

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



Cape Lighthouse

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, 25 July 2012

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

Tuesday, 25 July 25, 2012

Peter C. Andersen Receives Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award

By: SEM on July 25, 2012.

St. Paul, Minn. – Peter C. Andersen '77, of Freetown, Sierra Leone, has received the Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award from Macalester College. Andersen graduated from Macalester in 1977 and is now working for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.



The Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award honors the legacy of Charles J. Turck, president of Macalester College from 1939 to 1958. Lawyer, educator, social activist, internationalist, and churchman, Turck championed internationalism throughout his tenure. This award recognizes an alumnus who has advanced the internationalist spirit and lived up to the exhortation, “to be a worthy son or daughter of Macalester, you must listen to your hopes and not your fears.”

Andersen has come a long way from Maple Plain, Minn. - both figuratively and literally. And Macalester, he says, was the catalyst for that.

“It was the curriculum, the exposure to fellow students from many countries, and the opportunity to study abroad,” that set him off on this path, he says.

Almost a decade ago, Andersen moved back to Sierra Leone, a country he'd grown to love while serving there in the Peace Corps in the late '70s and early '80s working within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Since 2003 he has been working for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, an international criminal tribunal charged with trying those who committed atrocities against civilians during the country's civil war.

What is Andersen proudest of? “When the people of Sierra Leone were in desperate circumstances, I did everything I could to help them, and to make sure that the world could not turn its back on them.”

Andersen is the fourth Macalester graduate to receive the Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award. It was previously given to Tonderai Chikuhwa '96, a Senior Adviser at the United Nations; Steven Laible '67, who, with his wife Nancy, began supporting girls in Bengali. In 2011, it was awarded to former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan who graduated from Macalester in 1961.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 1,958 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism and civic engagement. Learn more at macalester.edu.

Macalester College

Sierra Express Media

Monday, 23 July 2012

FBC to Represent Salone

By: Donstance Koroma

John Foray Banting, LLB Honors II, Ebunolowa Finda Tengbeh LLB Honors I, and Evelyn Mannah LLB Honors of Fourah Bay College University of Sierra Leone will November of this year represent Sierra Leone for the Pan Africa Moot Cut Competition in Arusha Tanzania at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. (Photo: FBC Law Department receiving their trophy from Justice Gelaga King President Salone Special Court)

According to the Communications Officer, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society Patrick Massaquo, he said the National Moot Cut Competition is an extra curriculum activity where participants take part in simulated court proceedings; a mock court where students argue hypothetical cases organized and financed by the international Committee of the Red Cross Freetown Delegate. He said this year's competition is the eighth competition on International Humanitarian Law which accommodates six teams drawn from the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), Fourah Bay College University (FBC), Milton Margai College of Education, and Njala University.

He said FBC Law Department and IPAM qualified to the finals after an 80-minute presentation of both teams on hypothetical cases on armed conflict, where the FBC Law Department emerged as the winner.

Patrick Massaquo intimated to this medium that the winning team will have to go through a month's training in order to prepare the team for the Pan Africa Moot Cut Competition in Arusha, Tanzania.

Massaquo said the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Foreign Affairs, and the international Committee of the Red Cross, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, private legal practitioners, and the Institute of International Law have consented to train the winning team.

He said over the years, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has been supportive in providing their court facilities and judges, including their legal officer, to preside over the competition, draw up the cases, and also help train the winning team.

Ibrahim Konneh, private practitioner, Major Alistair Wills's legal adviser IMATT, Justice Gelaga King, President Special Court Sierra Leone among others acted as judges for the said National Moot Cut competition held at the Sierra Leone Special Court, New England, Freetown on Friday July 20th of this year.

The runners up included Musa .S. Kuyateh, Matilda Marrah and Sarh I. Sam from IPAM.

Human Rights Watch

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

Senegal: Agreement on Habré Court

After World Court Ruling, Plan to Try Chad's Ex-Dictator in Senegal With African Judges

Senegal's agreement on July 24, 2012, to establish a special court to try the former dictator of Chad, Hissène Habré, if swiftly implemented, could mark a turning point in the long campaign to bring him to justice, a coalition of human rights groups said today.

Habré is accused of thousands of political killings and systematic torture when he ruled Chad, from 1982 to 1990. Habré has been living in exile in Senegal for more than 21 years but has yet to face justice there. On July 20, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Senegal must prosecute Habré "without further delay" if it does not extradite him.

