

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



Acting Prosecutor Joseph Kamara presenting Christmas gifts to amputees
at the 'Aberdeen Road Amputees camp'.

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:

Monday, 4 January 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
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Awoko

Monday, 4 January 2010

Former Prosecutor Gives 2009 a Grade of C-Minus for Rule of Law

Courtesy Joe DeCapua (VOA) 29 December 2009

The former chief prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone says 2009 did not fare so well in terms of rule of law. David Crane says he'd give it a grade of C-minus.

Crane, a professor at Syracuse University's College of Law, says, "We started off ... 2009 with the incursion of Israel into Palestine and all of the alleged war crimes that were committed by both sides during that particular conflict. And then of course at the end of 2009, we see individuals rioting in the streets of Iran and being shot dead."

Some successes

"The ad hoc tribunals, the Special Court, the International Criminal Court," he says, are "continuing to do their important work and seeing justice is done for the victims for Rwanda, (the former) Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone and then of course the Cambodian court."

Crane says without these successes he would have given 2009 a failing grade.

"The actual tribunals themselves, modern international criminal law, is moving forward, slowly but steadily forward and prosecuting those who commit grave crimes," he says.

Wrapping of business

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which heard war crimes cases stemming from the country's civil war, completed most of its business in 2009. One exception is the ongoing trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who's on trial for allegedly fueling that conflict. That trial is taking place in a courtroom at The Hague.

The former prosecutor says he agrees with a description once given the special court as "the little engine that could." It's a reference to a children's story of a small locomotive that, despite the odds, pulled a great load up a long hill. He says he's proud of its accomplishments.

"It had a proper mandate and it had a realistic place for it to be and that was in Freetown, Sierra Leone. And in a period of eight years, from beginning, middle and end, they largely completed their mandate of seeking justice for those individuals who were destroyed in West Africa and particularly in Sierra Leone," says Crane.

Seeking al-Bashir's arrest

Awoko

Monday, 4 January 2010

This year the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir. The charges stem from the conflict in Darfur in western Sudan, which has been labeled genocide by the United States and others.

"I think it was proper. I think it was important. It was a decision made very carefully by Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the ICC," Crane says.

He likens the case to his signing the indictment against Taylor.

"You have to deal with these individuals as they commit the crimes. He felt it was the right time. Of course diplomats and politicians tend to think that it's never the right time," he says.

He believes al-Bashir will eventually be brought to a "fair and just trial." He says, "It's just a matter of time."

Kenya

Moreno-Ocampo announced this year he wants to launch a formal investigation into Kenya's post-election violence, which claimed well over one thousand lives.

Crane says, "I think it's important that anytime where there are allegations of grave crimes, which is within the mandate of the International Criminal Court, that they do open up an investigation to make sure that those who commit these crimes just don't walk away."

He says he would prefer for Kenya itself to prosecute any alleged crimes related to the violence but says that appears unlikely at this time.

Disappointments

"There are trends in modern international criminal law that concern me. And that is we tend to look the other way on certain countries and not the others. And that can give an impression that there is justice that is not being evenly applied," he says.

Once that happens, he says, "It's a real threat to modern international criminal law," adding, "We shouldn't just walk away from allegations of countries that should be investigated."

Crane also says he's concerned about the welfare of soldiers and civilians in conflict zones, about what he calls the "whittling away" of protections provided by the Geneva Conventions and other international agreements.

"We saw that start the 2009 period with the incursion by Israel into Palestine. And I'm concerned about how modern Western countries are blinking and looking the other way in some ways related to the laws of armed conflict," he says.

2010

"I hope to see that all of the tribunals and special courts," he says, "continue to do their job, continue to be supported by the international community ... and finish their work."

He believes the New Year will bring the conviction and sentencing of Charles Taylor.


United Nations **Nations Unies**
 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 31 December 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

International Clips on West Africa **Guinea**

Ocampo May Rope in Junta Leaders

Dec 31, 2009 (The Nation/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Ailing Guinean junta leader and a handful of his colleagues are most likely be roped in by the UN backed International Criminal Court (ICC) for the charges of crimes against humanity as indicated by an international investigation commission over the September 28, 2009 mayhem in Conakry. The UN-backed international commission which investigated the massacre and issued its finding last week to UN chief Ban Ki-Moon, laid responsibility on Moussa Dadis Camara, the leader of the military junta and a few of his colleagues including his renegade former body guard who attempted to assassinate him on December 3. In its report, the commission observed that there was "a series of systematic killings, rape and acts of torture orchestrated against a section of the population" on that fateful day. ; It said there was "strong suspicion" that the crimes against humanity had been committed during the massacre which the commission said left a total of 156 dead, dozens of disappearances, hundreds seriously injured while over a hundred women were raped.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf Commissions New Banking Complex

