

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



Small fishing boats briefly skirt the shoreline at Aberdeen before heading out to sea.

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:

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 9 October 2007

Former CDF Militia Leaders Sentenced by Special Court

Two former leaders of Sierra Leone's Civil Defence Forces (CDF) militia have received prison sentences following their convictions in August for war crimes committed during the country's decade-long civil conflict.

Justice Itoe said that while both Prosecution and Defence had recommended single, "global" sentences, the Court had decided to hand down separate sentences on each count for which the two accused had been found guilty.

Moinina Fofana, who was convicted on 4 counts of the 8-count indictment, received sentences of 6 years for Count 2 (murder), 6 years for Count 4 (cruel treatment), 3 years for Count 5 (pillage), and 4 years for Count 7 (collective punishments).

Allieu Kondewa, who was convicted on 5 counts, received sentences of 8 years for Count 2 (murder), 8 years for Count 4 (cruel treatment), 5 years for Count 5 (pillage), 6 years for Count 7 (collective punishments), and 7 years for Count 8 (conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities).

Prosecutors had asked for longer terms of imprisonment, but Presiding Judge Justice Benjamin Itoe, in reading out today's sentencing judgment, pointed to a number of mitigating factors which the Court held justified shorter sentences. These included the CDF's efforts to restore Sierra Leone's democratically-elected government which, the Trial Chamber noted, "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this Country where criminality, anarchy and lawlessness...had become the order of the day".

The Court ordered that the sentences be served concurrently, meaning that Fofana will serve a total of 6 years and Kondewa will serve an 8 year sentence. The sentences will run from 29 May 2003, the date the two were taken into custody by the Special Court.

#END

Awoko

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

CDF to now serve...

Fofanah 1yr 1 month Kondewa 3yrs 1 month

By Kelvin Lewis

The United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday handed down the lightest sentences to the former Director of War Moinina

Fofanah and Alieu Kondewa Chief Priest of the Civil Defence Forces.

The two had been convicted on four counts dealing with (count 2) violence to life (murder), (count 4) violence to life (cruel treatment), (count 5) pillage and (count 7) collective

punishments.

Alieu Kondewa had been convicted on an additional charge (count 8) for the use of child soldiers.

Moinina Fofanah was sentenced to 6 years for count 2, 6 years for count 4, 3 years for count 5 and 4 years for

count 7 leading to a total of 19 years.

Alieu Kondewa received 8 years for count 2, 8 Years for count 4, 5 years for count 5, 6 years for count 7 and 7 years for count 8 adding up to a total 34 years.

However the judges noted that Fofanah and Kondewa had stepped forward not because of their selfish aims but in true defence of the country.

In that regard they ordered that the sentences be served

concurrently.

This means that Fofanah's 19 years is reduced to 6 years and Kondewa's 34 years is reduced to a total of 8 years.

The judges did not stop there. They also ordered that the sentences should be effective from the day the two were arrested and placed in custody which was 29th May 2003.

This further reduced

the sentences by another four years.

In effect Fofanah will now serve the remaining of one year one month while Kondewa will now serve three years one month.

Justice Itoe called on all Sierra Leoneans to "bury the hatchet of war, bury the hatchet of conflict."

He called on Fofanah and Kondewa to respect their words and not go after those who may have given evidence against them.

Awoko

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Nigeria, 6 others to raise \$62m for Charles Taylor's trial

United Nations secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, has listed Nigeria among six-member nations expected to raise about \$62 million for the trial of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor. The amount is to cover the expenses of the special court trying Taylor between now and 2009.

The UN committee set up by Ban is chaired by Canada and has Sierra Leone, Nigeria, The Netherlands, UK and the U.S.A. as its members.

In a letter of urgent appeal sent to all member-states, the UN chief said the committee became necessary to tackle the problem of funds threatening to stall the activities of the special court trying Charles Taylor, who is currently on trial for "crime against humanity."

He called on the UN members to provide "necessary funding" for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is handling the case, "to ensure the successful completion of its mandate".

The letter, addressed to each of the court's Management Committee member-state as well as to other UN members-states, obtained by NAN at the UN at the weekend, stated that the appeal was "urgent in order to resolve the financial crisis".

"As you are aware, the Special Court is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions and presently, the court has insufficient funds to allow it to continue its operations beyond October 2007," Ban said.

He listed the budgetary requirements for the court for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2007 as 36 million dollars for 2007, 33 million dollars for 2008 and 20 million dollars for 2009.

The secretary-general underscored the importance of the court, which he said was aimed at promoting the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law.

According to him: "It is for these reasons that I have decided to appeal once again to your governments to provide funding for the court as a matter of urgency."

The UN chief also noted that "it is now vital that member-states provide the necessary financial support so that the court can focus on completing its important work, which is crucial to peace and security in the region."

He further appealed to member-states to consider entering into enforcement of sentences in agreement with the court.

"I will be grateful for a response from your government by October 15, 2007," Ban said.

Taylor is facing 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including mass murder, mutilations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers.

The crimes were alleged to have been committed during the decade-long civil war that engulfed Sierra Leone, which borders Liberia.

Concord Times
Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Minimal jail sentences for CDF accused

By Tanu Jalloh

Trial Chamber I of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Tuesday handed down minimal jail sentences on the two Civil Defence Forces

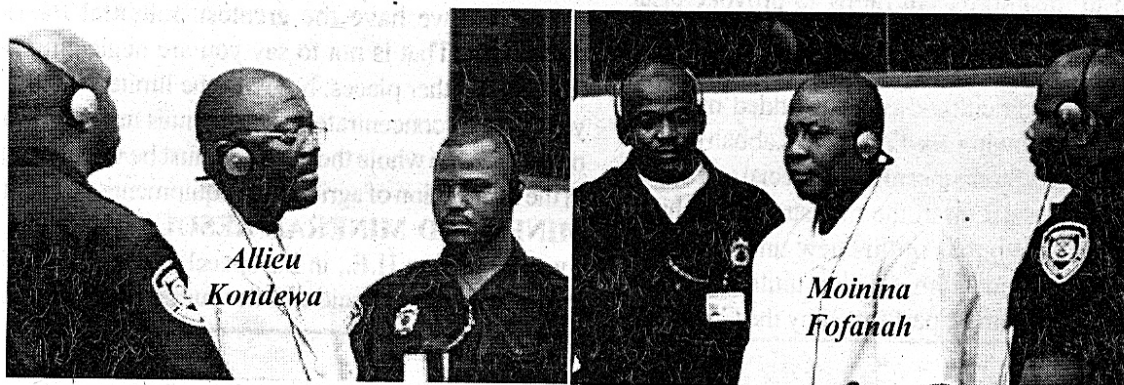
(CDF) inditees for crimes committed during the country's decade-long civil war.

