

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, December 14, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248

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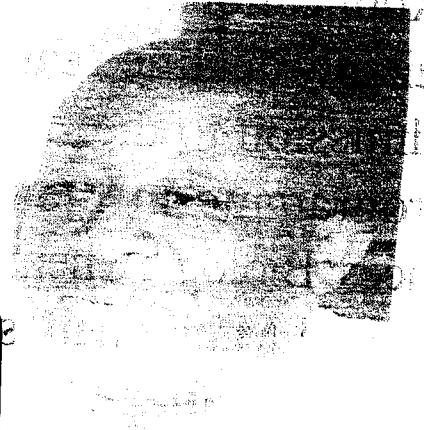
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allAfrica.com

Double Trouble: Margai Loses Special Court Job



Just a week after he began facing conspiracy and incitement charges in Bo, PMDC leader Charles F. Margai has lost his job as Lead Counsel at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. In a surprise move, Mr. Margai handed in his resignation letter to the Principal Defender saying his client, CDF indictee, Allieu Kondewa had threatened to physically attack him and his colleague Ansu Lansana should they continue to defend him. The PMDC leader claimed that a team member who was opting to be Lead Counsel was behind Kondewa's decision. *Read his letter back page.*

The Democrat

Wednesday December 14, 2005

Margai Loses Job

C.F. MARGAI & ASSOCIATES

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SOLICITORS

C.F. MARGAI ESQ.,
ARROW J. BOCKARIE ESQ.,
ROBERT B. KOWA ESQ.

OUR REF/PD/TH/05

YOUR REF:

25th November, 2005

The Principal Defender,
Special Court,
Jomo Kenyatter Road,
Freetown,
Sierra Leone
Dera Principal Defender.

Re: Kondewa Defence Team

As lead Counsel in the Allieu Kondewa Defence Team, I regret that my team and I are no longer prepared to continue defending ALLIEU KONDEWA.

My decision is based on your letter dated 22 November, 2005 in response to Kondewa's letter of 24th October 2005, 8th November 2005 and 22nd November, 2005 in which Kondewa requests doing away with the service of Mr. Ansu Lansana for the reasons proffered in his said letters. I consider such allegations to be not only baseless but a manifestation of the utmost ingratitude on his part regardless of dedicated service rendered to him throughout the presentation of the prosecution's case and beyond.

I am appreciative of efforts made by you and your deputy to reconcile us, but to no avail.

I am also aware of the threat made by Kondewa to physically attack my colleague and I should we continue defending him.

Much as I know that my colleagues and I are Court appointed Counsel, yet, I hold the view that an accused's wish to be defended by Counsel of his choice should be respected. In this regard, I crave the Chamber's indulgence to favourably consider my request to be relieved together with the rest of the Kondewa Defence of the task of continuing to so appear.

Kondewa's behaviour may not be unconnected with the ambition of a team member to take over as lead Counsel, coupled with Chief Norman exerting pressure on Kondewa so to act. He had (meaning Chief Norman) asked me sometime ago to discontinue serving as Defence Counsel as he believed this would deprive the Court of respectability and recognition. This I refused to do. By reason of the premise, I hereby tender my team's resignation without prejudice to a team member opting to be part of a reconstituted Defence Team.

Yours faithfully,



C.F. MARGAI
Lead Counsel Kondewa Defence Team.

The Democrat
Wednesday Dec 14, 2005

The Exclusive

Wednesday December 14, 2005

As RUF trials near Completion, final verdict January 10

By Mohamed Kai

The Presiding Judge of High Court No. 2 Justice Patrick Hamilton has told members of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) group 1, who are presently on trial that January 10 2006 will be the final judgement day.

Justice Hamilton made this pronouncement while addressing the Ex-RUF fighters at the High Court on Tuesday December 14 2005. counsel for the defendants, Lawyer Osho Williams told the court that he will be making his submission to the court next Tuesday, adding that some of the accused persons are innocent of the charges against them. The matter was adjourned to 10 January 2006.

It could be recalled that members of the RUF have for more than five years been facing charges of human rights violations and for breaching the Lome Peace Accord. The entire group was so large that it was divided into two groups, RUF 1 and RUF 2. This was in a bid to address the security lapses and misbehaviours in court.

www.wpherald.com

U.N.: Liberia needs security assistance

By **UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL**

Published December 12, 2005

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked the international community to assist Liberia with security reforms.

