

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



Boys net fish from a rain-swollen stream in Crab Town, on the outskirts of Lumley.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as at:

Tuesday, 1 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Standard Times
 Tuesday, 1 August 2006

In The Hague...

Charles Taylor fears not to die like Foday Sankoh



Taylor... worried?

Foday Sankoh, former head of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone spent his last days in a wheel chair after suffering from stroke. Charles Taylor, former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor is said to be unhappy with prison conditions. He is becoming increasingly

concerned that he may end up like Foday Sankoh, the former Sierra Leonean rebel leader who died of complications from a stroke in a Freetown hospital in July 2003 while in the custody of the Special UN war crimes court for Sierra Leone.

Like Taylor, Sankoh led a rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front

(RUF), whose rebels killed and maimed thousands of civilians in the West African country's 10-year civil war.

Richard Dicker, Director of the International Justice Program, Human Rights Watch said that his

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Charles Taylor fears not to die like Foday Sankoh

FROM PAGE 1

organization was unaware of any concerns of Taylor but said if such exists it is important for Taylor to be treated fairly and with respect.

"Charles Taylor is entitled to and should receive high quality medical care for the period of his detention awaiting and during trial. It would be a source of enormous concern if Mr. Taylor's health was neglected while he's in detention awaiting trial," said Dicker.

Dicker stated that the advantage of the relocation of the trial from Sierra Leone to The Hague, although Human Rights Watch would have preferred the trial on African soil, is Taylor's accessibility to medical services. "If there are medical problems, we would urge Mr. Taylor to convey them to the court and to the detaining authorities so they would be addressed. We're not aware of any or such refusal on the part of the authorities," said Dicker.

In the aftermath of Sankoh's death, his widow Fatou Mbaye Sankoh, accused the UN-backed special war crimes court for Sierra Leone of being responsible for the death of her husband, saying that the decision to deny her husband the chance to seek medical treatment abroad led to his death. Ironically, Taylor is being detained in a wing of the same maximum security prison in The Hague where former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic died in March while on trial for genocide and war crimes.

Last week, the former Liberian President appeared before a war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands for the first time, with his attorney complaining about the deposed leader's limited access to telephones and "Eurocentric" prison food.

Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly overseeing the murder, rape and mutilation of thousands of people during neighboring Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war. The former warlord has pleaded not guilty. He faces life in prison if convicted.

A family member who visited the former dictator recently said on Thursday that Taylor is becoming increasingly concerned that he will die in prison like Sankoh or the late Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic.

"The conditions in the prison are not good and he is not used to the food he is getting," said the family member who preferred anonymity.

Foday Sankoh's rebel war killed scores of Sierra Leoneans. Sankoh reportedly formed a close alliance with Taylor who was elected to the

presidency in 1997 after an appalling eight-year campaign of terror.

In fact, Sankoh's rebel onslaught in Sierra Leone is believed to have been sponsored by Taylor. Sankoh set up his RUF and launched his own insurrection in 1991. Initially fuelled by violent rhetoric against the corruption of the Freetown elite, that degenerated into bloodlust and greed for control of the nation's only significant source of wealth: the diamond mines in the east.

The RUF imposed its will in the interior of the impoverished country with systematic barbarity. Its ragtag forces, including a high proportion of press-ganged and brutalized children, became notorious for abduction, gang rape and summary execution. Its specialty was hacking off the limbs of children. In a land with chronic food shortages, the RUF is also said to have practiced cannibalism.

Thousands of Sierra Leoneans died during the RUF bloody campaign and up to a quarter of a million reportedly fled into exile.

Taylor was indicted by the Special Court in Sierra Leone for war crimes (murder, pillage, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel treatment, terrorizing civilians); crimes against humanity (murder, mutilation, rape, enslavement, sexual slavery); and other serious violations of international humanitarian law (use of child soldiers) in the course of Sierra Leone's armed conflict.

Taylor is charged with, as president of Liberia, providing training and financing to the main rebel group in Sierra Leone, the RUF.

Exclusive

Tuesday, 1 August 2006

Special Commentary

By Nana Kofi Sarpong

It is generally accepted that peace, sanity and political stability form the pillars of development. No doubt the gradual thaw in negotiations between warring factions in Ivory Coast is a step in the right direction.

