

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 11 May 2004

First Trial to Begin on June 3

The joint trial of three alleged former leaders of Sierra Leone's former Civil Defence Forces (CDF) will begin on 3 June 2004, in accordance with an order signed on Tuesday by Presiding Judge Bankole Thompson for the Trial Chamber.

The CDF trial will be the first of three joint trials currently pending before the Court's Trial Chamber.

The three accused, Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa, face an eight-count indictment for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Charges against the three defendants include unlawful killings, physical violence and mental suffering, looting and burning, terrorizing the civilian population and collective punishments, and the use of child soldiers.

Pursuant to another order of the Trial Chamber, the trial of three alleged leaders of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao, will commence on 5 July 2004.

The accused face an 18-count indictment which includes charges of terrorizing the civilian population and collective punishments, unlawful killings, sexual and physical violence, the use of child soldiers, abductions and forced labour, looting and burning, and attacks on United Nations peacekeepers.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

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War crimes trials of three Sierra Leonean leaders to start 3 June

11 May 2004 – The joint war crimes trial of three leaders of Sierra Leone's now-defunct civilian militia, which was active during the West African country's 10-year civil war, is set to start on 3 June, the Special Court for Sierra Leone said today.

The three former leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) - Moinina Fofana, Allieu Kondewa and former Internal Affairs Minister Sam Hinga Norman - will be tried on eight counts that include unlawful killing, physical violence, mental suffering, terrorizing civilians and using child soldiers during the war, the Court said.

The joint trial of three alleged leaders of the one-time Revolutionary United Front (RUF) - Augustine Gbao, Morris Kallon and Issa Hassan Sesay - will start on 5 July and consider 18 charges each, the Court said.

The orders for both trials were signed by Presiding Judge Bankole Thompson for the Trial Chamber, the Court said.

The Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in the country after 30 November 1996.

Eleven persons have been indicted so far on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/mason/stories/WO0405/S00120.htm>

Sierra Leonean War Crimes Trials Begin 3 June

Wednesday, 12 May 2004, 12:10 pm

Press Release: United Nations

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SIERRA LEONE STARTS LONG JOURNEY TO JUSTICE ON JUNE 3

RUF, AFRC and Kamajor leaders face the music at last

Wednesday May 12, 2004

It's a long lane that has no turning. At long last, those deemed as bearing the greatest responsibility for the incredible and unbelievable acts of cruelty and wickedness during the most brutal onslaught ever against innocent and unarmed civilians in the history of modern warfare will face the music in an international court of law.

What should be marathon trials that will keep the world transfixed during the next year will begin on June 3 with leaders of the pro-government militia, the Kamajors, going before the Trial Chamber of the UN-Sponsored international war crimes Tribunal. And on June 5, the trial will start of the rebel RUF and AFRC members.

The announcement thrilled many Sierra Leoneans yesterday, according to our reporters in Sierra Leone who said that people had become anxious for the sessions to begin. Most Sierra Leoneans are very eager for justice to be done and for the guilty persons to at last face their punishment for their barbaric acts against innocent civilians.

Our reporters said that the trials were the hottest topic in taxis, poda-podas and street corners yesterday, replacing the feverish complaints about the increase in the price of petrol, the hardships it has caused and the indifferent attitude to the economic suffering of the people by the government. Though most of them would have liked to see more alleged war criminals in the dock, they are satisfied that at least the leaders of the fighting forces during the war were about to pay the price for their negligence in doing nothing to stop their fighters from perpetuating atrocities on poor people who had no business with the war.

In the capital itself, most people welcomed the arrest and indictment of all the men to go on trial, though they regret the absence of the Kingpin, the late RUF rebel leader Foday Sankoh, his deputy, the late Sam Bockarie and the AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma (who is presumed dead) and some other key fighters on all sides who committed the atrocities on the battlefield.

In the South/East though, many Sierra Leoneans are annoyed with the indictment of the leaders of the Kamajors, a militia composed mainly of fighters from the region and credited with not only driving the rebels out from the area but in fact helping to stop a violent and catastrophic take over of Sierra Leone by the rebels.

Legal experts said yesterday that whether people will continue to sympathize with the Kamajors or not will be determined by the weight and credibility of the evidence when the Prosecution begins to unveil them. Our reporter Olu Faulkner quoted Sierra Leoneans as noting that if there are strong and damning evidence beyond any reasonable doubt that the Kamajor leaders knew about the atrocities committed by their men and in some cases ordered them in impunity, sympathies will be

eroded among the generality of citizens .

The Special Court has to convince the public that these men were blameworthy for the alleged crimes either through their own acts or omission of duty . The Sierra Leoneans who spoke to Faulkner went on to suggest that if the court's beef with Hinga Norman , Kondowa and Senesie is just that as leaders they were vicariously liable , and there is no damning evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that they knew about the atrocities or ordered them, sympathy and support for the Kamajor leaders will spread all over the nation. But this is of course the layman's interpretation of the legal issues at stake.

