

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



Justice El Hadji Malick Sow of Senegal was sworn in this morning as Alternate Judge of Trial Chamber II.
See today's 'Special Court Supplement' for more photos from the swearing-in ceremony.

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:

Friday, 11 May 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 May 2007

Justice El Hadji Malick Sow of Senegal Sworn in as Alternate Judge

Justice El Hadji Malick Sow of Senegal was sworn in Friday as an alternate Judge of the Special Court's Trial Chamber II.



Justice Sow made his solemn declaration before Acting Registrar Herman von Hebel at a special ceremony held in the Court's landmark courthouse in Freetown. Court President Justice George Gelaga-King then gave the closing address.

The solemn declaration was witnessed by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice Mr Frederick Carew on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone. Mr Kedar Poudal, the Human Rights Co-ordinator at UNIOSIL's Rule of Law Unit attended on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Justice Sow was joined by his fellow Judges from the Trial and Appeals Chambers, led by Justice King. Members of the diplomatic corps, Special Court staff, and journalists were also in attendance.

Justice Sow is the first alternate Judge at the Special Court. He will join Justice Julia Sebutinde of Uganda, Justice Richard Lussick of Samoa, and Justice Teresa Doherty of Northern Ireland to hear evidence in the Special Court's trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor at The Hague.

In accordance with Article 12 (4) of the Statute of the Special Court, Justice Sow will be present at each stage of the trial, and will replace a Judge if that Judge is unable to continue sitting.

Justice Sow has extensive experience in Senegal's judiciary, both at the regional and national level. From 1984 to 1990 he served in various capacities as Judge of the Regional Tribunals of Ziguinchor and Diourbel the Labor Tribunal of Dakar.

Since 1994, Justice Sow has served as Judge in a number of Senegalese courts, including the Première Chambre Sociale, the Première Chambre Civile et Commerciale, and the Troisième Chambre Correctionnelle, the Chambre d'Accusation, and the Première Chambre Correctionnelle of the Court of Appeals of Dakar.

In November 2006 he was named President of the Criminal Chamber of the Appeals Court in Dakar.

Justice Sow also worked as a Technical Advisor to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice, respectively.

Justice Sow received his Masters (L.L.M) in International and Comparative Law from the Southern Methodist University, in Texas in 2004, and his L.L.M in Private and Business Law from the University of Dakar in 1982.

Awoko

Friday, 11 May 2007

Johnny Paul escaped with diamonds – *Issa discloses*

On his fifth day of giving evidence in his defence, the former interim leader of the defunct Revolutionary United Front, Issa Sesay has said that following his overthrow in 1998, the former leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Johnny Paul Koroma arrived in Kailahun with some quantity of diamonds.

Sesay said the diamonds were taken from Johnny Paul by the then RUF

battlefield commander Sam Bockarie alias Mosquito.

He said after the AFRC troops had left Koidu for Kailahun, the RUF leadership were informed by one of Johnny Paul's bodyguards that the former junta leader was planning to move to Ghana with his family and was in possession of diamonds.

He said when Mosquito received the information he convened a meeting of all senior RUF officials and asked that the bodyguard repeat what he had told him, which he did. Mosquito then

ordered that Johnny Paul, who was at the time at Kangama, be immediately arrested.

"We then headed for Kangama where the [Johnny Paul's] bodyguards were disarmed and the diamonds taken from [him]."

Asked by his lawyer Wayne Jordash if anything was done to Makuta, Johnny Paul's wife, Sesay replied, "nothing was done to her...she only complained that she was tired."

It was reported that Makuta had been violated by RUF rebels.

The trial continues today.

Standard Times

Friday, 11 May 2007

Trivializing Security Threat

When the rebel war broke out in 1991 in Bomaru, Kailahun district, most people trivialized it at the initial stage as a minor border skirmishes emanating from a dispute among traders in Sierra Leone and their counterparts in Liberia. This was during the administration of the late President Joseph Saidu Momoh, a senior military officer who retired as a result of the appointment.

The war, which was perceived as a minor border skirmishes escalated to the point that even State House got a taste of it. The war lasted for eleven interrupted years. Lives and properties were lost, relationships broken and it is on record that the war caused excessive human rights abuses committed more than any where in the world.

