

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

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 12 – Friday 14 February 2003

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact

Local News

Why Attack The Limbas? / <i>The New Storm</i>	Page 3
Witchhunt Intimidation / <i>Midweek Spark</i>	Page 4
Berewa, Ernest Koroma Condemn Johnny Paul / <i>The New Citizen</i>	Page 5
...Johnny Paul Hibernates in Kambia / <i>Christian Science Monitor</i>	Page 6
Special Court Prosecutor Visits Port Loko / <i>Standard Times</i>	Page 7
PLP Asked Johnny Paul to Surrender / <i>The Democrat</i>	Page 8
5 Salone Lawyers for Special Court Named / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 9
Not All War Criminal Will Be Prosecuted / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 10
...Security Checkpoints on BO-Freetown Highway / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 11
Will Johnny Paul Face the Special Court? / <i>The Exclusive</i>	Page 12
Johnny Paul Around Samuel Town / <i>The Pool</i>	Page 13
Tribunal in Africa May Serve As Model for Trial of Hussein / <i>Wall Street Journal</i>	Pages 14-15
Sierra Leonean Kamajors Fightingg With Lurd / <i>Leonet</i>	Page 16
Liberians Flee New Fighting / <i>Reuters</i>	Pages 17-19

The New Storm

Wednesday, 12 February 2003

FEBRUARY 12, 2003

THE NEW STORM

Opinion

By
Amara A.
Samura

Why Attack The Limbas

I have been following with keen interest investigations into the shooting incident at the army engineering base at Wellington on the 12th January and the search and disappearance of the former junta leader and leader of the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP) Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma.

Together with other well meaning Sierra Leoneans I was very curious to know the outcome of the investigations so that appropriate measures could be taken against those found wanting. It is no longer a secret that the days of violence are over. What everybody should now be thinking of is what role will each and every individual play in the development of the nation.

As Sierra Leoneans are patiently waiting the outcome of the police investigations, the Secretary General of the Civil Society Movement Charles Mambu made a statement over FM 98.1D station two Sundays ago on the weekly "Salone Tidae" programme which has not gone down well to not only the Limba community in the Western area, but other tribes too.

In his statement at the time, Charles Mambu who is known to be a tribal person said that, the Limba people in Freetown have hidden Johnny Paul Koroma. This statements angered the entire Limba community and during the phone-in programme few people attacked him for what they described as a reckless statement. A statement which many view as one that tends to create a serious tribal conflict. By involving a whole tribe that is known for peace in a sensitive matter like this in a negative way was not expected from a man who is supposed to know much.

The Limba community at a meeting held last Sunday at Calaba Town categorically stated that they condemned all negative things aimed at disrupting the peace and stability of the nation. The question now thousands of people are asking is that why has Charles Mambu accused the Limba people of harbouring the former junta leader. Is it

because he a Limba? It is no longer a secret that the Limbas are the most peaceful tribe in the country.

Everybody knows that Johnny Paul is a Limba but that does not mean if he creates problem for himself the entire Limba community in the Western Area should be included or blamed.

During the Civil Society Movement protest last Wednesday at the Victoria Park, the Chairman of the Movement Mr. Hassan Barrie said the escape of Johnny Paul Koroma from the police net January 18 is no Limba problem nor is it a northern one as some people might want to include.

Barrie noted that the escape of Johnny Paul from jurisdiction is a national concern and that he did not informed the Limba Community before taking any decision neither are Limbas

Don't use the civil society movement or 98.1D Station to tarnish the image of the Limba people for your own benefit.

supportive of any of his negative action that might be inimical to the national peace and stability of the country. The civil society boss maintained that it would be unfair to blame a particular tribe or region in the matter.

In his contribution at the ceremony, Ibrahim Kargbo representing consumer protection agency criticised some people who want to preach tribalism in this sensitive matter which he said will not augur well for a peaceful nation.

Even the inspector General of Police Keith Biddle who is not a Limba joined Barrie and Kargbo also towns at some sections of the society who are trying to tribalise the issue of Johnny Paul. Biddle denied reports that the police is deeply divided along tribal or regional lines but that they are working together as one unit

and force to achieve their objective.

