

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



Mending fishing nets at Fogbo

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, 13 September 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Charlestaylortrial.org
Saturday, 11 September 2010

Weekly Summary

DCT-008 Concludes His Testimony and Could Be the Final Witness In the Charles Taylor Trial

By Alpha Sesay

The defense witness who concluded his testimony this week could be the final witness to give oral evidence in the Charles Taylor trial, defense lawyers for the former Liberian president indicated on Wednesday as the witness concluded his evidence.

DCT-008, a Liberian national who served as a radio operator in the Special Security Services (SSS) unit of Mr. Taylor's government in Liberia, is the 114th witness who has testified in Mr. Taylor's trial in The Hague. Of those witnesses, 94 testified for the prosecution while the remaining 20 testified for Mr. Taylor.

Earlier in the week, defense lawyers indicated that DCT-008 might be the final witness to give oral testimony as a defense witness for Mr. Taylor. As the witness concluded his testimony on Wednesday, the judges asked defense lawyers whether they had anything to say about the conclusion of their case. Defense counsel for Mr. Taylor, Terry Munyard, addressed the court and told the judges that the defense wants the court to have a status conference on Monday, September 13. Before the status conference, the team will meet with Mr. Taylor and get instructions from him on the way forward, he said.

He concluded, "At the moment, we are not anticipating calling any further live evidence, should that change, we will let the parties know."

DCT-008's testimony focused mainly on radio communications that took place between Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone and members of Mr. Taylor's security apparatus in Liberia. Prosecutors have alleged that these radio communications took place with Mr. Taylor's involvement and approval, and through these radio communications, RUF rebels updated Mr. Taylor on their activities and the former Liberian president gave the Sierra Leonean rebels instructions and facilitated arms transfers for use in Sierra Leone's bloody conflict. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations, telling the Special Court for Sierra Leone judges in The Hague that members of his security forces could have had close relationships with Sierra Leonean rebels and that through such relationships, arms and ammunition could have been traded between Liberia and Sierra Leone without his knowledge.

In DCT-008's testimony, he has said the radio communications and the diamond and arms trade that took place between Liberia and Sierra Leone were based solely on the friendship that existed between RUF commander Sam Bockarie and SSS Director Benjamin Yeaten. The witness also denied certain allegations that have been made by prosecutors, including that the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) used children for combat purposes during the Liberian conflict under a unit called the Small Boys Unit (SBU).

Prosecutors allege that the SBU comprised of children, who were forcefully conscripted and used for combat purposes by Mr. Taylor's rebel forces in Liberia. These children did not only fight in frontlines, but were also used to man NPFL checkpoints and served as bodyguards to NPFL rebel commanders, prosecutors say. It is also alleged that this practice was replicated by RUF rebels in Sierra Leone, who Mr. Taylor is alleged to have controlled and supported.

In his testimony as a defense witness for Mr. Taylor, DCT-008 told the court that the NPFL did not use children in combat or to man checkpoints. According to the witness, commanders only lived with their younger brothers, who helped them perform domestic chores, and these were the ones called SBUs. They neither took part in combat, nor were they made to man checkpoints or to serve as bodyguards to rebel commanders, the witness said.

On Monday, during the cross-examination of the witness, Chief Prosecutor Brenda Hollis challenged the witness on the NPFL's use of SBUs.

When asked whether “it is true that the NPFL did indeed have a unit called SBU,” DCT-008 said, “No.”

When the prosecutor stated that “these SBUs were used at checkpoints,” the witness said, “No.”

“My testimony is that the NPFL did not have any unit called the SBU. The SBU was the name given to those young boys who were with their big brothers and sisters, but they were not part of the NPFL,” DCT-008 said.

“They were not soldiers, they were not gun carriers,” he added.

Ms. Hollis read a portion of the statement made to defense lawyers by Mr. Taylor’s first witness, Yanks Smythe, a Gambian member of the NPFL who later attained Liberian citizenship and was appointed Liberian ambassador to Libya and Tunisia. In the statement, Mr. Smythe was quoted as saying to defense lawyers that the “SBUs were underaged but part of the NPFL rank.”

When this was presented to the witness with a suggestion that he also knew of the SBUs being part of the NPFL, DCT-008 said, “I don’t know that, I don’t know of a unit called SBU and there was no unit in the NPFL called SBU.”

Put to him again that Mr. Smythe said in his statement that “SBUs will bear arms to protect gates or checkpoints but not to go to the frontlines,” the witness said, “I don’t know that.”

The witness also refuted allegations that Mr. Taylor personally had SBU’s assigned to him, telling the court, “Mr. Taylor to my knowledge never had SBU’s around him.”

Ms. Hollis also quoted John T. Richardson, a former member of the NPFL and National Security Adviser to Mr. Taylor who in a 1994 news interview said, “The NPFL used children to fight for their own protection.”

The witness still insisted, “I am not aware of that.”

On Tuesday, as prosecutors concluded his cross-examination, the witness disagreed with prosecutors on several issues, including the manner in which the disarmament of fighting forces was conducted in Liberia, allegations of Mr. Taylor’s reliance on militias rather than the Liberian army, and the relationship that existed between RUF commander Mr. Bockarie and SSS Director Mr. Yeaten.

Prosecutors allege that when the disarmament process started in Liberia in the mid 1990s, Mr. Taylor’s NPFL rebel group did not turn in all their weapons, and the weapons they kept were part of those given to RUF rebels who used them to commit atrocities in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations.

In his testimony on Tuesday, DCT-008 insisted that the NPFL turned in all their weapons to Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers, who were coordinating the disarmament program in Liberia.

“I know that the NPFL disarmed. Even myself, I disarmed to ECOMOG,” the witness told the court.