The case against the third accused, Sam Hinga Norman, was halted after his death in

Dakar, Senegal in February.

Moinina Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa were each sentenced to 6 and 8 years imprisonment respectively

Contd. page 7



Minimal jail sentences for CDF accused

From page 1

starting from 29, May 2003; the date each of them was taken into the Court's detention centres in Freetown.

Presiding judge, Honourable Justice Benjamin Mutanga Itoe said the chamber has agreed to impose separate instead of global sentences and therefore ordered that the sentences shall run and be served concurrently.

The former leaders of the militia group, that fought alongside the conventional army were both convicted on August 2, 2007 on four counts for murder, cruel treatment, pillage and collective punishments.

The latter was convicted on an additional count for the recruitment of child combatants under the age of 15.

Executive Secretary of a local human rights organization, National Forum for Human Rights, Alfred Carew said while the trial went a long way to address the issue of impunity we must also not dismiss the relevance of reconciliation now that the sentences have been handed down on them.

According to the National Coordinator of Civil Society Alternative Process of Sierra Leone, Falla Ensa-N'Dayma, the lenience in the jail sentences of the two

CDF accused was apparently because they fought for a just cause though in the process they may have committed some crimes.

"We should be careful because these people have sacrificed a lot to save civilians. Who knows, if it were not for the sacrifices they made we would still be killing each other," he said.

Meanwhile, some family members had expressed disappointments at the whole process saying the two accused were betrayed by former president Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and the entire leadership of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party.

Premier News

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

CDF convicts sentenced

From p 4

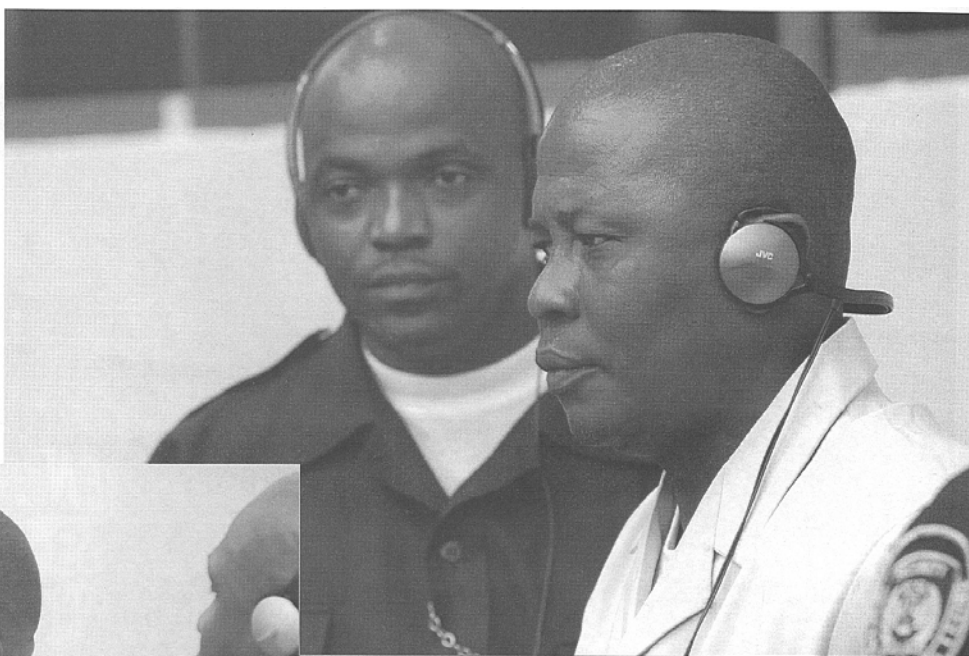
had spent that time in detention.

The Trial judge said the Civil Defence Force was mobilized to support a legitimate course to fight the AFRC and to restore democracy in 1997.

The judge stated that Alieu Kondowa aided and abetted and also failed to prevent crimes committed by his subordinates given his leadership position and was therefore an act greater than what the perpetrators did to women and children.

On the recruitment of child soldiers, the judge emphasized that the children were denied their rights and deprived of their family.

The judge urged all Sierra Leoneans to bury the hatchet of war and conflict and to reconcile with one another. "this is the time to forgive and forget" he declared.



**Moinina Fofanah sentenced to
6 years**

**Allieu Kondowai sentenced to
8 years**

[First part of article was omitted from newspaper]

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Short jail term for CDF men

Sentenced yesterday to six years imprisonment, Moinama Fofanah will now only have to serve two years having already served four years behind bars during the course of the trial. Similarly, Alieu Kondewa who was sentenced to eight years in jail will only be serving four years in prison. The sentences take effect immediately on the day they were arrested in 2003, according to the presiding Judge, Justice Benjamin Mutanga Itoe

There were smiles on the faces of the accused and their relatives who were not expecting such light sentences compared to the lengthy jail term handed down few months ago in the trial of the AFRC inductees.

Fofanah was found guilty on counts 2, 4, 5, & 7 and Kondewa on counts 2, 4, 5, 7 & 8.

The accused did not express their desire to appeal against their sentence and conviction.