(The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The Analyst)

- Speaking at the opening of the new complex of the Liberia-owned, Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) in Sinkor, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf expressed satisfaction over the acceptance of Liberia into the African Economic Cooperation (AEC).
- The President said the acceptance will lead the way for Liberia to find the best solution to the country's dual currencies situation.
- The President said it is prudent for Liberia to be a part of the African development initiative including the AEC.
- She said the LBDI was founded to encourage productive endeavours in the society with emphasis on Liberian entrepreneurs, noting it is time to move LBDI to its pre-war status without undermining financial viability.

Gender Ministry Refutes Media Reports of Graft at Ministry

(The Inquirer, Heritage, Daily Observer, The Analyst)

- The Ministry of Gender and Development has refuted media reports linking Minister Varbah Gayflor to graft.
- The Ministry described as shocking and disappointing the publication saying it did not represent the findings of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC).
- However, a student-based political party at the state-owned University of Liberia has called for the dismissal of Minister Gayflor saying it was clear from a LACC investigation that the

Minister is guilty of abuse of office, illegal disbursement and expenditure of about US\$23,000 representing allowances from employees at the Ministry, some now dismissed.

- On Tuesday, the LACC said despite the illegal deductions at the Ministry of Gender and Development, the action by the Minister had “no criminal intent.”

Belle Citizens Praise President Sirleaf For Road Project, Transformation of Notorious Prison

(The Inquirer)

- A local community organization, the Belle Yella Development Association has praised President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the construction of the 48-mile Bopolu-Belle Yella road and the subsequent disbandment of the once infamous maximum security prison in that area.
- The association believes Madam Sirleaf was sent to take the people of Belle District from a land of horror to a land of hope.
- The association said the construction of the road by the present administration was a phenomenon which has been anticipated since the independence of Liberia.

Local Media – Star Radio *(culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Police Arrest Several Motorcyclists for Alleged Violations

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) says it has arrested several motorcyclists for allegedly violating the vehicle and traffic law of Liberia.
- Police Spokesman George Bardue said motorcyclists were in the habit of riding without helmets and carrying two co-riders.
- According to Mr. Bardue, all motorcyclists in violation of the vehicle and traffic law of the country would be arrested to ensure public safety.
- The LNP statement follows a statement by the Liberia Motorcycle Transport Union accusing the Police of illegally arresting motorcyclists. The Union’s president alleged the act could spark violence.

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

Twenty Two Year Old Man Held for Sexually Molesting Minor

- The Cestos Magisterial Court in Rivercess County has begun trying a 22-year-old man for statutory rape.
- Police charged Saturday Jackson for allegedly using his finger to penetrate the sexual organ of a 5-year-old girl in Cestos City. The incident happened last week.

Defeated Senatorial Candidate Wants Structural Framework For PRS

- A defeated Senatorial Candidate in the November 10 Montserrado County by-election has called for an innovative national structural framework for “pillar two” of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which emphasizes economic revitalization.
- Mr. Daniel Johnson said such framework would facilitate what he called equitable technical assistance to every local district that would assure the survival of citizens.
- Mr. Johnson said citizens mainly at the community level need assistance to generate income, housing, food security, education, and health among others.

Belle Citizens Praise President Sirleaf For Road Project,

Largest Referral Hospital Gets Boost

- The Administrator of the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Medical Centre says the surgical wing of the hospital is now fully functional.
- The wing on the fourth floor of Liberia’s only teaching and largest referral hospital consists of eight operating theatres.
- Dr. Wannie Scott McDonald said each specialty now has an assigned theatre, making it easy for several surgical operations to go on at once.
- The specialties include Orthopaedics, Obstetrics, gynaecology and paediatrics.
- Dr. McDonald disclosed the entire surgical wing was fully equipped with modern state-of-the-art equipment made available through funding from government and partners.