In International Law governing war crimes , however, the court does not have any responsibility to prove that Hinga Norman and his men ordered the atrocities. This is a case of criminal vicarious liability. What the prosecutors will have to prove is that these men held such leadership positions in the militia that they knew , or had reason to know , that their fighters were committing the war crimes alleged, and secondly , that, though they knew or had cause to know about the commission of these acts , they failed to act reasonably to stop the alleged crimes.

The evidential burden the prosecutors will have to satisfy are firstly, that the war crimes alleged were committed; Secondly, that they were committed by Kamajors and thirdly that their leaders knew or had cause to know, that these atrocities were being committed but did nothing to stop them.

Our reporters stated that some Sierra Leoneans were arguing that since President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was the Minister of Defence, he should have been held more vicariously liable for the acts of the pro-government militia than Hinga Norman , who was just his Deputy. But according to legal experts , this argument will not discharge the legal duty on the Kamajor leaders that they should have acted reasonably to stop the alleged crimes. It will hinge on whether or not they had any sphere of influence within the militia .


This aspect of the case with regards to Kabbah's responsibility is going to be dicey, but again all will depend on the testimonies of the Kamajor leaders and how credible they will be in pointing out that they were subject only to superior orders and did not have the authority to stop the Kamajors from committing the alleged acts .If their testimonies implicate the President , he too may be indicted but that itself will not free the Kamajor leaders from their vicarious duty to have stopped the acts .

What will delight Sierra Leoneans is any strong message that the Special Court may send that no one individual, or individuals or political groups or tribes in Sierra Leone are above the law.If the culture of impunity which is flourishing in the country is dealt a death blow by the Special Court, it will compensate Sierra Leoneans for all they suffered at the hands of heartless fighters during the



<http://www.sierraherald.com/>

Trial date of Special Court announced at last

After months of speculations about just when the Special Court for Sierra Leone will begin trials proper, the court has now announced that the long-awaited date will be June 3. Supporters of detained former Kamajor Chieftain and Deputy Defence minister, Chief Hinga Norman will at last heave a sigh of relief - relief that the long wait is now over and that justice will be truly served in Sierra Leone. According to a Press Release from the court, Chief Hinga Norman and two other Kamajor operatives will jointly face eight counts relating to among others, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is the hope that there would not be any further delays arising out of adjournments and other court procedures. However if such adjournments are necessary in ensuring a fair trial, then they must be welcomed by all interested parties.

NPRC/AFRC exploited Kono to compensate mercenaries

- Dr. Sama Mondeh

By Ishmael Bayoh
Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr. Sama Mondeh said last Thursday at the Mary Kingsley Auditorium at Fourah Bay College (FBC) that diamonds were compensations for mercenaries and that Sierra Leone is



Dr. Sama Mondeh



Johnny Paul Koroma

a neo-colonialist state. Speaking at the symposium organised by Kono Students Union at FBC on the present state of Kono district and the

way forward, Dr. Mondeh, a descendant of the district said he was not expressing government's view, but was speaking as an indigenous Kono who knows all is not

well in Kono. He indicted the former junta regimes of the National Provisional Ruling Council and the Armed Forces Revolution-

Contd. page 2

NPRC/AFRC exploited Kono to compensate mercenaries

From front page

ary Council of Captain Valentine Strasser/Brigadier Maada Bio and Major Johnny Paul Koroma respectively to have contributed immensely to the exploitation of Kono district by compensating mercenaries with lucrative mining concessions, in their desperate bid to consolidate their grip on power. Although the Agriculture Minister did not speak

about the incessant Kimberlite blasting in the district by the Koidu Holdings Limited (KHL), he blamed past junta governments for the indiscriminate mining that is going on in Kono. "It is a bizarre picture living in a neo-colonialist state," the Minister fumed. The Minister expressed great surprise to have heard from one of the panelists that Sierra Leone has sold her 43 years of independence to 'com-men', and that the late junta

leader of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Gen. Sani Abacha, struck deals with foreign companies to exploit the mining industry in this country.

However, Dr. Mondeh called on descendants of Kono not to fight with weapons, but with their intelligence to redeem their district of frivolous mining that is not beneficial to them.

He disclosed that the Kabbah government knows about what is happening in Kono and that officials are discussing it at high level.