The New Citizen
 Wednesday, 10 October 2007

CDF

indictees

Trial Chamber 1 convicted Moinima Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa on a four-count with murder, cruel treatment, pillage and collective punishment while Allieu Kondewa was convicted on an additional count for the recruitment of

child combatants under the age of 15.

The three judge panel consisting of the Presiding Judge, Justice Benjamin Itoe, Justices Bankole Thompson and Pierre Boutet found the two indictees not guilty of two-

counts of crimes against humanity and one-count of war crimes.

Furthermore, Moinima Fofanah was not found guilty on the charge of recruiting child combatants.

Delivering the verdict, Justice Itoe asserted that the sentence would sent a

strong signal to anybody or pro-democracy civilian or militia groups to desist utilizing children as instruments of war in addition to strictly abiding to internationally accepted standards of war such as the Geneva Conventions and its additional protocols.

The New Citizen Online
Wednesday, 10 October 2007
<http://www.thenewcitizen-sl.com>

7 years sentence for CDF indictees

Justice Itoe revealed that the date for the commencement of the jail term for the two CDF indictees takes effect from the date of their arrest, i.e. 29th May 2003 to the day of sentencing.

According to the Presiding Judge, this means that Moinina Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa who were indicted on eight-court charges would now serve a jail term of three and four years respectively.

The two former leaders of the Sierra Leone CDF militia were convicted of war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's civil war.

Trial Chamber 1 convicted Moinima Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa on a four-count with murder, cruel treatment, pillage and collective punishment while Allieu Kondewa was convicted on an additional count for the recruitment of child combatants under the age of 15.

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Furthermore, Moinina Fofanah was not found guilty on the charge of recruiting child combatants. Delivering the verdict, Justice Itoe asserted that the sentence would send a strong signal to anybody or pro-democracy civilian or militia groups to desist utilizing children as instruments of war in addition to strictly abiding to internationally accepted standards of war such as the Geneva Conventions and its additional protocols.

Awareness Times Online

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

<http://awaresstimes.com/drwebsite/publish/index.shtml>

CDF Sentenced.

Former CDF Director of War, Moinina Fofana, and Chief Initiator, Dr. Alieu Musa Kondewa, were this afternoon sentenced to six years and 8 years, respectively for their roles in the eleven-year civil war in Sierra Leone. Mr. Fofana received a sentence of six years less time already served in which case, he will serve an additional 21 months in prison. Dr. Kondewa received a sentence of eight years less time already served in which case, he will serve an additional 45 months in prison by our calculations.

Fofana and Kondewa were leaders of the government-sponsored Civil Defence Forces (CDF) who fought alongside the West African defence force, ECOMOG, and loyal Sierra Leone armed forces to restore the democratically elected government of former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Following the war, Kabbah and his government distanced themselves from the CDF and their leaders, including Kabbah's former Deputy Minister of Defence and National Coordinator of the CDF, Chief Samuel Hunga Norman. Norman died while awaiting verdict in his trial in a prison cell in Senegal on February 22, 2007. Voters in Sierra Leone last month voted out Kabbah's government in part due to their betrayal and neglect of Mr. Norman and the CDF, which twice took up arms to restore Kabbah and his government.

Mr. Fofana and Dr. Kondewa were both found guilty August 2, 2007 on four counts each of violations of protocols of war under Article III Common to the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols collectively known as war crimes. Additionally, Dr. Kondewa was found guilty on one count of international humanitarian laws for recruitment and enlistment of child soldiers. Neither of the CDF Accused was found guilty of the most serious offence of Crimes Against Humanity. The lone Sierra Leonean jurist on the Trial Chamber, Professor Roslo Bankole Thompson, rejected the majority verdict with a strongly worded dissenting opinion in favour of a not-guilty verdict for the CDF Accused. His two foreign colleagues, Canadian jurist, Pierre Boutet, and Cameroonian, Benjamin Mutanga Itoe, ruled against the CDF.

The prosecutor on September 24 asked the court for a thirty-year prison sentence for each of the CDF leaders. Counsels for Dr. Kondewa and Mr. Fofana, Charles Francis Margai and Michiel Pestman, respectively, had asked the court for lighter sentences including four years for Fofana and three years for Kondewa.

Margai and Pestman representing are expected to launch an appeal to the sentences for their respective clients. Should they fail in their appeals, the president of the country where the men are sent to serve their sentences will have the prerogative to ask the court for a pardon. The lone Sierra Leonean jurist on the three-judge panel, Prof. Roslo Bankole Thompson, reiterated his earlier objection that the CDF leaders were guilty of any crimes and did not offer any punishment for Mr. Fofana and Dr. Kondewa..

Alfred Munda SamForay

CDF Defence Fund.

BBC World Service Trust

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Press Release

Sierra Leoneans Rate Special Court Highly But Say it Could do Better

More than two-thirds of Sierra Leoneans think their country's UN-backed Special Court has performed well so far, although more than a quarter think the court is putting some of the wrong people on trial, according to a nationwide survey for the BBC World Service Trust.

The household survey, carried out in July 2007 with Search for Common Ground and the International Center for Transitional Justice, explores knowledge and attitudes on transitional justice issues in the wake of Sierra Leone's civil war, which ended five years ago.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents say they think the Special Court's performance to date has been "good" or "excellent." An overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) say they are aware of the Special Court, although only 4% say they know a lot about its proceedings. More than one in four people report that they do not know anything about the court's proceedings.

Nearly 90% of people questioned said they were aware the court had put on trial former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Of those, half approved its decision to try Taylor in The Hague rather than in West Africa, but more than a quarter (27%) would have preferred the trial to be held in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown. Charles Taylor is on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly backing Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels. His trial began in June 2007, but has been adjourned until 7th January, 2008.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up in 2002 by the government and the UN to bring to justice those with "greatest responsibility" for atrocities committed during the civil war. Its decision to try leaders of the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF) as well as the insurgent RUF rebels and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) has generated some controversy, as has Charles Taylor's transfer to Europe. The court gained custody of Taylor in 2006, but transferred him to The Hague after West African leaders expressed fears that holding the trial locally could destabilize the region.