"After so many years of effort and so many disappointments, this agreement could finally give Hissène Habré's victims their day in court," said Reed Brody, counsel for Human Rights Watch, who has worked with the victims for 13 years. "The political will seems to be there in Senegal, and the World Court decision means there can be no turning back, but we are not there yet. Senegal should begin proceedings quickly, before more survivors die."

After four days of talks in Dakar, between July 20 and 24, Senegal agreed to an African Union (AU) plan to try Habré before a special court in the Senegalese justice system with African judges appointed by the AU presiding over his trial. Senegal's president, Macky Sall, has said he wants proceedings against Habré to begin by the end of the year, and the parties agreed to a road map that would have the court operational by year's end.

The International Committee for the Fair Trial of Hissène Habré – which comprises the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (ATPDH), the Association of Victims of Crimes of the Regime of Hissène Habré (AVCRHH), the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO), Human Rights Watch, and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), among others – said that Senegal's decision, after the World Court ruling, was another important victory for Habré's victims.

"Senegal made history in 1999 as the first country to join the International Criminal Court, and it could make history again by being the first country to prosecute the human rights crimes of a foreign leader," said Alioune Tine, president of the Dakar-based RADDHO. "The Senegalese government is demonstrating its resolve to fight impunity at the highest levels."

The new agreement calls for "Extraordinary African Chambers" to be created inside the existing Senegalese court structure in Dakar. The chambers' mandate will be to prosecute the person or persons most responsible for atrocity crimes committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990. The chambers will have sections to handle investigations, trials, and appeals, and will consist of Senegalese and other African judges.

The coalition – which has been pressing for Habré's extradition to Belgium as the fastest way to achieve justice – called on Senegal to set up the new court swiftly and start proceedings against Habré as soon as possible. Senegal still needs parliamentary approval for the plan and has said it will seek international funding for the court.

The coalition called for the establishment of a strong management committee – comprised of Senegal, the AU, and donor countries – to ensure sound financial management of the court’s budget, to supervise training of judicial staff and to oversee outreach to the Chadian public, and to provide technical assistance where necessary.

The coalition also said Senegal should move quickly to incorporate the results of Belgian and Chadian investigations into Habré’s crimes instead of starting from scratch.

A Belgian judge and his team spent nearly four years investigating Habré’s crimes before indicting him on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture in 2005, leading Belgium to request his extradition from Senegal. A 1992 National Truth Commission in Chad accused Habré’s government of systemic torture and up to 40,000 political assassinations.

The draft statute for the new court also allows Senegalese prosecutors to go after “the most serious” of Habré’s crimes rather than charging him with all the acts of which he is accused. The measure is aimed at ensuring that the trial is manageable and does not drag on for years.

“If Senegal is committed to providing justice to the victims, it should complete the investigations and bring Habré to a fair trial as quickly as possible,” said Jacqueline Moudeïna, lawyer for Habré’s victims and coordinator of the International Committee. “Senegal should also ensure that Habré’s victims can participate fully in his trial and should take steps to make the trial meaningful to people back in Chad.”

The draft statute allows victims to participate as civil parties in the trial. It also provides for trial proceedings to be recorded for broadcast in Chad and for public access to the trial by journalists and non-governmental organizations.

The World Court’s landmark decision on July 20 found that Senegal had violated its legal obligations under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It ordered Senegal to bring Habré to justice “without further delay” either by prosecuting him in Senegal or extraditing him to Belgium. In June, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the Senegalese government to take “concrete steps” to prosecute Habré in Senegal or extradite him to Belgium.

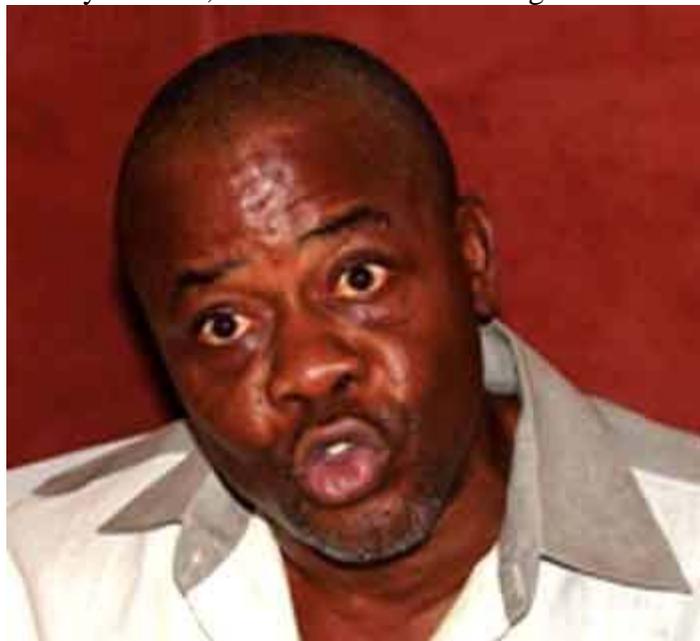
“In less than four months, Macky Sall’s government has made progress on a case that has lingered for years,” said Souhayr Belhassen, president of the FIDH. “With this agreement and recent public statements by Sall and other high-ranking officials, we trust that the government will take steps to maintain this momentum and bring Habré to justice swiftly.”