The Exclusive

Wednesday May 12, 2004

Source: News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text) []

Terms: russsian peacekeepers onkly force able to stop massacre in sierra leone (Edit Search)

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BBC Worldwide Monitoring, May 10, 2004, Monday

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BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union - Political
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May 10, 2004, Monday

LENGTH: 497 words

HEADLINE: Russian **peacekeepers** only **force** able to **stop massacre** in **Sierra Leone** - TV

SOURCE: Centre TV, Moscow, in Russian 0700 gmt 10 May 04

BODY:

Excerpt from report by Russian Centre TV on 10 May

Presenter Some 30 years ago, our **peacekeepers** had been serving everywhere in Africa and Asia where there were no US or NATO troops. Our contingents have now remained only in the post-Soviet space and in the distant western African country of **Sierra Leone**. Our contingent has been rotated there recently. Our special correspondent Aleksandr Borzenko reports on how our helicopter pilots are managing under African conditions of high humidity and heat.

Correspondent It is unusual to see combat Mi-24 helicopters without camouflage and painted white. These combat aircraft fulfil purely peacekeeping missions under a UN programme in the jungles of **Sierra Leone**. It is 39 degrees Celsius in the shade and some 45 in the sun. Only Russian Mi-24s are capable of coping with such a heat. It was discovered that the ceiling of temperature they can operate at is 5 degrees higher than that of US or other helicopters.

Our helicopter pilots are living in comfort by UN standards there. Their living cabins are air-conditioned and have got television. They are fed very well. Their entertainment is organized by their friends.

Passage omitted: correspondent on a monkey which friends use to entertain helicopter pilots

Viktor Ivanov, commander of seventh Russian air group of the UN mission in **Sierra Leone**, captioned, interviewed I believe that helicopters which fly over this area have ensured stability here over the past four years since we were deployed. In case, they helicopters can come to provide help. It is now the seventh rotation of our **peacekeepers**.

Correspondent Helicopters fly up to 1,000 km a day. We accompanied the pilots in their 700-km flight along the border with Liberia. These four combat helicopters have established order in this vast area bordering on Liberia where illegals from all over the world cross into **Sierra Leone**. These illegals are attracted here by these jungles where people have been washing out diamonds over the past 200 years with the risk of catching malaria.

This place is also home to a settlement of 16 former Chechen fighters who are searching for diamonds in an obsolete English mine. We flew over this settlement for a couple of minutes.


Our helicopters have started flying over the jungles at night which was done by no-one in the past.

Nikolay Peykrishvili, senior pilot, captioned, interviewed It was necessary because there had been reports that diamonds were being smuggled across the border into Liberia at night.

Correspondent Rebels had recently been terrorizing **Sierra Leone**: this is how people suffered from an African mopping-up. Russian helicopters remain the only **force** to arrive in a place of spontaneous fighting on time and **stop a massacre** in the country where there are no developed network of roads at the moment.

Video shows helicopters grounded and flying, **peacekeepers**, jungles, a settlement, people

LOAD-DATE: May 10, 2004

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Top Ex-GOL Commanders Disarm

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

May 11, 2004

Posted to the web May 11, 2004

Monrovia

In a major disarmament ceremony yesterday, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Sector 1 Commander, Brig. Gen. Festus Okonkwo, received personal automatic weapons from Minister of Defense Daniel Chea at Kakata, approximately 60 kilometers north-east of Monrovia, an UNMIL release has said.

Mr. Chea submitted an AK-47, one shot-gun and a sub-machine gun. "I am disarming myself by giving you my personal weapons. We want to chart a new course for Libeiria," the Defense Minister said. He observed that disarmament is not only about submitting weapons, but that "we must also disarm our minds." "There is peace, there is hope and there is a future in disarmament," Minister Chea noted.

Gen. Okonkwo said the voluntary disarmament of Mr. Chea and his lieutenants signified that the war is over. "I believe this gesture will encourage other commanders to present their weapons to UN peacekeepers," he said.

In addition, the ex-Government of Liberia artillery unit turned in two 81-mm mortar guns, rifles, mortar bombs and ammunitions.

The ceremony marked the start of disarmament of ex-GOL militias at Kakata. Two hundred and fifty-one combatants voluntarily turned in their weapons to UNMIL peacekeepers in an orderly and controlled manner, and were transported for demobilization to the cantonment site at VOA, in Careysburg.

Source: [News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days \(English, Full Text\)](#) 

Terms: **west africa; liberian disarmament process: challenges before ecowas** ([Edit Search](#))

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Africa News May 11, 2004 Tuesday

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Africa News

May 11, 2004 Tuesday

LENGTH: 998 words

**HEADLINE: West Africa;
Liberian Disarmament Process: Challenges Before ECOWAS**

BYLINE: Daily Trust

BODY:

The on-going disarmament **process** in Liberia after a prolonged delay has raised hope for brighter prospect towards sustainable peace and security in the embattled **ECOWAS** member State. The exercise scheduled to extend to six months started in April 2004 at the stronghold of the rebel leader of the **Liberians** United For Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

A similar exercise in the past suffered a set-back due largely to contradictions as to how much money fighters would receive in exchange for their guns. However, having resolved that issue this time around, an estimated 40,000 ex-combatants are expected to collect \$300 each in exchange for their arms during the disarmament exercise.