Low awareness of TRC recommendations

The survey also found Sierra Leoneans to be generally positive about their country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which worked from 2002 to late 2004 and submitted an extensive report to the government. Respondents were asked to rate the TRC's contribution to reconciliation, truth, justice and creating an accurate record of what happened during the conflict. The commission scored the highest percentage of good or excellent ratings for its contribution to reconciliation (73%), followed by truth (68%), creating an accurate record of what happened (66%) and justice (57%).

Nearly 90% of people were found to be aware of the TRC, but only 23% of these said they were aware of its recommendations. Those people were then asked to rate the government's response to the TRC's recommendations. Only 14% rated the response as "very successful," while 51% said it had been "quite successful." A further 18% said "neither successful nor unsuccessful" and 10% said the government's response had been "unsuccessful".

The TRC's recommendations include reparations to victims of the conflict; reform of the judiciary and security services; and measures to promote human rights, good governance and freedom of expression.

Asked what the government's main priority should be in finding justice for Sierra Leone, the most frequent responses were: access to justice for people through the courts (50%); reduce corruption (36%); and improve the court system and/or judiciary (27%).

Only 23% of respondents said they were aware of the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) for Sierra Leone. Of those who are aware, 18% of respondents said they think it has led to a big improvement, 59% think that it has led to a little improvement, 11% think that it has made no difference, and 3% think that it has made things worse.

The JSDP is a five-year project funded by the British government's development agency DFID and launched in 2005. Its stated purpose is "to support the development of an effective and accountable Justice Sector that is capable of meeting the needs and interests of the people of Sierra Leone, particularly the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized." The project has completed its "inception phase" and has recently started a new phase of implementation.

Note to Editors:

The survey is based on a sample of 1,700 adults, taken from seven districts and the Western Urban and Western Rural Areas of Sierra Leone. Participating households were selected randomly, with one respondent meeting the sample criteria being taken from each household. The survey is part of "Communicating Justice," a joint, two-year project of the BBC World Service Trust and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The project aims to raise levels of public awareness and debate around transitional justice issues in five post-conflict African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. "Communicating Justice" is funded mainly by the European Union and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with additional funds from the US-based non-governmental organisation Humanity United.

A full report from the survey will be available later in 2007 on the project website, www.communicatingjustice.org

The BBC World Service Trust is the BBC's independent international charity. It works with people in developing and transitional countries to improve the quality of their lives through the innovative use of media. For more details, log on to the website: www.bbcworldservicetrust.org

The Independent

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

BBC Trains Journalists in Transitional Justice Reporting

The BBC World Service Trust is training journalists in Sierra Leone on transitional justice reporting.

A 'Discussion Session' was held at the Kimbima Hotel , west of the capital Freetown on October 9.

Editors were urged to give their support in the training programme.

The essence of the training programme is to equip journalists in conflict and post- conflict reporting. Sierra Leone experienced a ten years civil strife that spanned from 1991 to 2001. The 4.9 million population of the coastal West African country were subjected to horrendous experiences that ranged from hacking off of limbs and hands, torture, gang-raping, burning alive summary executions and many atrocities, which were described as the worst in contemporary history. Many of the warring faction leaders including ex-president Charles Taylor of neighbouring Liberia, who was accused of allegedly supporting the Revolutionary United Front rebels, are now on trial at a UN backed court in the capital Freetown.

At Kimbima Hotel on October 9, editors of different newspapers and managers of radio stations met and had a discussion with the BBC World Service Trust Team.

The discussion was moderated by Hassan Arouni, BBC's news presenter. Steven king the director of BBC World Service Trust explained to journalists the mission, vision and strategies of the WSTF.

The Trust uses media and communications to reduce poverty and promote human rights, supporting transitional justice report training in post-conflict countries and strengthen the media sector through building of professional capacity and infrastructure among other things. The aim of transitional justice reporting is to raise awareness on post-conflict issues.

Peter Anderson the chief of Press and Public Affairs of the Special Court for war crimes in Sierra Leone said, "Lessons have been derived from the war crimes court set up in Rwanda.

'It was discovered that it was very expensive. The Special Court's mandate was therefore different' . During the war, many atrocities were committed. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up in Post- war era but many victims yearned for justice.

Anderson said, "Justice can't work in a vacuum. He said the Special Court has been less expensive compared to other courts in Africa. 'We should leave footprints in the legacy of Sierra Leone '. He pointed out the fact that transitional justice cuts across institutions. He urged journalist to cross check facts and on the whole to be objective in their reportage..

Justice Laura Marcus Jones former TRC chairperson told editors that transitional justice involves justice, stability and the rule of law. She underscored the fact that without justice there would be no peace. She stressed that in sustaining peace the independence of the judiciary is a sine qua non.

She said the media should not be an instrument of sending hate messages 'and in Sierra Leone the media has not done so. "It is important that the media acts with responsibility', she said.

The president of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalist Ibrahim Ben Kargbo pointed out that prior to the end of the war, the Lome Peace Accord was signed which among other things, mentioned the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the obligation of government to implement it. He recalled that during the war journalists took different 'ideological positions'; some preferred a military option to the war while others preferred a diplomatic solution to the war.

He said the Special Court was hailed at the initial stage because it was seen as a vehicle to try perpetrators of war crimes, but later perceptions changed.

He however pointed out that the culture of impunity which prevailed in Sierra Leone had to be stopped.

Julia Crawford of the BBC is the project director and Nesryn is the coordinator. They made initial acquaintance with journalists in the country.

The Patriotic Vanguard

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

CDF Leaders Sentenced

According to a Special Court press release, two former leaders of Sierra Leone's Civil Defence Forces (CDF) militia have received prison sentences following their convictions in August for war crimes committed during the country's decade-long civil conflict.



Justice Itoe said that while both Prosecution and Defence had recommended single, "global" sentences, the Court had decided to hand down separate sentences on each count for which the two accused had been found guilty.

