

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

The Exclusive Apologises to SCSL / The Exclusive	Page 3
Preserving Historic Records & Tools for Reconciliation / <i>ICTJ</i>	Page 4
Sierra Leone Preps For November Vote / <i>United Press International</i>	Page 5
Despite Progress, Liberia Still Grappling With Post-Conflict Tasks.../ <i>UN News Centre</i>	Pages 6-7

The Exclusive Apologises To SCSL

The Exclusive wishes to apologise unreservedly to the Special Court for Sierra Leone for the publication last November of a series of articles which alleged that the court and court officials had abused prisoners held in Rwanda. We acknowledge that failure to seek the court's comments before publication was a violation of the IMC Media Policy, which requires journalists to seek the comments of the other side before publication. In consequence, a reasonable reader could easily conclude that the articles were an attempt by The Exclusive to discredit the work of the Special Court which, in actual fact, was not the intention of this medium.

The Exclusive inadvertently failed to fully publish the Court's side of the story and we were aware that the court disputed these allegations.

The Exclusive hopes that the SCSL will accept its apology and continue working with us for the general good of Sierra Leone. We also want to assure the SCSL that we will henceforth endeavour to crosscheck stories with the court to avoid repetition of such errors.

ICTJ

Tuesday, 11 September 2012

Sierra Leone: Preserving Historic Records & Tools for Reconciliation



Participants at the launch of the new SL-TRC website in Freetown. Photo courtesy of Open Society Initiative West Africa (OSIWA).

On August 30, 2012, ICTJ joined government officials and civil society in Freetown, Sierra Leone to celebrate the launch of a new website for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone and welcome the prospects for revitalization of Sierra Leone's reconciliation.

Sierra Leone's 10-year civil conflict was marked by intense violence against civilians, recruitment of child soldiers, corruption, and a bloody struggle for control of diamond mines.

The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SL-TRC) was established to produce "an impartial record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone," and to "address impunity, to respond to the needs of victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered."

The final report of the Commission contains a historical record of human rights violations and provides recommendations for the future. However, after its initial release in 2005, the report became largely unavailable for three years due to the close of the Commission's website.

In response to a dearth of information on the Sierra Leone TRC report and the peacebuilding and reconciliation process, ICTJ joined its partners, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) to support the development and hosting of a reconstructed and improved website of the SL-TRC process.

The launching of the reconstructed website attracted participants from government, the UN, victims, civil society, and the media. Speakers called for the government to implement the recommendations, including the reparations program.

The new website of the SL-TRC will be host to comprehensive resources, including the report, audio and video of the TRC, a new page on the Sierra Leone Peace Museum, background information on the relationship of the TRC and Special Court for Sierra Leone, pictures of the TRC and an interactive Recommendations Matrix.

United Press International

Wednesday, 12 September 2012

Sierra Leone preps for November vote

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 12 (UPI) -- Sierra Leone has an opportunity to demonstrate political maturity as it prepares for broad-based elections in November, the U.N. Security Council was told.

Sierra Leone is to have presidential, parliamentary and local council elections Nov. 17.

Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen, U.N. special envoy for Sierra Leone, told the Security Council the country has the chance to display its political leadership if elections are conducted successfully.

An estimated 50,000 people were killed in the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone. Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was sentenced by a U.N. special court in May to prison for aiding and abetting crimes against humanity committed by rebel forces in the country during civil war in the 1990s.

The Security Council was told that major political parties in May signed a declaration committing to free and peaceful elections. So far, the agreement has been honored but rivalries could escalate as the election draws near.

The International Crisis Group said Liberians told their researchers following the Taylor sentencing that they felt "uneasy, even unsafe" knowing war crimes suspects were still on the loose.

UN News Centre

Tuesday, 11 September 2012

Despite progress, Liberia still grappling with post-conflict tasks, Security Council told



Special Representative Karin Landgren. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

Liberia has made remarkable progress in rebuilding its institutions, economic recovery and consolidating its democratic processes since the end of its civil war, but it needs to focus on remaining challenges such as strengthening the rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation, the Security Council heard today.

“Since 2003, Liberia has transformed itself from a failed State to one well along the path to democracy and lasting peace,” the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Karin Landgren, said in her briefing to the 15-member body.

“The presidential and legislative elections of 2011 showed the capacity to manage a politically and logistically complex event. The subsequent peaceful formation of a new government signalled the country’s increased stability,” she stated.

Ms. Landgren said that with Liberia “on the verge of becoming a true success story, the UN Mission must walk a delicate balance: applauding successes and pulling back our support, while continuing to accompany Liberia in areas crucial to lasting peace.”

At the Council meeting, the envoy presented the Secretary-General’s latest report on UNMIL, in which he highlights the country’s achievements in its post-conflict recovery.

“Much remains to be done, however, to address the historical injustices that persist, so that all Liberians feel that they are benefiting from the country’s progress in stability, democracy and development,” he writes.

“It will therefore be crucial to pursue reforms aimed at enlarging the political space and enhancing inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and fairness, which would give all citizens a meaningful stake in the future of Liberia.”

The UN continues to provide security support to Liberia on a significant scale, noted Ms. Landgren. “But as the Secretary-General noted in this report, security measures alone will not create lasting stability in Liberia,” she said.

“Reinforcement of the national security sector should go hand in hand with national reconciliation and structural changes to address the underlying causes of past conflict,” Ms. Landgren added. “Achieving this, however, will take both political commitment and financial resources.”

Strengthened security capacity and regulation will need to be matched with a stronger justice system, for the public to have confidence in the State’s capacity to protect and provide justice, she stated, adding that constitutional reform and national reconciliation will also be essential to peace consolidation.

“UNMIL is able to begin a transition because of the progress Liberia has made since 2003. The Mission represents nearly a decade of major investment by the international community,” the envoy said. “This investment has paid handsome dividends, supporting Liberians with a time and space free of war, which has permitted two democratic elections and steps towards national reforms on a large scale.”

The UN has maintained a peacekeeping force in Liberia since 2003 to bolster a ceasefire agreement ending a decade of war that killed nearly 150,000 people, mostly civilians. UNMIL’s mandate includes helping to restore the rule of law and democratic processes as well as facilitating humanitarian assistance.

Addressing the Council meeting, Ambassador Staffan Tillander of Sweden, the chair of the Liberia configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, said that “coherent and inclusive” national reconciliation should be at the centre of the Liberian peace process.

“Part of this process entails mending relations between the State and society, between communities, and between individuals. This includes reformulating the Liberian historical narrative including giving recognition to past persecution, discrimination and marginalization,” he told the Council.

He added, “Reconciliation is also linked to processes of constitutional review, decentralization and electoral reform, all essential parts of the broader peacebuilding process in Liberia.”

Liberia is one of six countries – along with Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone – currently on the agenda of the Commission, which was set up in 2005 to help countries emerging from conflict make an irreversible transition from war to sustainable peace.