Ivory Coast was once a beacon of peace, stability and a business hub in the entire sub-region, but was plunged into a devastating internal conflict as a result of lack of "political" tolerance on the side of the ruling government and opposing group. Now leaders of ECOWAS, African Union backed by the United Nations have been able to stymie a peaceful negotiation between the warring factions, leading to disarmament. What the warring factions need to do is to strictly stick to the terms of agreement stymied by the UN and its allies to bring about a final solution to the five-year internal conflict.

We are very much concerned about the crisis in Ivory Coast as leaders and opposing groups always renege on negotiations to close the sad chapter of the crisis. At this stage, Ivory Coast needs to put mechanism in place to overcome the conflict and return the country back to its past glory.

Against this background, Ivorians must be told in plain terms that the entire sub-region needs permanent peace and stability to forge ahead with development to overcome the protracted problems of abject poverty and economic degrada-

Need To Overcome Conflicts

tion. It is widely believed that internal conflict in each member state affects the entire ECOWAS in terms of political, economic and social advancement. It makes sense, therefore, for political leaders and opposing groups in the sub-region to always dance to the dictates of democracy, with a focus on tolerance with its

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adherence to the political systems of inclusion, respect for human rights and the rule of law. The sub-region, for a very long time, has been wriggling under a state of chaos, with its attendant economic degradation and grinding poverty and it is now time to put behind us, conflicts and forge ahead as one people with one common destiny.

This is all that entails in the ECOWAS instruments and as an organization spearheading the course of regional integration, ECOWAS will succeed only if political leaders and entire citizens of the sub-region behave like civilized people and doing what it takes to bring about peace, stability, political, economic and social development.

We hope, in the coming months, Ivory Coast would finally tread the path of permanent peace, stability and economic development.



Lebanese protesting along Rawdon Street

Lebanese protest in Freetown over Israeli bombing

Hundreds of Lebanese in Freetown stormed Rawdon Street protesting against the Israeli bombing in Lebanon on Sunday 30th July 2006 which killed about 70 Lebanese. The

protesters including men, women and children held placards in their hands condemning Israel attack and American support in the conflict. Some of them were chanting "oh Allah, oh Allah, bless our

Muslim religion" waving the picture of Hassan Nasralla, head of Hezbollah in Lebanon. According to the President of the *Continued page 2*



*Samir Hassaniyeh:
President of Lebanese
Community*

Lebanese protest in Freetown over Israeli bombing

From front page

Lebanese Community in Freetown, Samir Hassasnyeh they are not demonstrating but merely protesting against Israel especially the massacre of 70 people including 37 children by Israeli bombing on Sunday 30th July. He stated that the protestors are angry as most of their families were killed and properties destroyed. "I am appealing to whosoever responsible for this especially the Israelis and George Bush to stop as we do not want any more killing" he said. The President also explained that he had received lot of people coming to sympathise with him and the Lebanese community in Freetown for the death of their relatives in Lebanon. The Imam of the Lebanese Community in Freetown, Sheik Allie Tahani in consoling the women and children stated that Allah will surely bring an end to the conflict. He condemned the war and killing of innocent civilians in Lebanon stating that very soon the war will stop by the grace of Allah. He also



Lebanese protesting along Rawdon Street

expressed concern over the South of Lebanon where there are over 700 Sierra Leoneans living there stating that they have concerns for them. Among those

greatly affected by the Israeli bombing was Zuher Kudsy, a popular businessman and Sports analyst in Sierra Leone, who lost his mother, niece

and 2 grand nieces. Zuher Kudsy said that his relatives were massacred by the Israeli bombing together with two Nigerians in Lebanon.

The News (Monrovia)

Monday, 31 July 2006

Taylor Fears Ending Up Like Sankoh, Milosevic

Foday Sankoh, former head of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone spend his last days in a wheel chair after suffering a stroke.

Charles Taylor, former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor is said to be unhappy with prison conditions. He is becoming increasingly concerned that he may end up like Foday Sankoh, the former Sierra Leonean rebel leader who died of complications from a stroke in a Freetown hospital in July 2003 while in the custody of the Special UN war crimes court for Sierra Leone.

Like Taylor, Sankoh led a rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), whose rebels killed and maimed thousands of civilians in the West African country's 10-year civil war.

