

**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:

Tuesday, 4 May 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Exclusive
Tuesday, 4 May 2010

Liberian RUF, Taylor Not Formed Black Ghadaffa Group

The Liberian nationals who became part of the Sierra Leone rebel group that waged an 11-year rebel war in the West African country were neither sent to Sierra Leone by Mr. Taylor nor did they communicate with the former Liberian president while they were there, and the renegade rebel group Black Ghadaffa from Liberia, which later found its way into Sierra Leone, was not created by Mr. Taylor, said two of the former Liberian president's defense witnesses who testified this week in The Hague.

The two witnesses, Mr. Martin Flomo George and Mr. Karnah Edward Mineh, both Liberian nationals gave accounts of their experiences as members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group in Sierra Leone and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group respectively.

On Monday, Mr. George, who became a member of the RUF in Liberia and went on to become Brigade Commander for the rebel group in Sierra Leone, told the court that while there were several Liberian

nationals in the RUF, claims that it was Mr. Taylor who sent them to join the group and fight in Sierra Leone are false. The witness said that while they were in Sierra Leone as part of the RUF, the Liberians never had any contact or communication with Mr. Taylor.

"No. We never had communication with Charles Taylor," Mr. George told the court.

Prosecutors have alleged that members of Mr. Taylor's NPFL rebel group fought alongside RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. These Liberian rebels, prosecutors have alleged, were sent to Sierra Leone by Mr. Taylor as part of his involvement in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebel forces. Prosecution witnesses, including RUF radio operators, have testified before Special Court to Sierra Leone judges that the RUF commanders, such as Isaac Mongor, used to communicate with Mr. Taylor and his troops in Liberia. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, saying that he never sent Liberian nationals to fight in Sierra Leone, that those Liberian nationals who went to Sierra Leone did not go there on his command, and that they did not have any communication with him.

Mr. George, a Liberian national himself and former member of the RUF on Monday corroborated Mr. Taylor's account. Responding to a question from Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Morris Anyah, as to whether Liberian nationals, especially Mr. Mongor, a former prosecution witness, Liberian national and senior commander in the RUF, communicated with Mr. Taylor,

Mr. George told the court:

"While we were in the jungle, I never saw Isaac talking to Charles Taylor on the radio or even giving him message about any situation concerning the RUF war, never, no."

Prosecutors have alleged that RUF commanders used to communicate regularly with Mr. Taylor's Director of Special Security Services (SSS), Benjamin Yeaten. Mr. Anyah sought to know whether such communication did take place with any other commanders in Liberia apart from Mr. Taylor. The witness said this was never the case.

"At the time we were in the northern jungle, I never saw him [Isaac Mongor] communicating with Charles Taylor or any other Charles Taylor's commanders for that matter," Mr. George said.

Mr. Mongor, in his April 2008 testimony as a prosecution witness, said that he was first a member of Mr. Taylor's NPFL. In the NPFL, he said he served as a bodyguard before he was asked by Mr. Taylor to join RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, and help train RUF fighters for the invasion of Sierra Leone. Mr. Mongor, who later became a senior RUF commander, said the RUF leadership used to communicate with Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor, in his own testimony, denied these accounts. As one of the Liberians who fought as a member of the RUF, Mr. George on Monday sought to corroborate Mr. Taylor's account.

On Tuesday, Mr. George questioned accounts that RUF leader, Mr. Sankoh, re-

cruited most of his fighters from NPFL jails during Liberia's civil conflict in 1990. Several witnesses have given different accounts about how Mr. Sankoh recruited fighters for the RUF in Liberia. Some have testified that RUF fighters were recruited at NPFL check points, while some were recruited from prisons in NPFL-controlled territory.

According to Mr. George, these accounts are wrong. While some of the witnesses were captured in neighboring Ivory Coast, Mr. George said that no RUF member ever told him that he was captured from an NPFL jail.

"I know how some of these people came to the base, like for Issa Sesay, he was in Abidjan, Yusuf Sillah was in Abidjan, Kaifa Wai was in Abidjan," Mr. George said. "He brought them from Abidjan to join us at the base."

"But I don't know about anybody else who was in jail and who was freed by Foday Sankoh to come and join us," the witness said.