Candidly the genesis of the war could be traced to the early eighties during the days of 'Ndogbowoso' but the late President; Siaka P. Stevens was smart to reverse the ugly trend by then. Proactive quality was one of the characteristics of the late Stevens.

It is unarguably true that the prolong stay in governance of the APC was one of the principal reasons for the war. If the late Siaka Stevens were alive he could have nipped it on the bud as he did with the Ndogbowoso war that was misinterpreted at its initial stage.

With this brief historical background, one can point out a difference between the current President, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the late Stevens. Also a difference can be pointed out between the late General Momoh and Siaka Stevens bringing to focus the border dispute between the late Samuel Doe and the late Stevens.

The 1997 AFRC coup could serve as a simple litmus test to substantiate my assessment about President Kabbah and the late Stevens when the issue of state security is discussed. The acronym AFRC became part of the vocabulary of Sierra Leoneans because President Kabbah failed to respond on time to information disclosed to him about a pending coup or called it mutiny in military parlance. Had it been the late Stevens the story could have been different. No wonder he was nicknamed "Pass are die" meaning until I am dead.

Trivializing security threat

While in the Republic of Guinea as guest of President Lansana Conte together with substantial number of Sierra Leoneans, President Kabbah was bold enough to tell the world through the British Broadcasting Service (BBC) that he was informed about the coup three days before it materialized. Can you imagine? Again the invasion of Freetown, January 6 is another incident worth mentioning when security matters are chronicled under the SLPP administration with President Kabbah as head of government. The reason is to present the attitude of this

security and to impress on the minds of the masses that this administration had always trivialized security matters. However, the issue that this writer is very concern about is the recent house burning in the southern province by unknown persons. Since last month, several people have been displaced as a result of the continuous house burning in the three districts. It started in the Pujehun district and later spilled over to Bo and Bonthe. Over fifty houses have been reportedly burnt down to ground level, leaving several people including women, children and hus-

eleven-year war. Such terrible news about what occurred in the past that caused this nation to go down the economic, social and political hills should not be repeated.

It would be recalled that at the initial stage of this ugly development, the Inspector General of police, Mr. Brima Acha Kamara, on the UN radio referred to it as a minor family dispute among the people in the districts. Similar remarks were also made by the southern region commissioner of police Mr. FUK Dabor. Last week, the Vice President, Solomon Berewa paid a visit to the

cure the affected areas. The question is why should police (courtesy Mr.I.G) formed a task force team to "secure" a family dispute? If it was a family dispute it should be resolved at family level that is why there are heads.

Before concluding this piece, let me identify myself to my numerous readers that I am a strong member and believer of the SLPP from the Kailahun district. So the issue about anti SLPP should not arise. Frankly, the burning incident was a politically motivated one between the PMDC supporters and SLPP. Supporters of both parties are at each others throat, trying to inflict pains and sufferings on one and other, depriving themselves as a result of politicians while the politicians are paying little or no attention to them.

This should be a matter of serious concern to the authorities. This is because the southern province is fast becoming a trouble shooter zone. The region, as we all know, is very synonymous with political war. At this crucial moment, especially when we are just coming out of a conflict situation any thing that has the potential to send us back to those dark days should be discouraged immediately. The southern province is recognized as the home of the Civil Defence Forces (Kamajors). Prior to this time they have been continuously expressing resentments over what they described as "bad treatment" meted out to them by the Kabbah led -SLPP government. I am in no way anticipating or provoking future problem but the fact remains that we should not, as a nation under-estimate the situation that has the potential to disrupt our hard earned peace. The unfortunate situation had caused major destruction of properties and rendered poor people homeless. But the Inspector General of Police had described the situation as a minor family dispute. How true this statement is needs more explanation from the Chief of police.

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government and its leader to our numerous readers about how security issues are being handled to the detriment of Sierra Leoneans. It is not that this piece aims to ridicule the situation, but to bring out the inadequacies and inefficiencies of this government about state

bands homeless. This is a matter of grave security concern by any estimation. First, it has to do with the lives of our brothers, sisters and children and second it is a matter of national concern, especially when we as a people are trying to put together the remnants of the

southern province to resolve what these officers had referred to as a minor family dispute but turned out to be something different.