When noted by the Ms. Hollis that the NPFL turned in only fractions of their weapons, the witness responded, “To my knowledge, the NPFL turned over every weapon...it was not a joke, it was real.”

Ms. Hollis referenced a news article that quoted Mr. Taylor’s former Defense Minister Daniel Chea that the disarmament process in Liberia was a fiasco.

When this was put to the witness, he responded thus: “I believe that the NPFL fully disarmed to the peacekeepers...so if he [Chea] went on to say it was a fiasco, that was his opinion.”

“But what I know is that the disarmament went on very well, that is why we had elections.”

Ms. Hollis also asserted that because Mr. Taylor did not trust the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), he relied on private militias, which were controlled from the Executive Mansion. These militias, Ms. Hollis said, were notorious for committing crimes against civilians. The witness denied these suggestions.

“He relied on the national security of the Republic of Liberia,” the witness said, and “Charles Taylor to my knowledge never controlled any militia from the Executive Mansion,” he added.

When noted that Mr. Taylor controlled his militia groups just like the SSS, the witness said, “He never ran the SSS. The SSS were security assigned to the Executive Mansion and the first family.”

Ms. Hollis quoted Mr. Chea again, who in the same interview where he spoke about the disarmament process said, “Mr. Taylor had his own suspicions of the army, he transferred most of the duties of the army to his own militias. I thought that was a mistake.”

“President Taylor had his own disjointed militia that he ran from the Executive Mansion. Who will be in a better position to know about Charles Taylor’s militia, you or Mr. Chea,” Ms. Hollis asked the witness.

In response, he said, “To my knowledge, the president did not control militia group or militia from the Executive Mansion.”

The witness also insisted, like he has done throughout his testimony, that Mr. Taylor and his government did not have any relationship with the RUF, but rather, it was SSS Director Mr. Yeaten who used his friendship with RUF commander Mr. Bockarie to trade arms and ammunition with Sierra Leonean rebels.

According to the witness, Samson Wai, a bodyguard to Mr. Yeaten was the person who coordinated efforts with Daniel Tamba (Jungle) on Mr. Yeaten’s instructions to transport arms and ammunition to the RUF. The witness has stated that Jungle was a member of the RUF, a claim which goes contrary to prosecution claims that Jungle was a member of the SSS.

In response to a suggestion from Ms. Hollis that Jungle, Samson, Mr. Yeaten, and others “were members of the SSS carrying out security duties in relation to the rebels in Sierra Leone... at the instance of Charles Taylor,” the witness said, “Jungle was not a member of the SSS. Samson was a member of the SSS and a bodyguard to Benjamin Yeaten... They did this at the instance of Benjamin Yeaten, and Mr. Taylor did not know about this.”

The witness spoke extensively about radio communications that took place between Mr. Yeaten’s radio communications set in Liberia and those of RUF radio stations in Sierra Leone. When Ms. Hollis asked him whether there were no loyal radio operators who could have monitored these communications and made them known to Mr. Taylor, the witness said that such a thing never happened.

“And your story is that Benjamin Yeaten was able to do this without Mr. Taylor or anybody loyal to him knowing about it?” Ms. Hollis questioned the witness.

“I said this happened without Mr. Taylor’s knowledge,” the witness responded.

In concluding his cross-examination, the witness denied suggestions that he has come to the court with an intention to lie and protect Mr. Taylor.

“This is not what I intended to do. This is the truth that I have come to explain to this court. It is not my version, it is reality,” he said.

Earlier in the on Tuesday, the judges issued their oral decision on the defense motion that prosecutors be ordered to disclose statements made to Global Witness by defense witness DCT-097, which defense lawyers say contain exculpatory evidence pointing to Mr. Taylor’s innocence, and that prosecutors also be made to disclose details of payments made to the witness when he was a potential prosecution witness, payments that defense lawyers say amounted to about 30,000 USD.

Delivering the judgment of the Trial Chamber, Presiding Judge, Justice Julia Sebutinde, ordered that the Chamber dismisses Part A of the defense application relating to the statement made by DCT-097 to Global Witness, and grants Part B of the motion regarding the payments that were made to the witness by prosecutors.

The prosecution was ordered to disclose to the defense:

- a. All payments/benefits to DCT-097.
- b. All documents relating to the payments.
- c. Provide explanation for such payments.

On Wednesday, the witness concluded his testimony after being re-examined by defense lawyers for Mr. Taylor during which he tried to clarify certain issues that had come up during his cross-examination.

The witness clarified issues relating to the use of various floors of the Executive Mansion in Liberia while Mr. Taylor was president. During his cross-examination, prosecutors suggested to him that Mr. Taylor used the 8th floor of the Executive Mansion to coordinate operations with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. The witness denied this, saying that Mr. Taylor never lived on the 8th floor.

Explaining what he knew about the 8th floor, DCT-008 said, "On the 8th floor, that was where the presidents, starting from [William] Tolbert to [Samuel] Doe, they had their residence there but during the war, we were told that the place was ransacked and all the things that were there were looted by ECOMOG."

"According to the story that I heard for the Mansion, it happened that when they [ECOMOG] were in control of Monrovia, they were in control of the Mansion, and so they used that opportunity to loot the place so nobody could see them," the witness added.

The witness explained that the 7th floor housed radio communications equipment and the 6th floor was the presidential kitchen. He said he never heard that the SSS used the 5th floor of the Mansion for radio communications.

The witness also tried to clarify issues relating to the use of the word "principal" in radio communications. According to a previous prosecution witness, the language used by radio operators whenever RUF commanders wanted to talk to Liberian officials was "my principal wants to talk to your principal." DCT-008 has said in his testimony that radio operators used the word "master" rather than "principal" as the latter could have made it easy for people monitoring the communications to know what was going on.