The protracted nature of the **Liberian** crisis has been a disturbing phenomenon to quite a number of keen observers of the politics of the West African Sub-Region.

Despite successive efforts towards drawing peace accords and the resultant costs to life and property, peace continues to remain elusive.

It is against this background that the idea of cash-for-peace as conceived by **ECOWAS** and the United Nations under the on-going disarmament **process** looks plausible.

The political economy of armed conflicts shows that it is a very lucrative business, where cash and solid minerals exchange hands for arms, with the merchants of death smiling home with their loot, while rebel leaders and their combatants go into the bush with their tools of destruction.

In such a deadly partnership, any attempt by one party to disrupt the smooth operation, can be suicidal.

It may not be wrong to suggest that at times, rebel leaders are cajoled by these arms dealers and merchants of death, to ignore any peace accord reached, in the interest of their business.

Therefore, the idea of consoling ex-combatants with some cash in exchange for their guns in order for them to get engaged into other legitimate business activities is strategic and welcomed.

The continuous eruption of conflicts between communities in member states of the **ECOWAS**,

which eventually explode into full-scale armed confrontation, should be a matter of greater concern to the leadership of **ECOWAS**.

The ability to curtail the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons into the sub-region can be helpful in this regard.

Efforts toward assisting ex-combatants return to normal life in their respective communities have continued to gain acceptance as a credible initiative for ensuring sustainable peace in crisis areas of Africa and the World at large.

Failure of peace accords through ceasefire measures has given additional credence to the need for a comprehensive and articulated programme for smooth transition from war to peace nations. Accordingly, a workable approach is required where peace can be negotiated with cash on a long-term basis. There has to be a commitment from the political class, economic magnets, strategists, the World Bank, the United Nations to pull resources and ideas together, in drafting a sustainable transition package from war to peace for crisis-spots in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Latin America.

A sort of joint partnership by all stakeholders is desirable. These expectations pose a great **challenge to the ECOWAS**. It has to ensure joint cross borders monitoring to checkmate illegal importation of arms and ammunition in the sub-region. By so doing, it shall be able to prevent, combat, eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Similarly, **ECOWAS** would have to embark on a comprehensive institutional capacity building programme in order to face the **challenges** of peace-building in the years ahead. Reintegrating ex-combatants especially child soldiers can be difficult, making the exercise to include spiritual cleansing of the body, soul and spirit, in their entirety.

Efforts should also be made to promote the culture of consensus building to be imbibed in the family, the school system, places of work, thereby, reducing cases of depression, hostility and the resort to violence. The transition programme should also include a health care package where victims of all forms of sexual abuses can be treated and rehabilitated. Encouraging press reports recently indicating that some countries are offering assistance to the **ECOWAS** towards its peace building initiatives is commendable. Member states can equally organise fund raising for peace in respective countries to reduce tension and uncertainty in the larger society. Political leadership in the **ECOWAS** states should strive to promote social justice and respect for dissenting views, thereby, reducing the tendency for violent reactions from the populace on matters of dispute.

Efforts should be made to engage our youths in productive activities. They can be engaged in road rehabilitation works, reconstruction of bridges in the rural areas, numbering houses within streets nation-wide, agricultural programmes and advocacy in our rural areas on strategic national issues.

A certain allowances can be set aside and be paid on weekly basis.

It should be a matter of collective interest to all to facilitate the **process** of rehabilitating our unemployed youths across the sub-region. Countries involved in conflicts today were enjoying peace and security in the past, but were not mindful of the hard socio-economic conditions of their immediate neighbours and the boys on the street.

We must learn from the lessons of others.

It is hoped that, the managers of the on-going disarmament exercise in Liberia would do a good job, by ensuring smooth operation, while ex-combatants and their war lords should give maximum support and cooperation for a hitch-free exercise. While we contribute in ideas,

resources and goodwill, the **ECOWAS** should utilise its networking to persuade aggrieved sectors of the civil society across the West African sub-region to give peace a chance.

Maiyaki Abdullahi Uthman is of the Nigeria Institute of Internal Affairs (NIIA)

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Caritas aids Sudanese
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Liberia defence minister hands in guns to UN force

11 May 2004 13:38:59 GMT

MONROVIA, May 11 (Reuters) - Liberia's defence minister handed in a Kalashnikov assault rifle and two machineguns to United Nations peacekeepers and urged all fighters to follow his example and disarm "in their hearts and minds".

"I went in line and personally submitted my weapons to (U.N.) Lieutenant General Festus Okonkwo," Daniel Chea, who was also defence minister under now-exiled President Charles Taylor, told Reuters on Tuesday.