Reports from the region revealed that a task force team, including the police, had been formed in each district to se-

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UN News Service (New York)

Thursday, 10 May 2007

Sierra Leone: Country Elections On Track, But Assistance Still Needed - Ban Ki-Moon

Calling preparations for the upcoming national elections in Sierra Leone a "remarkable success," United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged the international community to remain engaged in helping the West African country continue its recovery from a brutal civil war.

"The fact that 91 per cent of the eligible voters have registered for the July 2007 elections is both a demonstration of the civic maturity of the people of Sierra Leone and an important indication of the increased capacity of the National Electoral Commission," Mr. Ban said in his latest report on the work of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL).

Among other notable accomplishments of the Commission, as assisted by UNIOSIL, Mr. Ban noted the recruitment and training of election workers, the drafting of election petition rules and the installation of technical advisers.

The deployment of state authority across the country, however, continues to lag behind and efforts to combat corruption and promote accountability have been painfully slow to yield results, he said.

"In this regard, the country clearly needs the support of the international community," he maintained, urging the Government to work closely with the UN's Peacebuilding Commission following the agreement reached on a framework for further consolidation of the peace.

In October 2006, the Commission declared Sierra Leone eligible to benefit from the recently set-up multi-million dollar Peacebuilding Fund, which is aimed at assisting countries emerging from conflict to rebuild and prevent them falling back into bloodshed. Sierra Leone's 10-year conflict began in 1991 and left thousands dead and many more mutilated.

In order to further advance peace consolidation, Mr. Ban said the national armed forces and the police needed "significant additional support" in the areas of equipment and accommodation.

In addition, he pointed out that a solid private sector in the country was still lacking. "Without a vibrant economy based on free-market principles and clean practices, the country will not be able to achieve the much-needed acceleration of the growth rate," he said.

Finally, he advocated that the Government and its partners should step up efforts to reform the judiciary and promote human rights, especially those of women and children.

UNIOSIL, the first integrated UN office established to support a peace-consolidation process, was established following the completion of peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone that ended on 31 December 2005. It is made up of almost 300 people, comprising 82 international staff, 192 local staff and 24 UN Volunteers.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 10 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

9 May 2007

President Sirleaf Departs for U.S. and Germany

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf leaves the country today for a visit to the United States of America and Germany. Whilst in the United States, the President will deliver the keynote address at the commencement program of the Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma on Saturday, May 12, 2007. She is also scheduled to address a fundraising event for the Liberia Educational Trust (LET) along with New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton on Tuesday, May 15, 2007.

VOA 10 May 2007

Liberia Postpones West African Exams

By James Butty, Washington, D.C.

The Liberian ministry of education has postponed this year's West African Examination Council (WAEC) exams. The exams are given each year to sixth, ninth, and 12 graders in five English-speaking West African countries – Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. But according to the Liberian ministry of education, this year's exams, which were printed in Nigeria, were characterized by massive fraud.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast cocoa growers slam EU audit report

ABIDJAN, May 9, 2007 (AFP) - Cocoa growers in Ivory Coast, the world's top producer of crop, on Wednesday blasted an EU audit report which recommended an overhaul of the sector's management system. "This report is an attack on the sovereignty of Ivory Coast," Michel Yeoun, vice president of the country's cocoa producers, Anaproci, told AFP.

Togo bans Ghana poultry following bird flu discovery

LOME, May 9, 2007 (AFP) - Togo banned poultry from neighbouring Ghana on Wednesday after a case of the deadly H5N1 bird flu was detected there, the agriculture ministry said. A week ago, Ghana became the eighth African country to report a case of the H5N1 bird flu virus in poultry. Some 1,700 birds were culled after the discovery.

Local Media – Newspaper

UNMIL Irish Troops Set for Final Pullout

(New Democrat, Heritage, The News and The Inquirer)

- The first batch of more than 400 Irish soldiers is expected to depart Liberia Wednesday following nearly four years of major contribution to international peacekeeping through their participation in peace support operations with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). UNMIL Spokesman Ben Malor told a regular press briefing on Wednesday that the Irish Contingent formally handed over command on Tuesday to the Pakistani Contingent at Camp Clara in Monrovia.

Liberians Brace to Walk Against Child Hunger

(The News)

- The global efforts to eradicate child hunger in Liberia will continue this Sunday, with Liberians and foreign residents gearing up to participate in the initiative.
- A Nigerian movie star, Ms. Stella Damacus, is due to arrive in Liberia this weekend to participate in Sunday's walk dubbed as "walk the World". The event is organized by the World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with the Liberian Government. According to Ms. Ilona Milner of the WFP, the presence of the Nigerian movie star would attract more Liberians to participate in this walk which is geared towards raising funds to end child hunger in Liberia.