Mr. George's account, however, conflicts with the account given by another defense witness, John Vincent. Mr. Vincent's testimony corroborated accounts of previous prosecution witnesses, who spoke of Mr. Sankoh's recruitment of RUF fighters in Liberia. According to Mr. Vincent, who himself was recruited by the RUF in Liberia, some of the RUF fighters were recruited from NPFL check points and from a jail cell in the Herbel area - a place under the control of Mr. Taylor's NPFL rebels.

War Reparations Program in Sierra Leone Needs Money

Lisa Schlein | Geneva 24 April 2010

An official with the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission says reparations have been paid to about 20,000 victims of the country's long-running civil war. She says the Commission would like to extend this program to a further 12,000 victims, but lacks the funds needed to provide cash grants and skills training to these people.

Tens of thousands of people suffered horrific abuse during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war, which ended in 2002. Two years later, Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up a reparations program to redress some of the worst consequences of the war.

Field Supervisor for the reparations program in Sierra Leone, Hawa Sese, says women were hardest hit by the war.

She tells VOA women were raped, used as sex slaves, their husbands and children were killed. She says the torment many women experienced during the war continues to this day.

"It is difficult for these women because most of these women who were sexually abused, some of them were not accepted back into their communities," said Sese. "When a woman is being raped they are ostracized by their community, the stigmatization. Some of these women have been living—even if there is no more war—they have been living in a war situation

because they have war in their own minds, within themselves."

Sese says many women are forced into prostitution to care for their families. She says many survive by begging on the street.

In recognition of the many problems confronting women, Sese says the war reparations program is specifically tailored to meet the pressing needs of victims of sexual violence.

She says more than 60 percent of those registered in the program are women. "It is timely because the women are really suffering in Sierra Leone and they need an extra hand," said Sese. "They need to be trained. They need to be given capacity so that they can restore their dignity once more and they need to be trained in livelihood skills so that they can be able to take care of their homes even if there is no husband."

The Geneva-based International Organization for Migration (IOM) is providing technical assistance to Sierra Leone's reparations program for victims of sexual violence. Hawa Sese was in Geneva to confer with officials from IOM about their joint activities.

The German government, the U.N. Peace Building Fund and U.N. Trust Fund to End Violence against women are providing money for the Sierra Leone Reparations Program. Despite this, IOM says \$8 million is urgently needed to continue vital assistance to all victims of Sierra Leone's brutal and long civil war

Concord Times
Tuesday, 4 May 2010

\$7.5M boost to war crimes trial

The United States is giving an additional \$7.5 million to help pay for Charles Taylor's war crimes trial; the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, Stephen Rapp, made the announcement Thursday in Freetown.

Taylor, the former president of neighboring

Liberia, is accused of funding Sierra Leonean rebels infamous for hacking off the lips, ears and limbs of their victims. Taylor has denied the allegations.

Rapp, who previously served as Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said that significant contributions

also have come from the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and Norway.

The court relies on voluntary contributions from governments, and Rapp has said the process has been complicated by the global economic crisis.

Clarence Roy-Macaulay (AP)

Charlestaylortrial.org (The Hague)

Monday, 3 May 2010

Liberia: NPFL Did Not Display Human Skulls and Intestines At Check Points, Witness says

Alpha Sesay

Claims that Liberian rebel forces displayed human skulls and intestines at checkpoints to terrorize or scare civilians are false, Charles Taylor's defense witness told Special Court for Sierra Leone judges today in The Hague.

Karnah Edward Mineh, a rebel commander for the former Liberian president, today told the court that one of his former colleagues – Joseph "Zig Zag" Mahzah, also a Liberian rebel fighter – did not tell the truth when he described checkpoint gates decorated with human body parts during his 2008 testimony as a prosecution witness.

"The gate was placed there in order when enemies come or enemies come nearer to us so that we can be aware. It was not intended to kill humans and place the skull on a stick," said Mr. Mineh, a former Brigade Commander of the First Battalion of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group.

"We placed the gate, we did that so that we would know the enemy. Whenever we captured a town, we stayed there for a while, then we placed the gate just to know the coming of the enemy. This is what I know," he added.

Mr. Mineh finished his testimony by insisting that Mr. Marzah had lied.

"What he (Marzah) explained to this court is not true," Mr. Mineh said.

This disagreement relates to prosecution allegations that the Sierra Leonean rebel group – the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) – copied actions of Mr. Taylor's Liberian rebels designed to terrorize civilians. Displaying human skulls and intestines at roadblocks is one of the tactics which prosecutors say that the RUF copied from the NPFL in order to inflict this terror. The use of terror, according to prosecutors, was important in order to subdue the Sierra Leonean population so the RUF could maintain control of the country's diamond mines. These diamonds would then benefit both the RUF and Mr. Taylor, according to prosecutors, because the rebels would give Mr. Taylor diamonds in exchange for weapons which they would then use to commit crimes during the war. Mr. Taylor has denied all the allegations against him.