"Security problems in Ivory Coast are a threat to stability in Liberia," said Annan Friday, in his ninth report on UNMIL, the U.N. Mission in Liberia.

Along with the secretary-general's report, a five-member panel of experts also submitted its report on Liberia to the U.N. Security Council. The panel expressed concern about the "organized recruitment of ex-combatants in Liberia."

The 445 mile-long border between Liberia and Ivory Coast made the monitoring of recruitments difficult, said the panel.

Security challenges stem from former members of the Liberian army, and members of ex-President Charles Taylor's armed militia.

In his next report, scheduled for March, the secretary-general said he would recommend adjustments to UNMIL. His recommendations will be based on findings of an assessment mission and consultations with Liberia's new government.

The report will highlight additional responsibilities for UNMIL, including protecting the Special Court for Sierra Leone and detaining Taylor if he returns to Liberia.

The embargo on Liberian diamonds and timber will continue as a means of curtailing illegal exports, said the panel.

Global Witness, a lobby group, told the BBC illegal diamond mining by former rebels is undermining efforts to restore stability. The group said the United Nations failed to halt illegal exports of minerals.

The panel expressed concern over a 25-year agreement with Mittal Steel which contained provisions costly to Liberians. "These provisions suggest transparent negotiations are necessary," said the panel.

Liberian President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has said she is confident in her ability to tackle the challenges ahead. Liberians hope her presidency will finally bring stability to the war-torn country.



UNMIL/PIO/PR/239

Press release, 12 December 2005

UNMIL responds to disturbances in Monrovia

In the evening of 11 December, a disturbance broke out at the headquarters of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) in downtown Monrovia. This disturbance occurred after earlier addresses made to party supporters by leaders of the CDC. A large group of CDC supporters became violent, attacking members of the Liberian National Police (LNP). In response to a request by the LNP, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) dispatched three Formed Police Units (FPUs), consisting of around 100 officers in total, and a limited number of military personnel to restore order. The situation at the CDC headquarters was brought under control at approximately 1930 hrs.

However, after leaving the party premises at approximately 2000 hrs, a smaller group attempted to disrupt and attack traffic on one of Monrovia's main thoroughfares, Tubman Boulevard, and roved through the adjacent neighbourhoods damaging vehicles.

The LNP arrested more than 40 persons involved in the violence and are detaining them in Monrovia. As a result of the violence, several Liberian police officers were wounded, one seriously. Three UN police officers also received minor injuries.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss, strongly condemns these acts of violence, the responsibility for which must be assumed by the CDC leadership. The SRSG urges Mr. George Weah and other leaders of the CDC to call on their supporters to prevent any further disturbances. Mr. Doss wishes to assure the citizens of Monrovia that UNMIL will continue to provide all necessary support to the Liberian law and order agencies in preventing any such acts which could threaten Liberia's hard-earned peace and security.

UNMIL is continuing to monitor the situation and has stepped up security in Monrovia in order to respond to any similar incident.

* * * * *



UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 12 Dec. 2005

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

International Clips on Liberia

12/12/2005 10:20:18

U.N. steps up security in Liberia's capital after clashes with

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH
Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) _ The U.N.'s peacekeeping mission in Liberia said Monday it has stepped up security measures across the capital after police clashed with angry supporters of the loser in the country's first postwar presidential election. In a late Sunday speech that fired up hundreds of supporters, international soccer superstar George Weah said he would work to stymie the January inauguration of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who won the November balloting to become Africa's first-ever elected female head of state. Weah rejects the results, charging fraud.

Angry Weah supporters attacked U.N. and Liberian police afterward in Monrovia's streets, leaving several security force members injured, the U.N. said in a statement. Police detained 40 Weah supporters suspected of rioting, it said.