The New Democrat (Liberia)

Tuesday, 24 July 2012

TRC Undercharged Me

Mr. Cyril Allen, one of the most faithful generals of the erstwhile rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia



(NPFL) has expressed dismay that instead of charging him as “one of those who bear the greatest responsibilities of the Liberian civil war”, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) “undercharged” him.

The TRC report charged Mr. Allen, a staunch ally of Mr. Charles Taylor in his 14-year war efforts in Liberia, as “aiding and abetting the war”—a similar charge levied against former fighters.

But Mr. Allen being interviewed live on Truth FM radio last week, spewed: “I am one of those who bear the greatest responsibilities of the war. They did not even charge me as one of those.”

“I was one of the leaders of the NPFL and they simply said aiding and abetting. And I think that it is unfair for you to do that to me and name young generals who were on the field fighting.”

“We, who were the leaders of the NPFL...they simply said aiding and abetting,” he wondered.

He added: “I think whatever way, they charged me much less. I should have been charged more than what they charged” me.

Despite his admission of being one of those bearing the greatest responsibilities of the Liberian civil war, Mr. Allen expressed support for the setting up of a war crimes tribunal in Liberia. “War crimes court is good for reconciliation...for healing the wounds.”

Mr. Allen accused Nimba County Sen. Prince Johnson, a bitter opponent of a war crimes court, of physically slicing the ears of former President Samuel K. Doe after Mr. Johnson’s forces captured him.

“He (Sen. Johnson) is the one who they had on video cutting the ears of president Doe. I do not see any reason why there should not be a war crimes court,” Mr. Allen said.

Daily Observer (Liberia)

Tuesday, 24 July 2012

TRC Report is a Trash, Says Nimba Lawmaker

Written by Keith Morris



The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calling for the prosecution of warlords with “the greatest responsibilities” for Liberia’s brutal civil war “ is a trash that needs to be ignored,” Nimba County Representative Jeremiah K. Koug, has declared.

In an interview with the Daily Observer over the weekend,

Representative Koug asserted that “if there should be War Crime Court established in Liberia, the recommendations about prosecuting few Liberians as outlined by the Commission should be trashed so that we can begin a new process.”

Representative Koug is a member of the National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP), a party of Senator Prince Johnson, one of the former warlords implicated in the TRC report.

He described those at the center of the report as “implementers who acted upon the orders of their financiers who,” he said, were left out of the report.

“If we are to establish a war crimes court here, we need to undo many things in order to be successful in prosecuting those involved.”

He pointed out that the establishment of the court during the peace process in Ghana was even unfair to the Liberian people. “You can’t ask warlords to choose between war crimes court and the TRC; they will certainly go for the TRC. The reason is simple, because they do not want to pay the prize for the damages made to the people and the nation during the conflict - this is what happened in Accra, Ghana,” Representative Koug said.

In his argument, he said, justice should not come in the absence of people paying for what they do. “People who financed the process are equally responsible for the crisis just as those who implemented their respective actions.”

Representative Koug’s statement was in reaction to the bill, presented by Grand Bassa County Representative Byron Browne early this month, seeking to establish a War Crimes Court in Liberia.

The presentation of the bill in the plenary of the House of Representatives was greeted with mixed reaction from the public. Some people declared their support for the setting up of a war crimes court while other, including Senator Prince Johnson and former Margibi County Representative Saah Gbollie rejected it.

In his view, Saah Gbollie said: “Establishing war crimes court seriously undermines peaceful coexistence and justice in Liberia.”

Meanwhile, Representative Koung has vowed to defeat the bill at the level of the House, pointing out that a reconstitution of the TRC commissioners and other relevant matters need to be addressed before establishing anything like a court.

“There are many good things in that report that are useful for us as people, but those things that have to do with prosecution for warlords must be trashed. We want everybody that is responsible for the instability in the country to be punished but this should be done in accordance with due process and better arrangement,” the Nimba County lawmaker indicated.

