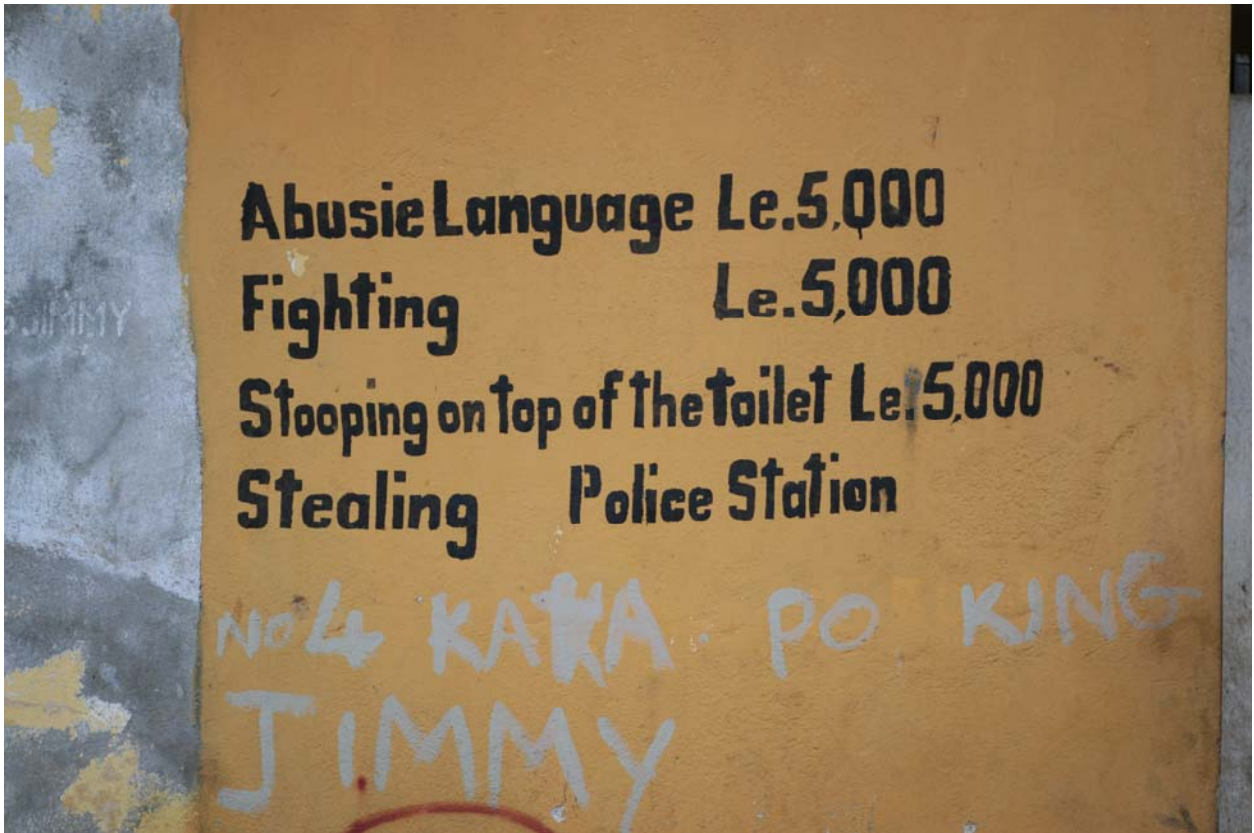


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



A wall in King Jimmy. Photo: Frances Ngaboh-Smart

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, 21 February 2011

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

Monday, 21 February 2011



SLP takes over from Mongolian Peacekeepers at Special Court

Mongolian Peacekeeper handing over the flag to a Sierra Leonean Court Official

SLP takes over from Mongolian Peacekeepers at Special Court

By William Freeman

The Mongolian Peacekeepers who have been providing security at the Special Court for Sierra Leone have handed over the baton to the Sierra Leone Police in a handing over ceremony last Friday at the Special Court's premises in Freetown.

The Mongolians have over the past eight years protected the Court's facilities and about 150 of them will depart the shores of Sierra Leone for their homeland.

In his address the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Hon. Justice Jon Kamanda commended the Mongolian Peacekeepers for the perfect job they have done by securing the Court up to this time.

"The need to secure the Court has been so paramount considering the high profile cases the court has been handling" the Court's President stated.

