

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH 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:**

Friday, 14 November 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Independent Observer
Friday, 14 November 2008

Taylor's lawyer back out of trial

A member of Charles Taylor's defence has told the Court that he is excusing himself from the trial.

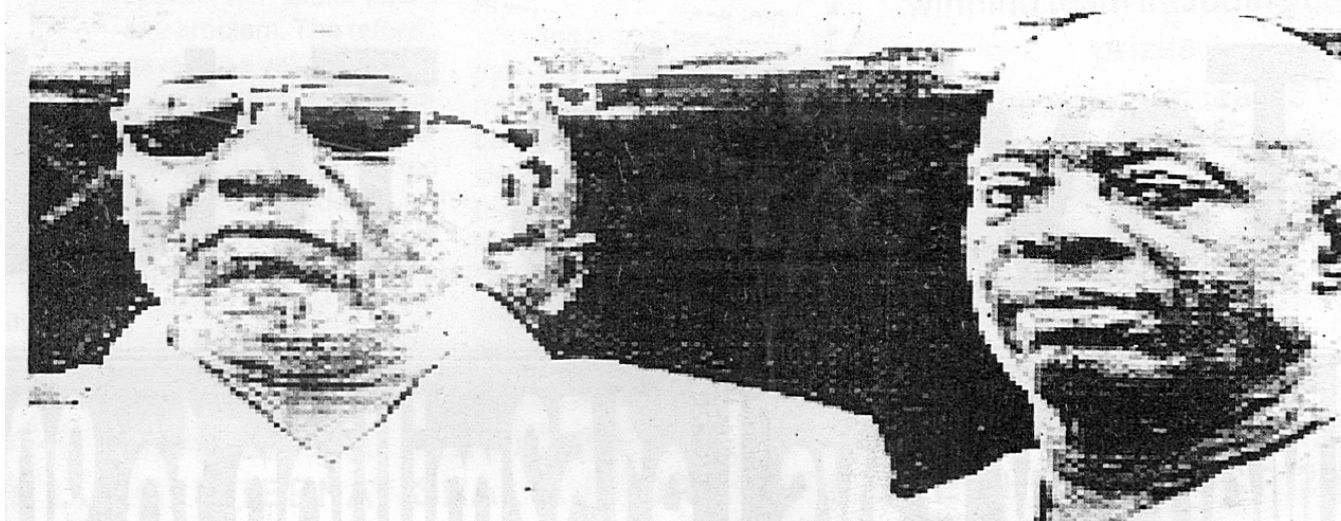
Co-defence Lawyer Terry Munyard informed Justice Teresa Doherty that he was withdrawing from the trial for reasons of professional ethics. He did not however elaborate, but says the decision is a temporary measure.

As a result of this development, Justice Doherty granted a week's adjournment to enable the Principal Defender find a replacement.

In the interim though, Courtenay Cariffiths remains Mr. Taylor's lead Defence Counsel.

It was Cariffiths who had earlier informed the Court of a very serious matter which has to do with allegations made against Munyard which needed to be discussed out of the Courtroom in private to which Prosecution Counsel Brenda Hollis had no objection and the Court went into private session.

It was the second time since the Taylor trial that a Lawyer representing him had pulled out of the trial.



Awareness Times
Friday, 14 November 2008

Government on National Security Exercise

Chief of Staff of the Office of National Security, Mr. Larry Bassie is said to have disclosed that the Government of Sierra Leone will be conducting the fourth national security exercise from Monday 17th to Friday 21st November 2008. The purpose is to exercise the nation's security architecture that is identifying best practices and procedures for responding to emergencies as and when they emerge within the context of Sierra Leone's national security. He is reported as saying that it will exercise the sub committees of the NSC among other areas.

BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 13 November 2008

Report from The Hague

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is on trial for eleven count charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Mr. Taylor is the first African leader to be put on trial for allegedly recruiting children under the age 15 years into armed forces or group and using them to participate actively into hostilities which is a violation of international humanitarian law. Another component of the eleven charges is enslavement and cruel treatment of the civilian population. Well, a former Strike Force commander of the RUF has testified to the recruitment of child soldiers and the enslavement of civilians by the rebels in Sierra Leone. Joseph Cheeseman reports.

