

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



Boats at Kent Beach look out toward Banana Island in the distance.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

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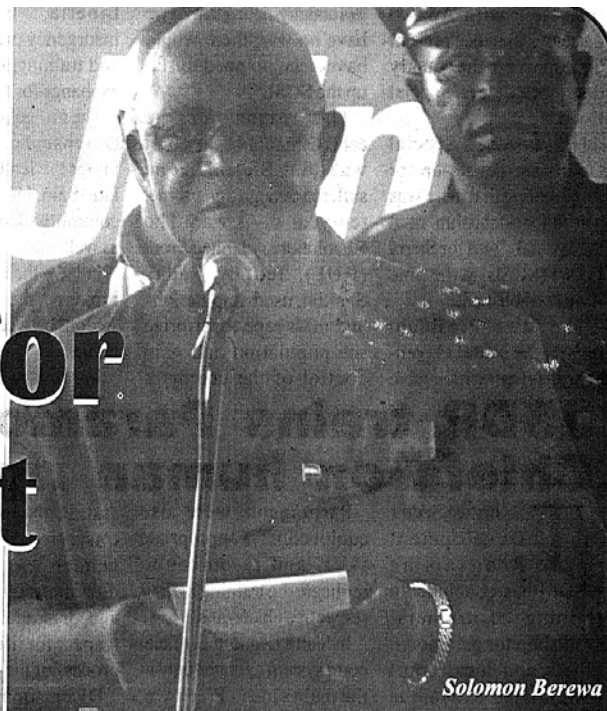
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Awoko

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

The present atmosphere does not call for Special Court

- Berewa



Solomon Berewa

'The present atmosphere does not call for Special Court'- Berewa

By Ophaniel Gooding

Vice President Solomon Berewa in an interview with Awoko discloses that the "present atmosphere in the country does not call for a Special Court."

He says the "Special Courts are not set-up for fun," adding that there was a need for establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) at the time it was established.

The Vice President regrets the brutal eleven-year mayhem which gave

need for the establishment of the SCSL, and prays that such scenario will never again be repeated in the history of this country, noting that "if we have no war, there would have been no need to set-up the SCSL".

The reason for the establishment of the court was that Sierra Leone suffered through a gruesome, ten-year civil war. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, used amputations and mass rape to terrorize the population and gain control of the country's

lucrative diamond mines.

Charles Taylor, then president of neighbouring Liberia, backed the insurgency providing arms and training to the RUF in exchange for diamonds.

The pro-government Civil Defense Forces (CDF), under the leadership of the late Sam Hinga Norman, committed serious offences as well.

In 1999 the UN eventually brokered the Lome Peace Accord between the warring parties.

In January 2002 the UN

approved the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to try those responsible for the crimes committed during the civil war.

Based in the country where the atrocities were committed and combining international and domestic law, the SCSL ushers in a

new generation of international tribunals. Experts believe this model will deliver justice faster and at a lower cost than its counterparts for Rwanda and Yugoslavia.

Since the trials opened on June 3, 2004 the SCSL has received both criticisms and praises. Some argue that the

Court is too constrained in terms of its time frame, jurisdiction and enforcement powers, which will weaken its ability to deliver justice.

Others see the court as an exemplary model for other international tribunals, though some of the major indictees died before judgment rendered.

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 14 March 2007

Special Court of Delay?