"If I can come to disarm, then all fighters in this country should take this process seriously and come to disarm."

Liberia is emerging from a 14-year civil war which killed more than 200,000 people and spilled chaos across the region. The U.N. says it has so far disarmed about 19,000 fighters.

Chea, who retained his post in a transitional government after Taylor's departure last August, disarmed on Monday in Kakata, 50 km (30 miles) northeast of the capital Monrovia.

He is the most senior of former Taylor loyalists to hand over his weapons and the first minister of the transitional government, which includes the two rebel groups that forced Taylor from power, to do so.

"Disarming is not only about turning in weapons, but also about the hearts and minds," Chea, a major general, said.

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The Forgotten crimes: Congo-Kinshasa

Possible ways to put an end to the culture of impunity in Congo-Kinshasa.

A comment on the situation in Congo-Kinshasa by Nalenga Z. Georges, from the Human Rights organisation Mouvement de la Jeunesse Congolaise, MJC-asbl, based in Eastern Congo.

Since August 1998, the democratic republic of Congo, formerly Zaire has been enmeshed in one of Africa's most internationalised wars, directly involving six others countries. The armies of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi invaded the country, together with Congolese rebel groups to overthrow the government of the DR-Congo supported by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia.

Those armed groups have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian and human rights law on the massive scale in the DRC. Assailants have massacred unarmed civilians, sometimes solely on the basis of their ethnicity, opinions, sex ..., committed summary executions, forcibly abducted persons whose whereabouts remain unknown, and arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully detained others, some of whom they subjected to systematic torture, sexual violence of women and girls has been a particularly devastating feature and has been used as a weapon of war by most of the armed forces. All groups have recruited children, some as young as seven years old, for military service, subjecting the children to the risks and the trauma of military operations.

In June 2003, a so-called government of National unity was installed in the democratic republic of Congo, purportedly ending what has been one of the most deadly war in the world, as reported by the international rescue committee that 3.3 millions people had died in the DRC since 1998 from direct and indirect violence, making this, the most deadly war in the world in terms of a civilian death toll since world war two.

On paper like it has been said by human rights watch, the country is on the road to peace, but in practice it is far from peaceful. In many parts of the eastern of Congo, such as Ituri, South Kivu, North Kivu and Katanga, the fighting between armed groups continues with widespread human rights crimes, including ethnic massacres, sexual violence, and recruitment of child soldiers. Systematic human rights offenses against civilians have been rampant throughout the duration of this five year war and continue with almost total impunity!

It is a shame to see people still live in the fear of death while the members of the Congolese government are enjoying the power and privileges. The Kinshasa government has shown his incapability to control (rule) the whole country, especially the eastern party which seems to have another administration! It seems like the transition exists only in Kinshasa! The former rebel groups appear to have monopoly to their former territory, to be preserving their military options should the transition process fail.

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Kongo-Kinshasa



Hovedstad: Kinshasa
Areal: 2,345,410 km²
Folketall: 55,225,478
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HDI-plassering: 155
Eksport: Diamanter, kobber, kobolt og olje

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Some leaders are weak, without political willing and encouraging culture of impunity. We are observing abuse of power and no one is putting the law in practice. They are ruling the country as they sees fit! There is no cohesion and confidence among leaders. Misunderstanding, distrust and confusion are prevailing among them. Everyone is pretending to be president of the state. It looks as if Congo is become a kingdom of wren!

Il ya manque de l'autorité de l'Etat, a lack of leadership where nobody is coordinating the government actions.

The violence/insecurity is increasing throughout the country because of lack of law enforcement. The culture of impunity in place in Congo is encouraging everyone to do whatever like a competition to seize power or retaliate... that's why it might be infernal cycle of violence in DRC.

In this uncertain environment, questions of justice are critical! A number of those appointed to government positions have been also accused of involvement in serious human rights abuses!

Addressing Impunity for horrific crimes that have been committed in DR-Congo should be the priority of this transitional government. We strongly believe like HRW that accountability for serious past crimes is the foundation for post conflict reconstruction based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The DRC's national justice system is in state of disarray. Its judicial system has had little investment over the past decade. Most of the courts do not function. its personal have not been for years and magistrates are badly trained and unsupported. Mismanagement or corruption often characterizes cases that are heard, sometimes fueling community grievances and furthering conflict. The national justice system need to be rebuild in long term, to give it the capacity to establish a functioning, independent, impartial, and fair judiciary.

While in short term, quick and innovative solutions need to be found to hold to the account those responsible for grave human rights crimes including war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide ...

We do believe at that level, the international tribunal court for DRC still needed as it has been several times expressed by the Congolese president to U.N. There is a need to set up that international tribunal court because under the current penal code in DRC, crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are not punishable offenses. These crimes will not stop as long as those who committed them are not held responsible for their acts! Accountability for those responsible for serious crimes is essential if the DRC and the great lakes region are to make a transition to a durable peace.