CHEESEMAM: Still on direct examination, Mr. Augustine Mallah, the Prosecution 82nd witness told the Judges the RUF recruited children as young as 10 and 11 years of age. He said children captured were trained and given arms. Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis asked the witness about the function of the Small Boys Unit in the RUF.

MALLAH: I can say almost all of the RUF officers had SBUs as bodyguards. They gave them arms, they guarded their homes where their properties were kept, their women, or they themselves at any time they went to the front line or anywhere else that they would want to go within their areas they would go with their SBUs. And they too fought – they were fighting, most of the SBUs fought.

CHEESEMAM: Mr. Mallah testified that an NPFL Commander named Jungle made several trips to RUF territories in Sierra Leone and took diamonds from Sam Bockarie to Charles Taylor. He also said Jungle in 1998 brought arms, ammunition, medicine and food from Charles Taylor to the RUF in exchange for the diamonds.

The former RUF fighter also told the Judges civilians were used as labourers by the rebels. Mr. Mallah said most of the mining of diamonds for the rebels were done by the civilians against their will.

MALLAH: Civilians did the mining and there would be armed men over you guarding for them not to escape or for civilians to ensure that what they were asked to do, they did it – that was the mining – to do it at their best. So those were the conditions that were put in place.

HOLLIS: And how were the civilians treated at these mining sites?

MALLAH: Bad.

HOLLIS: Tell the Court what you mean by that.

MALLAH: Because they would work but they would not be fed and they wouldn't have time to rest and if you did not do the job the way we had liked you to do it we will flog you and if you attempted escaping from that particular site you will be shot.

HOLLIS: In Tongo, did you see civilians being flogged at these sites?

MALLAH: Yes.

HOLLIS: Did you ever see civilians being killed?

MALLAH: Yes.

CHEESEMAN: Mr. Mallah also testified to the arrest and killing of 65 suspected Kamajors in Kailahun District. The witness told the court Sam Bockarie said the suspected Kamajors were not fit to live among the RUF fighters.

MALLAH: So Mosquito ordered that people be brought outside. They at first initially brought five of them outside. Mosquito himself shot three of them with his pistol. Then he said "we need to kill these people." So they brought five more outside right at the roundabout at the junction. We killed them there. Well, after Mosquito had left we too killed. I had already counted that moment up to 45 that we had killed because we had so many soldiers with us there. So some people will just ask for five prisoners and they will be taken maybe at the back of a house. The AFRC and the RUF killed those civilians that they had considered as Kamajors.

CHEESEMAN: The insider witness told the Court there was no free movement for civilians in RUF territories. Mr. Mallah said any civilian who travelled without an RUF pass was beaten or killed. He also told the Court that no woman could refuse the sexual demand of an RUF fighter. Mr. Mallah waived his right to testify with protective measures such as screen, pseudonym, and voice distortion. The insider witness waived these protective measures and is confidently testifying in open court.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 13 November 2008

Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah Concludes His Examination-in-Chief

3:00pm: Court resumed after lunch break and witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah continued and concluded his examination-in-chief. The witness spoke about several things including Foday Sankoh's return to Sierra Leone after his release from prison, problems between Sankoh and Bockarie and the latter's subsequent departure for Liberia.

Foday Sankoh's Return to Sierra Leone

The witness testified that after the signing of the Lome Peace Accord, Foday Sankoh was released from prison and he returned to Sierra Leone. The witness said that they were originally expecting Sankoh to go to Buedu but that the international community convinced him to travel straight to Freetown. When Sankoh went to Freetown, he travelled to Buedu together with the UN Force Commander Gen. Jetley in order to meet with RUF fighters. When Sankoh went to Buedu, the witness said that he asked Bockarie to assign 30 bodyguards to live with him in Freetown. The witness said he was one of those assigned to serve as bodyguard to Sankoh and they travelled to Freetown. The witness was in Freetown for about 2 to 3 months and lived at Sankoh's residence on Spur road in Freetown.