Richard Dicker, Director of the International Justice Program, Human Rights Watch told FrontPage Africa by phone Friday that his organization was unaware of any concerns of Taylor but said if such exists it is important for Taylor to be treated fairly and with respect.

"Charles Taylor is entitled to and should receive high quality medical care for the period of his detention awaiting and during trial. It would be a source of enormous concern if Mr. Taylor's health was neglected while he's in detention awaiting trial," said Dicker.

Dicker said a positive advantage of the relocation of the trial from Sierra Leone to The Hague, although Human Rights Watch would have preferred the trial on African soil, is Taylor's accessibility to medical services. "If there are medical problems, we would urge Mr. Taylor to convey them to the court and to the detaining authorities so they would be addressed. We're not aware of any or such refusal on the part of the authorities," said Dicker.

In the aftermath of Sankoh's death, his widow Fatou Mbaye Sankoh, accused the UN-backed special war crimes court for Sierra Leone of being responsible for the death of her husband, saying that the decision to deny her husband the chance to seek medical treatment abroad led to his death. Ironically, Taylor is being detained in a wing of the same maximum security prison in The Hague where former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic died in March while on trial for genocide and war crimes.

Last week, the former Liberian President appeared before a war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands for the first time Friday, with his attorney complaining about the deposed leader's limited access to telephones and "Eurocentric" prison food.

Taylor faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly overseeing the murder, rape and mutilation of thousands of people during neighboring Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war. The former warlord has pleaded not guilty. He faces life in prison if convicted.

A family member who visited the former dictator recently informed FrontPageAfrica Thursday that Taylor is becoming increasingly concerned that he will die in prison like Sankoh or the late Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic.

"The conditions in the prison are not good and he is not used to the food he is getting," said the family member who preferred anonymity.

Foday Sankoh's rebel war killed scores of Sierra Leoneans.

Sankoh reportedly formed a close alliance with Taylor who was elected to the presidency in 1997 after an appalling eight-year campaign of terror.

In fact, Sankoh's rebel onslaught in Sierra Leone is believed to have been sponsored by Taylor. Sankoh set up his RUF and launched his own insurrection in 1991. Initially fuelled by violent rhetoric against the corruption of the Freetown elite, revolutionary fervor soon degenerated into bloodlust and greed for control of the nation's only significant source of wealth: the diamond mines in the east.

The RUF imposed its will in the interior of the impoverished country with systematic barbarity. Its ragtag forces, including a high proportion of press-ganged and brutalized children, became notorious for abduction, gang rape and summary execution. Its specialty was hacking off the limbs of children. In a land with chronic food shortages, the RUF is also said to have practiced cannibalism.

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Taylor was indicted by the Special Court in Sierra Leone for war crimes (murder, pillage, outrages upon personal dignity, cruel treatment, terrorizing civilians); crimes against humanity (murder, mutilation, rape, enslavement, sexual slavery); and other serious violations of international humanitarian law (use of child soldiers) in the course of Sierra Leone's armed conflict.

Taylor is charged with, as president of Liberia, providing training and financing to the main rebel group in Sierra Leone, the RUF.

The indictment also alleges that members of the rebel alliance made up of the RUF and the AFRC, who committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international law, were assisted by, acted in concert with, were under the direction or control of, or were subordinate to Taylor.

Taylor made his first appearance since his arrival at The Hague in the courtroom of the International Criminal Court that is being rented by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He did not speak during the 50-minute hearing, which was meant to clear the way for his trial.

Taylor's attorney, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, complained last week about the conditions in the Hague prison and criticized U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for comments he made during a visit earlier this month to the court in Sierra Leone. Annan reportedly referred to war crimes suspects such as Taylor as 'criminals' saying it undermined their right to be presumed innocent. Annan's comment was "not just unseemly," he said. "It is repugnant to justice."

However, presiding judge Richard Lussick assured Khan that judges would ignore Annan's comments.

Khan said staff shortages at the U.N.-run detention center meant Taylor was locked in his cell for up to 16 hours a day and was unable to make as many phone calls as he could while being detained in Sierra Leone. He also called the food being served to Taylor "Eurocentric." Khan said the detention system in The Hague is "far more draconian . . . than in Freetown."