If there is no Justice, local populations may cause further violence by taking matters into their own hands. This has already been witnessed in Ituri, north eastern of Congo where the culture of impunity has further fuelled the cycle of ethnic violence, allowing opposing groups to believe they are justified in carrying out revenge killings for crimes committed against them. Questions of justice ought to be treated delicately in such a fragile environment!

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Without Justice in Congo peace will remain fragile, and transition may fail as the commission of illegally gotten wealth and the commission of murders (in french means: commission de biens mal acquis et assassinats) failed while the Mobutu regime. Moreover, the truth and reconciliation commission may fail also since the integrity and suitability of some of its members are subject of critics claim for having been implicated in human rights abuses.

The Mouvement de la Jeunesse Congolaise (MJC-asbl) has learnt from a diplomatic mission that under the international community pressure, the government of Joseph Kabila is going to withdraw his prosecution lodged against Rwanda and Uganda from the international criminal court which has shown the willing to investigate that case. The Rwanda and Uganda governments are alleged to have committed crimes under international law, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes while their four years war occupation in the eastern of the democratic republic of Congo. We think that decision is a major setback for the fight against impunity and it will increase the infernal cycle of violence in the region. This step backward in the campaign for universal justice and the MJC-asbl totally disagrees with the states of rule of law and strong democracy like USA, UK... which are encouraging that such irresponsible decision in order to safeguard their personal interest.

This decision goes against a growing trend in international law and significant efforts by national jurisdictions to end impunity, including by not giving immunity from prosecution to people suspected of crimes under international law.

A person's official capacity is not a bar to prosecution for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as expressed in the international treaties including the Geneva Convention, and convention against torture, statutes of international tribunal court for Yugoslavia, international tribunal court for Rwanda and the Rome statute of the international criminal court, and the DR-Congo has signed some of these treaties. As the desire to control and to exploit the natural resources of the DR-Congo has been a major driving force behind massive human rights abuses, the UN security council must assume its responsibilities, to put into practice the recommendations of the UN panel concerning the report of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of Congo-Kinshasa. The UN must set up an international tribunal court for DRC to investigate and to judge the responsible of those crimes.

We think that the UN should create also a kind of Marshal plan for the post conflict reconstruction of the DRC and the countries which invaded Congo whose Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, the multi-national companies and the developed countries implicated in the illegal exploitation of Congo's resources must finance this plan. That is the only way Congo should forgive and build peace with those countries during the international conference for peace, security, democracy and development in the great lakes region which will held soon.

The MJC is urging the Congolese transitional government to address impunity, and the persons who are implicated in war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide... must be investigated regardless of the position or power they are enjoying, to end human rights abuses, to undertake fundamental reform of army, police and justice systems. Justice must be served, and no one should enjoy immunity from crimes under international law, which are so serious that the international community has accepted that it is the responsibility of all states to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The MJC-asbl calls upon the international society to help make difference in the democratic republic of Congo and let us act together to ensure that nobody is immune

for these abominable and indescribable crimes under international humanitarian law.

Nalenga Z. Georges
Mouvement de la Jeunesse Congolaise, MJC-asbl

Tilbake

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Today is payment day for retired soldiers

Soldiers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces who retired last December under the phase one of the restructuring exercises will start receiving their payment today. The payment exercise, which is slated to last until Friday, will take place at the Cockerill Barracks Canteen at Wilkinson Road. It is expected that about 300 personnel will be addressed today. The commencement of the payment came less than a week after the aggrieved soldiers barricaded the road leading to the Cockerill Barracks. According to



CDS Maj. Gen. Sam Edwin M'boma

a Defence Ministry Press Release, it states, "the Defence Ministry remains thankful to all

RSLAF personnel who have contributed immensely towards the success of this all

important exercise and requests their continuous support at all times." The
Contd. Page 2

Today is payment day

From Front Page

barricading of the road did not go down well with civilians travelling between the Lumley and Garrison Street

commercial route, as their vehicles were diverted because of the tense situation that prevailed at the scene on that protest day. Sources

at the Defence Ministry indicated that sourcing the much-needed resources was the main stumbling block in the payment of the benefit to these retired soldiers.

Awoko

Wednesday May 13, 2004

For di people

Wednesday May 12, 2004

Nigeria Chief Of Defence Staff Visit Min of Defence

THE CHIEF of Defence Staff, Nigerian Armed Forces, General Alexandra O Ogunmodia, has said the Nigerian Armed Forces will continue to lend support to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, particularly through training courses to ensure that a standard and accountable Armed Force is achieved.

The General, who was speaking during a visit to the Ministry of Defence, expressed appreciation to the Deputy Defence Minister for the warm welcome accorded his delegation adding, that Nigeria will always stand beside Sierra Leone to ensure that peace prevail also within the sub-region.

