

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



An HIV/AIDS awareness wall mural targeting youth in Bo.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Wednesday, 13 August 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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SPECIAL COURT APPOINTS DEPUTY PROSECUTOR

Prosecutor Stephen Rapp announced recently the appointment of Sierra Leonean Lawyer, Joseph F. Kamara, as Deputy Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kamara is the first Sierra Leonean to occupy the post. He succeeds Dr. Christopher Staker who has held the position since July 2005. Mr. Kamara, a Senior Trial Attorney in the Office of the Prosecutor, joined the Special Court in 2004. Most recently, he led the prosecution team in the successful prosecution of two former leaders of the Sierra Leone Civil Defence Forces militia.

"Mr. Kamara is an individual of outstanding level

ability and integrity" said Mr. Rapp

"I look forward to working with him as my deputy Prosecutor to complete the mission of achieving justice for the grave and massive crimes committed against the innocent people of this country."

Joseph Kamara said he was looking forward to the challenge. "This is a significant milestone in the history of the court. I promise to work to promote the protection of fundamental human rights and to bring the workings of the Special Court closer to the people of Sierra Leone."

Under the Special Court statute, the Deputy Prosecutor is appointed by the Government of Sierra Leone in consultation with the Secretary-General of

the United Nations and the Prosecutor.

His appointment has been approved and will take effect on 15th August, 2008.

"This appointment reflects the close partnership between the government and the international community that has become one of the hallmarks of this institution," said Rapp.

The Prosecutor also recognized the significant contribution of Dr. Staker to the work of the prosecution. "Dr. Staker has provided tremendous service during his tenure as Deputy Prosecutor. His expertise has proved invaluable not only in leading the appeals proceedings but also on a wide array of legal issues that have arisen during the trials."

The Spark
Wednesday, 13 August 2008

Commentary

The Human Right Commission of Sierra Leone in its first annual report commented on how human rights have been observed or violated in this country throughout the period of January 2007 to December 2007.

Among the commission's biggest concerns was shockingly high infant mortality and maternal morbidity rates, the government's sluggishness in carrying through on its human rights commitments, and the threat presented to certain rights by the failure of the state to take appropriate action violations related to women, children and state prisoners also featured heavily in the report. At the same time the HRCSL was quick to point out areas where the government or others had acted in the interests of human rights and remained optimistic in its conclusions.

Notably, the HRCSL report pointed out a number of immediate actions the government could take to fulfill the commitment it has undertaken, including the obligation to report to a number of treaty bodies and to adopt the provisions of the treaties it has signed into domestic law. The government has also failed to adopt or implement many of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the creation of a TRC follow up committee. Looking ahead the HRCSL also advised the creation of a National Human Rights Action Plan, which would detail a comprehensive strategy for all actors in the human rights field and would demonstrate that the government takes these issues seriously. The failure of the government to adequately fund, inspect or regulate public services was repeated and emphasized concern throughout the report. In the view of HRCSL these failures resulted in multiple serious human rights violations.

The commission stated that the right of persons to life liberty and security of person was threatened by the slow response of police to reported crimes. The right to life was also infringed upon by the government's failure to create standard safety measures for public transportation, possibly to blame the tragic deaths from a helicopter crash last year. Likewise, the commission felt that the right to enjoyment of property was undermined by the failure of the police courts and the Ministry of Lands to handle cases and settle disputes.

How Human Rights Was Violated

A number of concerns raised by the commission were related to the infringement on multiple rights resulting from political passions, especially during the 2007 election period. For example, in regards to freedom of expression and the press, the HRCSL noted both the use of seditious libel laws by the government to quiet opposition and the irresponsible use of publications or broadcast time by journalists putting forth politically inflammatory material with the aim of inciting conflict.

Similarly, the commission noted violations of the right to freedom of assembly and association resulting from attacks on opposition political parties or the rights of individuals from government positions on what many believed to be political grounds. While government institutions like the Independent Media Commission, the NEC and the police stepped in to address specific incidents, the HRCSL felt that was not enough and more had to be done to discipline wrongdoers.

In relation to women and children, the HRCSL remarked on a number of encouraging and important reforms that took place in 2007 including the passage of the "Gender Justice Acts" and the Child Rights Act. The government also turned in five years of backlogged reports to the committee for the convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in turn receiving a comprehensive response from the treaty body. This response which included numerous extensive and well thought recommendations for improvement was included within the HRCSL report. Still the commission noted the high number of complaints received throughout the year related to domestic and sexual violence and lamented the lack of knowledge among women about their rights under the new gender acts.