By Jacob Sax Conteh
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How can justice that has been delayed for so many years be real justice? How can those of us who lost loved ones in the senseless carnage in Sierra Leone be assured that the same thing will never happen again when the perpetrators of one of the most cruel and brutish wars in modern history have not been punished because of an intricate court system which sees many foreign and national workers of the Special Court live in luxurious houses, ride air-conditioned SUVs and fly wherever they want in the country when our people continue to languish in poverty and diseases, some without hands and feet? I often shudder when I think of the untold misery the rebels caused in Sierra Leone, and how up to this day none of the leadership of that movement has been convicted in a court of law. The rebel leaders – Sam Bockarie and Foday Sankoh died without facing justice. Jonny Koroma is missing, and now Issa Sesay is in Senegal getting first class medical treatment. This is wrong. The UN can do better than that. We cannot continue to wait without seeing someone locked up for good in a less luxurious hotel (prison) like the one the killers now enjoy in Freetown. Though many of us are willing to forgive and move on with our lives, we also need the process of justice to be accelerated. Here in the United States and in many other countries in the world, serious cases are often tried and concluded in a space of a year or two. So why is it that more than six years after the war officially ended, we are still waiting for the Special Court to nab the rebels.

The answer lies in the way the UN operates. In Rwanda, despite warning from several groups, the UN stood by or left the

Tutsis and moderate Hutus to be massacred before heading there to set up a tribunal to prosecute the killers, many of whom have either been killed in reprisal killing or have simply disappeared into oblivion. After the Rwanda genocide, many Hutus, including innocent women and children fled to Goma, Zaire to escape from Paul Kagame and his army. But Kagame and his henchmen took advantage of lapses in Zairian security and massacred thousands of Hutus, and the UN did not do anything. In Zaire itself, it took the UN years to react to the continued rape and murder of innocent civilians. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Nigerians would have easily ended the rebel carnage if they had the support of the UN Security Council, but here again the UN failed miserably. They sat in their offices in New York until thousands of people lost their lives. In Sierra Leone, when the UN finally decided to act, they sent a group of inept and ill-equipped peace keepers five hundred of whom the RUF rebels took hostage. That emboldened the rebels to press the war until they almost overran the entire country.

Today, the UN is a toothless lame bulldog when it comes to Darfur. While thousands of poor defenseless people are killed in that region in an ethnic cleansing foray, the UN cannot agree on what to do to rescue the people of Darfur. This is an outrage. But the UN will surely set another tribunal to bring the perpetrators to justice years later.

I call on the UN Special Court in Sierra Leone to speed up its process and bring the killers of our people to justice. That will finally put to rest the anguish many of us still feel knowing that the murderers, rapist and gangs that terrorized our people have never paid the price for their act.

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Christian Monitor

Tuesday, 13 March 2007

http://www.christian-monitor.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=362&Itemid=26

Charles Taylor's Freetown Trial bid thwarted

Charles Taylor's motion to have his trial held at the seat of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, (SCSL) in Freetown instead of The Hague has been dismissed by the president of the court. The venue for the proceedings was ordered changed in June 2006 for security reasons and at the special request of Liberian leader Helen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Lawyers for the former Liberian leader argued that the circumstances that necessitated the change of venue are no longer justified as the security situation in both Liberia and Sierra Leone have changed significantly. Also, they argued that 'Taylor's fair trial rights will be violated or made significantly more difficult to guarantee if the trial proceeds in The Hague'.

The President of the SCSL, Justice George Gelaga King in dismissing the motion Monday 12th March 2006, recalled UN Security Council Resolution 1688, which was adopted in June 2006 that created the legal basis for the Special Court to detain and conduct the trial of Charles Taylor in the Netherlands.

He noted that he was the one who in the first instance ruled that because of the security situation in Freetown; it is 'necessary for the efficient exercise' of the court's function for the trial to be held outside the West African sub-region. In pursuant of the rules of procedure and evidence, he authorised that the trial should be held at the International Criminal Court facilities in The Hague.

The rules, Justice King said, does not provide Taylor with an avenue for 'reconsideration' of place of trial therefore, the motion was improperly placed and inadmissible. Consequently, the motion was dismissed in its 'entirety'. Taylor's trial will go ahead in the Netherlands.

Patriotic Vanguard website

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

Opinion

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=1090

Norman's Death & the Legacy of the Special Court

"No one would also forget that the current government in power, for which Norman has paid the ultimate price trying to defend and protect, foolishly handed him over to the Court and abandoned him to his fate - underlining the all-too familiar pathos: of the petty native colluding in the destruction or ridicule of his own society."