During cross-examination by prosecutor Mohamed Bangura, Mr. Mineh also disagreed with an account of Mr. Taylor's first defense witness, Yanks Smythe. This witness — a Gambian NPFL member and later, a Liberian ambassador to Libya – had told the court that while the Liberian rebels underwent revolutionary training in Libya in the 1980s, Mr. Taylor never visited the camp, called Tajura. Today, Mr. Mineh, who also trained in Libya at the same time, disagreed with Mr. Smythe. According to Mr. Mineh, Mr. Taylor visited the rebels regularly at Tajura to see how the training was being conducted. Mr. Bangura sought to highlight the disagreement between the two witnesses.

"So if somebody came to this court and told this court that Mr. Taylor was never seen at Tajura, that person would not be telling the court the truth, would they?" Mr. Bangura asked the witness.

"Yes, the person must be lying because Taylor came and we saw him. I saw him," Mr. Mineh responded.

“And indeed over the period that you were there at Tajura, he must have come several times, not so?” Mr. Bangura enquired further.

“He came many times, I think three or four times,” Mr. Mineh said.

While this disagreement highlights different accounts by two different defense witnesses on the same issue, it will be left to the judges to determine the significance of this disagreement and which witness is more credible in their account.

Mr. Taylor is on trial because of his alleged role in the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law by Sierra Leone’s rebels during the country’s brutal 11-year war. Prosecutors say Mr. Taylor controlled the rebels’ actions during the war, and also jointly developed and supported a criminal plan to terrorize the Sierra Leonean population and benefit from the country’s diamond wealth.

Mr. Mineh’s cross-examination continues tomorrow.

News24.com

Friday, 30 April 2010

US cash for war crimes trial

Freetown - The US is giving an additional \$7.5m to help pay for Charles Taylor's war crimes trial.

The US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen Rapp made the announcement on Thursday in Sierra Leone's capital.

Taylor, the former president of neighbouring Liberia, is accused of funding Sierra Leonean rebels infamous for hacking off the lips, ears and limbs of their victims. Taylor has denied the allegations.

Rapp, who previously served as Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said that significant contributions also have come from the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and Norway.

The court relies on voluntary contributions from governments, and Rapp has said the process has been complicated by the global economic crisis.

ABC News

Friday, 23 April 2010

ABC News Uncovers New Evidence in Naomi Campbell 'Blood Diamond' Scandal

War Crimes Prosecutors 'Excited' By Discovery of Photo of Supermodel With Dictator

By ANNA SCHECTER

International war crimes prosecutors said they were unaware of a photo showing supermodel Naomi Campbell with Charles Taylor before the picture was shown during an ABC News report Thursday.

The controversy that caused Naomi Campbell to storm out of an interview.

More PhotosThe photo, found by actress Mia Farrow, shows Campbell posing with the African warlord at Nelson Mandela's house in 1997. Taylor is accused of using 'blood diamonds' to fuel an insurgency that cost tens of thousands of lives, and prosecutors want to know if Taylor gave Campbell a "blood diamond."

Farrow discovered the photo with an ABC News producer while looking through an old photo album. "I'm excited to hear that you have it," said Brenda Hollis, lead prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where Taylor is on trial. Hollis said she would consult with the prosecution team before deciding what to do next. Campbell had previously declined to provide testimony to prosecutors. The Special Court for Sierra Leone has the power to subpoena Campbell.

Campbell, Farrow and Taylor were at Nelson Mandela's house in Pretoria, South Africa in 1997 when the picture was taken. According to Farrow, the next morning, Campbell told her she had been visited by representatives of Taylor during the night, and they had given her a "huge" uncut diamond.

"You don't forget when a girlfriend tells you she was given a huge diamond in the middle of the night," Farrow told ABC News.

When ABC News tried to question Campbell about the allegation during a recent New York fashion show, the model had another of her infamous outbursts.

The Model and the DictatorNaomi Campbell Explodes on ABC NewsMore from Brian Ross and the Investigative TeamAsked if she had received a diamond from Charles Taylor, Campbell bristled. "I didn't receive a diamond and I'm not going to speak about that."