People have even went further of implicating the Acting Deputy Inspector General of Police Brima A. Kamara of involving in the escape of Johnny Paul. Because Mr. Kamara is a Limba and from the same place where Johnny Paul came from, people have pointed accusing fingers on Brima Acha for some thing he knows nothing of.

The Senior Assistant Commissioner in Charge of professional conduct Oliver B.M. Somasa all criticised the ill motivated people who want to tribalise the incident. Addressing a news conference last Tuesday Mr. Somasa said they are investigating the matter from a national perspective and not on tribal lines.

Mr. Somasa told the nation on Sunday February 3 at the popular "Salone Tidae" programme that they have started investigating this matter as far back as November last year and that if any information should have been passed to Johnny Paul Koroma then, the police should not have met him in the house during the search exercise again.

Please Charles Mambu and others allow the investigations to conclude and wait the outcome of the police report so that Sierra Leoneans will know whether the Limba's were responsible for Johnny Paul's escape. In as much you have the interest of the country at heart, so too the Limbas want peace, stability and national development for the country.

Be aware also that the Limba community is angry with the reckless statements you made at 98.1D and that they will never forgive you for trying to destroy the image of their tribe as was said in that meeting held at Calaba Town.

Don't use the civil society movement or 98.1D Station to tarnish the image of the Limba people for your own benefit. Even those who does not belong to the Limbas ethnic tribe are not happy with the way you are speaking against the Limba community on that day in question.

Midweek Spark
Wednesday, 12 February 2003

Midweek Spark
Wednesday February 12, 2003

Witchhunt! Intimidation!

Recently, the opposition party in parliament, the All Peoples Congress Party accused the government of the indiscriminate witch hunting and arrest of its citizens. From the look of things, it was clear that the accusation was a direct reference to the incidents of shooting and subsequent raids of people deemed to be connected with the shooting incidents which so far, has been unsatisfactorily explained as a Coup D'Etat. These developments no doubt sparked off a general feeling of apprehension sending cold shivers down the spine of most business people.

With Johnny Paul out of the scene, the Crystalball has been engaged in extensively focusing the events behind the headlines, as to what will become

of the whole saga.

Among the pictures picked up by its lenses, is the campaign of harassment and intimidation being mounted against anyone deemed to be a close ally of the former Junta leader.

Among the latest discovery is Bai 'Sesay who is now on the run for his dear life. Said to be the former junta leader's errand boy, Bai is seen to be in hot pursuit by particularly members of the Juba Community who knew his 'inns and outs' with Johnny Paul.

Though it is not yet clear whether these developments are the initiative of government sympathizers, there have been wide spread suspicions of government's hand in this wide chase of Johnny Paul's people.

The New Citizen
Wednesday, 12 February 2003

The New CITIZEN

TOLONGBO

WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2003

VOLUME 7 NO. 17

BEREWA, ERNEST KOROMA CONDEMN JOHNNY PAUL

The Vice President Solomon Berewa has condemned the act of the Peace Liberation Party leader, Johnny Paul Koroma from escaping in the hands of the police who were trying to carry out investigation of a recent plot to create panic in the country.

This disclosure was made during the found opening of the Community Bank in the

Marampa-Masimera chiefdoms, Lunsar.

Vice President Solomon Berewa said that the setting up of the Special Court should not warrant people to create panic so that the peace the country is now enjoying should be put at stake.

He said that the Special Court was meant to try those who bore the greatest responsibility during the ten year rebel war



VP BEREWA

and that the TRC was geared towards the healing process of the country.

Vice President Solomon Berewa noted that peace



development and that the majority of people in the rural areas were extremely poor and that nobody should create fear in the minds

of the war weary Sierra Leoneans.

Mr. Solomon Berewa said that since Sierra Leone was the last in the human index report 2002, the economic, social and political will should be geared towards developmental programme for the sustenance of peace and democracy.

The APC leader, Ernest Bai Koroma, in his brief speech said that he condemned the act of Johnny Paul Koroma in trying to derail the peace

process.