However, with this latest opposition to a war crime court, there are fears of a heated controversy among the legislators over the proposed legislation.

FrontPage Africa (Liberia)

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

Heaven Door Opens: Taylor's Ex, Jewel, 18 Others Removed from UN Travel ban



Gbarnga, Bong County - Nineteen Liberians including former first lady Jewel Howard-Taylor have been taken off the UN travel ban.

Making the disclosure to FrontPageAfrica via mobile phone, Senator Taylor termed the revelation as the dawn of a new day.

“God is wonderful! This will afford me ample time to fetch out for more developments that have eluded my county for year,” she told our Bong County correspondent Tuesday evening.

Other Liberians taken off the ban include: Adolphus Dolo, Bell Dunbar, George Dweh, Agnes Reaves Taylor, Tupee Taylor, Myrtle Francelle Gibson, Martin George, Cyril Allen, Randolph Cooper, Victoria Cooper [Deceased], John T. Richardson, Reginald Goodridge, Emmanuel Shaw, Sampson Gwen and Maurice Cooper.

Benoni Urey, Momo Jebba, Benjamin Yeaten, James Cocoo Dennis are among those who are still on the travel ban.

The official list of the Liberians on Travel ban was last updated by the UN Security Council on July 20, 2012.

Human Rights Watch

Wednesday, 25 July 2012

Press Release

Mali: Security Forces ‘Disappear’ 20, Torture Others

Crackdown on People Linked to Counter-Coup, Journalists

Soldiers loyal to Mali’s coup leader have forcibly disappeared at least 20 soldiers allegedly linked to an April 30, 2012 counter-coup, and committed torture and other abuses against dozens of others, Human Rights Watch said today. The security forces of Capt. Amadou Sanogo, who led the March 22 coup against President Amadou Toumani Touré, have also engaged in a campaign of intimidation against journalists, family members of detained soldiers, and others deemed a threat.

Human Rights Watch called on the interim Malian government to investigate the disappearances and other abuses, hold those responsible to account, and take urgent measures to exert control over the security forces. The 20 soldiers whose forcible disappearances were documented by Human Rights Watch are feared dead.

“Malian authorities have a duty to the victims of torture and the families of the disappeared to ensure these crimes are investigated and those responsible brought to book,” said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “Even at this chaotic and difficult time in Mali, authorities should ensure that the horrific treatment and other violations should be promptly addressed.”

Human Rights Watch interviewed about 30 people with detailed knowledge of the abuses, including eight people who witnessed torture and enforced disappearances and 13 family members of the detained and disappeared.

Witnesses told Human Rights Watch that the abuses were committed by members of the security services, including soldiers, policemen, and national guardsmen who have supported Sanogo since the March 22 coup. Two described seeing Sanogo at the military base in Kati, 15 kilometers north of Mali’s capital, Bamako, when torture and other ill-treatment took place. One witness said he saw Sanogo kick one detainee who has since disappeared, and heard him threaten several others.

Nearly all the witnesses to the abuse who spoke to Human Rights Watch identified officers responsible for the detention facility at the base and believed they reported directly to Sanogo. Torture was also reported at a police camp known as the Mobile Security Group (Groupement Mobile de Sécurité, or GMS).

The mother of one disappeared soldier said that her son had gotten access to a phone and called her on the afternoon of May 1. She said, “My boy sounded so frightened. ... He said the military were arguing among themselves about whether or not to kill my son and the others being held with him. ... He was very afraid.”

Most of the disappeared and victims of torture formed part of an elite unit of paratroopers known as the Red Berets, who were detained after being accused of involvement in the April 30 counter-coup. During the counter-coup, the Red Berets attacked the state radio and television building and airport in Bamako, and the Kati military camp. After soldiers loyal to Sanogo put down the counter-coup, they rounded up dozens of people they believed had supported it.

Sanogo and other military officers ousted Touré in March in protest of his handling of a separatist rebellion by ethnic Tuareg in northern Mali. Following international pressure, notably from the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), Sanogo in April agreed to hand over power to a

transitional government that would organize elections and return the country to democratic rule. However, with the backing of security forces loyal to him, he has continued to exert considerable influence, meddle in political affairs, and marginalize members of the military who did not support the coup.

Last week, the government of Mali, as a state party to the International Criminal Court (ICC), referred “the situation in Mali since January 2012” to the ICC prosecutor for investigation. The prosecutor’s office will determine at a future date whether it can take jurisdiction of the situation.