Herman von Hebel, deputy registrar for the Sierra Leone court, described the problems as "start-up issues" and pledged to visit Taylor this week to ensure they were ironed out. However, the family member said Taylor has expressed slim hopes that his wishes would be granted in full but are still hopeful.

"We are totally uninfluenced by what people might say outside the courtroom," he said. Prosecutors had hoped to start the trial early next year, but Khan said that was unlikely.

"For a case of this size and magnitude, particularly given the geographical displacement of this court from Sierra Leone . . . I do think that the earliest this trial can properly start is around July of next year," Khan said.

Prosecutor Brenda Hollis said she might have to call more than 100 witnesses during the case and said some could be asked to testify via video links between the courtroom and Sierra Leone.

Khan said he would object to such a move, however, arguing that it would amount to "conducting this trial by remote control" and would deprive him and the judges of the opportunity to watch a witness' demeanor while testifying.

Taylor was flown to the Netherlands in June because of fears that staging his trial in Sierra Leone could trigger fresh unrest in the war-scarred African nation. The charges against him stem from his alleged backing of Sierra Leonean rebels, who terrorized victims by chopping off body parts, including lips.

On March 25, 2006, President Obasanjo informed President Johnson-Sirleaf that Liberia was "free to take former President Charles Taylor into its custody," although Nigeria did not arrest Taylor at that time. Within forty-eight hours, Taylor had disappeared. However, on March 29, Taylor was detained by Nigerian police near Nigeria's border with Cameroon. He was then sent back to Liberia, where he was taken into U.N. custody and transferred to the Special Court in Freetown.

In November 2005, the U.N. peacekeeping force in Liberia had been given authority to detain and transfer Taylor to the Special Court for prosecution if he were to enter Liberian territory.

Taylor launched an insurgency in Liberia in 1989 and won elections that handed him the presidency in 1997. Rebels took up arms against him three years later, and he fled to Nigeria in 2003 at the end of Liberia's 14-year civil war. He was captured in March as he attempted to slip out of Nigeria after the country agreed to hand him over to authorities seeking his prosecution. The Dutch government finally agreed in June to host his trial after British authorities agreed to find a cell for Taylor if he is convicted.

Taylor is said to be represented by high-caliber lawyers.

HRW had previously stated in a briefing paper this year international donors must ensure that all costs associated with holding Taylor's trial in The Hague, including costs related to logistical, technical, and witness issues, are provided. "Donors must further ensure that the rest of the court's work in Freetown does not suffer due to the costs of holding Taylor's trial in The Hague," according to the HRW briefing.

Taylor's support for the RUF allegedly contributed to the deaths, rapes and mutilations of thousands of civilians in Sierra Leone, prompting U.N. sanctions on his regime. The eleven-year war in Sierra Leone claimed the lives of tens of thousands, and left many more wounded and mutilated. In 2002, the two rebel factions signed a peace treaty with the government and the war officially ended.

Taylor's lawyers have previously stated that he does not have the money to finance his trial and legal fees. In a briefing paper released last month, the watchdog group, Human Rights Watch called on The Hague and the international community to ensure that the court has adequate funding to cover all expenses entailed by the trial, including travel of Special Court staff and witnesses to The Hague. Dicker says he believes Taylor is being well represented. "Human Rights Watch is please to know that Mr. Taylor has the highest caliber of lawyers representing him."

Cocorioko website

Tuesday, 1 August 2006

RSLAF out with Code of Conduct on International Humanitarian Law

Story: Joseph Kamanda in Freetown

After four years of hard work, the International Humanitarian Law Code of Conduct for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces was today launched at the Ministry of Defence.

In his remark, Captain T. F. Maturie, deputizing for the Commanding officer of the Armed Forces Education Centre (AFEC), said that before the outbreak of the civil conflict, forces were ignorant of the International Humanitarian Law. He said the book is a great achievement for the nation. The RSLAF, he said, now knows the humanitarian laws and will abide by it. He also stated that it was important for civilians to trust and obey the soldiers

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Giving an overview of the book was Patrick Massaquoi, International Committee of Red Cross Communication Field Officer. This was followed by a statements from the Chief of Defence Staff, Representatives from IMATT and the ICRC Delegation Head.