He commended the government and people of Sierra Leone, for achieving peace through a collective agreement from all parties which he said is the best methods of solving crises.

The present problem within the sub-region General Ogunmodia

said, is inter-woven and therefore a collective solution from all parties and governments concerned, must work with one objective to maintain peace and stability within not only in the sub-region, but Africa as a whole.

The Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, expressed appreciation expressed by the Deputy Defence Minister on behalf of the Nigerian contingents in Unamsil, which he said, is commendable.

Deputy Defence Minister, Joe Blell, who described the visit as timely said he was excited particularly to receive such a high powered military

delegation from a country that has done so much in bringing peace to Sierra Leone.

The relationship between the two countries the Deputy Defence Minister said is historical and such relationships he said continues to grow from strength to strength.

He appreciated the support and assistance received from the Nigerian government during the trying period of this country, while trying to achieve peace and also the training of cadet officers to ensure that the Force is equipped with well-trained officers.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces Chief of Defence Staff, Major Gen-

eral Sam M'boma, said the military delegation would not have come at a better time than now when the RSLAF and the MOD is been restructured to ensure standards, professionalism and accountability.

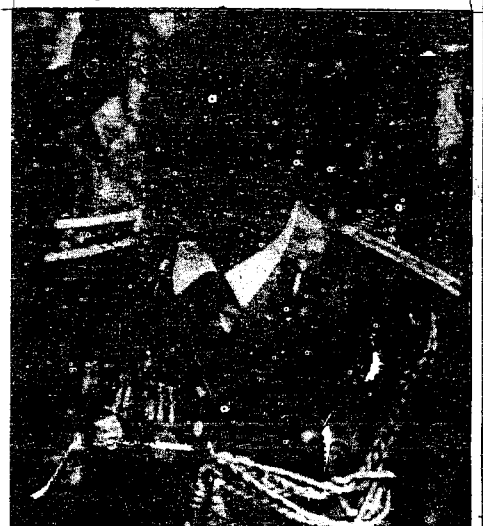
He appealed to the Nigerian General, for more training slots to be allocated to the RSLAF particularly at the level of Staff Courses to enable officers to be in line with modern military techniques in terms of administration and operations.

The Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Alfred Nelson-Williams gave a brief background of activities undertaken

by the RSLAF within the restructuring framework and an update of the security situation at present.

A one minute silence was observed in honour of the late Brigadier General

Maxwell Khobe and other Nigerian soldiers who lost their lives, while trying to bring peace and stability to Sierra Leone.



KHOBE: the lion-hearted whose role was significant

The News

Monday May 10, 2004

SRSB Calls For Robust Media

The Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General, Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago has called for a robust and patriotic media in Sierra Leone.

He was speaking at the reception for media and information professionals to mark the World Press Freedom Day at UNAMSIL Headquarters, Mammy Yoko past Saturday. He expressed fears that there is a kind of complacency and cavalier attitude to journalism and urged journalists to learn from the media of developed countries. "They can be vicious in their investigative journalism. But nevertheless, they remain very much committed to the well being of their countries," he emphasized.

Ambassador Nwakawago said that as Sierra Leone consolidates its democracy with the

forthcoming local government elections, all journalists should ensure a level playing field for all actors and participants by establishing a clear distinction between the reporting of facts and the expression of opinions. "Reporting calls for objectivity, which is the hallmark of good journalism", he went on, adding, "objectivity may not necessarily mean clinical or scientific precision, but rather an effort by journalists to produce news stories and newscasts that are emotionally detached and that separate facts from opinion."

The SRSB acknowledged the role played by the media and the sacrifices journalists

have made in the search for and defense of democracy in Sierra Leone. "It is gratifying to say that you have not betrayed the privilege and the social responsibility placed on you as members of the fourth estate and as manufacturers of a sought - after product that can change a society for good," he stressed. As partners in the defense of peace and human rights, Ambassador Mwakawago expressed

UNAMSIL's willingness to assist the media in realizing its ideas. He intimated that the media, as any other segment of society, can, should and will be held accountable for their own actions and the way they

exercise their role. "A free and independent press is the sign of strong and functioning societies and a powerful contributor to progress, which should be the objective for the media in Sierra Leone", he concluded.

STANDARD VOICE

Prioritize national security

IT'S USUAL FOR every independence celebration to be complimented by different occurrences, which tends to account for the enthusiasm some people have for them.

APART FROM THE traditional gesture of freeing prisoners, such an occasion has always been marked by speeches from the Head of State bordering on pertinent critical issues affecting the lives of the people.

WHEN THEREFORE THE 43rd independence was approaching, many Sierra Leoneans expected the president to make a grand speech about something bordering on the lives of all.