When asked to tell the court why they used "master" rather than "principal," the witness explained, "The reason was that the term principal, even within the Government of Liberia radio communications system, we referred to the commander of certain radio stations as principal and the term principal in Liberia means head of an institution."

"So if the term principal is used, anybody who had been listening on the Government of Liberia side will know that there is an operator on the Liberian side and the Sierra Leone side."

When he was responding to questions from the judges, the witness discussed the arms purchase that SSS Director Mr. Yeaten undertook for the RUF.

Justice Richard Lussick asked the witness that when "Benjamin Yeaten sent people to buy arms and ammunition from the LPC [Liberian Peace Council] and ULIMO [United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia], where did he get the money from?"

In response, the witness said, "I did not say he sent men to buy arms from the LPC or ULIMO. I said those areas were controlled by LPC and ULIMO. To answer your question, I don't know where he got the money."

The witness has said that Mr. Yeaten's radio operators communicated regularly with RUF radio operators and such contacts were not known by other radio operators working for the Liberian government.

Justice Lussick therefore asked the witness whether he used to monitor other calls made by other radio operators.

“As a radio operator, provided I stand on the frequency, I could monitor any calls...any operator could do that, even during the war, LURD [Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy] used to monitor our communications and we used to do the same,” he said.

He agreed with Justice Lussick that he would not know if somebody else was monitoring his communications.

As SSS Director Mr. Yeaten has taken center stage in this trial as the main person who was in contact with RUF rebels and having worked as a radio operator for Mr. Yeaten, Justice Teresa Doherty asked the witness whether Mr. Yeaten is still alive.

“I don’t know, since he left Liberia in 2003, I have not got any information about him...I do not know whether he is alive and even if he is alive, I do not know where he is now.”

The trial of Mr. Taylor will resume on Monday with a status conference to determine when and how defense lawyers will close Mr. Taylor’s defense.

Star Radio

Saturday, 11 September 2010

Liberia still faces security challenges---UNMIL boss

Written by Moses Wenyoun

The United Nations Mission in Liberia says the country still faces what it calls destabilizing security challenges.

The head of UNMIL Ellen Løj says such destabilizing security challenges often arise from mob violence, ethnic and communal tensions among others.

Madam Løj observed these challenges make the overall situation in the country to remain fragile despite the level of stability attained over the years.

The UNMIL boss said additional progress is needed in several areas to truly consolidate the peace.

She named some of the areas as competition for access to natural resources, land disputes, sexual and gender-based violence and armed robbery.

Madam Løj also underlined high rates of unemployment as a major concern for sustained recovery and future stability.

The UNMIL boss spoke this week when she briefed the UN Security Council on the current trend of events in Liberia.

She emphasized the need for substantial donor support for key security institutions including the police, immigration and corrections services.

Madam Løj said strengthening these areas would enable the country carry out strategic plans presented at a special partners' forum a year ago.

Meanwhile Madam Løj has called on the international community to give Liberia the assistance, time and space necessary to consolidate its peace.


United Nations **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
09 September 2010

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

UN News in Liberia

UNMIL News

SRSJ Løj Highlights Need for Continued Support

[The News, The Informer, The Inquirer, the New Vision, Liberian Journal, The Analyst]

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj, in a briefing to the UN Security Council today congratulated Liberians for seven years of unbroken peace.
- She said though it is a remarkable achievement, substantial international support and assistance are still needed for sustainable peace and development.
- She commended the Government's efforts in reaching the Completion Point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, calling it a "milestone" critical to Liberia's success in implementing its Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- However, despite the progress made, much work remains in consolidating Liberia's fragile peace, including the rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation.
- SRSG Løj noted that Liberia still faces destabilizing security challenges that often arise from mob violence, ethnic and communal tensions, competition for access to natural resources, land disputes, sexual and gender-based violence and armed robbery.
- The SRSG also underlined high rates of unemployment as a major concern for sustained recovery and future stability.
- The SRSG emphasized the need for "substantial donor support" for key security institutions - police, immigration and corrections services – to move forward strategic plans presented at a special partners' forum a year ago to adequately address potential security challenges.
- She stated, "Given the fact that Liberia's major security threats are internal rather than external, it will be important to ensure that these security institutions are strengthened to professionally meet their future operational challenges."

Former Ghanaian President Visits Liberia

[The Analyst]

- Former Ghanaian President and current Chairperson of the Inter-peace Governing Board John Kufour yesterday arrived in Liberia to present a nationwide conflict research report.
- An Inter-peace Government Board says the former Ghanaian President will present a 100-page document that speaks about the views of people on burning issues that they perceive could derail peace if not taken seriously.
- Inter-peace is a Swiss originated peace body instituted that is expected to collaborate with eight civil society institutions in Liberia and implement the platform for dialogue and peace in Liberia (P4DP).
- P4DP, with funding from the Peace Building Fund, carried out a yearlong research consultation across the country in five regions.
- After the research, the group noticed that peace in Liberia is being challenged by land and property disputes, shortcoming on local governance; problem with the rule-of-law and security; discrimination based on ethnicity and other identities, unemployment and access to resources.
- While in Liberia, Mr.Kufour will hold special meetings with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and other key players in Liberia's peace process .
- The Inter-peace project is implemented by UNMIL and the Liberian Government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs .

Land Commission Extends Awareness to Bong County

[National Chronicle]

- The Land Commission has embarked on a three-day workshop on land dispute harmonization in Bong County.
- Participants include the National Traditional Council of Liberia , civil society organizations , the Gbarnga City Corporation and the Norwegian Refugee Council .
- UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), UNMIL have pledged massive support to the workshop.
- Participants are expected to share experiences on various issues including land management, security and poverty.
- The three day event is expected to develop key policy on land management.