Joe Blell, the Deputy Minister of Defence who was also the special guest of honour, launched the book. Joe Blell stated that the book is a manifestation that the RSLAF is a professional army. He added that the launching of the book was in fulfillment of their obligation to the people whose interests were served by the armed forces. Brigadier Alfred Nelson-Williams, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, in his closing remark stated that those days of impunity were gone.

The book was published in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is made of two parts. The first one concerns the rules that every soldier must follow while conducting his task. The second part gives a basic summary of important aspects of First Aid and an important chapter on HIV/AIDS

Star Radio (Liberia)

Saturday, 29 July 2006

Pro-War Crimes Court Group Accuses Conneh

Reported by Wellington Geevon Smith

Saturday, 29 July 2006

The Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia has called on the state security to invite former rebel leader, Sekou Damate Conneh.

The Forum alleged Mr. Conneh made a mysterious appearance in the office of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf before the fire incident at the Mansion.

The group alleged the former LURD rebel leader was sneaked into the office of the President, which created suspicion.

According to a statement issued by the Forum, the chain of events leading to the fire incident should serve as the basis for inviting Mr. Conneh.

The statement also alleged that Mr. Conneh still has in his possession several artillery weapons including a 60mm rocket machine gun.

The statement signed by the entire Executive Committee said the body has evidence to prove that Mr. Conneh is still harboring weapons in the country.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Saturday, 29 July 2006

Former Rebel Leader Describes Critics as "Paid Agents"

Reported by Wellington Geevon Smith

Saturday, 29 July 2006

The leader of the disbanded LURD rebel movement has described members of the Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia as paid agents.

Mr. Sekou Damate Conneh said accusations by the Forum are part of a calculated plan to undermine the prevailing peace in the country.

Mr. Conneh told Star Radio he visited the Executive Mansion but the visit was upon the invitation of Presidential Affairs Minister Morris Dukuly.

Mr. Conneh described the fire incident at the Mansion as unfortunate and said it was good that the government is investigating to establish the facts.

Mr. Conneh also denied that he is still in possession of weapons in the post-disarmament era.

The former rebel leader-turned-politician said he is proud to be part of the democratic process in Liberia.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Friday, 28 July 2006

Former Rebel Spokesman Supports War Crimes Court

Reported by Joey Kennedy

Friday, 28 July 2006

A spokesman of the disbanded Movement for Democracy in Liberia rebel movement wants a war crimes court established in Liberia.

Mr. Boye Bleju Boye told Star Radio a war crimes court would bring perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice.

Mr. Boye said such court would serve as deterrent to the culture of impunity.

He said true reconciliation cannot be achieved in Liberia if people are not brought to book for their role in the crisis.

Independent Online

Tuesday, 1 August 2006

Liberian leader replaces key staff after fire

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf replaced key security staff on Monday after a suspicious fire destroyed her office last week while she hosted three other presidents in the same building.

The fire broke out on Liberia's July 28 Independence Day in the Executive Mansion hours after Johnson-Sirleaf switched on the first mains electricity for 15 years in the capital Monrovia, a city ruined by a 1989-2003 civil war.

An investigation has established that the fire started in the cabinet room, Johnson-Sirleaf told reporters on Monday.

"The full results of the investigation will be made available at the appropriate time," she said.

Monrovia has since been awash with rumours of arson and Johnson-Sirleaf has already said all Mansion staff will be screened before being allowed to resume working there.

She said she had replaced the head of the Special Security Service which acts as a presidential guard, the national security minister and her minister of state for presidential affairs, Morris Dukuly, who had been in charge of staff at the Executive Mansion.

"Let me just say that Minister Dukuly and I had a good talk. When there is some failure, someone takes responsibility. He was honourable enough to take responsibility and resigned. I respect him for doing so," said Johnson-Sirleaf.

She named Willis D. Knuckles to replace Dukuly.

Johnson-Sirleaf became Africa's first elected woman head of state after polls late last year to draw a line under years of fighting, which ended when former President Charles Taylor went into exile in 2003.