12/12/2005 08:21:01

Weah backers in Liberia demonstrate after presidential claim

MONROVIA, Dec 12 (AFP) - Supporters of George Weah, declared loser of last month's Liberian presidential election, fought with police Monday after the ex-football star repeated fraud allegations, calling himself the real head of state. Activists and supporters of Weah's Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) gathered at party headquarters in Monrovia and then went on the rampage after he returned from a two week trip to South Africa Sunday, declaring himself "the winner of the elections" on his private King FM radio. Police moved in with tear gas to disperse them when they damaged about a dozen cars and premises in the city centre and suburbs. About 20 people were seriously injured in clashes, including five police officers, an AFP correspondent reported.

12/12/2005 08:58:14

Liberia says investigating reports of coup plot

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, Dec 12 (Reuters) - Liberia's government said on Monday it was investigating reports of a coup plot against its newly elected president while she is out of the country. The government held a crisis meeting on Monday after supporters of soccer star George Weah, who lost the Nov. 8 presidential election to former Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, rampaged through a Monrovia suburb on Sunday. Riot police with batons and plastic shields surrounded Weah's party headquarters as protesters smashed car windscreens and

pelted officers with rocks after the former AC Milan striker renewed claims that he was the rightful president-elect.

Local Media – Newspapers

George Weah Declares Himself President of Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News, Analyst, The Inquirer, National Chronicle, Poll Watch and The Independent)

- Congress for Democratic Change defeated standard bearer George Weah yesterday declared himself President of Liberia upon his return to the country after reportedly meeting with Presidents John Kuffuor and Thabo Mbeki of Ghana and South Africa respectively. Mr. Weah said that he won both in the general elections and the runoff, adding that there will be no inauguration of President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Two Government Officials Linked to Instability Plan

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer and Heritage)

- An Information Ministry press release said yesterday that the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) has received credible information that certain people, including two NTGL officials were planning to cause instability in the country.
- Information Minister Dr. William Allen said that the government was taking the information seriously and that the joint security had launched an investigation in the matter.

UNDP Launches Small Arms Project

(The Inquirer, Heritage and The Independent)

- The UNDP has launched a campaign to collect small arms and light weapons in exchange for funding of community development projects, UNDP Country Director Steve Ursino told a two-day media workshop in Monrovia recently.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

CDC Supporters and Police Clash

- Speaking to journalists yesterday, Liberian National Police Inspector-General Joseph Kerkula said that five police officers were wounded in a scuffle with partisans of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) who had gathered at the CDC headquarters to welcome its standard bearer George Weah.

(Also reported on Start Radio)

Two Government Officials Linked to Instability Plan

(Also reported on Start Radio)

George Weah Declares Himself President of Liberia

(Also reported on Start Radio)

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

Local Group wants Women Play Proactive Role in Reconciliation

- Addressing a local women elections Saturday, a non-governmental organization Better Future, Executive Director Augustine Aquie called on the women of Liberia to play proactive roles in the reconciliation process in the country because women had roles to play in the post-war peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.

British Clergyman Says Prosperity in Liberia Depends on Sustainable Peace

- British Evangelist Wisdom Ogah said that the prosperity of Liberia depended on its citizens maintaining the peace with the aid of the international community. He added that there was brighter future for Liberia after years of war.

Police to Clampdown on "Half-Naked" Women in Margibi County

- According to Margibi County Police Commander Ralph Tuopay, the area police was preparing to raid the streets of Kakata of young women believed to be improperly dressed. He attributed the causes of rape to the indecent dress code among the youth.

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. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.



Build. Your business.

Pledging 'Government of Inclusion', President-Elect Wants Liberians to' See Hope in Their Future'

allAfrica.com

INTERVIEW

December 13, 2005

Posted to the web December 13, 2005

Washington, DC

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a veteran development official and politician who scored an unexpected victory in Liberia's presidential run-off last month, is currently on a brief private visit to the United States. Planned as a low-key affair, her trip has become a whirlwind of events and appointments, as interest in her status as Africa's first woman president has ballooned. On Monday in New York she met with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and was hosted at a dinner by the Business Council for International Understanding and the Corporate Council on Africa. The financier George Soros invited a group of private investors to lunch with the president-elect Tuesday. Wednesday, after both breakfast and lunch events, she will attend a dinner hosted by the Leon Sullivan Foundation, which was so oversubscribed that its waiting list of several hundred was itself closed. Sirleaf is slated to meet the U.S. secretaries of State, Defense and Treasury on Thursday before returning home.