Problems Between Sankoh and Bockarie

The witness said that at some point, he left Freetown for Segbwema. Asked why he made the trip, the witness said that he was sent by Sankoh to go and address the fighters there that they should no longer take orders from Bockarie. He said that Sankoh accused Bockarie of refusing to take orders from him. He said that Bockarie on the other hand said that Sankoh had been away for sometime while he (Bockarie) had taken care of the RUF and now that Sankoh was back, he was supposed to listen to him about the reality on the ground.

The witness said that Bockarie on the other hand had told the fighters in Segbwema that they should not allow any unauthorized persons from Segbwemah to Kailahun including RUF fighters and UN peacekeepers. The witness said that while in Segbwemah, Issa Sesay arrived there with armed men and told them he was on his way to go and advise Bockarie in Buedu that it was unacceptable for him to refuse to take orders from Sankoh. He said that Issa called Bockarie on radio and told him he was on his way with armed men to give military advice to him and let him know he will not be allowed to corrupt the RUF. Bockarie on his side said that he had struggled to keep the RUF together and that if they were going to attack him, he was leaving with all the things he had for the RUF, including diamonds and money. The witness said that they joined Issa to go meet Bockarie in Buedu but by the time they got there, Bockarie had left for Liberia with many fighters and civilians.

RUF Mining Activities in Tongo

The witness said that when Bockarie left the RUF and went to Liberia, his position was taken by Issa Sesay. The witness said that in 2000, he moved to Tongo for RUF mining activities there. The witness said that when he went to Tongo, there was government and private mining activities taking place there. Government mining he said meant RUF mining while private mining was that undertaken by private commanders. He said that the mining policy was that all private mining was to be done with the approval of the mining commander and that government mining had priority over all private mining. He said that any diamonds found which were over 5 carats were to be handed over to the RUF mining commander. He

said that civilians were used as miners. He said that there were various mining commanders at different times in Tongo. He said that when they wanted civilians to do mining, they would convene a meeting of all battalion and brigade commanders and the mining commander would tell them how many civilians he needed for mining on a particular day or within particular periods. The witness said that they would move around and arrest the civilians to do forced mining. The witness said that all diamonds mined were handed over to the mining commander who will in turn hand them over to Issa Sesay. He said that Issa took most of the diamonds to Taylor in Liberia and returned with lots of arms and ammunition plus United States dollars. He said when Issa brought the dollars, he told them that since the RUF was going to become a political party, they needed the money for elections. He said Issa told them that the ammunitions were necessary because during peacetime, it was necessary to prepare for war.

The witness further spoke about problems that occurred between himself and some of his colleagues on the one hand and Issa and Kallon on the other. He said that at some point in Makeni, Issa and Kallon had them beaten and almost executed. The witness said that when he was released, he returned to Tongo, took his arm and disarmed to the UN.

This brought the witness's examination to a conclusion. Defence cross-examination commences tomorrow.

Court adjourned for the day.

Mid-Morning Session: Examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah Continues

12:00am: Court resumed after mid-morning break and prosecution witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah continued in open session. In his testimony, the witness spoke about several issues ranging from the command structure in the RUF after the end of the AFRC/RUF rule to the treatment of civilians in Buedu, Sam Bockarie's visits to Monrovia, Jungle's visit to Buedu and the plan of Operation Spare No Soul.

Prosecution counsel first had the witness to talk about diamonds handed over to Sam Bockarie by Johnny Paul Koroma, something he had testified about in the morning session. The witness drew on a piece of paper, the size of the parcel that Johnny Paul handed over to Bockarie. The witness signed the paper on which he drew the parcel and the said paper was admitted as prosecution exhibit. The witness also spoke about diamonds taken from Gullit in Kailahun.

Command Structure

The witness was asked about the command structure in the RUF after the ECOMOG intervention that removed the AFRC junta from power. The witness explained that Sam Bockarie was the overall leader of the RUF in the absence of Foday Sankoh. He said Issa Sesay was deputy to Bockarie, Morris Kallon next to Issa, Superman as Battle Group Commander and Rambo as deputy to Superman. He explained that Superman and Rambo were in Makeni while Bockarie and Issa were in Buedu. He said that there were senior AFRC officers also in Buedu who reported to Bockarie.