He noted that his party APC believed in democracy and that few individuals should not be allowed to create panic for the war weary Sierra Leoneans.

Mr. Koroma said that the opening of the Bank was an indication of Government's

commitment to decentralize development and that his party was closely watching the strides taken by the government.

Still on the search, Police sources predict...

Johnny Paul hibernates in Kambia

By Our Special Correspondent

When Johnny Paul Koroma announced in a radio interview after evading Police arrest couple of weeks ago that he was heading northwards, many people took his rantings with a pinch of salt.

Well, clues and counter-clues followed by the Police have not yielded any results despite their massive manhunt and increased se-

curity activities around Freetown and its environs.

Now, it is been revealed that the fugitive Peace and Liberation Party (PLP) leader, Member of Parliament and ex-AFRC junta leader may be hibernating in the northwestern district of Kambia.

See back page



Johnny Paul Koroma

Johnny Paul

hibernates in Kambia

From page 1

Our sources quoting the Police, say that the story of Johnny Paul being in Kambia is gaining grounds as new leads point to that direction.

He is believed to be backed by some of his core supporters, especially ex-AFRC activists and militants. The names of these individuals are not immediately known but are believed to be die-hard loyalists to the ex-junta leader.

A state security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told our reporter that Johnny

Paul may be surrounded by some ex-combatants and serving personnel from the lower ranks of the Sierra Leone Army. Their number, he said, may not be significant enough to pose a threat to the country's fragile peace.

He however cautioned that these dissidents may after all somehow disrupt the security situation if not dealt with immediately and decisively.

Johnny Paul himself has not disclosed his intention since going into hiding, but many

believe he may well be trying to abort the upcoming Special Court for Sierra Leone, which would be trying individuals believed to bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during the war.

Meanwhile, more security checkpoints have sprouted on the main highways between the northern regional capital of Makeni to Freetown. The search for Johnny Paul continues, but many observers are waiting to see whether the security forces would net their prized fugitive.

*Christian Monitor
Wednesday, February 12, 2003*

STANDARD TIMES Wednesday February 12, 2003

Special Court Prosecutor Visits Port Loko

The Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone David M. Crane provided residents of Port Loko last week, Tuesday with an update on his criminal investigations of those who bear the greatest responsibility, according to a press release from the office.

"We are working hard to put together our cases,

and significant progress has been made since our arrival. I am pleased to announce that my team of investigators could complete their investigations by June of this year," said Crane.

The Prosecutor and his staff have been holding community meetings in various parts of the country since August of last

year to solicit views on how he should undertake his mandate of prosecuting those who bear the greatest responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law committed during the country's decade-long civil war.

So far he has visited eleven out of Sierra Leone's twelve districts.

Later, the Prosecutor is scheduled to make the second in a series of diplomatic missions in support of his work.

Traveling to Europe and North America, Crane will hold talks with senior government officials and human rights leaders regarding cooperation and coordination with his office.

Additional trips are planned for late-February and throughout March.

PLP Asks Johnny Paul To Surrender



not correct
Thursday February 13, 2003

By Solomon Rogers

The Peace and Liberation Party (PLP) Southern Region wants their fugitive leader, Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma, to surrender to police and prove his innocence.

Speaking to the Democrat in an interview last week,

the party's Southern Region Chairman, Peter Mamy, condemned the use of force as a means of attaining political power. "That is un-

acceptable," he said at their regional secretariat. "Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma should surrender himself to authorities and go through

the due process of the law. We also want government to protect our membership across the country against any form of harassment and intimidation."

"We joined the PLP to foster democracy and good governance and not to engage in any subversive activ-

ity." On Hon. Johnny Paul's replacement in parliament, Mr. Mamy maintained that it was a constitutional matter that has to be decided by the house. "I think there is a standing order that can be invoked in such circumstances more especially when a member of parliament is absent for a certain period of time," he opined.