Samoa Bar Says no Prostitution

[Heritage]

- The Management of Samoa Bar says claims in the media that the centre is a breeding ground for prostitution and other forms of social abuses is not true .
- A top official of the business, William Kpehe said he does not record any of such interaction under the watchful eye of the business and maintains that the business is focused to delivering quality services to its many customers .
- He said the business has accommodated several high profile persons including staff of UNMIL who have wished it progress.
- Recently, residents of the community in which Samoa Bar operates complained of having sleepless nights as a result of loud music, constant practices of immorality, including prostitution .
- They also spoke of violent acts and criminally at the business centre .

50 Immigration Officers Trained

[The Inquirer]

- Ghana's Interior Minister Martin Amidu has charged 50 newly trained Liberian Immigration officers to demonstrate humanity and discipline.
- The officers were trained in basic immigration tactics and disciplines in Ghana for four months .
- He noted that the recent graduation is the second in a series of trainings for Liberian immigration officers in Ghana .
- He urged the newly trained officers to make the best use of the knowledge and skills acquired in the interest of their country .
- Liberia's National Security Advisor Boima Fahnbulleh who also attended the program said UNMIL, the Liberian Government and other partners are concerned about security in Liberia.
- He thanked the Ghanaian Government for the training and noted that Ghana has always been a true partner to Liberia's peace process.

Other UN News

UNYSAL Elects New Corp of Officers

[Frontpage Africa]

- A local youth organization, "United Nations Youth and Student Association (UNYSAL) , has elected its new corps of officers .
- The elections brought to power Benaiah Kwekwe, Program Officer ; Laura Parker , Secretary General ; Martina Nimely , Finance Officer and Joseph Trinity , Public Relations Officer .
- The elected officers were challenged to put their country first in all they do.
- Augustine Tamba who performed the induction ceremony also praised the UN for its many support to Liberia's peace process.

2,000 Farmers Empowered

[National Chronicle and Daily Observer]

- The European Union (EU) has provided funds to enhance empowerment and capacity building of about 2,000 farmers in Montserrado County.
- EU also provided USD\$100,000 to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) who will save guide the project.
- The project will be implemented by the Bettie's Agriculture and Development Union (BADU).
- BADU has already begun distributing farming materials to the farmers.
- Items being distributed included vegetable seeds, fertilizer, cutlasses , hoes , shovels , water containers amongst others.

FAO Distributes Agricultural Tool

[Daily Observer]

- The Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has commenced the distribution of assorted seeds to over 700 farmers in Margibi County.
- The materials are being distributed to 29 communities in the county .
- FAO's Margibi Project Coordinator Richard Sherman said the project is in support to the government's "back to the sail campaign".
- He said the project is supported by the EU and the Ministry of Agriculture.
- He said other beneficiaries of the project include the Women in Peace Building Network , Community Agriculture Development Project , Kukatonor Farmers and the United Farmers Association .

Local News on Liberian issues

Liberia Will Kick Out Substandard Products, VP Boakai Stresses

[Heritage , News , National Chronicle]

- Vice President Joseph Boakai says Liberia will no longer accept substandard products from foreigners .
- He said anyone wishing to invest in the country will be compelled to meet what he called "international acceptable standards " .
- He told a news conference that it is now time for Liberia to send a caveat to the world that the country is now on an irreversible path to development.
- The Vice President also said during his recent visit to China at Expo 2010, he held talks with potential private investors and encouraged them to consider investing in Liberia mainly in mining , road construction and food production.

PUL Sets up Anniversary Committee

[New Democrat, The News and National Chronicle]

- The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) has named a ten-member committee to plan and execute programs marking its 46th anniversary.
- The union said this year's anniversary will be held in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County from 1-3 October.
- The PUL said the event will be held under the theme , "Media Integrity for Peaceful Elections " .

Senate Discovers Additional USD\$22 Million

[*Inquirer and National Chronicle*]

- Discussion on the 2010/11 draft budget has ended in deadlock at the House of Representatives.
 - The deadlock follows over four hours of intense discussion in secret session on Wednesday.
 - It was gathered that lawmakers are split over the distribution of some USD\$22 million discovered during the budget review.
 - According to reports the extra USD\$22 million was discovered outside the USD\$347 million draft national budget submitted by the executive .
 - Reports say the lawmakers are deciding allocating the additional money to the budget of the legislature.
 - Some are arguing that large portion of the extra USD\$22 million be allotted to increase civil servants' salaries while the rest are said to be against the move .
- Despite the stalemate, Speaker Alex Tyler said discussion will continue today on the matter.

BIVAC Evades Tax

[Heritage]

- A committee of the Senate has described the operations of BIVAC in Liberia as illegal.
- BIVAC is an entity that monitors and checks goods coming into the country to ensure quality.
- The Commerce and Industry Committee said government must halt the operations of the company with immediate effect.
- The committees said the contract that led to the operation of BIVAC was not ratified by the National Transitional Government of Liberia.
- It said BIVAC is not paying taxes to government despite the millions of dollars it is collecting .

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

Senate Discovers Additional USD\$22 Million

[*Sky FM and ELBC,*]

BIVAC Evades Tax

[*Sky FM and ELBC*]

PUL Sets up Anniversary Committee

Nimba,Grand Gedeh Remember Sons

[Sky FM and ELBC]

- The Nimba-Gedeh peace initiative has announced two memorial services for late President Samuel Doe and fallen Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) General Thomas Qwiwonkpa.
- The chairman of the organizing committee said the decision is intended to promote peace and reconciliation between the two counties and families of the men.
- Mr.Jackson Doe said the memorial service of former President Doe takes place today at the Good Shepherd Assembly of God Church in Sinkor.
- He said the memorial service for late General Qwiwonkpa will also take place at the same church in November this year Man Sentenced by Death
- The Forth Judicial Circuit Court in Harper Maryland County has sentenced two brothers, Benjamin and Paul Toe ,to death by hanging .
- Jurors last week found the two men guilty for murdering their farther Albert Toe.
- Resident Judge Nelson Togba said murder is a first degree felony, punishable by death through hanging under the Liberian law .
- The judge said the state produced enough evidence to convict the men.