Treatment of Civilians in Buedu

Prosecution counsel asked the witness about the treatment of civilians in Buedu. The witness explained that civilians were used to do domestic chores for RUF and AFRC officers in Buedu. He said that the civilians had no way to refuse doing these chores. He also said that the female civilians were used for sexual purposes by AFRC/RUF soldiers. The witness explained that when a woman stayed with one man for over one or two years and decided they did not want that particular man anymore, another soldier will take that woman. If the woman decided not to want the new man, she would be kicked around like a

football, meaning, different rebels will sleep with her at their will. He said that civilians were only allowed to move around when they obtained pass from the RUF hierarchy.

Bockarie's Visits to Monrovia and Jungle's Visits to Buedu

The witness said that at some point, he was transferred to Baima but since his family was based in Buedu, he used to visit them. He said that when he made such visits, he knew that Bockarie was making visits to Monrovia to see Charles Taylor. The witness said there were times when he accompanied Bockarie to Foya where a helicopter will pick Bockarie up to go to Monrovia. He said that Bockarie told him that he was visiting Monrovia to get materials from Taylor for the RUF. The witness said that two of Bockarie's bodyguards who used to travel with him to Monrovia told him that Bockarie used to take diamonds to Taylor for those materials. He said that while in Buedu, he used to see mining commanders bringing diamonds to Bockarie. He said that he also saw United States dollars being given to a man called Salim, an RUF contractor to purchase materials along the Guinea/Sierra Leone border.

The witness said that Jungle also used to visit Bockarie in Buedu from Liberia. He said that he saw Jungle in Buedu on three occasions. On two of those occasions, he said he saw Jungle bring arms and ammunition for the RUF. He said that Jungle told him that he brought the materials on orders from Taylor. The witness said that Jungle told him that he brought arms and ammunition on a third occasion but he did not see them. He said that Bockarie used to give diamonds to Jungle to take to Taylor.

Operation Spare No Soul

The witness said that there was a time when Bockarie held him he was travelling to Liberia to seek advice from Taylor. He said that when Bockarie returned to Buedu, he called a meeting which was attended by many senior officers of both AFRC and RUF. He said Bockarie reported at the meeting that he had just come from visiting Taylor in Liberia and that Taylor had given him arms and ammunition for a particular mission. He said that he had also come with people from Liberia, headed by a former ULIMO commander, who were to serve as reinforcements for the particular mission. He said that the mission was planned as Operation Spare No Soul. This, he said, meant that all towns occupied by ECOMOG should be completely destroyed when captured. The witness said there was a second meeting in Buedu in which they discussed the same mission. He said once the mission was planned, they apportioned themselves into different units, going in different directions. The witness said that he was with a group that was to advance towards Kenema, while Issa, Akim and Soriba were to join Superman and Rambo to attack Kono. After the Kono attack, he said that Akim was to advance and capture Tongo while Issa and Kallon were to advance to Makeni. The witness said that in his group, they could not capture Kenema but implemented Bockarie's orders by killing civilians and burning down the villages they captured on the way. After this operation, the witness moved to Segbwema where he remained until rebels entered Freetown in January 1999 and the signing of the Lome Peace Accord.

Court adjourned for lunch break.

Morning Session: Examination of Witness TF1-045, Augustine Sama Mallah Continues in Open Session

10:00am: Court resumed and prosecution counsel Ms. Brenda Hollis continued the examination of Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah in open session.

Ms. Hollis first made a brief recap of some of the issues that the witness testified about yesterday. Among the issues clarified were:

Witness's meeting with Foday Sankoh at Gendema in late 1991: Yesterday, the witness testified about having met with Sankoh on three occasions. One of those he said was while at the training base, and the other two were after his graduation, one of which was at Gendema when Sankoh brought arms ammunition and medicines from Gbarnga in Liberia. Prosecution counsel sought to establish where Sankoh had brought the materials from. The witness said that Sankoh told them he had brought them from Taylor in Gbarnga.