Campbell then stalked out of the interview and slapped the camera in a producer's hand.

Prosecutors say Campbell has refused their requests to be interviewed about the allegations that they say could help directly link Taylor, the former president of Liberia, to the possession of uncut diamonds used to buy weapons for rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone between 1997 and 2001.

Campbell would not answer questions about her alleged refusal to cooperate with the international criminal tribunal. Her London-based lawyer also declined to comment.

Taylor is accused of orchestrating bloody massacres in which thousands were killed or maimed by amputation, leading to the phrase "blood diamonds."

"The diamonds made possible the continuation of the conflict but they also profoundly profited Charles Taylor," said former chief prosecutor Steven Rapp, who is now the United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes.

Campbell's alleged receipt of a "blood diamond" first surfaced when prosecutors contacted Farrow to ask about the dinner at Mandela's house. Farrow then told prosecutors what she remembered Campbell telling her about the visit from Taylor's men. At the time she spoke to prosecutors, however, she did not remember the photo of Campbell with Taylor.


United Nations **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
3 May 2010

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

UN News in Liberia

UNMIL News

Journalists Complete Electoral and Political Reporting Training

[The Informer]

- A training workshop intended to prepare and sharpen the skills of journalists for the ensuing 2011 general and presidential elections ended last Thursday in Monrovia.
- The training organized by UNMIL Public Information Section and coordinated by Mr. James Wolo was intended to build the capacity of twenty five journalists drawn from several media institutions with knowledge, attitude and the practice of how to adequately report political issues.
- Mr. James Wolo who served as chief facilitator told the participants that the training was necessary to prepare journalists as the nation is gearing towards general and presidential elections in 2011.
- During the training workshop, journalists were thought among other things to identify political issues and how to report on them as they unfold.

Local News on Liberian issues

President Sirleaf Dedicates Development Projects in Lofa County

[The Informer, front Page Africa, The New Republic, Liberian Express]

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has dedicated several development projects including a health centre, a new police barrack and an administration building in Lofa County.
- President Sirleaf also held a town hall meeting with people in Foya before she and her entourage departed for Kolahun Sunday.
- The President lavished praises on the people of Lofa for leading the way in food production in Liberia.
- The Liberian chief executive said agriculture is the bedrock for sustaining national development.
- She observed that Lofa is blessed with a vast landscape suitable for agriculture development.

Bong Lawmaker Sure of Threshold, Dismisses Colleague's Argument

[Public Agenda]

- Bong County Representative George Mulbah has dismissed statement that the Legislature is proceeding illegally over the passage of the threshold bill.
- Representative Mulbah said claims by Maryland lawmaker Bhofal Chambers are shocking and disappointing.
- He said the statement by his Maryland counterpart is not in good faith and intended to undermine the passage of the threshold bill.
- Representative Mulbah said the issue raised by the Maryland lawaker on the case filed against the Legislature and President Sirleaf is completely out of order.
- According to him, the lawsuit filed before Justice-In-Chamber Kabineh Jan 'eh violates the Constitution.
- The Bong lawmaker said the petitioners acted in error because they failed to realize that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf cannot be taken to Court.

High Court Cites Parties to Leadership Crisis in CDC

[Heritage, The Inquirer]

- The Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) is this week going to court for the leadership crisis involving the party's ousted Chairman Joshua Sackie and Mrs. Geraldine Doe Sheriff, current chairman of the party.

- According to a CDC release signed by Joshua Sackie as acting Chairman, the Supreme Court is citing the parties in the leadership crisis to a conference on Wednesday.
- The release quoting Mr. Sackie said Wednesday's conference at the Supreme Court is intended to encourage through discussions Mrs. Sheriff to step aside as chairman of the CDC to focus on her senatorial work at the National Legislature.
- Mr. Sackie who is still claiming the chairmanship of the CDC said he was constrained to drag Mrs. Sheriff to court because of her persistent refusal to quit the party's chairmanship.

Trial Jurors Convict Nine For Murder

[New Democrat, heritage, front Page Africa, The Analyst, The Inquirer]

- Trial jurors at Criminal Court 'A' have finally convicted 9-man for murdering the late chairman of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), Keith Jubah in November 2009 in Margibi County.
- Although the men earlier pleaded non-guilty, the jurors said they were convinced that the convicts conspired to kill Mr. Jubah and set his body ablaze along with his vehicle.
- The jurors in their unanimous verdict maintained that evidence including three single-barrel guns, several cutlasses produced by the state were sufficient to prove the case of conspiracy, murder and criminal mischief against the defendants.
- Meanwhile, the public defenders have taken exception to the jurors' verdict but the court is expected to give its final judgment and sentence Wednesday.