The HRCSL called on the government to take more action in addressing inequality under the customary law system and to increase awareness of rights among these vulnerable groups. The report also listed serious prob-

lems within Sierra Leone's judicial sector, including a lack of access to justice, indiscipline among members of the police and deplorable prison conditions. In the opinion of the commission, extremely lengthy detention due to unnecessary and avoidable delays, combined with problems of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in prisons, amounted to the level of cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, a serious violation of international law.

As for the police, the commission stated its concern with both complaints about excessive use of force, sexual violence and corruption, and the community's perception of discrimination in the way the police members responded to situations. In International Law, a distinction is traditionally made between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. Civil and political rights largely codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are generally seen as negative rights, or guarantees made to individuals that states cannot infringe upon. In contrast, economic, social and cultural rights, embodied in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are typically viewed as positive rights, or obligations upon states to take specific actions to give individuals access to work, education and good health, amongst other rights. The HRCSL report chose to address this second category of rights as well, noting that they are to be progressively related with the aid of the country's "maximum available resources." Thus, the Sierra Leone Government has committed to provide these rights to the people of Sierra Leone to the best of its ability, using whatever budgetary allocations and resources it has to do so.

The commission called on Parliament to solidify these international commitments by including the right to health and education in the revised constitution. The HRCSL also pointed out the need for greater resource allocation to specific areas, including vocational guidance or training programmes for youths, in order to guarantee the right to work. Under the rights to education, the commission noted that compulsory primary education is too often undermined by unofficial school fees, a lack of both funding for teachers and teachers themselves, and the early removal of girls from the school system due to fears of pregnancy. The commission also stated that Sierra Leoneans have a right to the "highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" and deplored the lack of access to medical services, the lack of adequate drinking water and the lack of waste disposal. The report once again brought up the devastating infant and maternal mortality rates under this right to health.

However, the right to life is also a civil and political right, meaning that it is usually interpreted to mean only that the state cannot take away the lives of its citizens, as opposed to imposing an obligation on states to save the lives of individuals. Thus, in admonishing the government to take action to lower infant and maternal mortality rates, the commission took the right to life a step further than is customary, choosing to hold Sierra Leone to a higher standard than that which some of the most developed countries in the world follow

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that is guaranteed in numerous treaties to which Sierra Leone is a party and that is considered of utmost importance.

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Xinhua

Tuesday, 12 August 2008

Nigeria offers to retain troops in Liberia

LAGOS, Aug. 11 (Xinhua) -- Nigeria has offered to retain its troops in Liberia despite the plan by the United Nations to withdraw its peace keepers by 2011, according to Channels TV news on Monday.

Lt. Gen. Luka Yusuf, Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, made the pledge at the weekend during his visit to Nigerian peace keepers in Liberia

The commandant of the Nigeria contingent to Liberia, Brig Gen Ezekiel Olofin, had complained that there are serious security concerns in the country over the expected outcome of the trial of its former President, Charles Taylor, at the Hague.

The United Nations which deployed the troops from Nigeria and other countries to ensure security in the country after a fourteen-year civil war has indicated plans to withdraw the soldiers by the year 2011.

The commandant of the Nigerian troops in Liberia has raised security concerns over the pruning down of peace keepers by the United Nations.

But the Nigerian chief of Army staff, General Luka Yusuf, announced that the Nigerian government has offered to retain its troops in Liberia after the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeepers by 2011.

He assured the peace keepers of government's plan to provide them with more military equipment to improve their work condition in the country.

Representative of the United Nations at the event warned that the UN still maintain a zero tolerance policy on corruption and indiscipline especially on sexual exploitation and abuse by peace keepers.

Nigeria has sent peacekeepers into several war zones around Africa, beside Liberia. It has sent troops to Sudan's Darfur region and Sierra Leone, bolstering its status as a major continental power.

The Nigerian peace keepers in Liberia provide security in Monrovia which is the seat of government.

They guard key government installations such as the seaport, airport, and parliament, among others. They also provide security for the Liberian President, Vice President, and other key government officials.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
12 August 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Four Suspected Criminals Hacked to Death in the Paynesville Suburb

(New Democrat, Daily Observer, Heritage)

- At least four suspected criminals have been hacked to death in the Red Light Commercial district of Paynesville outside Monrovia.
- The incident followed a melee between a group of suspected robbers and angry marketers in the area.
- The robbers in their bid to protest the death of one their colleagues early Monday went on the rampage attacking business houses and traders thereby disrupting normal activities in the area.
- Angry traders later responded to the attacks and in the process the robbers were killed by the mob.
- Meanwhile, United Nations Police and their Liberian counterparts moved in and have restored calm in the area.