When she takes office on January 16, she will be in charge of a country emerging from 14 years of savage conflict that displaced most of the population and left even the capitol, Monrovia, without electricity or running water. A generation of children grew up without schooling, and tens of thousands were forced by armed factions into being soldiers or sex slaves.

Most immediately, Sirleaf must contend with claims by international football superstar George Weah, her opponent in the run-off election on October 11, that he was denied the presidency by fraud. The day Sirleaf met Annan at the United Nations, whose peacekeepers have been enforcing Liberia's post-war calm, Weah supporters clashed with police in the streets of the capitol, and officials of his Congress for Democratic Change, or CDC, have threatened to block the inauguration, although Weah has denied that his party is behind the violence. This week Liberia's transitional government said it was investigating reports "gathered from intelligence and security sources" of a possible coup plot.

In an interview with AllAfrica, Sirleaf discussed the challenges of national reconstruction and reclaiming a future of hope for Liberia's people.

You won a hotly contested campaign, surging ahead of a candidate who the conventional wisdom said would win, by emphasizing your experience and your plan to rebuild the country. In the process, you created high expectations. Are you concerned that those expectations will outstrip your government's capacity to deliver?

We are going to try to manage those expectations. In the first instance, we are going to set out a

development agenda that is realistic and consistent with our own resources - human, financial and natural. We are going to set an agenda that is time-bound, letting people know through proper communication what exactly we are able to achieve with what we have, what time it will take to achieve it. And we will make regular reports on the progress. If one communicates to the Liberian people exactly what we are, what we can do, what we will achieve, then I think those expectations will become realistic.

But we want them to also feel like change is on the way, that we are going to make progress and that we want them to be part of that progress - by putting everyone to work in keeping with their own capacity and interest. We want them to see hope in the future. If that means expectation, we will just make sure that we are realistic in telling them how we are going to achieve our development goals, and I think we can carry the Liberian people with us.

Your recent trip around West Africa and your visit to the United States have shown that there's a lot of enthusiasm and goodwill towards you. How do you propose to use that to Liberia's advantage?

We must move quickly to harness all this goodwill. To do that, we need to reconcile and unify the Liberian population, get all of the contesting groups together. We need to find the means to address the needs of our war-affected youth, and then, as I said, we must communicate a very clear, realistic and time-bound development agenda that attempts to set out goals around which the goodwill and the support that we now have can support that agenda. Part of that effort will be to get the government machinery working again with effectiveness and efficiency, and with full accountability and transparency, to be able to address the corruption that has characterized our operations for so long.

How do you go about achieving that reconciliation? What about Mr. Weah, who is claiming that he is the rightful winner?

We are committed to a government of inclusion. We are very committed to that, reaching across political party lines, ethnic lines, religious lines, and trying to bring into the government, as much as possible, those who meet our basic standards, standards of competence, integrity and human rights promotion. I think that will go a long way.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Weah has not accepted the results that truly reflect the wishes of the Liberian people, but we hope he will come around and get over his disappointment and see what he can do. At the same time, the security of the state is paramount. We hope that his young people will realize that that cannot be sacrificed in any way. We must preserve the security of the State to enable us bring people together and start on our development agenda.

Liberia has resources to finance development.

Liberia has a lot of natural resources, some of it already being exploited through concession agreements and contracts. We are going to look at those concession agreements and contracts and make sure they are in the national interest. If they are, or can be made to be, then we want to give the encouragement necessary to make sure resources are available to support our development agenda. We want to start getting our displaced people and people in camps back to their farms so they can be self-sufficient, because we do have the means to produce much of our own food needs.

Then we need to explore the other natural resources we have and create the environment of peace and stability to attract capital and private investment to exploit those resources. All of this, of course, will

take a bit of time. But I think if we get our policies right, we can then attract this investment. The natural resources we have, which are ample for our relatively small population of three million, can accelerate the development effort, and very quickly we can see our growth rate increase and per capita income and purchasing power improved, and the economy then takes on more momentum. Those are the things we will be working on, so we can get them started very early in the New Year after the inauguration.

You've been outspoken about the contribution women can make to development, and of course women played an important role in your own election. How do you plan to promote gender equality in the government and in the society?