Justice Kamanda told guests that the Court operated three Chambers which include two Trial Chambers and an Appeals Chamber adding that they successfully adjudicated three important cases dealing with the RUF, AFRC and the Civil Defence Forces while the fourth case which involved the former Liberian President; Charles Taylor is almost coming to an end in The Hague.

He said the Special Court has been a huge success in trying to bring to justice the perpetrators of heinous crimes committed during the war in the country and for this reason the Court was among the top three nominees for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize.

The Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone; Madam Binta Mansaray said the effort of the Mongolian Peacekeepers in bringing peace and security to Sierra Leone will always be remembered.

The Court's Registrar said two of the Mongolian peacekeepers lost their lives while serving as guards in the Special Court. She expressed her condolences to their families on behalf of the Court, the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN.

She disclosed to her audience that the departure of the Mongolian peacekeepers will mark the end of the presence of UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone and the beginning of Sierra Leone's responsibility in maintaining its responsibility of the court.

Madam Binta Mansaray further disclosed that in the coming weeks two-thirds of the Court's facilities will be handed over to the government of Sierra Leone.

She expressed confidence in the SLP whom she said have received professional training from the UN to increase their confidence and capacity in handling the security of the Court.

Highlighting the challenges of the Court the Registrar said protection of all witnesses who testified during the four trials is one of their biggest challenge and the location of the Special Court in the country in which the crimes were committed is in itself a challenge.

The UNMIL Force Commander; Major General Muhammad Khalid thanked the Special Court for Sierra Leone for providing the enabling environment for the soldiers to perform their duty. He wished the Mongolian

peacekeepers safe journey as they return back home after years of risking their own lives to protect others.

The Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Government and People of Sierra Leone thanked the Mongolians and the UN in particular for their efforts in bringing peace to Sierra Leone. He said the handing over will bring into focus the Sierra Leone Police capability to sustain the security of the Court. The VP said the SLP has always assisted in the activities of the Court in the areas of effecting arrests of indictees.

The VP expressed confidence in the SLP ability in maintaining the status quo of the security system.

StarAfrica.com

Friday, 18 February 2011

<http://www.starafrika.com/en/news/press-releases/article/un-hands-over-special-court-security-to-148724.html>

UN Hands Over Special Court Security to Sierra Leone Police

By: Special Court for Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, February 18, 2011/African Press Organization (APO)/ -- United Nations peacekeepers of the Special Court's Mongolian Guard Force today formally handed over responsibility for the Court's security to the Sierra Leone Police.

UN peacekeepers, working in cooperation with Special Court's Security Section and the Sierra Leone Police, have maintained security at the Special Court since its inception in 2002. In addition to securing the Court's premises in Freetown, they have provided security during the movement of detainees and prisoners within and outside of Sierra Leone.

The Mongolian peacekeepers, who serve as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), took over the Special Court's security from Nigerian peacekeepers in January 2006. Since then, a total of 2,300 Mongolian peacekeepers have served at the Court.

At a colourful ceremony in front of the Special Court's courthouse, a Mongolian peacekeeper handed over the court flag to a member of Special Court Security (photo), who handed it to a Special Court Police officer.

Vice-President Alhaji Sahr Sam-Sumana represented the Government of Sierra Leone, and in his remarks highlighted the cooperation between the police and the peacekeepers, as well as the training received by police officers serving at the Special Court. The United Nations was represented by UNMIL Force Commander Major-General Mohammad Khalid, while Special Court President Justice Jon Kamanda and Registrar Binta Mansaray represented the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

“The fact that the Special Court was able to operate so smoothly since its inception is a great tribute to the security provided by Nigerian and Mongolian peacekeepers, supported from the very beginning by the Sierra Leone Police,” Ms. Mansaray said.

Among those attending were senior government officials, heads of diplomatic missions, civil society representatives, journalists, and Special Court staff.

Today's handover marks a significant milestone as the Special Court is set to become the first international tribunal to complete its mandate and transition to a Residual Mechanism.

BBC Network Africa

Friday, 18 February 2011

Music.