Moinina Fofana, who was convicted on 4 counts of the 8-count indictment, received sentences of 6 years for Count 2 (murder), 6 years for Count 4 (cruel treatment), 3 years for Count 5 (pillage), and 4 years for Count 7 (collective punishments).

Allieu Kondewa, who was convicted on 5 counts, received sentences of 8 years for Count 2 (murder), 8 years for Count 4 (cruel treatment), 5 years for Count 5 (pillage), 6 years for Count 7 (collective punishments), and 7 years for Count 8 (conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities).

Prosecutors had asked for longer terms of imprisonment, but Presiding Judge Justice Benjamin Itoe, in reading out today's sentencing judgment, pointed to a number of mitigating factors which the Court held justified shorter sentences. These included the CDF's efforts to restore Sierra Leone's democratically-elected government which, the Trial Chamber noted, "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this Country where criminality, anarchy and lawlessness...had become the order of the day".

The Court ordered that the sentences be served concurrently, meaning that Fofana will serve a total of 6 years and Kondewa will serve an 8 year sentence. The sentences will run from 29 May 2003, the date the two were taken into custody by the Special Court.

Associated Press

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Sierra Leone court sentences militia leaders to less than 10 years

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone: A U.N.-backed court has sentenced two former leaders of a pro-government militia to six and eight years in jail for brutalities committed during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

The ruling on Tuesday was a victory for the defense, given that the prosecution was asking for 30-year jail terms. It also reflects the ambiguity with which Sierra Leone has viewed atrocities committed by a group that many still see as heroes who fought rebels who may have done much worse.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa were among the leaders of a group called the Civil Defense Forces, which used a network of tribal-based hunters known as the Kamajors to fight various rebel groups during the country's 1991-2002 war.

The Civil Defense Forces have been widely accused of torturing and mutilating civilians in pursuit of its goals.

Fofana and Kondewa were both convicted on four counts involving murder, cruel treatment, pillage and issuing collective punishment. Kondewa was convicted on an additional count of conscripting child soldiers.

Kondewa was sentenced to eight years; Fofana to six years.

The charges against the Civil Defense Forces have fueled controversy in the West African country, where many argue the tribal-based force should be praised as patriots. Some relatives of the defendants could be heard sobbing in the crowded public gallery as sentences were read out, while other onlookers argued they were too light.

The sole Sierra Leonean judge on the three-judge trial panel had ruled that they were not guilty on all counts. The Aug. 2 conviction held 2-1 with guilty verdicts from judges from Cameroon and Canada.

Presiding Judge Benjamin Itoe said the sentences were short partly because the Civil Defense Forces "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this country where criminality, anarchy and lawlessness ... had become the order of the day."

Still, he added that the brutality of their methods could not go unpunished.

"Both Fofana and Kondewa failed to prevent the brutal killings of their kith and kin by their subordinates," said Judge Benjamin Itoe, the presiding judge. He said civilians "unjustifiably perceived as rebel collaborators" were harshly and violently punished.

The jail terms are to be counted from the date the defendants were taken into custody by the court in May 2003, meaning Fofana could be free in two years.

Fofana and Kondewa issued public statements expressing their regret for their organization's role in the bloody war.

"Sierra Leoneans, those of you who suffered during the conflict, I plead for mercy and I express remorse," Kondewa said in his native Mende language.

Sierra Leone's Special Court was set up after the end of the war to hold accountable those most responsible for atrocities committed during years of vicious fighting. During the war, various groups burned villages, chopped off people's hands with machetes and went on campaigns of rape.

Those first convicted were members of a ruling junta who were sentenced to 45- to 50-year prison terms.

Over the course of the trial of the Civil Defense Forces militia, which began in June 2004, 75 prosecution witnesses testified to support charges of murder, systematic looting and burning of villages, as well as the recruitment of child soldiers.

The head of the Civil Defense Forces, Sam Hinga Norman, had also been indicted, but died earlier this year.

It is estimated that about half a million people were victims of killings, systematic mutilation and other atrocities during years of fighting in Sierra Leone.

Reuters

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Sierra Leone jails pro-govt militia chiefs

By Katrina Manson

FREETOWN (Reuters) - Sierra Leone's U.N.-backed Special Court sentenced two former leaders of a pro-government militia to six and eight years in prison on Tuesday for war crimes during the West African state's 1991-2002 civil conflict.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa were leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), which defended former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's government from rebels during a war notorious for atrocities by drugged soldiers, often no more than children.

Rights activists expressed disappointment at the court's leniency, but Judge Benjamin Mutanga Itoe said the defendants' service to democracy had been taken into account.



The two had "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this country", Itoe told the court.

The pair were convicted in August of war crimes under the Geneva convention -- including murder, cruelty and pillage -- but were acquitted of crimes against humanity.

Kondewa was also found guilty of recruiting child soldiers and was handed the longer, eight-year sentence on Tuesday. The sentences take effect retroactively from their arrests in 2003.

Justice Rosolu John Bankole Thompson, the only Sierra Leonean on the three-judge panel, had voted to acquit them of all charges in August.

A third defendant, former Defence Minister Hinga Norman, who headed the CDF and was regarded by many Sierra Leoneans as a hero, died in detention in February after a routine operation.

Former President Kabbah stepped down at elections in August, the first since U.N. peacekeepers left in 2005. His Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) lost power to the All People's Congress (APC) of new President Ernest Bai Koroma.

HIGH PRIEST

Sierra Leone's civil war, fuelled by the sale of illegal "blood diamonds", was made notorious by images of drug-crazed child soldiers wielding machetes and AK-47s who raped, killed and mutilated civilians. More than 50,000 people were killed.

Prosecutors had described Kondewa as the "high priest" of the feared Kamajor traditional hunters who dominated the CDF and are accused of torture and cannibalism.

Among the crimes he was convicted of aiding and abetting was the murder of two women who had sticks inserted into their genitals until they came out of their mouths, Itoe said. The women were disembowelled and their entrails eaten.