Half A Dozen Inmates Likely To Go Free In Bomi For Lack Of Evidence

- Bomi County Attorney Juma Karnley says he would evoke section 18.1 of the Liberian Penal Code to set a number of inmates free.
- Section Eighteen Point One says the prosecution will not proceed with the hearing of cases in the absence of evidence.
- Attorney Karnley said the inmates have been held at the Tubmanburg detention facility without trial threatening to release them for lack of evidence.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

UL-based Student Group Wants Gender Minister Varbah Gayflor Dismiss

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

President Sirleaf Upbeat About Liberia's Acceptance Into the AEC

Voice of America

Sunday, 3 January 2010

Liberians React to Temporary Lifting of Arms Embargo

The temporary lifting of that embargo is meant to help government and UN security forces, but Liberians are divided about whether the move will help.

The U.N. Security Council has lifted its arms embargo on Liberia for one year, primarily to allow its peacekeeping mission there to receive military equipment. But it also allows the government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to acquire arms and training to fight crime.

Government misuse of force under former President Charles Taylor brought about the arms embargo 10 years ago. Its lifting, even temporarily, has been met with both pride and worry among Liberians still recovering from a long civil war.

Businessman Matthew Wesseh says the move recognizes the progress the government has made to restore security in Liberia.

"It is the constitutional responsibility of the government to protect its citizens against external forces," he said. "We are not opting for external aggression. But it is within the purview of every government the world over to protect its citizens."

More than arms, Wesseh says it is the proper training of security forces that will prevent a repeat of abuses under former President Taylor and former President Samuel Doe.

"My government, the government of Liberia, must be in a position to treat this issue with care and caution so that those who are going to carry arms in this country must be people who are trained, who understand that indeed the issue of human rights is around, and nobody can use their arms to suppress or intimidate any peaceful citizen in this country and think that he or she will get away with impunity," he added.

The United Nations is helping to train a new generation of soldiers and police in Liberia.

Student Amazee Quayesee hopes arming that new police force will reduce violent crime.

"Armed robbery in this country is on the rampage," he said. "The government is trying to put in mechanisms to stop it, but it is still going on the rampage. So for me, I feel the arms embargo that was lifted by the international community is very, very helpful for the government to protect its citizens."

Youth leader E. Barclay Carr says there is no shortage of weapons in Liberia. He fears the embargo's suspension will only lead to more crime.

"There is a security implication relative to the arms embargo being lifted," he noted.

Carr says the history of Liberia's struggle makes it too unstable a place for more weapons.

"In Liberia, for nearly 15 years, people got used to arms," he added. "People used arms for their survival. So now if the arms embargo has been lifted, people will start trading arms in this country."

Businessman Francis Manney agrees that it is too soon to suspend the embargo.

"To me I feel it is inappropriate now to lift the arms embargo for the fact that the peace in Liberia is fragile," he said. "The total manpower of the military that should have been trained has not reached the mark. Our borders are still vulnerable."

Manney is concerned by the instability in neighboring Guinea and by supporters of former President Taylor who are angry about his ongoing trial for crimes against humanity.

"There are people who are having mixed feelings among themselves," he added. "And so these people have the power. They have the finances. Now if you should lift the arms embargo today, I am afraid that there will be many arms smuggled into Liberia, and it will cause serious problems for Liberia, because there is still some divide in our Liberian society."

Recognizing Liberia's still-fragile peace, the Security Council extended its travel ban on key members of the Taylor administration. The U.N. says its force remains in charge of overall security in Liberia. It sees the temporary lifting of the arms embargo as a chance for the current government to fight crime, help secure its borders, and combat piracy and smuggling.

Reporting by Prince Collins in Monrovia

Star Radio (Liberia)

Saturday, 2 January 2010

Government to soon begin releasing people in jail for years without trial

Written by Julius Kanubah

Solicitor General Wilkins Wright says government will soon begin releasing detainees who have stayed long in jail without trial.

Cllr. Wright said government will not keep people in jail if their accusers are no longer interested the cases.

The solicitor general told Star Radio the situation will force government to release people accused of heinous crimes back into the communities.

Cllr. Wright said prosecution under him will try by all means to de-congest prisons around the country by releasing people who have stayed in jail beyond the statutory period.

There are hundreds of accused people in jail around the country who have not been indicted or tried.

Some of the accused people have been in jail for more than five years without even been charged. Under Liberian law such prolonged detention of accused people without trial is a gross violation of their rights.

Reuters

Tuesday, 29 December 2009

Serbian minister quits war crimes team

By International Justice Desk



Belgrade, Serbia

The Serbian minister responsible for helping the UN war crimes tribunal track down suspects resigned on Tuesday because efforts to bring fugitive Bosnian

Serb General Ratko Mladic before the court had failed.

"Earlier this year I said that Mladic will be in The Hague by December 31, and that didn't happen so I am resigning," Rasim Ljajic told Reuters.