Elections Commission Suspends Interaction with Nine Political Parties

(The Monitor, Heritage, The Inquirer and The Analyst)

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) on Wednesday suspended interaction with nine registered political parties on account that they do not have established national headquarters in Monrovia. The suspension will stay in force until the parties in question can regularize their status.
- The affected parties are the Reform United Party of Liberia (RUPL), Independent Democratic Party of Liberia (IDPL), Progressive Peoples Party of Liberia (PPPL) and the Liberia Equal Rights Party (LERPL). Others are the Labour Party of Liberia (LPL), the National Party of Liberia (NPL), the Peoples Democratic Party of Liberia (PDPL), United Democratic Party (UDP) and the United Democratic Alliance (UDA).

Chaos Erupts at Pay Ground for Soldiers

(New Democrat)

- [sic:] Chaos and confusion erupted at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium Wednesday when several former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) gathered to receive their pension benefits. The melee erupted when it was discovered that the names of some of the pensioners could not be easily located and some names could not be found on the pensioner payroll.

Minister Optimistic About Female Education Programme for Police

(The Inquirer)

- As the Special Educational Support Programme for the Liberia National Police (LNP) women candidates comes to a close, Education Minister Dr. Joseph Kortu has entreated the female candidates to prove themselves as competent as their male counterparts.

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

Elections Commission Gives Deadline to Political Parties

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Justice Ministry Checks "Sodomy" at Central Prison

- In an exclusive interview with Radio Veritas yesterday, Assistant Justice Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation Fatoumata Sheriff announced that the Ministry was probing an allegation, on instruction of Justice Minister Frances Johnson-Morris, that sodomy was being committed at the Monrovia Central Prison even though she thought the practice was common among prisoners worldwide.
- As part of measures to reduce jail-break in Liberia, Assistant Justice Minister Sheriff said that Corrections Officers would be trained at the Correctional Palace in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh

County would be made functional as soon as basic facilities have been built and more correctional officers trained.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Phone Company Denies Evading Storage Fees at Airport

- In a release issued in Monrovia yesterday, the COMIUM Communications, a cell phone company operating in Liberia, denied an Executive Mansion statement that it evaded the payment of a Roberts International Airport (RIA) storage fees amounting to more than US\$100,000, and contended that it did not engage in any dubious deal.
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had told a news conference that the Company would have to pay more than US\$100,000 in storage fees waived by former RIA Managing Director Julius Dennis.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Get Gears from United States Government

- Presenting some 6,000 sets of uniforms, handcuffs and a tow truck donated by the United States Government to the Liberia National Police Wednesday, Ambassador Donald Booth said that the donation, valued at US\$800,000, was important as the foundation of all the international community's effort to help rebuild Liberia rested on the foundation of security. He stressed the need for security to be felt among Liberians by the police coming to the needs of the citizens.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

President Sirleaf to Address American University Graduates

- Correspondents said that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has left the Country for the United States where she would address graduates of the Langston University, in Oklahoma on Saturday.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star 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.

Voice of America

Thursday, 10 May 2007

Gunfire Breaks Out Near Military Base in Guinea Capital

By VOA News
10 May 2007



Gunfire has broken out in Guinea's capital, Conakry, near a military base where soldiers have been threatening to go on strike over a pay dispute.

Witnesses said the shots could be heard late Thursday near the Alph Yaya Diallo barracks in the West African nation's capital. There have been no reports of casualties in the shooting incident.

Less than a week ago, Guinea's government held emergency talks with senior military officers, following two nights of rioting by the military over the pay dispute.

Soldiers are demanding back pay said to total \$100,000 and dating from a 1996 promise by President Lansana Conte to increase their salary.

The shootings present a challenge for the government, which was formed in the wake of violent strikes in January and February.

Labor unions called those strikes to protest widespread poverty and corruption in the administration of President Conte. Clashes between police and protesters killed more than 100 people.

The strikes ended only after Mr. Conte appointed a consensus prime minister, Lasana Kouyate.

The military's loyalty is seen as key to President Conte remaining in office. Mr. Conte has ruled Guinea since taking power in a 1984 military coup.