Operation Stop Election: In his testimony yesterday, the witness spoke about RUF operations to stop civilians from voting in 1996. Prosecution counsel Hollis sought to establish what the specific orders were and from whom they came. The witness explained that Foday Sankoh gave the orders and that he told them to kill civilians and soldiers to stop them from voting. He said Sankoh specifically told them that they should cut off the hands of civilians so they will take their hands off the elections.

Security Operations Explained by Sankoh to Taylor: In his testimony yesterday, the witness spoke about radio communications between Sankoh and Taylor, during which the former told the latter about security operations in RUF territory. Prosecution counsel asked the witness to explain what he meant by security operations. The witness explained that Sankoh updated Taylor on the movement of RUF fights, areas under their control, areas under government control, arms and ammunition captured from the enemy soldiers, etc.

Witness's Trip to Tongo to Mine for Mike Lamin: Yesterday, the witness stated that Mike Lamin sent him to Tongo to go and mine for him. Ms. Hollis asked the witness to tell the court how long he stayed in Tongo and where he went after that. The witness responded that he stayed in Tongo for two months and that he returned to Kenema, where he stayed until ECOMOG soldiers dislodged the AFRC/RUF junta from power in February 1998.

Bockarie's Orders for Operation Pay Yourself in Kenema

The witness testified that when ECOMOG dislodged the AFRC/RUF junta from Freetown, Bockarie told them that they should prepare to leave Kenema as the ECOMOG soldiers will be attacking the town. The witness said he saw Bockarie load three trucks with looted items from a shop owned by one Mammy Saad, a business woman in Kenema. He said that Bockarie told them that they should launch Operation Pay Yourself and get whatever they wanted before leaving Kenema. The witness said that together with other rebels, they embarked on a looting spree of houses and shops in Kenema and that they took away the loots when they were leaving the town.

The witness said that together with Bockarie, they left Kenema and moved to Buedu. When leaving Kenema, the witness said that many rebels took away female civilians to serve as their wives. The witness referenced seeing a 13 year old sister of another colleague who told him their house was attacked by rebels, her parents ran away and that a rebel called Ibrahim had taken her as his wife.

Killing of the 65 Alleged Kamajors in Kailahun

The witness testified about the killing of 65 individuals in Kailahun, whom Bockarie had accused of being Kamajors. He said that Kamajors had attacked RUF positions and that when these individuals were captured, Bockarie suspected them to be Kamajors. He said that Bockarie ordered Augustine Gbao, the head of the Internal Defence Unit (IDU) to investigate the matter as to whether they were indeed Kamajors. The men were transferred to Kailahun town. The witness said that after sometime, Bockarie travelled to Kailahun and asked Gbao about the status of the investigation. He said that Gbao told Bockarie the people were all kamajors and that they were not fit to live. He said that Bockarie ordered the MP Commander, Joe Fatorma to open the cell and get the men out. He said that all the individuals were executed on the orders of Sam Bockarie.

Transfer of Johnny Paul Koroma and Others from Kono to Buedu

The witness testified about the transfer of Johnny Paul Koroma and others from Kono to Buedu after the junta forces had been removed from power. The witness said that after the retreat from Freetown, the AFRC/RUF officers travelled to Makeni. He said at some point, they moved from Makeni to go to Kono. On their way, the witness received orders to travel with Major Gweh in order to open the road from Bunumbu to Gandohun. The witness said that on their way, they attacked several towns until they got to Gandohun where they met Issa Sesay and told him Bockarie asked that they all move to Buedu. He said that Issa moved with them to get Johnny Paul Koroma and together with other officers like Mike Lamin, Sammy etc, they all moved to Buedu.