5 Salone lawyers for Special Court named

Five Sierra Leoneans Law-
yers have been appointed
to serve in the Special Court
for Sierra Leone. This was

disclosed by Mr. Robin
Vincent Register of the Special
Court.
The five lawyers are Miatta

M. Samba who will serve
as Human Rights Adviser,
Office of the Prosecutor; Dr.
Marcus Jones, former Uni-

versity lecturer will serve
as Senior Trial Attorney,
Office of the Prosecutor;
Mr. Mohamed Bangura;
as been appointed as
Trial Attorney, Office of the
Prosecutor; Mr. Nicolas-
Browne Mark, will also
serve as Trial Attorney,
Office of the Prosecutor
and Fatmata Claire
Cotton-Hanciles who will
serve in the Office of the
Registrar in the Defence
Support Unit of the Special
Court for Sierra
Leone.

*Independent Observer
Wednesday, February 12, 2003*

Not all war criminals will be prosecuted

...Berewa



By Regina Thomas

Vice president Solomon Berewa has over the weekend said in Lunsar, north-west of the country that

...on war burn houses, kill off arms, kill and yet you will not be tried by the special court."

He was trying to lay to

rest fears of most people who thought the Special Court was here to try all those who were involved in the decade-old war.

Solomon Berewa

Speaking during the official opening of the Marampa-Masimera community bank in Lunsar, Berewa said that the Special Court was here for a few people who "bear the greatest responsibility" for crimes committed during the war - that is, those who had command control and influence over the fighting forces

that committed atrocities. He said contrary to what has been rumoured, the Special Court had made a public notice informing the public that they were here for few people.

He added that people who are to be tried by the Special Court could either be in Freetown or in other countries, stressing that even if they were in other countries as long as they bear the greatest responsibility for crimes, they would be traced and brought to justice.

"Let no one fool you," he stressed. Though he did not call names, many people had in mind Sam "mosquito" Boackarie, the former battlefield commander of the Revolutionary United Front and President Charles Taylor of neighbouring Liberia who

was suspected of funding the RUF.

Berewa said that some people committed atrocities, but do not bear the greatest responsibility for what happened in the country. Apparently, he meant that they were either influenced or coerced which puts them out of the reference of "those who bear the greatest responsibility".

Meanwhile, the Special Court prosecutor, David Crane is yet to produce a list of indicted persons to face the court.

Speaking in Port Loko recently, he said his work would finish in June. Who will be the first accused? This is the question everyone is asking today in Freetown.

Concord Times

Monday, February 12, 2003

Independent Observer
Thursday, 13 February 2003

Independent Observer
Thursday, February 13, 2003

Johnny Paul:

Security checkpoints on Freetown-Bo highway



Johnny Paul, still on the run

Security checkpoints set up along the Freetown - Bo highway last weekend were "just a normal routine," a senior police official told *Sierra Leone Web* on Tuesday. While he acknowledged that part of the reason for the operation was related to the search for fugitive former junta leader Johnny P. Koroma and others wanted for questioning in connection with last month's armed attack on a military warehouse, the official insisted police had not received any intelligence reports which would indicate further problems. "You know we are investigating certain people that are not large."

One journalist who returned from the highway on Monday reported encountering a significant army checkpoint at Waterloo. Curiously, the soldiers were wearing green face paint, he said.

The Exclusive
Thursday, 13 February 2003

The Exclusive
Thursday February 13, 2003

Will Johnny Paul Face The Special Court?

firm action



Johnny Paul Koroma

The whereabouts of the fugitive Johnny Paul Koroma remains a mystery to everybody, not least the security operatives who are yet to pinpoint his exact location. Talks about whether or not the police will capture and bring to justice are still rife in town. Already, the 72-hour deadline that the Civil Society Movement gave the military to capture him has expired. Some say he is in Sierra Leone, but others believe he has fled to a foreign country.

seems to be heading for a dead end, as usual. Thus, the question on the lips of every Sierra Leonean

now is whether in fact Johnny Paul, a sure candidate to face the Special Courts, will ever stand trial. One journalist,

who is very critical about the capabilities of our security operatives, thinks that Johnny Paul will only face trial if

he runs out of luck somewhere, probably in a foreign country and is extradited. He thus hopes that the international community will assist us in

not only bringing Johnny Paul to justice but the likes of Maskita, who are at large. Another person we

Contd. page 3

Will Johnny Paul Face The Special Court

From front page spoke to, said that the issue of Johnny Paul facing the courts should not be preempted until the court Prosecu-

tor releases his list of names of indicted persons. Meanwhile, public discussions on the escape of Johnny Paul and

his continued fugitive adventure seem to have died down, with attention shifting to the long queues for fuel in all filling stations here in Freetown.