LACC Wants Finance Minister, Others Suspended

[Public Agenda]

- The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) has differed with President Sirleaf's pardon on Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan, and other indictees in the HIPC Audit Report, recommending that they be suspended and prosecuted for alleged misappropriation of over US\$28,000.00 in the report.
- The amount is believed to be separate from the US\$5 million.
- The audit report reveals that US\$3,921,645.7 million was misused at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, while it holds the Public Works Ministry for US\$12, 485, 556. 49.
- The Education Ministry is to account for US\$3,728,836.71, while the Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy allegedly misappropriated \$2,808,214.73.
- The audit report, conducted on five ministries, unveils financial irregularities, covering sprawling 'bogus transactions' of the alleged amount.

Split in Liberia Unification Party Deepens

[New Democrat]

- The son of the founding father of the Liberia Unification Party has ruled out any possibility for a merger with the ruling Unity Party.
- Mr. Martin Kpolleh, son of the late Gabriel Kpolleh said attempts by some members of the Party to form a merger with the Unity Party will not work.
- Mr. Kpolleh who is also Acting National Youth Wing Chairman of LUP said the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into with the UP does not seek the interest of the masses.
- Also, the Acting Chairman of the 'Gabriel Kpolleh Faction' of the Party John Cooper said they will not be a part to any agreement.
- The LUP partisans accused certain elements in the Party of masterminding the merger with the Unity Party.
- The President of the Bong County Citizens Union, George Johnson claimed the framers of the MOU did not treat them fairly.

UL Revokes Fake Degrees, Banned Graduates For 4-years

[The Informer, New democrat, Heritage, Liberian Express, The Inquirer]

- The University of Liberia (UL) has announced the revocation of the degrees of five persons who graduated from the University on December 16, 2009.
- At a joint news conference Friday, UL Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Sarwolo Nelson said the five students falsified their documents to graduate.
- Dr. Nelson could not however give the names of the students for what he called privacy right, but revealed they are from the College of Science and Technology.
- The UL Vice President said the students would be suspended for four academic years each before being accepted for readmission to clear their deficiencies.

LDI Rejects Executive Mansion Argument on System Failure

[The Analyst, Public Agenda, The News]

- The Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI) has strongly rejected the Executive Mansion argument that system failure was to blame for the disappearance of US\$5 million from the Finance Ministry.
- LDI Executive Director Dan Saryee said systems around the world do not run in isolation but are run by human beings.
- Mr. Saryee said the exoneration of audit indictees by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf means she has lost her professed fight against corruption.
- According to Mr. Saryee, it is regrettable that rampant corruption has re-conquered Liberia under the leadership of Mrs. Sirleaf.
- The LDI boss said the President has surrendered to corruption which she declared public enemy number one in 2006.

American Bishop Escapes US\$2M Kidnapping Plot

[New Democrat]

- [SIC] American Bishop Rosetta Cox narrowly escaped a kidnapping scheme in which her captors would have demanded US\$2 million as ransom for her release, according to report.
- According to still sketchy details, American security personnel at the US Embassy near Monrovia credited with foiling the attempt is in close collaboration with the National Security Agency and not the National Bureau of Investigation as was previously reported.
- Bishop Cox, who is head of the Rock International Christian Academy on the Robertsfield highway, was last Thursday flown out of the country by the US Embassy.
- Investigators are particularly worried that those arrested Nigerians in the attempt to kidnap Bishop Cox may be part of an international ring or just a local one.
- Both the US Embassy and the Liberia National Police are keeping a close lid on the incident.
- One of the Nigerians told investigators that they had no intention of harming the American, but had every intention of demanding a US\$2 million ransom for her release.

US Approves US\$7M For Special Court

[The News, The New Republic]

- The US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen Rapp says the United States government has donated US\$7.5 million to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in continuation of the trial of Charles Taylor.
- Mr. Rapp who addressed journalists last Friday at SLENA on a visit to Sierra Leone said he came with the good news for the people of Sierra Leone.
- He revealed that the money is presently in the court's account which is intended to give the court the necessary resources it needs to complete the trial of Mr. Taylor.
- Ambassador Rapp further indicated that the fund will also help in presenting additional witnesses for the defense and also for the closing argument.