Sudan Tribune

Friday, 11 May 2007

Ethiopia's Zenawi on whom no bounty has been put

By Aklilu Demissie

May 9, 2007 — The atrocities that are being committed by the brutal, voted out, undemocratic government is something it is trying to hide in plain view under the popping out eyes of the State Department officials. Lives lost in gruesome manners and whole sale detentions, intimidations, and silencing of the media and violations of individual rights have become the order of the day than the exception for freedom lovers in Ethiopia who failed to move the heart of Western political analysts and office advisor think tanks. Rhetoric of the state department designed to appear to have got their attention is non other than a political gimmick not to push issues beyond headlines which in some way has the similarity to a movie in which Eddie Murphy acted in “The Distinguished Gentle Man.”

The perceived stability of the Horn is alluring to Western diplomats while in fact it is rotting from inside out simply because of the major destabilizing factor of the region unquestionably being Meles Zenawi. It is naïve for the State Department officials to adhere to their misguided belief that it is only with Meles that they can do business with no matter unelected, blood thirsty he is. This assumption of doing business with the unelected regime would endanger over the long term America's influence as to lose its revered champion of freedom status from the hearts and minds of Ethiopians. It would lead to disillusionment and bias with democratic values.

The instability in the horn emanates from the lunacy of Meles Zenawi who further complicated and entangled the situation of the factionalized and fractured Somalia by his invasion and war crimes; the spiraling fiasco with Eritrea which he jabbed in between the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea; the volatile and precarious disputes between communities along the borders of Kenya and Sudan; and the explosive situation in Ogaden. All the fingers point to Meles Zenawi.

It would be unwise to think the magnitude of atrocities to have not come to the proportion of the West African crisis which Charles Taylor unleashed during his reign of terror.

The brazen, shrewd subterfuges practiced to cling to power with their subtle strings are far deeper and exceed what Charles Taylor has done in Liberia and to West Africa. The Horn is in a cataclysmic eruption that is throwing ashes of mayhem and social disruption unseen since the Rwandan crisis and now the Darfur crisis.

It defies reasons and would be uncharacteristic of State Department officials to think a stabilizing and buffer power boy in the Horn to be Meles Zenawi in view of stark naked serious breaches of known integral human rights in Ethiopia and now war crimes committed in Somalia.

The State Department should be mindful with its deserved anti terror policy from falling victim to wanton dictators and torturers. The department's leverage should not be compromised from grossly imbibing the poisonous concoctions Meles Zenawi trumps up for their consumption of terrorist threats which can not be thwarted if he were to be removed from the picture.

It has and would ever be the people of Ethiopia who have stood and would stand against any form of terror along side their brothers and sisters in America.

These heinous, poignant crimes committed by Meles Zenawi with their patent similarities unleashed by Charles Taylor of Liberia are being implemented in their full facets and forms with pervasiveness. What might

have remained to edge media wise to Charles Taylor's style supported former rebels of Sierra Leone, as the next step, for the besieged and beleaguered Ethiopians is to choose either the "Short Sleeve" or "Long Sleeve" amputation options of the arms to really capture the attention of the Western media. Recently, Meles Zenawi has publicly announced that he is prepared and is in his earnest to cut off fingers and hands of any one opposing his brutal regime. His rant will not appease the thousands he has killed, jailed and tortured all the way to power and in power. One can imagine what Somalis are going through at the hand of this merciless killing machine.

When Charles Taylor's viciousness became beyond the scoop of human imagination the United States Government put a bounty on his head. This came after all preventable human miseries and sufferings had transpired. His sanctuary in another dubious, most corrupt Nigeria seemed to have stalled the pursuit for his apprehension by the International Tribunal for Sierra Leone. With all the pressure from US and Britain he was captured and found himself where he belonged- in a prison cell where notorious rights violators end up- in the Haig. For those who had a chance for a glimpse of the damning report of Human Rights abuses of 2006 State Department Ethiopia report would ask how despot Meles Zenawi is still in power. His concurrent war crimes in Somalia are not helping him at all.

The despot ridiculed the report as not being the last word in the bible. It was even audacious for a spiritually amputated despot to mention the name of the Holy Bible. He can be rest assured when the time comes, be it the bible or the Koran won't save him from standing trial in international tribunals for crimes against humanity in Ethiopia and war crimes in Somalia. Obviously he was telling American policy makers that the 'Chinese Bible' would save him, until at least America decides to come at him.