The Sierra Leone Police brass band, bidding farewell to Mongolian UN peacekeepers as they folded their tents and piled up their weapons to formally start leaving country. After the UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMSIL, ended their assignment in Sierra Leone in December 2005, the Mongolians were sent here from the UN Mission in neighbouring Liberia, UNMIL. For five years they provided security for the UN-backed war crimes court for Sierra Leone, and sent 2,300 troops here – around a quarter of the Asian country's entire army. At a colourful ceremony in Freetown, the last batch of 150 troops transferred security for the Court to the Sierra Leone Police. One of them handed over the flag of the Court, which was received by a police officer. Even if tinged with some good reminiscences for Sierra Leoneans, whose hospitality is legendary, this Mongolian peacekeeper is relieved that they are heading back home after a mission in which two of them died of natural causes.

SOLDIER: I am the Major [unheard] We have been here since 2006, so from the 2006 came ten rotations rotating and this is our last. Of course this Africa is difficult for us. We are from Mongolia, far away from here. Usually our country is very cold, but Sierra Leone, is you know, is hot and warm. From the behalf of my troops we really appreciate Sierra Leone people's hospitality. It was very good experience with African people [first time] in Mongolian contingent.

Vice-President Samuel Sam-Sumana, who is also the head of the Police Council, assured the Court that the Sierra Leone Police have the capacity to take over their security as they wrap-up their in-country activity. While here, Mongolians provided security for senior staff of the Court and its premises, which housed the detention centres where war crimes indictees were kept. Following their convictions, they are serving their lengthy jail terms in Rwanda, while another indictee, former Liberian President Charles Taylor, is being tried in the Dutch city of The Hague.

This is the first time since 1999 that Sierra Leone will be without foreign peacekeepers helping with one form of security or another. This led to high premium (sic.) charged on foreign vessels that came here, which had a knock-on effect on the prices of goods. It is believed that with the departure of all foreign peacekeepers from the country, its security is now guaranteed, and insurance companies will reduce their premiums, which will have a positive effect on the country.

Christian Science Monitor

Wednesday, 9 February 2011

As Charles Taylor boycotts trial, Sierra Leone's war-battered residents hope for justice

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor faces indictments on 11 counts, including murder, rape, sexual slavery, and the use of child soldiers in a brutal civil war that ravaged Sierra Leone.

By Paige McClanahan, Correspondent / February 9, 2011
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor boycotted his war crimes trial in The Hague for a second day on Wednesday, further delaying the court's ruling on whether he bears responsibility for the civil war that ravaged the West African country of Sierra Leone for more than a decade.

It is the latest bizarre twist in the drawn-out trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, established in 2003 "to try those who bear the greatest responsibility" for the war that brutalized the country in the 1990s. Proceedings have included Shakespearean monologues from Mr. Taylor along with testimonies from British supermodel Naomi Campbell and American actor-activist Mia Farrow.

But here in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, the public remains confident that the law will eventually catch up with Taylor, who faces indictments on 11 counts, including murder, rape, sexual slavery, and the use of child soldiers.

Think you know Africa? Take our geography quiz.

"Charles Taylor is pretending to the world that he's innocent," says Theresa Turay, a Sierra Leonean who lived through the country's gruesome 11-year civil war. "But he has to face the trial. He has to face the penalty."

"If you play evil," she adds, "it will come back for you."

The trial, which heard its first witness in January 2008, was set to come to an end Friday. Prosecutors presented their closing arguments Tuesday, and the defense was meant to do the same today. If closing arguments had wrapped up as planned this week, a ruling in the case could have been expected sometime later this year. Taylor's boycott has thrown that schedule into disarray.

'This is about ego, not justice'

Taylor's lawyers led the walkout Tuesday, claiming the court wrongly rejected their 547-page trial summary, which was filed three weeks late despite multiple warnings from the court.

Speaking outside the courtroom Wednesday morning, Taylor's lead lawyer Courtenay Griffiths insisted that the court's refusal to accept the trial summary was evidence of its bias against the defense team. The British lawyer said he plans to appeal, a process that could delay a ruling in the case indefinitely.

"It's about simply this: 'You're not running this court, Mr. Taylor, and we're going to show you who's in charge by rejecting your final brief,' " Mr. Griffiths said today outside the court, reports the Associated Press. "So this is about ego, not justice, and I really don't see that this kind of personalized politics has any part to play in a court of law."

Chief prosecutor Brenda Hollis shot back, claiming that Taylor's team was just trying to buy time. "The accused is not attending a social event. He may not R.S.V.P. at the last minute. He is the accused at a criminal proceeding," Ms. Hollis said.