Accused Armed Robber Set Free

- Criminal Court “D” has ordered the immediate release of one Judee Toe, an alleged armed robber.
- The court’s decision was sparked by defence’s motion against the state to prosecute.
- The man was jailed in 2009 but was never indicted.
- The judge said the act violates the rights of the accused.
- According to the court, Toe was in jail on a mistaken identity.

Agreement Yields Workers’ Benefits

- A collective bargaining agreement has been signed between the Sime Darby Company and the General Agriculture Workers Union of Liberia (GAWUL).
- The agreement states that skilled workers will earn US\$5 a day while tappers will earn LD\$225 per ton of rubber.
- The agreement also covers scholarships, death and other benefits for the workers.
- The agreement took barely six weeks to be finalized.
- Labor Minister Teawon Gongolo who witnessed the ceremony described it as a milestone in the lives of tappers in Liberia.

Man Sentenced by Death

- The Forth Judicial Circuit Court in Harper Maryland County has sentenced two brothers, Benjamin and Paul Toe ,to death by hanging .
- Jurors last week found the two men guilty for murdering their farther Albert Toe.
- Resident Judge Nelson Togba said murder is a first degree felony, punishable by death through hanging under the Liberian law .
- The judge said the state produced enough evidence to convict the men.

Court Releases Accused Armed Robber

[Sky FM and ELBC]

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- According to the court, Toe was in jail on a mistaken identity.

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

Bropleh Requested Illegal Payment

[Sky FM)

- The fifth state witness in the case between the Republic of Liberia and former Liberia Telecommunications Authority(LTA) Boss Albert Bropleh has disclosed that Mr. Bropleh made several trips abroad without the approval of the president .
- The Liberia News Agency (LNA) quotes the witness as saying Mr. Bropleh at most instances compelled the LTA to provide money for his foreign travels.

- Mr. Abraham Samukai testifying in Tubmanburg ,Bomi County said Bropleh requested payment without presenting any invitation or indicating the destination and duration of the trips .
- Samukai according to LNA said a 2008 circular issued by the Executive Mansion forbids all public corporations including the LTA to pay for private trips for government officials.
- Samukai also said Mr. Bropleh violated the Public Procurement Act when he purchased two jeeps valued at USD\$40,000 .
- Samukai is the former head of procurement at the LTA.

BIVAC Evades Tax Nimba, Grand Gedeh Remember Sons

PUL Sets up Anniversary Committee

Witness Denies Knowledge

[Also reported Radio Sky FM and Truth]

- The state's fourth witness involving two Chinese men has told the court that he does not know who killed his boss.
- The Chinese are on trial for allegedly killing a South African Information Technology specialist in September last year.
- Joseph Dennis, a houseboy of the late South African said upon his arrival at the home of the deceased on 7 September, he discovered the body but did not know who killed him.
- He said he immediately called people and latter the police .
- He answered in infirmity when asked whether he knew the accused .
- Dennis did not confirm the two Chinese as the killers but said they were friends of his boss.
- The two Chinese have since pleaded not guilty.

Infant Motility Besieges Doe Community

- Residents of the Doe Community on Bushord Island say infant motility rate is high in the community.
- The residents have attributed the problem to flooding, lack of clinic and other diseases.
- They said most of their children died as a result of malaria and unsaved drinking water.
- The community has a population of over 20,000 inhabitants but with out a police depot and other basic social services.
- A fact-finding team which visited the community says the community is currently flooded and residents are using rain boots.

Gbapolu District to be Cut-off, Citizens Worried

(Sky FM and ELBC)

- A concerned Gbapolu County Citizen, Buster Cooper, has accused the Mano Resource Company of damaging the roads in the district.
- He said the company is transporting heavy earth moving equipment out of the area which are damaging the roads during this rainy season.
- Mr. Cooper said at times the company transports 40-foot containers and 5-tons machines, noting that the district will be cut-off from the rest of the country if the complain is not addressed .
- All attempts to contact the company on the matter has since failed

Truth FM

[News monitored today at 10:00 am]

Senate Passes Medicine &Health Products Regulatory Authority Act

- The Liberian Senate has passed into law the Liberia Medicine and Health Products Regulatory Authority Act.
- The act seeks to ensure, amongst other things, the inspection of retailed pharmaceutical outlets for annual registration , which will see the documentation, condition of pharmacies and qualification of dispenser in store .
- The Senate reached the decision on Wednesday following a report by its committee on Health and Social Welfare.
- The act will now be forwarded to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

PUL Sets up Anniversary Committee

Gbapolu District to be Cut-off, Citizens Worried

UP Legislative Caucus Rejects Claims

- The Unity Party Legislative Caucus has rejected media reports that one of its members is delaying the Caesar Freeman Rape case.
- The National Chronicle accused Representative Titus Barclay of delaying Mr. Freeman's case under the caption " Justice Delayed , Justice Denied ".
- The caucus described the publication as an act intended to smear the character of the Montserrado County Lawmaker.
- The caucus wants the family of Mr. Freeman to follow the case through the court rather than making empty allegations.
- Mr. Freeman is on trial for raping a 19-year old girl .