“ECOWAS and other governments that have voiced their concern about abuses committed in the context of the armed conflict in the North and the March coup shouldn’t go silent now,” Bekele said. “Mali’s partners should insist the transitional government take concrete and urgent steps to stem any further deterioration in respect for the rule of law.”

Arbitrary Detention

Witnesses and family members of victims said forces loyal to Sanogo immediately began detaining those deemed to be involved in the failed counter-coup on April 30. Over the next several weeks, they detained at least 80 men, most of whom were members of the elite Red Berets parachute regiment.

While people who participated in the counter-coup attempt would be legitimately subject to arrest and prosecution, the actions attributed to Sanogo’s security forces were taken outside of any lawful process. Witnesses said the men were detained at the scene of the attacks, on public transport vehicles, at their homes, as they drove to work, and after being called to the Kati camp or a police station to answer questions about their involvement in the counter-coup. While most are believed to have been taken directly to the Kati camp, at least nine spent several days within the police GMS camp before their transfer to Kati. Many of the detainees endured torture and other ill-treatment in both places.

On June 24, after considerable pressure from detainees’ families and their lawyers, local and international human rights organizations including Amnesty International, and Mali’s justice minister, officers at Kati military camp permitted the transfer of 43 detainees to Gendarme #1, the military police, where their conditions and treatment drastically improved. Malian law provides that soldiers accused of a criminal offense are to be held within the gendarmerie. Since then, many of those who were transferred have been charged for their alleged involvement in the counter-coup.

Torture and Ill-Treatment

The most severe and systematic mistreatment targeted rank-and-file soldiers, and took place over several weeks in May. Witnesses at the Kati military camp and GMS described seeing soldiers and policemen drag handcuffed and hogtied detainees along the ground, beat them with batons, sticks, and gun butts, and kick them in the back, head, ribs, genitals, and elsewhere. Others were stabbed in their extremities. Some detainees lost consciousness as a result of the beatings. Wives of some detainees said their husbands had told them they had urinated and, in one case, defecated blood as a result of the torture. Other witnesses and family members said men had suffered broken ribs and, in one case, a fractured arm.

Witnesses within Kati military base said they saw soldiers burn detainees with cigarettes and lighters on their backs, hands, arms, and ears. Two witnesses described how four men were forced at gunpoint and under threat of death to engage in anal sex with one another and said that fabric was stuffed in their mouths before the abuse to stifle their screams. Other detainees were suffocated during interrogation when soldiers stuffed rags into their mouths, pushed the rags back with a wood stick, and tied the men’s mouths with a piece of fabric. Detainees were chained and handcuffed for days on end; relatives able to see them weeks later described seeing scars on their wrists and ankles.

Witnesses said the detainees were kept in small, unventilated rooms with no windows. About 40 men were said to be held in a room that was five meters by five meters. May is one of Mali’s hottest months,

and many detainees were not given anything to eat or drink for at least 72 hours, causing severe dehydration. Many drank their own urine to survive.

The wife of a Red Beret told Human Rights Watch: “My husband really suffered.... He told me they made several of them strip and then they kicked them in their genitals; they called female soldiers to their windows to look at the scene. He and others I saw had cigarette burns on their forearms; he told me that during the interrogation, instead of throwing the butt on the ground, they’d put it out in his skin. He had deep scars on his wrists and ankles because of the way he’d been bound. It was only when they got to the gendarmerie that they found some peace.”

The detainees were also routinely subjected to psychological abuse. Some were threatened with death each day. One witness said that soldiers showed the detainees a photo of one of the alleged coup plotters who had been killed in detention days earlier. Another said that soldiers routinely told the detainees that two or three of them would be taken out and executed. The police subjected one group of detainees to a mock execution at the GMS camp.

Enforced Disappearances

Human Rights Watch interviewed several witnesses who described seeing at least 20 men who had been detained at the Kati military camp and are now feared to have been forcibly disappeared.

Witnesses at Kati camp said that on May 3 between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m., soldiers removed the detainees and put them inside a military truck. According to one eyewitness within Kati that night, “They took them out, bound their hands and legs, and covered their eyes; they have never been heard from or seen since.” Another witness gave Human Rights Watch a hand-written list of 21 detainees whom a witness saw being taken from the camp.

There are unconfirmed reports that the men were executed and buried in the town of Diago, some 12 kilometers from Kati. Human Rights Watch spoke with Diago residents who said rounds of shots were fired that night; the residents, however, said they were too terrified to provide further details.