First of all, we hope that the composition of the government will give a strong signal about the important role that women must play, and then we want to look at the laws and the practices as regards the protection of women. We want to focus on the girl-child and giving girls the opportunity for education. Women's organizations - we want to get them strengthened so that they can respond to the specific needs of women. And I think setting the example ourselves and encouraging women to take leadership roles and take active roles in all aspects of our national endeavor will begin to bring about the gender equality that we know is so important to get the best in our society.

What kind of support do you hope to attract from the United States and the international community more generally?

We are looking for both technical and financial support. From the United States, we want support to reactivate the process of getting our external debt resolved. It is very high - U.S.\$3.5 billion - and we will not be able to access important sources of funding unless that is resolved. So we want to work towards meeting the requirements for getting the sanctions lifted off some of our natural resources that are needed to support our development effort. We want to see the GMAP [a donor-backed economic reform program], which has been talked about so much, move very rapidly into implementation, so that we can fill the gap in promoting accountability and transparency and begin the process of capacity-building. And demonstrate that we can manage our own resources effectively and efficiently and fully.

We want to see how [charitable] foundations can support some of our repatriation efforts and getting communities back at the farms and working again. There is so much that we think will put Liberia on the right track, and we know that the key to all of this is our own performance, both in terms of policy and in terms of management of our resources. We are confident that if we do our part, we will get the support from the United States, the European Commission, the United Nations.

More importantly, we need support in restructuring and professionalizing the security forces, because we will not be able to move forward with our development agenda unless the nation is secured. Those are the areas we are having discussions on right now. We have had discussions with the west African leaders. Ecowas and the African Union are very supportive of our efforts. We have also had some talks with the European Commission, while I was in transit, and now with the United States. I feel very confident that, if we do the right things, we will get the support that we need.

You were well received in west Africa. How does regional cooperation fit into your plans?

That is very important. We must have the support and understanding of our neighboring countries to make sure that regional stability is secured. Then there is the whole issue of regional cooperation, being able to work with the Ecowas [Economic Community of West African States] secretariat, [Ecowas Executive Secretary] Dr. Mohammed Chambas and his people who are promoting regional integration. We want to come up with common economic programs to improve the mobility of goods and services

across borders and thereby create the economies of scale and the potential to attract private investment on a regional basis in those cases where domestic markets are quite small. I am grateful I was well received by the African leaders, and I think we are going to have clear understanding as to how we can get the countries working together to achieve these regional development objectives.

Are you confident that the region has turned the corner on conflict, which has created so much pain and destruction in recent years?

No. The peace is still extremely fragile in Liberia and in the sub-region as well. We have pockets of disenchanted elements in the society that have not accepted the fact that the Liberian people have given us a mandate for change. They haven't accepted that the Liberian people want to move forward. These elements like the status quo. They have a vested interest in seeing the current situation remain in place, and we know they are going to try to do things to undermine the potential and the progress that we are setting in train.

We are not out of the woods yet, but we have to take all action with the support of our regional partners and the international community, including the United Nations mission in Liberia, to address those pockets of discontent. We will try to reach out to them in a positive way and get them to see the benefit for joining in the development effort. But in those cases where they remain very recalcitrant, then they will have to be identified, to deal with it, so that the nation's progress is not impeded.

One issue you are facing is what to do about Charles Taylor. There are strong voices here in the United States calling on you to request his extradition from Nigeria, so he can be tried by the Special Court in Sierra Leone, where he has been indicted for war crimes in connection with the civil war in that country.

Let me say that in the consultations that I have had recently with the African leaders and European leaders and now the United States, we are going to find a solution that resolves the Charles Taylor issue. I think we should leave it at that for now. Proper solutions that meet African leaders' requirements as well as the international community's requirements will be found, and we will deal with it.

So you feel that you can move forward, despite the effort of George Weah and his supporters to contest the election outcome?

The Liberian people have given us a mandate for change, a mandate to set our country on the road to respectability, to peace, reconciliation and development, and we should all continue to be committed to that goal, despite the distractions that are taking place. I am convinced that the Liberian people, with the support of the international community will move on and will see progress in a very, very short period of time.

RELATED:

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