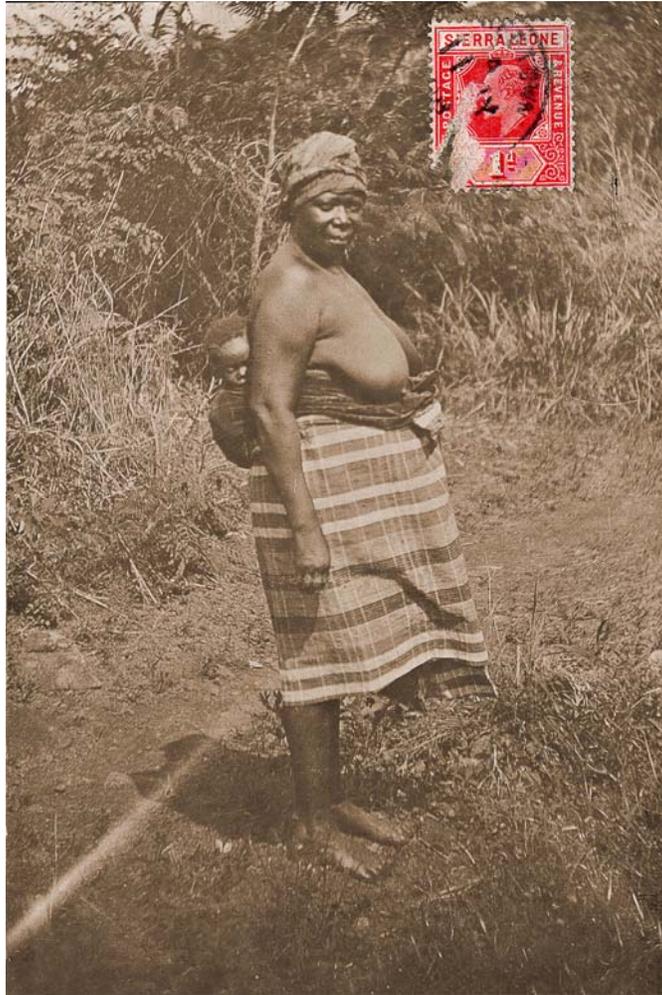


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Historic 1908 postcard from Sierra Leone

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Wednesday, 23 February 2011

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

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

SLP takes over from Mongolian Peacekeepers at Special Court



The Mongolian Peace keepers 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.

<http://www.awoko.org/2011/02/21/slp-takes-over-from-mongolian-peacekeepers-at-special-court/>

New Internationalist Blog

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

<http://www.newint.org/blog/majority/2011/02/22/goddbye-blue-berets/>

Goodbye, blue berets

Posted by Sulakshana Gupta

Starting this week, Sierra Leoneans in Freetown will miss a familiar sight they've grown used to. The resident battalion of Mongolian peacekeepers in their khaki uniforms and blue berets are finally leaving the country.



UN peacekeepers formally left the country in 2008, but the Mongolian Guard Force have protected the Special Court for Sierra Leone since January 2006 and managed the movements of high profile detainees like former RUF rebel leader Issa Sesay and former Liberian president Charles Taylor. Last week, in what was a colourful ceremony, they handed over the Court's security to the Sierra Leone Police.



A total of 2,300 Mongolian peacekeepers have served at the court but they've maintained a quiet presence. I've been visiting the court regularly since 2009 and the sight of them perched in their towers always comforted me. The only time I've made eye contact is when there's been a hearing or a screening at the court building.

They rarely left the premises, and when they did it was in secured UN vehicles in full uniform, which made them a bit of a novelty on the streets of Freetown. Though very respectful, they rarely smiled at passers-by and I was often tempted to pull a face, a tourist gag you'd try with one of the Queen's guards in London.

As part of the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), peacekeeping troops poured in from all over the world from the end of the civil war in 2002 – from India, Zambia, Jordan and Nigeria, just to name a few. Between 2002 and 2004, there were about 20,000 peace keepers in the country.



But the Mongolian contingent is different. In the past, peacekeepers mingled freely with the local population in Sierra Leone and many even intermarried and had children out of wedlock. But none of this for the Mongolians. They have maintained a cautious distance from the Sierra Leonean community. 'I think this made them more impartial and it's why we looked up to them,' says Aminata Sesay, who runs a small banana stall across the road from the court building.

In 2012, Sierra Leone will hold another national election, for the first time without the presence of UN peacekeepers. Some are nervous that the Mongolians have now left too. With issues of unemployment and service delivery close to a boil, the continued presence of the Mongolian guards could have had a calming effect.