Under international law, an enforced disappearance occurs when the state or state agents take a person into custody but refuse to acknowledge doing so or do not provide information about the person’s whereabouts or fate. Among the rights an enforced disappearance may violate are those to life, liberty, and security of the person, including protection from torture and other ill-treatment.

Ten witnesses described seeing one or several of the disappeared men inside Kati camp or the GMS in the 48 hours before they “disappeared.” One was seen handcuffed to a military truck within the GMS at around 5 a.m. on May 1. Another witness saw a private second class – who is on the list of those disappeared – within a courtyard at Kati between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on May 1. He said one of the soldier’s eyes was “bleeding from the beating he received, like there was a hole where his eye had been.”

Human Rights Watch learned that between 10 a.m. and noon on May 1, some two dozen soldiers removed 19 wounded soldiers, including Red Berets and loyalists to Sanogo, from the Gabriel Touré Public Hospital in Bamako and took them in at least two military trucks to Kati military camp. Witnesses heard the military officer in charge of the evacuation say the patients were being taken to the military hospital at Kati. A 20th soldier gravely wounded in the abdomen was allowed to stay at Gabriel Touré. Human Rights Watch received unconfirmed reports that, upon arrival at Kati military camp, the soldiers loyal to Sanogo were transferred to the Kati military hospital, while the Red Berets were refused treatment and detained. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

Family members of the men who had been disappeared told Human Rights Watch that they had searched for their loved ones in hospitals, gendarme and police stations, the local prison, and several military

camps. At least two of the men who have been disappeared appeared on state-run television station on May 1; they were presented by the television interviewer as detainees associated with the counter coup.

One family member told Human Rights Watch, “When we saw him on television I leapt, screaming, ‘That is my son! My son is alive!’ Since then we have searched for him everywhere, but there is no trace. Tell me, how can he be there on national television one day and simply disappear the next?”

The mother of another said, “I call my son’s phone, but he doesn’t answer. I’ve been everywhere and looked at all the lists – the list of those wounded, the list of the dead, the list of those in detention, but my son’s name is not there. But still, I have faith that I will see his face again. Faith is all I have.”

Family members of Red Beret soldiers living within the Djikoronni Red Beret camp complained of harassment, sexual threats, and intimidation by soldiers loyal to Captain Sanogo who now guard the camp. The wife of one Red Beret still detained for alleged links to the coup said, “When we come and go from the camp they say things like, ‘We’ve chased your husbands. We can have sex with you any time we want’ and to the daughters they say things like, ‘Your family is nothing... We are the ones now in charge.’”

Intimidation of Journalists and Civil Servants

Members of state security forces have tried to suppress the publication of information regarding abuses in the aftermath of the failed counter-coup. They have called in for questioning or visited the offices of at least five journalists and two civil servants who were investigating the coup, the treatment of detainees, enforced disappearances, or the existence of a mass grave. While the journalists and civil servants did not suffer any physical aggression during the questioning, they reported being pressured to reveal their sources, drop their investigations, and desist from publishing or speaking about the events. Several believed their phone conversations were routinely intercepted by the state security forces. The intimidation of journalists appears to form part of a wider crackdown on Malian journalism, which began after the March 22 coup and has since intensified.

In July, two journalists were abducted by armed, masked gunmen driving pickup trucks with no license plates, severely beaten, and dumped on the outskirts of Bamako after being warned to stop criticizing the military. On July 2, Abdoulaye Keita, editor of the *Aurore* newspaper, was pulled into a 4x4 car by armed men in civilian dress, taken to an isolated area near the airport, and beaten by men who repeatedly castigated Malian journalists. On July 13, a respected Malian journalist and publisher of *L’Independent*, Saouti Labass Haidara, was abducted by eight heavily armed men in civilian dress.

From his hospital bed, he told Human Rights Watch, “They fired in the air as they stuffed me into their car... After seeing the lights of the capital start to dim, they pulled over, threw me on the ground, and kicked and beat me further. They kept referring to the one in charge as ‘captain,’ and said, repeatedly, ‘It is you journalists who are irritating us.’ They threatened to kill me if I brought a legal case against them, and said at any rate, nothing would happen to them.”

Haidara suffered a fractured arm and multiple contusions. The justice minister has promised an investigation into the incident.

One journalist told Human Rights Watch, “Mr. Haidara is one of Mali’s most revered journalists and is like the doyen of the Malian press. He has mentored 10 editors of smaller papers. By attacking Mr. Haidara, they intend to send a message to all of us.”