's Acquittal Bid, Trial to Continue

Source: AFP World News / English Date: May 04, 2009

THE HAGUE, May 4, 2009 (AFP) - Former Liberian president Charles Taylor lost a bid Monday for his acquittal on war crimes charges in the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which set June 29 as the date for the start of his defence case.

"The (trial) chamber ... dismisses the defence's submission in its entirety," judge Richard Lussick ruled in an application for Taylor's acquittal at the close of the prosecution case.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from his support of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas in neighbouring Sierra Leone's 1991-2001 civil war.

There was evidence on which a court may eventually find that Taylor had been involved in a campaign to terrorise the civilian population of Sierra Leone, during which civilians were killed, raped and mutilated, the judge said.

Charles Taylor defence to open June 29: court

Source: AFP World News / English Date: May 04, 2009

THE HAGUE, May 4, 2009 (AFP) - The Special Court for Sierra Leone Monday said the defence case in the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor would open June 29, with Taylor likely to be the first witness.

"We are of the view that a reasonable and appropriate date for the start of the defence case is Monday, 29 June, 2009," Judge Richard Lussick ruled, dismissing a request by the defence for a delay.

The court set the June 29 date after Taylor lost a bid for his acquittal on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. His lawyers have previously said they expected he would be the first to take the stand.

Taylor is charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from his support of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas in neighbouring Sierra Leone's 1991-2001 civil war.

Sime Darby to develop Liberia palm, rubber estates

Source: AFX International Focus Date: May 04, 2009

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 (Reuters) - Sime Darby, Malaysia's biggest listed firm, will initially spend 70 million Malaysian ringgit (\$19.87 million) to develop palm oil and rubber estates in Liberia, the company said on Monday.

Sime Darby did not give the total investment for the 63-year concession but an industry source familiar with the transaction said total spending would eventually amount to \$800 million. The deal comes as Malaysia has just about 100,000 hectares left for expanding oil palm plantations. Sime Darby will start working on 10,000 hectares first in Liberia.

'It is increasingly difficult to acquire arable plantation land in Asia and thus it is imperative that new frontiers be sought to meet increasing demand,' said Ahmad Zubir Murshid, chief executive of Sime Darby, in a statement.

International Clips on West Africa

Against Sexual Violence - Solidarity Among African Women

By Wambi Michael

Kampala, May 04, 2009 (Inter Press Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Increased cases of rape and sexual abuse of women and girls is closely associated with armed conflict and its aftermath in Africa.

"Rape has been used as a weapon of war by militia, and this hurts women forever, because even in peacetime you find little response in terms of repairing the effects and providing justice," Marie Jalloh told IPS.

Jalloh, a member of Parliament from Sierra Leone was among the gender activists brought together in Kampala between April 28-29 by Akina Mama wa Africa - the name means "solidarity among African women" in Swahili, and the organization has worked to support African women in identifying issues and organizing around them since 1985 - to discuss ways of strengthening the women's movement against gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict Africa.

Local Media – Newspaper

Bryant, Others' Acquittal Disappoints President Sirleaf

(Daily Observer, National Chronicle, The Inquirer, New Vision)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has reacted to a jury acquittal of former officials charged with corruption, stating "the Executive Mansion is deeply disappointed" by the decision reached by the jury to drop charges against the former officials.
- The President's reaction was contained in a statement she handed out at the Saturday evening's tête-à-tête with editors and media managers in Monrovia. President Sirleaf however said the Executive Mansion accepts the verdict of the court and would like to move on.
- She said her government remains relentless in its commitment to continue the fight against corruption in the country saying four bills have been brought by a Special Grand Jury in-sitting to indict individuals on corruption charges.

Several "Gangsters" Arrested Over Flogging of Police, Commerce Inspectors

(Liberian Journal)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested several persons in connection with the alleged flogging and wounding of six police officers and four Inspectors of the Commerce Ministry. Speaking to journalists at the weekend, the Inspector General at the Commerce Ministry, Maceatog Wleh said the officers and commerce inspectors were allegedly manhandled by men claiming to be cement dealers.
- At the same time, the Commerce Ministry has announced the closure of more than six depots around the cement factory in the Freeport area. The Ministry said the move was necessary because the dealers were involved in hiking the price of cement.

Ex-Liberian Rebel Leader Arrested in Guinea

(Daily Observer)

- [SIC] Confirmed reports reaching the Daily Observer indicate that Sekou Damate Conneh, former Supreme Commander of the defunct armed rebel movement, Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), has been arrested in Guinea. Mr. Conneh is reportedly undergoing intense investigations by Guinean security personnel. According to the reports, the former LURD Commander was arrested early last week and taken to the country's highest military prison outside the capital, Conakry. Liberia's National Security Minister, Peter Bonner Jallah confirmed the arrest and said Mr. Conneh was arrested based on intelligence he passed on the new military rulers in Guinea which could not be authenticated.

Justice Minister Rebuffs Calls for His Resignation

(Public Agenda, Liberian Journal, New Vision, Liberian Express, New Democrat, The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- The media reports that Justice Minister Philip Banks has reacted harshly to calls for his resignation over the nearly half a million dollars seized from a Nigerian businessman. Minister Banks said those advocating his dismissal or resignation should "shut up" until they investigate the issue.
- On Friday, the Executive Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC), Cllr. Augustine Toe called for Minister Banks dismissal if he did not resign.

- The opposition Liberty Party has demanded the immediate restitution of the money seized from the businessman. Meanwhile, the Public Agenda quotes the Nigerian businessman as demanding his money back from government.

LPRC Sign US\$24.8m Contract for Rehabilitation

(Daily Observer)

- The Liberia Petroleum Refining Company has signed a US\$24.8 million contract with Zakhem International Construction Company. Under the terms of the agreement, Zakhem International would construct three new storage tanks to increase LPRC's terminal capacity. According to the plan, after the completion of the project LPRC's terminal capacity would increase from forty-five thousand to sixty thousand metric tons.
- Zakhem International won the contract following a competitive bidding process initially involving ten respondents. LPRC Managing Director, Harry Greaves at the signing ceremony announced that the project would take four years to complete.
- Mr. Greaves believes the rehabilitation of the LPRC terminal will help save the company from unnecessary losses. The Managing Director of Zakhem International, Marwan Zakhem said the completion of the project will put Liberia in a competitive position with Ghana and Nigeria.

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

Special Court Rejects Request to Acquit Former President Taylor

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, ELBC)

Justice Minister Reacts to Critics calling for his Resignation

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

President Sirleaf Launches Monrovia Clean-Up Day

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has acknowledged that better planning is needed for the implementation of the Monrovia Clean-Up Day. The Clean-Up Day was launched on Saturday in Monrovia.
- Late last month, President Sirleaf declared the first Saturday of each month as Monrovia Clean-up Day.

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

Four Counties Sign Resolution Urging the Passage of the Threshold Bill

- Four counties have signed a joint resolution seeking to pave the way for the holding of the 2011 General and Presidential elections. The counties are Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Margibi.
- The citizens in a three-count resolution said in order to have a successful election in 2011 the threshold bill currently before the Legislature must be considered and passed into law without delay.
- The citizens also called for the immediate passage of the boundary harmonization and other electoral bills.