However, it's something that needed to happen. This is part of the handover process at the Special Court from international to national staff. Last year, the detention centre at the court was handed over to the government to be converted into a women's prison. Increasingly, key positions are being offered to Sierra Leoneans.



Still, many like me will miss having them around. Cote d'Ivoire has requested for a contingent of Mongolian peacekeepers and I'm sure the blue berets will continue to work tirelessly to maintain peace in West Africa.

All photos by The Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Time

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

Gaddafi's Blood-Soaked Hands

Posted by **MASSIMO CALABRESI** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at 10:57 pm

2 Comments

It was not long after he received a **secret warning** from the Italian government in April 1986 and narrowly escaped being blown to bits by American bombers that Muammar Gaddafi declared his intention to become Emperor of Africa. What followed as the increasingly erratic Gaddafi pursued his megalomaniacal dream was one of the most obscene and violent episodes in recent African history.

Drawing recruits from his terrorism camps, Gaddafi trained, armed and dispatched thugs like Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh to take power in West African countries, initiating the brutal slaughter of innocents in Liberia and Sierra Leone, says David M. Crane, the founding prosecutor of the **Special Court for Sierra Leone**. "This was a long-term criminal conspiracy," says Crane, who is now a professor at Syracuse University, and "[Gaddafi] was the center point."

For those who don't remember, here's a quick summary of the atrocities that took place in the war in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. In pursuit of diamonds, timber and gold, Sankoh, backed by Taylor, backed by Gaddafi, invaded Sierra Leone and instituted a campaign of terror, cutting off the arms and other body parts of civilians to frighten the country into compliance. Rape was a widespread weapon of war, and according to reporting by one human rights organization, Sankoh's troops played a **game** where they would bet on the sex of a baby being carried by a pregnant captive, then cut the fetus out of the woman to determine its gender.

Sankoh died in custody after the war ended; Taylor is currently being tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Gaddafi is named in Taylor's indictment, and Taylor has testified to Gaddafi's involvement. Crane says he found evidence that when Sankoh invaded Sierra Leone, "Libyan special forces were there helping train and assist them tactically and there were Libyan arms in that invasion: he had been involved from the get go."

Tuesday afternoon, the U.N. Security Council issued a statement suggesting Gaddafi might be called to task for the current bloodshed in Libya, which has reportedly included unprovoked and lethal assaults by foreign African mercenaries against innocent protesters. "The members of the Security Council stressed the importance of accountability," the statement said, "They underscored the need to hold to account those responsible for attacks, including by forces under their control, on civilians."

Anyone holding Gaddafi to account will have a long ledger to work from. It was Gaddafi, after all, who ordered the attack on the West Berlin disco that killed two U.S. servicemen and prompted the 1986 U.S. bombing known as operation El Dorado Canyon. Gaddafi was behind the bombing of Pan Am 103, which killed 270 people over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. And until he gave them up after the U.S. attack on Iraq in 2003, Gaddafi was pursuing nuclear and chemical weapons.

What would it mean for U.S. interests if Gaddafi were to be put on trial for any of the atrocities he's been responsible for over his four decades in power? On the surface, Gaddafi's fall should not pose the kind of threat to U.S. strategic interests that a disorderly transition in Egypt or Bahrain might. Egypt's relationship with Israel and its military cooperation with Washington are as important to the U.S. as the presence in Bahrain of the Navy's 5th fleet. But Gaddafi's sponsorship of the brutality in West Africa shows how Libya's vast oil wealth can allow it to project instability well beyond its borders in ways that can also threaten the U.S.

Another thug could replace Gaddafi. Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said Monday, "Would you imagine to have an Islamic Arab Emirate at the borders of Europe? This would be a very serious threat." U.S. officials are unconvinced the threat is as bad as Frattini says, and they note that Gaddafi himself has been peddling the danger. "We've heard [Gaddafi] say that there are caliphates being formed in Libya," says a senior administration official. "There are very valid concerns about Al Qaeda in the Maghreb, but the fact that a bunch of people have taken territory in the east [of Libya] does not a caliphate make."

The greater danger may be of Gaddafi staying. "In the recent past [he] has been better behaved," says a senior administration official, "But go back 20 years or so and he was a significant sponsor of terrorist acts who had a nuclear program. So a major concern is does the regime retrench in ways that affect our interests in the region? Even before this happened he was complaining that his gesture in giving up nukes had not been reciprocated with the kind of love he expected. If he somehow survives this he'll have no interest in improving relations with the west."