Published by The

The Pool

Friday, 14 February 2003

Johnny Paul around Samuel Town

By Savoh Kamara



Johnny Paul: Stop this hide and seek game

Fugitive Peace and Liberation Party leader, Honourable Johnny Paul Koroma is reported to be hibernating around Samuel Town some five miles from Waterloo. The Pool can authoritatively reveal.

According to our investigations and sources around Waterloo, the former AFRC junta leader is hiding in a cave like environment.

Investigations further disclosed that J.P. as he is popularly known, is very much in contact with certain individuals within his party as well as the security forces almost on a regular basis. "He is apparently using a different sim card in order to avoid being detected by intelligence officers that might be possibly monitoring such calls", one source intimated.

The location is said to be forested and hilly with rocks and impossible to reach by transport, which according to sources could make

it impossible for any lightly armed security force team to penetrate. "The area is under intensive surveillance by his men who are in mufty. Since he came to this area we've been seeing different faces coming and going", another source stated.

It could be recalled that three weeks ago, following his just controversial escape from police arrest, there was pandemonium at Waterloo, as parents were seen running helter skelter to the various schools to retrieve their children.

Johnny Paul made his miraculous escape from the city when police investigations led to a search and arrest of certain elements believed to be suspects in the shooting incident at the Wellington Army Depot on 14 January at his residence on 18 January. In an apparent move to confuse any search attempt for him, he was on the BBC Focus on Africa stating that he was heading for the north.

Pool

Friday February 14,
2003

Wall Street Journal

Wednesday, 12 February 2003



"Bravin, Jess"
<Jess.Bravin@wsj.co
m>

To:
CC:
Subject: Today's report

12/02/2003 16:54

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

February 12, 2003

Tribunal in Africa May Serve
As Model for Trial of Hussein

By JESS BRAVIN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

If Saddam Hussein wonders what awaits him if U.S. forces conquer Iraq, he might look to judicial proceedings unfolding 4,000 miles from Baghdad in the

African capital of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

There, in a bullet-ridden house that rebels once used to torture prisoners, a veteran Pentagon lawyer is readying indictments of the alleged instigators

of mass killings, rapes and amputations that marked the country's civil war.

The charges will go before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a new type of

war-crimes tribunal formed by agreement between the United Nations and the Freetown government.

The U.S. was deeply involved in creating the Sierra Leone court and plans to

provide one-third of its \$54 million budget. U.S. officials say the court offers a model that could be used to try Mr. Hussein and his top aides for crimes against humanity that were allegedly committed during his 24-year dictatorship, including a genocidal campaign against the minority Kurds in 1987.

Later this month, top U.S. officials are expected to discuss how to address Baghdad's alleged crimes. Officials say that any decisions will be preliminary, hinging on whether there is an armed overthrow of Mr. Hussein, the shape of any future Baghdad regime, and the response of foreign governments. Some Bush administration officials favor sending the regime's leaders to U.S. military courts. Other options include an international criminal tribunal, trials held by a successor Iraqi government, and a nonjudicial "truth and reconciliation" commission.

But over the past year, U.S. officials have cited the ad hoc Sierra Leone court as a template for future war-crimes prosecutions overseas, instead of the decade-old U.N. tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and the permanent International Criminal Court supported by the European Union.

"It's the next generation of tribunals," says David Crane, a former U.S. Defense Department lawyer who was named as the Sierra Leone prosecutor in April 2002 by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan after intense lobbying by U.S. diplomats. The special court's design reflects U.S. frustration with the Rwanda and Yugoslavia tribunals, which remain years from concluding their work even as they each get \$100 million annually from the U.N. treasury. In contrast, the Sierra Leone court operates under a tight budget directly controlled by the U.S. and other donor countries, a three-year timetable and a limited mission. It will try only those with "greatest responsibility" for atrocities during the last half of the civil war -- a few dozen out of thousands of combatants.