CONSIDERING WHAT WE went through, a large number of us also expected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to priorities national security in particular as a paramount business.

THIS IS CONSIDERING the case from the background of the fact that recently a United Nations (UN) fact finding team was in this country and on their recommendations the Security Council of the UN agreed to delay the final withdrawal of Unamsil troops from the country beyond the close of this year.

WE AT STANDARD Times believe that the deferment of that final withdrawal should not be viewed by our government as a stroke of luck or the strength of its contacts with and in the international community.

IT IS TRUE that the UN fact finding mission categorically stated that there were grave misgivings about the preparedness and capability of the government to conveniently handle the security of this nation.

TO ANY WELL meaning Sierra Leonean, this is supposed to be a serious blow to our ego and ability, especially when one considers how much has already been spent on the restructuring not only the police and the army, but the government itself.

IF WITH ALL this the traditional security apparatus (police and army) are still not in a position to thoroughly handle our security, then it is an indication that there is a missing link somewhere.

THIS, to all intents and purposes must have triggered the setting up of a Security Sector Review Working Group to monitor the gains and losses in the nations stride to secure itself.

THIS PRESS, conscious of security and its importance to any given society has thought it fit to be thoroughly monitoring the activities of the Security Sector especially its Review Working Group at State House under the aegis of the Office of National Security.

THAT WORKING GROUP is reportedly supervised by a secretariat drawn up from the ONS, and as a group are doing very well with regards to promoting the idea of national security and how best to maintain it.

IN FACT THE entire nation must be profoundly proud of that small group of patriotic Sierra Leoneans who have been literally "locked up in a conference hall at State House, eating, drinking and sleeping national security" since August last year, when they were warmly and heartily commended by an expatriate team of security monitors here to assess the security situation in the country.

WHILE THIS IS the situation, and as a news organ, we are nevertheless extremely concerned that the time set for the completion of the all important reviewing process has not been met.

IT WOULD BE very good if the officials of the ONS can provide some answers as to why this has still not been done.

CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATIONS and the apparent delay in concluding the SS Reviewing Process, many also believed the president would prioritize that work, if not the ONS and its activities.

HOWEVER TO THE amazement of many Sierra Leoneans, the president prioritized poverty reduction.

LIKE MANY OTHERS whose only aim is to 'chop' monies meant for the so-called 'poverty Reduction Strategy Paper' (PRSP), this was the focus of the president's independence speech, repeating over and over the rhetoric of fighting hunger and reducing abject poverty.

CERTAINLY, this is where Standard Times views his priorities as probably not orderly.

THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT to be reminded of the fact that the issue of poverty reduction can only be properly addressed in a secure environment, as is development and prosperity.

WE HAVE ALSO been succinctly informed about the "quick fix" security review done for the PRSP, and that most of what is on the desk of PRSP officials regarding security is from ONS Security Review Process, which is yet to be released.

THE QUESTION IS why waste another money on a PRSP security paper when ONS is doing a comprehensive security review for the whole country?

We at this press wish to impress it on this government that every thing humanity possible, including total support must be given to the Security Sector Review so that they can do what they have been contracted for efficiently and effectively.

Standard Times

Wednesday May 12,

2004

Awoko

Wednesday May 13, 2004

US to hand Saddam back to Iraqis

US-led forces will hand over Saddam Hussein to Iraqi authorities by 30 June, according to a top lawyer in charge of

co-ordinating his trial. Salem Chalabi said other officials of the former regime, like Tariq Aziz and Ali Hasan Majid,

would also be returned ahead of any war crimes tribunals. "They will be transferred to us

Contd. Page 2

US to hand Saddam back to Iraqis

From Front Page

before the transfer of power," he told reporters in Kuwait. The US-led coalition is to return sovereignty to Iraqis by 30 June. Mr

Chalabi, who is in Kuwait to collect evidence against the suspects, said he hoped trials would begin early next year. "We will put 100 people... including

Saddam Hussein, on trial," he said in remarks quoted by the Associated Press news agency. Iraq's war-crimes tribunal has appointed judges and prosecutors, but no charges have yet been filed.

Concord Times

Wednesday May 12, 2004

Jealous woman sentenced to death by hanging

By Nimalty Kamara (Kenema)

Presiding judge of the High Court in Kenema, Patrick Hamilton has sentenced Mariama Toronka to death by

hanging after she was found guilty of murdering Fanta Conteh a resident of Tongo Field in March 2003.

Defence Counsel C. Martin appealed for the offence to be reduced to manslaughter but was overruled.

A knife and cutlass were tendered in court as evidence of the weapons the accused used to commit the of-

fence. It was proved in court that the accused was guilty of the offence and the autopsy report showed that she executed the crime.

In her last words, the accused begged for mercy and the judge said, "May the lord have mercy on you," after delivering sentence.