By Lansana Gberie, Toronto, Canada.

The first indication that everything relating to the UN-created Special Court for Sierra Leone should no longer be taken at face-value came from the unintentional lucidity of the 22 February press statement by Court Registrar Lovemore Munlo. Announcing the death, after a botched hip operation, of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, one of the Court's most important accused, Munlo stated that the operation on Norman -



Not many people who noted the cognitive dissonance that this stupid and callous statement represent readily connected it to one made four years ago, by the former American prosecutor of the Court, David Crane. Shortly after indicting Norman and seven others of crimes against humanity, Crane stated that the accused will "never see the light of day." The accused, Crane stated, bore "the greatest responsibility" for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone during its decade-long war, 1991-2002.

The notion of "greatest responsibility" was always an intellectually slovenly contrivance, but no one who has followed the Court's very ponderous and expensive progress (over \$100 million spent to date) since it was set up in 2002 would fail to notice its hanging judge's methodology: success for it means conviction, never acquittal, of the accused, and where this is not likely, well...

Norman, and the two other members of the pro-government Civil Defence Force (CDF) which he led, Alieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana, were accused by the Court of using "cultish rituals" to conscript civilians into the CDF, and of scheming to "take a traditional belief system and [manipulating] it [sic] to their own ends." The charges, also including cannibalism, states that Norman hatched "a common plan" to use "illegal and forbidden means" to "defeat the RUF and AFRC forces." Norman, the prosecution claim, was central in the "joint criminal enterprise" - the war.

The Court was meant to be in operation for three years, but five years after it was set up, it is yet to conclude a single case. Its new multi-million dollar budget suggests that it will be in operation at least until 2009. The Court has indicted fourteen persons, but three - the RUF leader Foday Sankoh and his sociopathic former commander Sam Bockarie, and now Hinga Norman - are dead; another, a military leader named Johnny Paul Koroma, has simply disappeared. A fourth (and most significant), former Liberian President Charles Taylor, was handed over to the Court in 2006, and is now detained in The Hague, where he will be tried under a special arrangement. With the death of Norman, eight persons, two of them CDF leaders, three RUF officials, and three members of Koroma's military junta, are in the detention of Court in Sierra Leone. All are virtually unknown, and their fate of very little concern to the wider public in Sierra Leone. The idea that their trial would have any valence with respect to impunity, in other words, is totally moot, indeed highly unlikely.

In still other words, the key reason for which the Court was set up in Sierra Leone - in addition to the immediacy of physical presence and its purported short, inexpensive life span - is now gone with the wind. This is a flat observation. After years of inept trudging, the death in detention of key suspects, tens of millions of dollars virtually wasted on expatriate officials in the form of salaries and other benefits, with zero earmarked for the war's thousands of victims (including hundreds of amputees), it has led to this: another tongue-in-the-cheek announcement by a nondescript Court official about how Sierra Leoneans have been, once again, robbed of "justice"!

It bears restating, in view of such brazen assault against decent sensibilities, what Norman and the CDF represented during Sierra Leone's bloody decade. The CDF was set up in Guinea in 1997 by the exiled President Tejan Kabbah (after his overthrow by Koroma). It was formed as a coalition of various civil militia groups, among which was, notably, the Mende-dominated Kamajor hunter militia, which had emerged during the war as a result of the corruption and ineffectiveness of the national army. These groups emerged among largely displaced Sierra Leoneans - displaced by the ravages of the rebels and rogue soldiers - and they fought back to reclaim or protect their villages and homes from the depredations of the rebel forces. I have looked into this very carefully, and can say that these groups represent a very rare phenomenon in Africa: the reality of ordinary, derelict, poor people organising themselves to resist predatory forces. What is known about Africa - and you can see this in various Hollywood representations of the continent - is of its huddled, helpless citizens, stalked by rampaging thugs, finally getting saved by some gallant white people. This is the standard narrative, and any deviation spoils the script: it destroys a certain myth; and it has to be resisted and sullied. Little wonder that among the many charges against the CDF, whose primary crime seems to have been to undermine this complacent myth, was cannibalism, another ancient, corrosive insult that has been levelled against a people who must remain benighted and patently hopeless.