Dictator Augusto Pinochet was not saved by America when his time came to face trial nor did Saddam Hussein an ally to America at one time escape the noose. Did the Shah of Iran get sanctuary after decimating the population when he begged for asylum in the USA after finishing the assignment given to him? It is then that 'American Bible' of justice would matter and take its own course. It would definitely become a defining first and last word.

The rotting despot might have thought clinging to the shoulders of visiting American Senators and Congressmen on official visits could save or endorse his crimes. The thoroughly crafted hollow economic development has shown the world where the people of Ethiopia stand. The population has been transformed in to a recipient of meager wheat ration in a Meles' world of media frenzy of bogus economic development.

It is unfortunate a power crazed despot at his criminal zenith continues unleashing destruction and mayhem to the very fabric of the nation and East Africa.

Finger pointing, accusations, crocodile tears, and parading of human rights violators in tribunal proceedings have not helped the fallen innocent heroes of Rwanda. Immediate practical action not rhetoric is needed before a bounty circular is sent to hunt a head.

** The author is an Ethiopian based in the USA. He can be reached at akndka@yahoo.com*

Global Witness

Thursday, 10 May 2007

http://www.idexonline.com/portal_FullNews.asp?id=27502

Caution: Trouble Ahead Warns Global Witness

Speakers at the World Diamond Council's fifth annual meeting devoted a lot of time to the organization's achievements during the past year. In particular, much was said about the industry's response to the Blood Diamond movie, about the WDC's efforts to prevent any fallout from the film, and the organization's continuing endeavors to educate the public and the trade. While many speakers looked to the future, Alex Yearsley, head of special projects at Global Witness, told the gathering what obstacles really lie ahead.

Although previously troubled African countries, such as Liberia, have joined the Kimberley Process (KP), Yearsley warned of trouble from elsewhere in the continent.

The first hot spot he mentioned was the Central African Republic where fighting is currently taking place. Unlike in other African conflicts, in CAR diamonds are not in rebel hands but are controlled by what Yearsley termed the "alleged" government. The situation, he says, "has the possibility to spill over and cause a headache for the diamond community," urging close monitoring of the situation so diamonds won't fuel conflict in the region.

Yearsley termed the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo as "truly volatile". Despite the fragile peace in the country, Yearsley told the Council that he has seen detailed photographs of "armed shipments flown in there recently from our old friends in the conflict diamond trade."

As with the CAR, he urged very close monitoring of diamonds emanating from the DRC. He pointed to human rights abuses occurring in DRC diamond mines. Even though these are not Conflict Diamonds in the true sense of the word, he said, they do involve diamonds.

Yearsley also drew the council's attention to human rights abuses in Angola, where he said the treatment of alluvial diamond miners was "dire." Such abuses have been documented by the U.N., he said and "do not bode well for the future," especially for any initiative for Angola to chair the KP.

Yearsley reminded listeners that on June 4 former president of Liberia Charles Taylor will stand trial in The Hague. He warned that once the trial gets underway, 'blood diamonds' will again be in the public eye. Yearsley urged the council to get positive stories into the press to show the public how much has been done since Taylor's reign of terror. "I have read some of the reports [that will be included in the trial] and they present sober reading," he said.

Another legal issue that could bring the conflict diamond issue front and center are the RUF trials in Sierra Leone. Yearsley recommended that industry members read the transcripts and testimonies to see what actually happened during those terrible years. There is, he said, quite considerable mention of the role that diamonds played in that regime.

Moving away from African, Yearsley talked about Venezuela, a country well known for its KP violations. "Venezuela has no positive part in the Kimberley Process," he said, before calling for KP member countries to lobby their governments to have the country thrown out of the process. "We cannot have them holding it back," he said.

Besides looking to the future, Yearsley also congratulated the WDC on their achievements, especially for their role in returning Ghana to the process. "The Ghana missions [of the WDC Technical Committee] have really set the benchmark."

He also mentioned the positive work that the industry is doing to help the lives of people across the diamond pipeline, especially the establishment of the Diamond Development Initiative.

Special Court Supplement
Justice El Hadji Malick Sow sworn in as alternative Judge, in pictures
Friday, 11 May 2007