The Sierra Leone court's rules are based on those of the U.N. Rwanda tribunal, which derive from the Nuremberg trials after World War II. Defendants will have rights similar to those in a U.S. courtroom -- presumption of innocence, free legal representation, subpoena power and the right to remain silent. However, a panel of trial judges, rather than a jury, will rule on guilt and impose sentences.

Unlike the ICC and the U.N. tribunals, which are based in The Hague, the special court sits where the crimes took place. The location offers a number

of advantages: Witnesses and evidence won't have to be shipped to a

courtroom abroad, and the local population will be able to attend the trials, presumably increasing the proceedings' credibility. Unlike the ICC and the U.N. tribunals, which have no judges from the affected countries, the Sierra Leone court includes three judges appointed by the Freetown government, along with five named by Secretary-General Annan.

The court has also made a point of hiring Sierra Leoneans as lawyers and support staff, hoping to create the nucleus of a legal establishment trained

in international standards of justice. And after the tribunal shuts down, its planned 12-acre complex, including a courtroom, jail and offices, will be given to the Sierra Leone government.

But the Freetown location has brought its share of problems. The court must operate amid the disorder of a failed state where stability rests on 16,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops. And Sierra Leone ranks last on the U.N.

human-development index, which measures such categories as health care, literacy and economic opportunity in 172 countries. In addition to poor telephone connections, unreliable electricity and a numbing lack of recreation for the court's foreign staff, the city also remains tense and dangerous. Some fear that violence could break out when indictments are handed up later this year, and court staff say they hear that al Qaeda operatives may be roaming Freetown, where weak law-enforcement makes money-laundering easy.

"There is a downside, and that's the security risk," says the court's president, Geoffrey Robertson, an Australian appointed by the Sierra Leone government. "I don't want to end up presiding over a court that's held on a British battleship off Freetown." (In his private legal practice, Mr. Robertson has represented Dow Jones & Co., publisher of The Wall Street Journal and the online Journal.)

Nevertheless, Mr. Robertson says the Sierra Leone model would work well in Iraq and that he has discussed the matter with U.S. diplomats. "In a postwar

Baghdad or a Baghdad that had regime change from the inside, it would be an important first step to allow Iraq to develop a system of justice," he says.

Not all are convinced. "Sierra Leone is not Iraq," says David Scheffer, the Clinton administration's ambassador at large for war-crimes issues.

"There's a real benefit to getting the top leadership out of Iraq and not have them percolating in Iraqi detention centers staffed by Americans," says Mr. Scheffer, who helped design the Sierra Leone court and has compiled dossiers

on alleged war crimes by the Baghdad regime. "It could be so disruptive of building Iraqi democracy to have this hard-line element still kicking around

in Iraq and generating dissension."

On the other hand, any kind of international court "is going to be very difficult to sell to the Iraqis" who suffered under Mr. Hussein because such

tribunals won't impose death sentences, says Charles Forrest, chief executive of Indict, a U.S. government-funded group in London that advocates

war-crimes prosecutions for Iraq.

Mr. Forrest has been working with Iraqi exile lawyers assembled by the State

Department to help plan a post-Saddam justice system. Rather than involve the U.S. or the U.N., "they believe that Iraq should conduct these trials itself. It's a nationalistic, patriotic attitude that extends to all factions of Iraqis," he says. While Americans may be skeptical of the country's legal foundation, he says, "they say that Iraq is the birthplace of law, starting with the Code of Hammurabi."

Leonet

Friday, 14 February 2003



"p.palmer"
 <p.palmer@dsl.pipex.com>
 Sent by:
 owner-leonenet@listpro
 c.umbc.edu

To: <leonenet@listproc.umbc.edu>
 cc:
 Subject: Sierra Leonean Kamajors fighting with LURD, government says

14/02/2003 17:22

LIBERIA: Sierra Leonean Kamajors fighting with LURD, government says

MONROVIA, 14 February (IRIN) - Liberia's government said on Thursday that former Kamajor militiamen from Sierra Leone were fighting alongside the rebel Liberians United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) in the western part of the country.