Taylor is awaiting trial in The Hague on war crimes charges related to the civil war in Liberia's neighbour Sierra Leone. His trial was moved from Sierra Leone due to fears his presence could threaten stability in Liberia, where he still has significant support.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 31 July 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

LEBANON-LIBERIA: Lebanon Diary Part VI

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

BEIRUT, 30 Jul 2006 (IRIN) - Saide Chaar and 22 other Liberians and Lebanese-Liberians have been seeking a way out of Beirut for more than two weeks. They are among about 50 Liberians trapped in the besieged city. Liberia has no embassy in Lebanon to evacuate them. Chaar, 25, and his family were evicted from the one-bedroom apartment they were staying in because the landlord said there were too many people staying there. They have found another one-bedroom flat but the landlord there is also urging them to move on. IRIN has been documenting the plight of Chaar and his family through daily phone conversations that are published in narrative form. IRIN spoke with Chaar's fiancé, Marcelle Bedran, 19, on Sunday and compiled Part 6 of an ongoing diary of life in besieged Beirut.

30 July 2006 – We're just stressed out today. The situation, we don't know what to think anymore. Things are getting worse by the hour. Today we got news that protesters in Beirut broke into the UN office. And the air strike in Qana this morning where the civilians died – it was disgusting. The most surprising thing is even the ones in the basement underground got killed and most of them were women and children. It was so heartbreaking to see them taking the babies out, the little children. It was sickening. Right now everybody is so tense in the house. Everybody is arguing. Some people want to go back home but the city is not safe.

International Clips on West Africa

[There were no other relevant stories in the major international media on West Africa]

Local Media – Newspapers

Changes Imminent at the Executive Mansion

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage, New Democrat, National Chronicle, Liberian Express and The Monitor)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will shortly effect changes at the Executive Mansion in the aftermath of the fire episode which destroyed parts of the Mansion including her office last Wednesday. Some key officials at the Ministry of State, the Special Security Services and other security sectors are likely to be affected in the process.

Civic Group Links Ex-Rebel Leader to Fire Episode but Accused Denies

(The Informer and The Monitor)

- The Forum for the Establishment of War Crimes Court in Liberia has linked former rebel leader Sekou Damate Conneh to the recent fire episode at the Executive Mansion on Independence Day. The group urged State security to invite Mr. Conneh, leader of the defunct Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, for investigation on grounds that he made a mysterious appearance at the Mansion few days before the fire outbreak. Reacting to the accusation over the weekend, Mr. Conneh denied entering the Mansion surreptitiously, but said that he was officially invited by President Johnson-Sirleaf's Chief of Office Staff, Morris Dukuly.

President Johnson-Sirleaf Accused of Breaching Constitution

(The News and Public Agenda)

- The suspension of Judge James Zota of the Criminal Court "A" on orders of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf interferes with the work of the Judicial Branch of Government and is a violation of the Liberian Constitution. The papers accused the Head of State of using Chief Justice Johnny Lewis as a pawn to suspend Judge Zota.

Charles Taylor Senses Death

(The News and Liberian Express)

- Former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor is said to be unhappy with his prison conditions as he is increasingly concerned that he may end up like Foday Sankoh, former Sierra Leonean rebel leader who died of complications from a stroke while in the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

WHO Donates Drugs to Rural Health Facilities

(The News and Liberian Express)

- The World Health Organization over the weekend donated an assortment of drugs, training materials and medical supplies valued at US\$76,000 to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The drugs, medical supplies and training materials are intended to be used by health facilities in rural Liberia.

Buchanan Faces Threats from Advancing Sea

(Liberian Express)

- The port city of Buchanan in Grand Bassa County is gradually being eaten up by sea erosion. Atlantic Street, a major residential area, and other communities along the Atlantic Ocean are fast being swept by the advancing sea. Grand Bassa County Superintendent Julia Duncan-Cassell told journalists in Buchanan over the weekend that officials of the county and citizens have launched a fund drive for a pending erosion project to save the city.

Budget Undergoes Tough Scrutiny as Public Hearing Continue Today

(Daily Observer, Heritage and National Chronicle)

- Public hearings on the 2006/2007 national budget will continue today in the Joint Assembly Hall of the Capitol Building. The Hearings began Friday with lawmakers raising concerns over the issues of security, public corporations, civil servants' salaries and health. Speaker Edwin Snowe on Friday expressed disappointment over the low level of public input into the process and frowned on the absence of several opposition political parties and civil society organizations at the start of the hearings.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