"We were expecting more than 30 years because of the crimes they committed," said Alex Kaikai, director of local NGO Torture Watch. "I see my brothers whose limbs have been amputated. I want them to feel the weight of what they have done."

The jail terms contrasted with sentences imposed in July on three leaders of the rebel Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, which toppled Sierra Leone's government in 1997.

Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were jailed for 50 years each, and Brima Bazzy Kamara for 45 years.

The court's most high profile defendant, former Liberian President Charles Taylor, is on trial in the Netherlands on 11 counts of war crimes for allegedly arming the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in return for gems from the rich eastern diamond fields near the border with Liberia.

Agence France-Presse

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Sierra Leone militia chiefs get six, eight years for war crimes

FREETOWN (AFP) — A UN-backed court for Sierra Leone on Tuesday handed down relatively light jail sentences to two former pro-government militia commanders for war crimes after they were cleared of more serious charges arising from the gruesome civil war in the west African country.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa, leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a notorious paramilitary force which recruited traditional Kamajor hunter militias to fight rebel forces during the 1991-2001 conflict, were jailed for six and eight years, respectively.

Their jail terms, a far cry from the 30-year sentence sought by the prosecution, run with effect from May 29, 2003 when they were arrested and taken into custody by the court.

The pair was found guilty of war crimes but acquitted of charges of crimes against humanity including murder.

The court justified the shorter sentences compared to the 45- to 50-year terms slapped on some rebel leaders in July, on mitigating factors.

These included the need for reconciliation and the CDF's role in restoring the democratically-elected government of ex-leader Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

The CDF "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this country where criminality, anarchy and lawlessness ... had become the order of the day," the court said in a statement.

As a parallel force to the regular army, the CDF fought rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in a war that claimed, according to UN estimates, some 120,000 lives and left thousands mutilated and traumatised.

Many Sierra Leoneans believe the CDF and its Kamajor fighters helped rein in the brutal RUF rebels and protect villagers in the vulnerable hinterland of the diamond-rich country.

The late Sam Hinga Norman, the ex-deputy defense minister and head of the CDF was a celebrated hero in the country. Proceedings against him had to be dropped following his death in custody, from natural causes, early this year.

The CDF was created to replace hundreds of mercenary fighters hired mainly from a South African company which shored up the government army.

Judge Benjamin Itoe said "it is now time for all to bury the hatchet of war in the interest of peace.

"It is now time for reconciliation and forgiveness," he said, adding both militia leaders had expressed remorse for their actions and "their apologies have been taken into consideration."

A human rights activist who asked not to be named noted the differences in the sentences for the CDF and a rebel faction, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in July.

"A crime is a crime no matter for what group it emanates from. The CDF sentence should have been more," he said.

Set up in January 2002 by a treaty between the Sierra Leone government and the United Nations, the tribunal is prosecuting those responsible for atrocities committed during the war.

Chief among those in the dock is former Liberian leader and warlord Charles Taylor, who is the first African head of state to face warcrimes charges in an international court.

In its first rulings, the court jailed three rebel AFRC commanders to between 45 and 50 years each for mutilation, murder, rape and enlisting child soldiers.

The west African nation, ranked by the UN as the world's second most poverty-stricken, has just held democratic elections that brought the former opposition All People's Congress (APC) to office.

The vote was seen as a test of the nation's chances of definitively turning its back on the brutal conflict which ended in 2001.

The war, funded by blood diamonds and considered one of the most gruesome in modern history, started under a former APC administration.

BBC Online

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7035190.stm>

Jail for S Leone self-defence duo

Sierra Leone's UN-backed war crimes court has jailed two ex-leaders of a pro-government militia during the war.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa were given six and eight-year jail sentences to run from 2003 for offences including murder and cruel treatment.

The case has been controversial as some saw the Civil Defence Force (CDF) as defending civilians against rebels in the 10-year war that ended in 2002.



The Kamajor militia supported the government in the civil war

Some 50,000 people were killed and many more maimed and raped during the war.

Child soldiers

The CDF recruited traditional Kamajor hunter militias to fight rebel forces and was seen as defending civilians from the rebel fighters.

Before their conviction in August, Fofana and Kondewa had pleaded not guilty to eight counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The judgement detailed some of the crimes carried out by the pro-government militia.

These included an order to destroy an entire village and consider all people found there as rebels who must be killed.

Kondewa was also found guilty of the use of child soldiers. Fofana was acquitted on this count.

They were both acquitted on all counts of crimes against humanity and of acts of terrorism, considered a war crime.

Correspondents say many Sierra Leoneans see the CDF - also known as the Kamajor militia - as a force that fought for a noble cause, to defend the population against brutal rebel groups such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

When the head of Kamajors, Sam Hinga Norman, was indicted four years ago there was public outcry. He has since died in custody.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone originally indicted a total of 13 people in connection with the war, including the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is accused of backing the rebels.

In July, it handed down its first sentences against three senior members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, which toppled the government in 1997.

CDF CONVICTIONS

Murder and violence (war crime): Both guilty

Violence to life and mental suffering (war crime): Both guilty

Pillage (war crime): Both guilty

Collective punishment (war crime): Both guilty

Murder (crime against humanity): Both acquitted

Inhumane acts (crime against humanity): Both acquitted

Acts of terrorism (war crime): Both acquitted

Recruiting child soldiers: Kondewa guilty; Fofana acquitted

Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were jailed for 50 years each, and Brima Kamara for 45 years.

Mr Taylor's trial is being conducted in The Hague because of fears that trying him in West Africa could jeopardise the new-found peace of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Critics say the UN-backed court has been too slow in delivering justice to the people of Sierra Leone.

Three of those indicted, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh and Mr Hinga Norman, died before their verdicts were delivered.

Aljazeera.net

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Former S Leone militia men jailed

Two former leaders of pro-government militia in Sierra Leone have been sentenced to six and eight years in prison for war crimes committed during the country's brutal decade-long conflict.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa escaped more severe sentences because of what the judge called their service to democracy.