The Kamajor militias are traditional hunters who fought against Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during Sierra Leone's armed conflict (1991-2002). Liberian Justice Minister Lavela Koboi Johnson told reporters that the government had reliable reports - confirmed by fleeing civilians - about the presence of ex-Kamajor fighters within the LURD. He described them as "hired killers".

Fighting between LURD and loyalist troops has intensified in recent weeks, spreading to the coastal town of Robertsport, 78 km southwest of the capital, Monrovia. Civilians fleeing Robertsport, which is the capital of Grand Cape Mount County, have been arriving by canoe on the New Kru Town beach in Monrovia. They confirmed that LURD had captured Robertsport on Monday and abducted more than 100 residents, while many others were stranded in the town.

A group of 15 elders from nearby Bomi County reported to the government that heavily armed LURD rebels had abducted 25 civilians, mainly women and children, in the towns of Kley, Dewoin and Cheesemanburg, where LURD and government troops have been fighting since early February.

The executive director of the Liberian Refugees, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Sam Brown, told IRIN on Thursday that the influx of internally displaced people (IDPs) as a result of the renewed fighting was increasing daily. The LRRRC had registered 25,000 IDPs by Thursday. Brown called on international humanitarian organizations to help Liberia to address "the alarming humanitarian crisis", saying the government could not handle the influx on its own.

[ENDS]

Copyright (c) UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2003

Reuters

Saturday, 15 February 2003



"p.palmer"
 <p.palmer@dsl.pipex.com>
 Sent by:
 owner-leonenet@listproc.umbc.edu

To: <leonenet@listproc.umbc.edu>
 cc:
 Subject: U.N.: Liberians flee new fighting

16/02/2003 18:38

U.N.: Liberians flee new fighting
 Saturday, February 15, 2003 Posted: 3:28 PM EST (2028 GMT)

 Story Tools

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (Reuters) -- Thousands of Liberian refugees have fled into neighboring Sierra Leone to escape a fresh wave of fighting in their own country, a U.N. official said.

Mohamed Shekari, a military spokesman for the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone, said U.N. peacekeepers were on alert to prevent fighting at the border between the two West African countries from spilling over into Sierra Leone.

"Thousands of people are fleeing from Liberia through the eastern border and many of them are women and children," Shekari told reporters late on Friday.

"The U.N., in collaboration with the (U.N. refugee agency) UNHCR has been helping to evacuate the fleeing refugees by transporting them to refugee camps but this is done after the refugees have been screened by Sierra Leone's police and armed forces," he said.

Rebels fighting to oust Liberian President Charles Taylor captured the key coastal town of Robertsport this week, near the border with Sierra Leone, sending hundreds of panicked residents fleeing. Defense Minister Daniel Chea said on Thursday the army had later retaken control of the town.

Sierra Leone is itself recovering from a bloody 10-year civil war that ended in January last year, and the United Nations wants to make sure peace there is not put into danger by turmoil in Liberia.

The two countries have a history of intertwined conflicts and Taylor is under U.N. sanctions for fueling instability in Sierra Leone.





Taylor, a former warlord, emerged victorious after a brutal seven-year civil war in the 1990s and was elected president in 1997. Rebels calling themselves Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) launched an insurrection against him in 2000 and earlier this month came to within
 12

km (eight miles) of the outskirts of the capital, Monrovia.

Military sources said this week there were also clashes between government forces and LURD rebels in eastern Liberia, near the border with Ivory Coast, itself divided by a five-month civil war.

Liberian fighters, notorious for their brutality and lack of discipline, have joined rebel ranks in western Ivory Coast. Rebels say Ivorian troops have also hired Liberian mercenaries.

Copyright 2003 Reuters. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

 [SAVE THIS](#)  [EMAIL THIS](#)  [PRINT THIS](#)  [MOST POPULAR](#)