Liberian Journalists Join World Freedom Day Celebration Today

[The Inquirer, The News]

- Liberian journalists today May 3rd joined their colleagues to celebrate World Press Freedom Day.
- The Day is set aside by the UN General Assembly to remind governments worldwide to respect and uphold press freedom as an obligation.
- Journalists today paraded through the principal streets of Monrovia to showcase the importance of media freedom in Liberia and later assembled in the auditorium of the University of Liberia for a forum on the theme, "Freedom of Information: The Right to Know".
- Cllr. Negbalee Warner, former CNN producer Bill Burke, former foreign minister Lewis Brown, maritime commissioner Beyan Kesselly and Montserrado County lawmaker Kettehkumuehn Murray addressed the special edition of the Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum.

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

Bong Lawmaker Sure of Threshold, Dismisses Colleague's Argument

Opposition Party Pleased With LACC Reaction on GAC Audits

- The opposition Liberty Party says the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission's (LACC) position on clearing audit indictees by the Executive is commendable.
- The Deputy Secretary General of the Party said the LACC has restored the hope of many Liberians with the view that there are still credible institutions in the country.
- Mr. Jacob Smith encouraged the LACC to continue on the path of speaking out against vices that tend to undermine transparency and accountability.
- Mr. Smith however called on the Commission to go beyond the issuance of press releases and take practical steps on issues concerning corruption in the society.
- According to him, the response of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the audit report on the Finance Ministry is tantamount to killing the report and shielding certain officials.

Concerned UP Members Unhappy With Merger

- A group of Unity Party partisans has called for the immediate postponement of the pending merger convention of the Party.
- The group under the banner Central Monrovia UP Partisans Stakeholders Forum said the call is based on protest arising as a result of the pending merger.
- The Unity Party is to hold a merger convention with the Liberia Action Party and the Liberia Unification Party next week in Ganta, Nimba County.
- The group in a release said the uneasiness and bitterness toward the merger is a result of lack of understanding.
- According to the group, there are still concerns in the ranks of the Unity Party over the fate of the Party's partisans after the convention.
- The release said bulk of UP partisans that ensured the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf are disenchanting with the Party's leadership style.

Split in Liberia Unification Party Deepens

UL Revokes Fake Degrees, Banned Graduates For 4-years

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YEP Questions LACC Corruption Fight

- The Youth Empowerment Programme says it is concerned about the selective nature of the corruption fight being initiated by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC).
- YEP said the call by the LACC for the suspension of Finance Minister Augustine Ngafuan following the HIPC audit report is worrisome.
- The group wondered why the LACC decided to single-out Minister Ngafuan even though five Ministries were audited and all alleged to have misapplied funds.
- The local youth group described the LACC's latest position on the audit findings as extremely naive, unfair and illogical.
- The group said it is strange for the LACC to now be considering the audits findings as indictments for which auditees must go to court to have their names clear.
- YEP believes that equity and fair play should be the hallmark of anti-corruption bodies.
- It called on the LACC to weigh the implications of whatever position it takes before going public.

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

Sierra Leonean Woman Arrested

- Police in Grand Cape Mount County are investigating a Sierra Leonean woman for allegedly kidnapping a three-year old boy.
- The woman, Salaymatu Barry reportedly kidnapped the little boy and placed him in a rice bag.
- The mother of the child informed the police that the incident happened after she left her son in the yard of the accused.
- According to Ms. Luciana Keita, her son was playing in the yard of the accused while she left to buy goods at Bo Waterside.
- However, Ms. Keita said upon her returned from Bo Water Side, her child could not be found any longer, something that drew public concerns.
- Ms. Keita said after going through a careful search in the yard of the accused her son was discovered in one of the rooms of the Sierra Leonean woman tied in a rice bag.