Norman, in my view the true hero to emerge out of the war of so many villains, acted as the spiritual leader of the CDF. As a result of his background as a British-trained soldier (he served in the Congo as a UN peacekeeper in the early 1960s), he was chosen to coordinate the operations of the CDF with the West African intervention force Ecomog during their assault against Johnny Paul Koroma's junta, in 1997-1998. The role exposed him to great danger, but he was ultimately successful: the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) junta, which had overthrown Kabbah in 1997, was unseated in February 1998, and Kabbah was reinstated. Later, following the resurgence of rebel activities, Norman once again coordinated CDF activities with those of Ecomog and the British forces to beat back the rebels, and played a crucial role in the subsequent disarmament process. Without his courageous role, Sierra Leone may not have survived; it was only after his (and Ecomog's) success in putting down the coup and driving the nihilistic rebels out of Freetown, that the so-called international community sent in a UN force to oversee the final stages of the war's end.

Now imagine what the nibbling, extravagantly paid, incompetent bunch at the Special Court has wrought. The Court has profaned the very exalted achievement that the CDF represented, at the same time as profaning, at least in the minds of many people, the very idea of the sanctity and ultimate fairness of international humanitarian justice. By mercilessly prosecuting (actually persecuting) and ultimately causing the death of Norman, a national hero with huge following in large parts of the country, the Court has further deepened the fissures in Sierra Leonean society, and deformed the already problematic socio-politics of the country just a few months before nation-wide elections. No one would forget that Norman incurred the health problem (whose attempted cure in an ill-equipped hospital led to his death) as a result of his brutal treatment, on the day of his arrest and after, by Special Court officials. No one would also forget that the current government in power, for which Norman has paid the ultimate price trying to defend and protect, foolishly handed him over to the Court and abandoned him to his fate - underlining the all-too familiar pathos: of the petty native colluding in the destruction or ridicule of his own society.

That is a legacy of another sort...playing exactly to type.

Photo: The late Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, about to be flown to Senegal last month.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 13 March 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian leader says African women rising

TOKYO, March 13, 2007 (AFP) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state, said Tuesday that the continent's women were slowly but steadily advancing. "While painfully slow, the progress for women is steady and progressive," Sirleaf said in an address at the United Nations University in Tokyo.

Liberia to arrest ex-interim president for graft

MONROVIA, March 13, 2007 (AFP) - Liberian authorities have issued an arrest warrant for the post-war transitional government president, Gyude Bryant, who has been indicted for corruption, a spokesman said Tuesday. "The writ of arrest was issued yesterday by the solicitor-general of the Republic," Charles Mataley, spokesman for the justice ministry, told AFP.

UN, Police Open Fire on Suspected Armed Robbers, Killing One

Mar 12, 2007 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --A suspected armed robber was shot dead early yesterday near Liberia's border with Guinea when United Nations peacekeepers supporting Liberian Police returned fire on armed men in a stolen UN vehicle who attacked a checkpoint after an earlier armed robbery. On Saturday night, three suspected armed robbers entered the residential compounds of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Zorzor armed with an AK-47 rifle and two pistols, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) said in a statement today. They attacked the residents and stole a UN vehicle, office equipment, personal effects and some cash.