Country Devil Attacks, Senator Linked

[Also reported Radio Sky FM and ELBC]

- A former Senator of Gbapolu County Amah Jallah has described as worrisome reports of country devil attacks in the county .
- Mr. Jallah alleged that Senator Daniel Nyetahn is behind the attacks in the county .
- He wants the Ministry of Internal Affairs to quickly move in before it escalates.
- He said Senator Nyetahn is using the devil to frighten people who are opposing his leadership.
- Senator Nyetahn has meanwhile described Mr. Jallah and others who are accusing him as evil minded .
- He denied the claims and vowed to pursue the matter through legal means.
- Reports say eight people remain unaccounted for in Niakeh Town, Gbarpolu County following the reported invasion of the area by the country devil.
- Dozens of people mainly men reportedly fled in disarray when the Poro society devil took control of the town.

Education Ministry Creates Adult Literacy Curriculum

- Deputy Education Minister Dr. Mator Kpangbai says the Ministry has crated a non formal educational curriculum for adult.
- He said the curriculum will be distributed to adult literacy institutions across the country .
- He said the adult literacy program is helping government in its educational drive.
- The Deputy Education Minister spoke in Monrovia during programs marking "International Literacy Day ".

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian Gov't Poised To Loose Millions to Logging Companies...Global Witness Alarms Over 'New'

Forest Law

sengbeh.wordpress.com

Logging companies in Liberia are trying to get out of paying millions of dollars in tax to the country's cash-starved government through a dubious new law, Global Witness, an international campaign group has alarmed. The draft law in question which emerged from Liberia's House of Representatives is titled 'An Act to Abolish the Payment of Land Rental Bid Premium on Contract Area in the Forestry Sector of the Liberian Economy'. The bill is accompanied by a 'Report of the Joint Committee on Ways, Means and Finance, Judiciary and Agriculture, on the Act to Abolish Land Rental Bid Premium,' also from the House of Representatives. Global Witness, in a statement issued in Monrovia earlier this week , said it has discovered that members of the Liberian House of Representatives have drafted legislation to reduce the annual fees paid by timber concessionaries by 80 percent, which would rob the government of needed revenues. This could cost Liberians US\$10.3 million a year in much needed revenue, the campaign group said. In a clear conflict of interests, Global Witness alleged that one of the lawmakers (Lofa County Representative Moses Y. Kollie) supporting the move holds shares in a logging firm that stands to benefit financially. Global Witness said it has copies of the Articles of Incorporation of the logging concessionaire International Consultant Capital, dated 20 August 2007, which show that Rep Kollie owns 6% of the shares in the firm.

700 Ghanaian Peacekeepers honored in Liberia

www.ghanaweb.com

Seven hundred Ghanaian peacekeepers, serving with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), have been decorated with medals for their outstanding achievements in contributing to peace in that country. The peacekeepers, comprising 644 men and 56 women, are part of the 12th Ghanaian Battalion operating with UNMIL under the command of Lieutenant Colonel C.K. Lithur, since April 2010.

A statement issued in Accra on Wednesday and signed by Major K. Baah-Bentum on behalf of the Director of Public Relations of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) said Madam Ellen Margrethe Loj, Special Representative of United Nations Secretary General, decorated the personnel at Buchanan, Liberia. She commended Ghana for her consistent and steadfast willingness to contribute to the UN's call for global peace and security.

"Since 1948, many nations had supported the UN in its quest for global peace and security by contributing troops and police to peacekeeping operations, but few could beat Ghana's support," she added.

Fargo man collecting books for children in Liberia convicted of identity fraud

www.wday.com

A Fargo man who was ordered to stop collecting books for children in Liberia because his group wasn't a licensed charity in the state has been convicted of identity fraud in Maryland. 27-year-old Naboth Zondo was found guilty on one count after a court trial and sentenced to time already served. He was found not guilty on an additional 6 counts of fraud, 5 counts of credit card misuse and 1 count of theft. In July, Zondo was issued a cease-and-desist order in North Dakota for operating as an unlicensed charity. He's the director of the Liberian Center for Growth and Development. The group wanted to collect books and equipment for a library in Liberia.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

Hyperdynamics Says Guinea Concession May Hold 2.3 Billion Barrels of Oil

www.bloomberg.com

Hyperdynamics Corp., an exploration partner with Dana Petroleum Plc in Guinea, said its concessions in the West African nation may hold about 2.3 billion barrels of prospective oil resources. Netherland Sewell and Associates Inc. assessed assets covering an area of 3,635 square kilometers (1,403 square miles) being surveyed with Petroleum Geo-Services ASA, Houston-based Hyperdynamics said today in a statement. "Further resource potential is anticipated on the remainder of the 25,000-square-kilometer concession with future work." Dana Petroleum Plc, the U.K. explorer subject to a hostile takeover from Korea National Oil Corp., holds a 23 percent stake in the Guinean concession. Hyperdynamics owns the rest. Dana Chief Executive Officer Tom Cross today said that he is "focused on driving value" for shareholders through exploration. The company said that it's worth about 1.96 billion pounds (\$3 billion), or 18 percent more than the 1,800 pence a share the state-owned Korea National offered. Dana, based in Aberdeen, is readying to drill an exploration well in Mauritania, Cross said today on a conference call. Dana also plans to expand exploration in Africa, including in Guinea, Senegal, Egypt and Morocco, Cross said Aug. 27.