President Sirleaf Dedicates Development Projects in Lofa County

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

High Court Cites Parties to Leadership Crisis in CDC

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

Liberian Journalists Join World Freedom Day Celebration Today

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

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

Trial Jurors Convict Nine for Murder

International Clip on Liberia

PRS town hall meetings kick off in Providence, Rhode Island

<http://runningafrica.com/news-05032010PRS-TownHall-KickOff.html>

The ministerial town hall meetings spear-headed by the Liberian government delegation currently in the United States kicked off at the Marriott Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island, on Friday, April 30, 2010, with Liberians traveling from the neighboring states of Connecticut and Massachusetts to join their fellow compatriots in the island state in attendance. The four-man ministerial delegation is in the country to explain the progress of, and solicit the views of Liberians in the Diaspora on, the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) which "articulates the government's overall vision and major strategies for moving toward rapid, inclusive, and sustainable growth and development during the period 2008-2011." The delegation comprises Mr. Amara M. Konneh, Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs and Coordinator of the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee; Mr. Augustine Ngafuan, Minister of Finance; Dr. C. William Allen, Director General of the Civil Service Agency; and Mr. Samuel Kofi Woods, Minister of Public Works. However, only two members of the delegation - Planning Minister Amara Konneh who is head of the delegation and Civil Service Director General C. William Allen, attended the Rhode Island meeting. No official reason was given for the absence of other members of the delegation.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Iron-ore acquisition in Guinea shows Vale no longer dormant

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=107685>

VALE's second deal this year — paying \$2,5bn for deposits in Guinea — signalled the world's largest iron-ore producer had resumed its strategy of smaller acquisitions for growth, analysts said after the announcement. Vale will pay \$500m up front for 51% of BSG Resources (Guinea), which is owned by the holding company of Israeli billionaire Beny Steinmetz. The remainder would be paid as the projects met targets, the company said on Friday. The deal includes the Simandou North blocks 1 and 2, previously owned by Rio Tinto, and the Zogota project in Simandou south. Guinea confiscated the blocks from Rio Tinto over a development dispute. The acquisitions in Guinea had broken Vale's silence, since its failed play for Anglo-Swiss mining group Xstrata in 2008 and the troublesome integration of Canadian nickel-mining company Inco, analysts said. Vale paid \$18,9bn in 2006 for Inco. Rio de Janeiro-based Vale is expanding output as steel production in China surges, helping drive global iron-ore demand to 1-billion tons this year, according to Barclays Capital. The company boosted prices about 90% this year and departed from a 40-year-old system of setting annual contracts as it seeks greater flexibility to increase prices when demand rises.

Amid Reports of "Tensions," AU, UN, ECOWAS Reps Rush to Guinea – Konate Assures Election Still On for June 27

(AFP) DAKAR — Guinea's interim leader assured international envoys that a presidential election will be held as planned next month despite reports of disputes among the transition team, a delegation said Saturday. Representatives from the African Union, the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States visited Guinea on Thursday and Friday to discuss reports "of tensions between the members of the transition regarding the electoral process," they said in a joint statement. The Guinean interim president, General Sekouba Konate, said that "all arrangements will be taken to assure the holding of a presidential election on June 27, 2010,"

said the statement sent to the AFP office in Dakar. The election would represent Guinea's first free presidential polls since independence in 1958. The country has long been under autocratic or military rule.

Guinea's transitional authorities assure UN that June vote will be on schedule

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34572&Cr=conakry&Cr1=>

Guinea's interim President Sékouba Konaté has reassured the United Nations and its African partners that presidential elections will be held as scheduled on 27 June following recent reports of tension among the West African country's transitional authorities over the electoral process. A joint delegation of the UN, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) conferred with the president, Prime Minister Jean Marie Doré and other transitional and electoral officials during a visit to Conakry, the Guinean capital, on 29 and 30 April. The impoverished country was gripped by unrest after the forces of Moussa Dadis Camara, who seized power in a coup in 2008 following the death of long-time president Lansana Conté, opened fire on unarmed protesters at a rally last year, killing at least 150 people.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast checkpoints cost millions a year-business

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE6421QF.htm>

ABIDJAN, (Reuters) - Racketeering by "mafia" police and soldiers at roadblocks in Ivory Coast has hiked transport prices to amongst the world's highest and costs business up to \$600 million a year, the Chamber of Commerce said on Monday. Chamber of Commerce President Jean-Louis Billon told Reuters in an interview that the rackets had been a major cause of rising living costs in the West African country and landlocked neighbours who depend on its ports for trade. Military and rebel checkpoints sprang up across Ivory Coast after a short 2002-2003 war divided the world's top cocoa grower, once seen as one of Africa's most stable for business. "The impact is huge. They are slowing traffic and have raised the cost of transport to the point where we have the most expensive in the world," Billon said on Monday. "We're talking 150-300 billion CFA francs (around \$300-600 million) a year," he added. An official in Ivory Coast's Defence Ministry told Reuters racketeering was illegal and was being tackled.