International Clips on West Africa

FEATURE-Sierra Leone war inspires arts world

FREETOWN, March 12 (Reuters) - Ducking into a Starbucks for a caffeine fix could lead you to a harrowing tale of child soldiery in the tangled jungles of Sierra Leone. "A Long Way Gone" is a novel by 26-year-old first-time author Ishmeal Beah about his combat experiences during Sierra Leone's civil war and it is being stocked in 6,000 outlets of the Starbucks chain across the United States.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberian Leader Seeks Japanese Debt Waiver

(The Informer, The Inquirer, The News and National Chronicle)

- In an interview, the Press Secretary to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Mr. Cyrus Badio said that the Liberian leader and Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe met yesterday in Tokyo at which time she asked Japan to grant Liberia debt relief and assist to develop the Country's private sector, lamenting that debt burden was impeding to the Country's progress.
- For his part, Premier Shinzo challenged the Government to ensure security and stability in the Country as this was a major factor to attract Japanese investors. He asked for Liberia's support as longed for a Permanent Seat at the UN Security Council.

Court Fails to Arrest Former Interim Leader

(The News)

- Attempts to arrest former National Transitional Government of Liberia Chairman, Charles Gyude Bryant failed yesterday because court officials who had gone to his house to issue a Writ of Arrest on him, were informed that he was attending a Church conference in Lofa County.
- However, Justice Minister Counsellor Frances Johnson-Morris told reporters that Mr. Bryant had been formally charged for allegedly misappropriating over US\$1 million of State fund when head of the Transitional Government. But he denied engaging in corruption and challenged the Government to induce substantial evidence.

Supreme Court Describes UNMIL Report as "Misleading"

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

- Speaking at the formal opening of the Supreme Court of Liberia yesterday, Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis described as "misleading" the United Nations Secretary-General Thirteenth Progress Report on UNMIL which accused Liberia's judiciary officials of being corrupt. He added that the Mission painted a misleading picture of the Country's court system and challenged it to give proof of corruption in the judiciary.
- Chief Justice Lewis said claims that respect for human rights were blocked by the lack of the rule of law in the interior of Liberia were not true and said out of the 15 counties only one was without a circuit court.

Sweden Promises Assistance to New Army

(The Inquirer, The Analyst and Heritage)

- The Minister of Defense, Mr. Brownie Samukai said that his Ministry will continue to engage with its international partners in seeking support for the reform process of the new army.
- Speaking yesterday when the Ambassador of Sweden Anders Ostman paid him a courtesy call, Minister Samukai emphasized that he and his team would continue to seek technical assistance and training for the Ministry and the new Liberian Army and to that effect, the Swedish diplomat expressed willingness to form part of the Defence support group in coordinating assistance for the AFL while promising his Government's continued support to rebuilding the Army.

U.S. Government Human Rights Report on Liberia Indicts Police

(The News, The Inquirer and Heritage)

- In its 2006 Human Rights Report on Liberia, the United States Government has indicted the Liberian National Police for abusing, harassing, intimidating and soliciting bribe from suspects, sometimes, adding that police officers employed torture and other cruel and inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment contrary to the Constitution.

Suspected Guinean Armed "Raider" Killed in Lofa County

(Daily Observer and National Chronicle)

- Correspondents said that soldiers of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) assigned in Lofa County, in Northern Liberia exchanged fire with a gang of armed men in the area over the weekend and killed a member of the gang.
- The gang reportedly looted the offices of a non-governmental organization and stole a vehicle belonging to the United Nations and was heading to Guinea when they encountered a joint patrol of UNMIL Peacekeepers and Liberian National Police when the exchange of fire started.
- UNMIL Spokesman Ben Malor said the armed men who he termed as "Raiders" first shot into the air – apparently to scare villages away – then opened fire on the patrol team leading to the death of one of the "Raiders".

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

President Johnson-Sirleaf Appeals to Japan for Debt Relief

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Attempts to Arrest Former Transitional Chairman Bryant Fails

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Supreme Court Debunks UNMIL's report of Corruption in the Judiciary

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Sweden Promises Assistance to New Army

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.