Fofana and Kondewa were leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a paramilitary force which recruited traditional Kamajor hunter militias to fight rebel forces during the conflict between 1991 and 2001.

The two were sentenced to six and eight years respectively on Tuesday by the court in the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, significantly shorter terms than the 30 years requested by the prosecution after the two men were convicted in August.

Disappointment

The pair was found guilty of war crimes but acquitted of the more serious charges of crimes against humanity including murder.

Rights activists expressed disappointment at the court's leniency, but Judge Benjamin Mutanga Itoe said the defendants' service to democracy had been taken into account.

The CDF "contributed immensely to re-establishing the rule of law in this country where criminality, anarchy and lawlessness ... had become the order of the day," the court said in a statement.

"We were expecting more than 30 years because of the crimes they committed," Alex Kaikai, director of local NGO Torture Watch, said.

"I see my brothers whose limbs have been amputated. I want them to feel the weight of what they have done."

Kondewa was also found guilty of recruiting child soldiers and was handed the longer, eight-year sentence on Tuesday.

The sentences take effect retroactively from their arrests in 2003.

New government

As a parallel force to the regular army, the CDF fought rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in a war fuelled by the illegal trade of "blood diamonds" that claimed, according to UN estimates, some 120,000 lives and left thousands mutilated.

The prison term contrasted with sentences imposed in July on three leaders of the rebel Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, which toppled Sierra Leone's government in 1997.

Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were jailed for 50 years each, and Brima Bazzy Kamara for 45 years.

Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, is the court's most high profile defendant and is on trial in the Netherlands on 11 counts of war crimes for allegedly arming the RUF in return for gems from the diamond fields near the Liberian border.

The West African country has emerged successfully from the conflict and in August elected Ernest Koroma from the opposition All People's Congress (APC) as its new president.

Sierra Leone is ranked by the UN as the world's second poorest country, and the vote was seen as a key test of the nation's democratic institutions.

Koroma was sworn in as president last month following his victory in a tense run-off vote with Solomon Berewa, the former vice president.

On Tuesday Koroma named the first 10 ministers of his new cabinet.

Zainab Bangura, an experienced good governance campaigner who had run as a presidential candidate against Koroma in a 2002 election, was named as foreign minister.

Bangura was the only woman in the first 10 ministerial appointments and had been working with the UN in Liberia, as had the new agriculture minister, Sam Sesay.

Press TV (Iran)

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Court jails Sierra Leone militia chiefs

A UN-backed court in Sierra Leone has sentenced two former leaders of a pro-government militia to 6 and 8 years in jail for war crimes.

Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa were among the leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), which used a network of tribal-based soldiers known as the Kamajors to defend former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's government from various rebel groups during the country's 1991-2002 war.



Half a million were victims of Sierra Leone war.

The charges against the Civil Defence Forces have fuelled controversy in the West African country, where many argue the tribal-based force should be praised as patriots. Rights activists expressed disappointment at the court's leniency, but Judge said the defendants' service to democracy had been taken into account as prosecution was asking for 30-year jail terms.

More than 50,000 people were killed in Sierra Leone's civil war which was fuelled by the sale of illegal "blood diamonds".

Christian Monitor website

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

<http://www.christian-monitor.org/cms/>

Former Kamajors get lighter sentences

The Special Court has sentenced two ex-leaders of a pro-government militia, Moinina Fofana and Alieu Kondewa to six and eight years respectively. Sentences will be served from May 29 2003, which translates that Fofana will be a free man in less than two years, and Kondewa in less than four years. Some legal pundits believe they will serve just half of the remaining years i.e. less than one for Fofana and less than two years for Kondewa. They were earlier found guilty of crimes committed during the civil war.

Fofana and Kondewa were convicted in August for offences including murder and cruel treatment. The case has been controversial as some saw the Civil Defence Force (CDF) as defending civilians against rebels in the 10-year war that ended in 2002. Some 50,000 people were killed and many more maimed and raped during the war.

Before their conviction in August, Fofana and Kondewa had pleaded not guilty to eight counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The judgement detailed some of the crimes carried out by the pro-government militia. These included an order to destroy an entire village and consider all people found there as rebels who must be killed. Kondewa was also found guilty of the use of child soldiers. Fofana was acquitted on this count. They were both acquitted on all counts of crimes against humanity and of acts of terrorism, considered a war crime.

Many Sierra Leoneans see the CDF - also known as the Kamajor militia - as a force that fought for a noble cause, to defend the population against brutal rebel groups such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Perhaps, this explains the light sentences handed down by the court. When the head of Kamajors, Sam Hinga Norman, was indicted four years ago there was public outcry. He has since died in custody.

The UN-backed court originally indicted a total of 13 people in connection with the war, including the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is accused of backing the rebels. In July, it handed down its first sentences against three senior members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, which toppled the SLPP government in 1997. Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were jailed for 50 years each, and Brima Kamara for 45 years.

Taylor's trial is being conducted in The Hague because of fears that trying him in Sierra Leone could jeopardise the peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Critics say the UN-backed court has been too slow in delivering justice to the people of Sierra Leone. Three of those indicted, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh and Mr Hinga Norman, died before their verdicts were delivered.

UN News Service (New York)

Tuesday, 9 October 2007

Two Former Militia Leaders Jailed By UN-Backed Tribunal in Country

The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) today sentenced two former leaders of a pro-Government militia to jail over war crimes they committed during the country's prolonged civil war in the 1990s.

Moinina Fofana, who was convicted on 2 August on charges of murder, cruel treatment, pillage and collective punishments, was given a six-year prison term by the SCSL, which sits in the capital, Freetown.

Allieu Kondewa, who was convicted on the same charges and also on a count of recruiting child combatants, received an eight-year sentence.

At the trials, prosecutors said Mr. Fofana served as National Director of War for the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) while Mr. Kondewa acted as the militia's "High Priest." The case against a third accused CDF leader, Sam Hinga Norman, ended after he died in February.