Vice President Says Education is Best for Nation-Building

- Addressing graduates of a high school outside Monrovia recently, Vice President Joseph Boakai said that education was the best instrument required to build a nation. He challenged the graduates and other Liberian youths to commit to the fight against drug abuse through education. The Vice President awarded scholarships to needed students of medicine at the University of Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Solicitor-General Says Government Would Treat Corruption like Treason

- Liberia's Solicitor-General, Tiawon Gongloe said that the Government of Liberia would weed out corrupt officials irrespective of who is involved, adding that corruption would be treated like treason. In an interview, Cllr. Gongloe said that corrupt people were serious enemies of the State and must be punished drastically.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Senator Calls for Budgetary Allotment to Repair Burnt President Office

- In a press statement, Grand Kru Senator Cletus Wotorson said that he would propose an extra budgetary allotment to repair the offices which were destroyed by fire at the Executive Mansion on Wednesday, 26 July. He said that he would encourage his colleagues at the National Legislature to pass the required extra budgetary appropriation to facilitate the repairs.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

City Mayor Threatens Punitive Action against Illegal Land Dealers

- Addressing a mass citizens meeting over the weekend, Acting Paynesville City Mayor, Isaac Flomo warned that he would institute punitive measures against illegal land dealers in the community. He said that his office had received several complaints of illegal sale of land including the sale of alleys layout by government in the City.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Advocates for War Crimes Court Want former Warlord Probed

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Workshop Participants Want Article in Constitution Amended

- Participants at a workshop organized by the National Elections Commission in Bong County have called for an amendment to Article 83 of the Constitution of Liberia, citing the clause for absolute majority in Chieftaincy and Municipal Elections as one which must be amended. The participants claimed that the holding of run-offs was an expensive venture which should not be applied to chieftaincy and municipal elections. The workshop was to sensitize the county about the upcoming elections for chiefs and city mayors.

Special Court Supplement

History of Sierra Leone – Madam Yoko



The Mammy Yoko Hotel in Aberdeen, pictured left, has served as headquarters to UNAMSIL and now UNIOSIL. It was named after Madam Yoko, one of Sierra Leone's most prominent women a century ago.

The biography below is taken from the book "Sierra Leonean Heroes - Fifty Great Men and Women Who Helped to Build Our Nation".

MADAM YOKO (ca. 1849-1906)

A WOMAN OF CULTURE AND AMBITION

Madam Yoko (Mammy Yoko) was a brilliant and ambitious woman who used her friendship with the British to gain control of Kpaa Mende, but in the end that very friendship may have destroyed her.

As a child, she was called Soma but acquired the name Yoko at her Sande initiation where she attracted admiration for her beauty and graceful dancing. After an unsuccessful first marriage, Yoko became the wife of Gbenjei, Chief of Taiama; and although she was barren, Gbenjei made Yoko his head wife. When Gbenjei died, Yoko married Gbanya Lango, a powerful war-chief at Senehun. In 1875, she saved her husband from a long imprisonment under the British by making a personal appeal to the Governor, who was charmed by her beauty and feminine graces. Afterwards, Gbanya used Yoko in diplomatic missions to the British and to other chiefs.



In 1884, after the deaths of Gbanya and his successor, Yoko became the "Queen of Senehun". Within a few years, she had brought all of the Kpaa Mende region (now fourteen chiefdoms) under her nominal control through alliances, warfare, and her ability to call on the support of friendly British troops. She established a famous Sande bush in Senehun where she trained girls from throughout Kpaa Mende, sometimes giving the most beautiful in marriage to sergeants of the Frontier Police or to important chiefs.

When the British declared their Protectorate in 1898, Madam Yoko commanded her people to pay the new tax — but her sub-chiefs rebelled. They held a secret meeting, blaming Yoko for "spoiling the country" by supporting the British police, taxes, and forced labour. Yoko took refuge in the police barracks which withstood several attacks by her own subjects, and she was later awarded a silver medal for her loyalty by Queen Victoria.

Madam Yoko ruled as a Paramount Chief in the new British Protectorate until 1906, when it appears that she committed suicide at the age of fifty-five. If true, her reasons have never been altogether clear. A British official wrote that she had obtained all there was to be had in life — love, fame, wealth, and power — and felt there was nothing more to look forward to. But her attempts to manipulate the British for her own ends had turned around on her. She had lost the support of her people, and perhaps she was bored and saw nothing challenging in Britain's new and tightly controlled protectorate.