Ljajic, who is Serbia's labour minister, said he had given Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic his resignation as coordinator in a team involved in the hunt for war crimes suspects. He said he would remain as head of the National Council for Cooperation with the UN war crimes tribunal, a separate body.

The arrest of Mladic is essential for Serbia's progress towards membership of the European Union, for which it applied last week.

Mladic has been charged with genocide over the 1995 massacre of 8,000 Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica and the 43-month siege of Sarajevo during the three-year war in Bosnia.

Ratification of the EU's pre-membership Stabilisation and Association Agreement remains on hold because the Netherlands wants to see Mladic extradited to the Hague tribunal.

Dutch soldiers served as part of a UN peacekeeping contingent in and around Srebrenica during the massacre but were unable to intervene because they lacked weapons and a mandate.

Agence France Presse
Monday, 4 January 2010

Peruvian court upholds 25 year sentence for Fujimori



Lima, Peru

The Peruvian Supreme Court on Sunday unanimously upheld a 25 year prison sentence on the country's former president Alberto Fujimori, who has been convicted of massive human rights abuses.

A Supreme Court review of Fujimori's convictions was requested in November by his defence lawyer, who asked the high court to revoke his client's sentence.

"None of the 10 pieces of evidence that went to determine his guilt as mastermind of premeditated murder have to do with the issue of him giving the order for the Barrios Altos and La Cantuta killings in 1991 and 1992," attorney Cesar Nakazaki told the court.

The defence lawyer also asked for an annulment of Fujimori's conviction in the kidnapping of a journalist and a businessman in 1992, claiming there was not enough evidence to prove that the former president had ordered the abductions.

Fujimori, 71, has been found guilty in four trials since he was extradited from Chile in September 2007.

He was found guilty of abuse of power and sentenced to six years in prison in December 2007.

In July, he pleaded guilty to charges of illegally paying a 15 million dollar bonus to his security chief and right hand man, Vladimiro Montesinos, and was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison. The sentence is under appeal.

On 30 September he was given another six year sentence and fined nine million dollars after he admitted charges of wiretapping and bribing journalists, politicians and business leaders.

Varying responses

In one of the first reactions to the Supreme Court's ruling, member of Congress Carlos Raffo said he was "disappointed" by it.

"The court has convicted a president who has freed us from terrorism," Raffo said. "And it has ratified this odious 25 year sentence without any proof of guilt. It was a political settling of scores against Fujimori."

During his presidency, Fujimori proved to be an unrelenting foe of Shining Path and Tupac Amaru rebels active in rural areas.

However, his political downfall began in 2000 when a video of Montesinos was broadcast on television, showing the spy chief buying off an opposition lawmaker.

Exile

Soon after, Fujimori fled to Asia and resigned via fax from a Tokyo hotel.

Congress refused to accept his resignation and instead voted to sack him and ban him from public office for 10 years.

In 2005, Fujimori, who was trying to stay involved in Peruvian politics while in Japanese exile, flew to Chile on a private jet. On arrival, he was arrested and Peru demanded his extradition, which Chile finally granted in September 2007.

Poor health has dogged the former president, slowing trial proceedings. He has been treated for hypertension and cancer, among other ailments.

But the ex president's political legacy appears far from extinguished.

Fujimori's daughter Keiko enjoys her own political career and remains deeply loyal to him.

She is likely to run for the Peruvian presidency in 2011 and, if successful, she has vowed to pardon her father.

Legal Brief

Monday, 04 January 2010

SA pushing case for fixing ICC flaws

Although SA's controversial proposal on the International Criminal Court (ICC) - that the provision allowing for the UN Security Council to defer proceedings before the court (article 16) be amended to allow for the UN General Assembly to do so in the event that the council fails to act - at the eighth session of the ICC's Assembly of States Parties in November was greeted with hostility by most states, the issue remains on the agenda for the next session in March, the all-important precursor to the court's first review conference in Kampala in mid-2010.

Christopher Gevers, a lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of KwaZulu- Natal, writes in Business Day that the court's disciples' immediate and predictable response to the proposal will be that SA has again sacrificed the ideals of international justice on the altar of political expediency. Gevers says the argument 'inadvertently and clumsily made by SA's proposal' is that the current set-up of the ICC is flawed, and repeats the hierarchical and unjust structure of the international system. He tackles the pros and cons of SA's amendment, which aims to grant a residual power to the General Assembly to defer a matter before the court if the council 'fails to act' within six months, in depth in the article online.