During Sierra Leone's civil war the CDF, comprised of various tribally-based traditional hunters, supported the Government against rebel groups, including the Revolutionary United Front and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Prosecutors had asked for longer terms of imprisonment for Mr. Fofana and Mr. Kondewa but Justice Benjamin Itoe, the presiding judge, said today that several mitigating factors meant shorter terms were warranted.

These included the efforts of the CDF to restore the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone, which the court said had contributing to re-establishing the rule of law in the West African nation.

The SCSL is mandated to try those bearing the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian and Sierra Leonean law within the country's borders since 30 November 1996. It is the second international war crimes tribunal established in Africa.


 United Nations Nations Unies
United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 9 October 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

There were no relevant stories on Liberia in the international media today.

International Clips on West Africa

10/09/2007 08:32:51

Sierra Leone president taps technocrats for cabinet

By Katrina Manson

FREETOWN, Oct 9 (Reuters) - Newly-elected Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma has appointed the first ministers of his government, mixing technocrats with some political loyalists from his party which won recent elections. Koroma, a 54-year-old former insurance executive who was sworn in last month after winning a tense presidential run-off in the West African state, named 10 ministers of his new cabinet in a broadcast on national radio late on Monday.

UN peace building commission official heads to Sierra Leone

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 8, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- A senior official with the UN's Peace building Commission left on Monday **for Sierra Leone** to meet with the newly-elected leaders of the western African country. Dutch Ambassador Frank Majoor, in his capacity as chair of the Peace building Commission's Sierra Leone configuration, is to meet with newly-elected President Ernest Bai Koroma and members of his Cabinet, UN spokesperson Michele Mantas told a noon briefing.

Local Media – Newspaper

America Opens International School in Liberia

(The News and The Analyst)

- The Government of the United States has officially opened the International School of Monrovia which the United States Ambassador to Liberia, Donald Booth, said will serve as a beacon of light that will attract international partners to the country. The International School of Monrovia is a not-for-profit institution sponsored by the American Government and modeled on the U.S. public school educational program.

Chinese Road Construction Engineers Demand Security Guarantee

(Daily Observer)

- The head of a major Chinese road construction company (CHICO) has pleaded for security guarantee for Chinese engineers who are due to shortly commence the rehabilitation of Liberia's road network.

USAID Gives US\$1.1M to Support Rubber Farmers

(The Informer, Heritage and The News)

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), acting through the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) has awarded four grants, totaling US\$1.1 million to support the redevelopment of the smallholder rubber sector in

Liberia. Two of the grants, are for the rehabilitation of 5,000 acres of smallholder rubber farms in Bong and Nimba Counties, while the other two are for the establishment of 30 acres of rubber nurseries in the same counties.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

USAID Donates to Small Holding Rubber Farms

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Liberian Accountants to lead March against Foreign Auditors

- Appearing on a radio talk show yesterday, the head of the Liberia Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Mr. Sam Mombo said that the organization will shortly lead a march of accounting college students and graduates to present to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to demand an end to the awarding of auditing contracts to foreign auditors.
- Mr. Mombo said that hundreds of Liberian auditors and young accounting graduates were being deprived of jobs and job training because the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) and other Government entities were denying local auditing firms contracts, citing as an example the CBL's latest awarding of nearly US\$90,000 auditing contract to the Price-Water House/Ghana.
- Mr. Mombo described the practice of Government hiring foreign auditors as a violation of the Liberianization Policy and not nationalistic.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Justice Ministry Vows to Keep Criminals off the Streets

- Correspondents said that Justice Minister Philip Banks vowed that his Ministry will never allow criminals to takeover the Country because the security agencies were exerting all efforts to have the criminals out of the streets. He added that the Ministry was currently prosecuting some alleged criminals who were arrested recently.
- Cllr. Banks' comments were in reaction to Catholic Father Andrew Karnley's criticism that criminals were taking over the streets of Monrovia.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Chief Justice Wants Court Workers Sacked

- Speaking at the formal opening of the Supreme Court yesterday, Chief Justice Johnny Lewis recommended to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf the dismissal of all Magistrates and court workers in Sinoe and Grand Kru Counties because the names of the court officials were just on paper, but the courts were not functioning.
- Justice Lewis also said that the slicing of the budget for the judiciary by the Lawmakers from US\$1 million to US\$300,000 has hampered the construction of Circuit Courts in River Gee and Grand Kru Counties. He advised the Lawmakers to consult the judiciary before any future budget cuts.
- Further, Justice Lewis disclosed that the UNHCR has offered to fund the construction of 6 magisterial courts in Liberia shortly.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Public Works Ministry Closes Major Detour for Reconditioning

- The Public Relations Officer of the Ministry of Public Works Fasuma Kollie announced that the Jallah's Town bypass presently under reconstruction will be completely closed to vehicles beginning today, Tuesday in order to speed up work and complete the project on time.
- Mr. Kollie also said that active work on the Somalia Drive-Freeport Road has begun with a Chinese firm, CHICO being awarded the contract.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Government Introduces HIV/AIDS Education in School Curriculum

- Addressing the opening session of the National HIV/AIDS Conference in Monrovia, Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto said that the Liberian Government has introduced

into the school curriculum the teaching of HIV/AIDS awareness course throughout Liberia, emphasizing that most of those affected by the killer were youths of school-going-age who have multiple sex partners without taking any preventive actions.
(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Foreign-Owned Companies Allegedly Dupe Government of Taxes

- The Chairperson of the Commerce Committee of the House of Representatives, Representative Hajji Fata Sanyon recently told the House's Plenary that Sethi Brothers, International Aluminum Factory and City Builders allegedly duped the Liberian Government of thousands of United States dollars through duty-free privileges they enjoy as so-called manufacturers of roofing sheets.
- Representative Sanyon said that the Committee's investigation established that the three businesses have no zinc factories except that they only import zinc into the Country for relining yet, they benefit from duty-free privileges and in so doing have cheated the Government under Oath.
- The Committee called on the Government to bring to book the three businesses and make them to pay back the huge sum of monies due the Country.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM and ELBS Radio)

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.