Kromah Justifies Formation of Rebel Group - Says they never Wanted Power

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

- The former leader of the defunct United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), Alhaji G.V. Kromah says the rebel movement was not interested in ascending to power as a basis for its armed struggle against Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The Heritage reports that testifying Monday before the ongoing Truth and Reconciliation thematic hearings, Mr. Kromah said ULIMO was organized in order to provide free passage to Liberians who fled the country to neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone and wanted to return home. Meanwhile, the former rebel leader has attributed the fall of Samuel K. Doe's administration to the assassination of former Armed Forces of Liberia General Thomas Quiwonkpa of the erstwhile People's Redemption Council (PRC). He said the killing of General Quiwonkpa in the aftermath on the November 12, 1985 abortive invasion also led to tribal divisions in Liberia.

Three Suspected Armed Robbers Arrested

(The News)

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) have arrested and forwarded three suspected armed robbers to the Monrovia Magisterial Court at the Temple of Justice for prosecution. According to court records, the suspects include Allison Wowah, alias Gio-Boy; Bill Tomah and Junior Jerry, alias School Face. The suspects, residents of Paynesville City, were arrested on July 21 and 25, 2008 respectively.
- The court records stated that the suspects were arrested based on a complaint filed by a resident of Duport Road in Paynesville. According to the records, the complainant was armed robbed on July 9 in which incident he was robbed out of properties valued over US\$1,000, including a set of wedding rings belonging to him and his wife. "On July 9, 2008 at 11 p.m., while in bed with his wife Velma Woods, six robbers armed with pistols broke into his home and inflicted injuries on his body and made away with valuables," the Court records stated.

- During police preliminary investigation, the defendants admitted to the allegation, and named their accomplices as George Washington, alias four-fair; Prince David, alias Cooper; Mamie Bombo, Jonathan, Zubah Kolubah and Lewis Kennedy.

President Sirleaf Visits Flood Victims - Stunned by Level of Destruction

(The News)

- [sic:] President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has visited flood affected areas in Virginia and Brewerville on the outskirts of Monrovia, expressing deep regrets to residents of the areas for the losses sustained. Accompanied Sunday by the Ministers of Internal Affairs and Public Works, and Montserrado County Representative Victoria Lynch of District #13, the President visited areas including the Cece Beach Resort and surrounding areas, which suffered massive losses. The Liberian leader assured residents of the areas that the Ministry of Public Works would conduct an assessment of the flood affected areas to determine the scope of Government's response. According to an Executive Mansion release, President Johnson Sirleaf lauded the Liberian National Red Cross for providing emergency response for the displaced, now sheltered at Hotel Africa and a public school in Brewerville.

Chief Justice Warns Judges of Circuit Courts

(The Informer, New Democrat, Heritage, The News, The Parrot, Daily Observer)

- The New Democrat reports that Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis says the Judiciary would begin cutting the per diems of Circuit Judges for going to court late. Chief Justice Lewis said the judicial officials are not disciplined because they are not observing the rules of court. Justice Lewis said most often Judges sit in their chambers and forget about going to court on time. The Chief Justice said this could probably be responsible for the slow disposal of cases at the circuit level.
- Justice Lewis spoke Monday at the opening of the August Term of Court at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia. The media reports that also speaking during the ceremony, the newly assigned Criminal Court "A" Judge Boima Kontoe revealed that the lack of a pathologist or forensic expert at the Ministry of Justice poses a serious problem to speedy trial of criminal cases. Delivering his charge at ceremony marking the official opening of the August Term of Court at the Temple of Justice Monday, Judge Kontoe said the absence of pathologist or forensic expert at the Ministry of Justice creates the situation where state prosecutors lack the capacity to establish forensic evidence.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 9:00 am)*

Angry Traders Murder four Suspected Criminals outside Monrovia

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Commerce Ministry Dismisses Two Employees, Suspends 5 Others

- A Commerce Ministry release issued in Monrovia said two of its inspectors have been dismissed for allegedly soliciting and receiving bribe.
- The two, Andrew Martu and Henry Roberts took US\$400 from a local supermarket as comprise for not reporting the sale of expired goods and other malpractices.
- The Ministry has also suspended 5 other employees for what was termed unethical conduct in the performance of their duties.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Police Female Recruit allegedly Killed by lover

Truth F.M. *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

Liberia's Defense Ministry Rejects 'Armed Robbery' Claim

- The Ministry of National Defense (MOD) has dismissed reports from community people in the vicinity of the Edward Beyan Kesselly Barracks that they were terrorized by soldiers of the

Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) last Thursday night and several of their values taken away. In a statement issued in Monrovia, the Ministry viewed the report as a misrepresentation of the well-trained and disciplined men and women of the AFL.

Government Announces Reduction in Price of Petroleum Products

- The Commerce Ministry in collaboration with the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) has reduced the prices of petroleum products in the country.
- According to a release, the retail price of gasoline has been reduced to US\$4.55 to US\$4.25 while fuel has dropped from US\$5.30 to US\$4.95.
- The entities attribute the decrease to a drop in the price of the products on the world market.