Sierra Leone

S.Leone panel to probe 13-year-old adoption scandal

(AFP)

Sierra Leone's social minister on Wednesday announced a new probe into a 13-year-old trafficking scandal in which 40 parents claim their children were illegally adopted in the United States. Minister Soccoh Kabia told reporters that President Ernest Koroma had ordered the creation of a three-man fact-finding committee headed by a high court judge in a fresh attempt to clear up the controversial case. "The commission will investigate all issues connected with the child trafficking incident in which some 40 parents ... alleged that their children were taken to the United States for adoption without their consent by a local NGO, Help a Needy Child International (HANCI) about 13 years ago," said Kabia. According to the minister HANCI was established in 1996, "setting up child survival centres in Freetown and Makeni (in the north) where it offered services of schooling from kindergarten to tertiary level." When civil war broke out, parents sent their children to the organisation for protection and after the war, which ended in 2002, parents who came to fetch their children were told they had been adopted. "The parents said they were never informed about the adoption process but the organisation reacted that they were informed," said Kabia. The organisation also said that the children were adopted with their parents' consent. Pressure from the parents later led to an investigation in which three officials from the organisation were charged and acquitted.

Ivory Coast**Cote d'Ivoire Education Ministry says 52 pct citizens illiterate**

Xinhua

Up to 51 percent of Cote d'Ivoire's citizens, mostly women, are illiterate, according to the West African country's Education Ministry. Monou Fally, head of the literacy campaign services in the Education Ministry, made the disclosure here on Wednesday at a ceremony to mark the 45th International Literacy Day. He called for the development of functional literacy campaign programs to help women improve themselves in building their country. "Women play a central role in the social chain and we should therefore empower them so that they can be involved in human development," he said. Cote d'Ivoire's National Education Minister Gilbert Bleu Laine, on his part, said literacy is an important factor in developmental and that it is one of the best ways to fight against poverty. "It is difficult for one to make progress in life without knowing how to read, write or calculate," the minister said. He declared that education for all is a priority for Cote d'Ivoire's government.

Bangkok Post
Friday, 10 September 2010

Cash-strapped Khmer Rouge tribunal appeals for more funds

Cambodia and the UN on Tuesday appealed to international donors for more money to fund the country's cash-strapped war crimes court as it prepares for its second trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders.



This picture, released by the Extraordinary Chamber in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), shows the courtroom during the verdict reading in the trial of Khmer Rouge prison chief S-21, Kaing Guek Eavin July 2010.

Cambodia and the UN appealed to international donors for more money to fund the country's cash-strapped war crimes court as it prepares for its second trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders.

The appeal was made during a meeting in the capital Phnom Penh between the government, officials from the United Nations-backed court and representatives from 22 countries, officials said.

"We ask you to continue to give full support to the tribunal in its endeavour to bring justice to the victims of the Khmer Rouge, once and for all," deputy premier Sok An said, according to his speech later issued.

Originally budgeted at 56 million dollars over three years, the tribunal opened in 2006 after nearly a decade of wrangling between the UN and Cambodia but significantly raised its cost estimates last year to 170 million dollars.

The tribunal currently falls around 39 million dollars short of next year's 46.8 million dollar budget, on top of a 7.4 million dollar shortfall for this year as of June 30, according to court and government officials.

In its first trial, the court sentenced in July the former prison chief of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime, known as Duch, to 30 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Sok An said the court had made "good progress" in its work but warned that the second trial, which involves four more Khmer Rouge leaders, is "more complex and will test the will of the national and international community".

The joint trial of Khmer Rouge's Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea, former head of state Khieu Samphan, ex-foreign minister Ieng Sary and his wife Ieng Thirith, who was the minister of social affairs, is expected to start in 2011.

Donors, who include Japan, France, Australia, the US and the European Union, have hesitated to fund the Cambodian side of the court after allegations of political interference and a scandal in which local staff were allegedly forced to pay kickbacks for their jobs.

Up to two million people were executed or died of starvation, disease and overwork as the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge movement emptied cities and enslaved the population on collective farms in its bid to create a communist utopia.

Carla Del Ponte investigated over illegal evidence

Former war crimes prosecutor accused of allowing bullying and bribing of witnesses in trial of alleged Serbian warlord Vojislav Seselj



Carla Del Ponte, the former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Photograph: Laurent Gillieron/AP

Carla Del Ponte, the former war crimes prosecutor who put Balkan warlords and political leaders behind

bars, is to be investigated over claims she allowed the use of bullying and bribing of witnesses, or tainted evidence.

Judges at the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague today ordered an independent inquiry into the practices of Del Ponte and two prominent serving prosecutors, Hildegard Ürtz-Retzlaff and Daniel Saxon, after complaints from witnesses that they had been harassed, paid, mistreated and their evidence tampered with.

It is the first time in the tribunal's 17 years in operation that top prosecutors have faced potential contempt of court rulings.

During her eight years as chief prosecutor, Del Ponte, a determined Swiss investigator now serving as her country's ambassador to Argentina, was a combative and divisive figure. She left her post in 2007.

The allegations against her concern the working practices of her team of investigators in the ongoing prosecution for war crimes of the Serbian politician, Vojislav Seselj, a notorious warlord.

"Some of the witnesses had referred to pressure and intimidation to which they were subjected by investigators for the prosecution," said a statement from the judge in the Seselj case. "The prosecution allegedly obtained statements illegally, by threatening, intimidating and/or buying [witnesses] off."

One Serbian witness said he was offered a well-paid job in the US in return for testimony favourable to the prosecution.

"The statements mention sleep deprivation during interviews, psychological pressuring, an instance of blackmail (the investigators offered relocation in exchange for the testimony they hoped to obtain), threats (one, for example, about preparing an indictment against a witness if he refused to testify), or even illegal payments of money."

An independent investigator, expected to be a French magistrate, is to report on the allegations within six months. Prosecutors in The Hague rejected the allegations while promising to co-operate with the inquiry.

"We believe our staff have conducted their work in a professional way within the rules," said Frederick Swinnen, special adviser to Serge Brammertz of Belgium, who succeeded Del Ponte as chief prosecutor.

Seselj, who surrendered to the tribunal seven years ago, has been alleging prosecution dirty tricks for years. He is routinely disruptive in court, trading insults. He has already been sentenced to 15 months for contempt of court after revealing the names and addresses of protected witnesses.

Judge Jean-Claude Antonetti, who ordered the Del Ponte investigation and who is presiding over the Seselj trial, has himself come in for strong criticism for "bending over backwards" to accommodate the accused.

Antonetti said the tribunal was taking the allegations seriously and refused "to allow any doubt to fester concerning a possible violation of the rights of the accused and concerning the investigation techniques employed by certain members of the prosecution".

While tribunal experts believed the judge was conducting an exercise in political correctness, today's unprecedented decision was the second blow this month for prosecutors in major international war crimes trials.

In the trial, also in The Hague, of the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, the prosecutor's decision to summon Naomi Campbell as a witness this month backfired badly when the supermodel failed to supply explicit evidence linking Taylor to "blood diamonds" and warmongering in Sierra Leone.

Caribbean court of justice: a model for international courts?

Five-year-old CCJ has been praised for its process of selecting independent, high-quality judges



The International Criminal Court in The Hague. The Caribbean Court of Justice has been held up as an model of how to choose judges for international courts. Photograph: Robin Utrecht/EPA

A book by UCL professors examining how judges are chosen for international courts has been getting a lot of attention recently. One of the authors has praised the process of selecting judges for the

Caribbean court of justice (CCJ) – a supra-national court serving the Caribbean. Professor Kate Malleson names the CCJ's external selection body – called the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC) – as a model for identifying independent and high-quality judicial candidates.

Born of a fear of political interference, the commission is chaired by the CCJ's president and consists of legal and non-legal persons, as well as members of civil society from different Caribbean member states. The court's bid to be independent of governments is bolstered by the fact that it is wholly financed through a trust fund, from money raised on international markets.

Structurally, the CCJ is an interesting hybrid. It is both a final appellate court for criminal and civil cases and the tribunal that resolves treaty disputes between member states. As an appellate court, it replaces appeals to the judicial committee of the privy council. The privy council was previously the UK supreme court, hearing matters as the final appellate authority, and still hears appeals from British territories, dependencies and some Commonwealth countries.

Though most of the CCJ judges previously sat at a national level, at least one member of the panel is required to be an expert in international law. This has favoured legal academics, particularly those with experience working with the Caribbean community (Caricom) system. One judge is also required to be from the civil law tradition, reflecting the presence of civil law jurisdictions such as Suriname and Haiti.

Unlike the international criminal court (ICC), the CCJ selection system does not include prescriptions to ensure gender balance or quotas for country representation. Judicial vacancies are advertised and suitably qualified candidates may apply.

As the two countries that have notoriously held off on submitting to the CCJ as a final court of appeal, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica each currently boast citizens on the CCJ's seven-member panel. In the five years since the inception of the CCJ, only one woman has been appointed to sit as a judge.

Tracy Robinson, senior lecturer in the law faculty at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill in Barbados, is not persuaded that this system ensures sufficient diversity: "In the absence of explicit provisions, I hope the under-representation of women on the court is directly addressed by the Service Commission [and] taken into account in the appointment of new judges". Early fears that the CCJ was set up by Caribbean governments to be the "hanging court", as the antidote to the privy council's supposed hostility towards the death penalty, has not materialised. In one of its first decisions, the court upheld a challenge to the death penalty, arguably in the liberal tradition of the privy council. Court watchers such as Robinson believe that the true test for the CCJ will come in civil liberties cases in areas other than the death penalty. It's in producing a range of these decisions, she argues, that the court is likely to establish itself as an authoritative voice in the region.

Maybe it's too early to judge the judges of the CCJ. The absence of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago has led to a paltry case load for a court that is hugely expensive to maintain. And without more robust public interest lawyering or arguing novel questions of law, the true mettle of the CCJ has not been tested. The jury is out on whether the court will be transformative in developing the jurisprudence of the region.

Philip Dayle is a lawyer who has worked in human rights at the Inter American Commission on Human Rights in Washington DC and the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, Switzerland

Foreign Policy

Friday, 10 September 2010

Uncovering international judges

Posted By David Bosco

Several UK-based legal scholars have just published an important new book, *Selecting International Judges*, that takes a hard look at how international judges are chosen. They examine the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, and the results are devastating.

For the most part, they find that judges are selected through a combination of cronyism at the national level and horse-trading at the international level. I spoke today with Philippe Sands, one of the book's authors. He's an experienced international litigator who frequently appears before international courts. He's long had the feeling that the insular world of international judgeships needed scrutiny. The problem was that most of those with the knowledge and access to carry it out were deeply invested in that world. "Those who know about it are part of the system," he says.

Built on more than a hundred interviews with judges and diplomats, the book exposes a deeply problematic system. Very few countries have rigorous or competitive processes for selecting the candidates they put forward for international judgeships. Often, Sands says, those nominated are "friends of friends or friends of politicians." In other cases, diplomats rather than lawyers are put forward. In one particularly egregious case, the Japanese government nominated a candidate with no formal legal training or background in criminal law for an ICC judgeship. Once countries have nominated candidates, their final selection often becomes the subject of traditional horse-trading between states that has little or nothing to do with relative qualifications.

The ICJ and the ICC, in particular, are institutions that rule on critical matters involving human rights and international security. The ICJ's recent decision on Kosovo had major political and security implications. And as Sands says, "the ICC is a court that can put people behind bars for the rest of their lives." It's well past time to reform the way these judges are selected.