Meeting Summoned by Johnny Paul Koroma in Buedu

The witness spoke about a meeting summoned by Johnny Paul Koroma when they got to Buedu. He said this meeting took place at the house occupied by Bockarie in Buedu. He said that among those present at the meeting were Johnny Paul, Bockarie, Sammy, Maj. Dumbuya, CO. Issa, the witness himself and other senior officers. He said that Johnny Paul thanked Bockarie for the effort he had made to get him and his family to Buedu. He said that Johnny Paul told them that while in Freetown, he used to receive diamonds mined by AFRC/RUF soldiers in Tongo and Kono. Johnny Paul asked for direction on how to proceed since he had not had much contact with Charles Taylor while in Freetown. He said that Bockarie told them that once they had moved from Freetown and were now in the bush, it was necessary for Johnny Paul to listen to him for directions on how to proceed. He said that Bockarie then asked that all diamonds and monies in Johnny Paul's possession be handed over to him. Bockarie took them all from Johnny Paul.

Court adjourned for mid-morning break.

Afternoon Session: Witness TF1-045 Augustine Sama Mallah Continues His Testimony
Posted by Webmaster on November 13, 2008

3:00pm: Court resumed after lunch break and the examination of Witness TF1-045, Augustine Sama Mallah continued in open session. The witness testified about several issues including his return to Sierra Leone from Ivory Coast via Liberia, the AFRC coup and the AFRC/RUF mining activities in Tongo.

Witness's Trip From Ivory Coast to Sierra Leone

The witness testified that when Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria, he left Ivory Coast and went to Liberia. He said that Mike Lamin with whom he had travelled to Ivory Coast had been arrested there but he was later released and he joined him in Liberia. The witness said that on entering Liberia, Jungle met him together with other people and told them he was on his way to get them out of Ivory Coast. The witness said that together with Jungle, they went to Gbarnga, where they remained until the AFRC coup took place in Sierra Leone. He said that while Jungle was making efforts to get them back to Sierra Leone, he became impatient and travelled to Monrovia. He said he went to the Freeport in Monrovia, where the Sierra Leonean contingent of ECOMOG was based. The witness said that Mike Lamin met him there and asked to talk to Sam Bockarie. He said that at that time, Bockarie was already in Freetown with the AFRC soldiers. He said that Mike Lamin spoke with Bockarie and he heard their conversation. According to the witness, Bockarie told Mike Lamin that he should travel to Sierra Leone as he wanted him to head a delegation that would move to review the peace agreement signed in Ivory Coast. The witness said that they immediately left for Sierra Leone and met Bockarie in Kenema. The witness said that Bockarie and Mike Lamin travelled to Freetown while he stayed in Kenema.

AFRC/RUF Mining Activities in Tongo

The witness said that after a few days in Kenema, he travelled to Tongo where he met AFRC and RUF soldiers involved in mining activities. Among the soldiers in Tongo were Capt. Yamao Kati, Sgt. Junior, Capt. Eagle, etc.

The witness said that while in Tongo, he saw civilians used for mining purposes by the AFRC/RUF soldiers. When asked about the treatment metted out to civilians, the witness said that they were treated very badly. He said that some civilians were severely beaten and some were even executed. The witness said that he was also involved in private mining while in Tongo.

He testified that all diamonds over 5 carats were handed over to the PLO 2 based in Tongo, who took them to the Residence Minister East in Kenema, Eddie Kanneh, who in turn took them to Johnny Paul Koroma in Freetown. The witness said that when he travelled to Kenema to sell his own diamonds, he would visit Sam Bockkarie who was based in the town. He said that on those visits to Bockkarie in Kenema, he saw Jungle who had travelled from Liberia to see Bockkarie in Sierra Leone. He said that Bockkarie told him that Jungle was sent by Taylor to collect parcels of diamonds. The witness said that mining activities were also taking place in Kono and that Gullit was in charge there.

Supply of Arms and Ammunition to the AFRC

The witness said that he stayed in Tongo for two months and then travelled to Freetown where he served as senior bodyguard to Mike Lamin. The witness spoke of a meeting in Freetown where the AFRC Chief of Army Staff informed them that they would receive the first consignment of arms, ammunition and medicines at the Magburaka airstrip. He said that Major Dumbuya was sent to receive the arms, ammunition and medicines at the Magburaka airstrip.

The witness said that Mike Lamin sent him back to Tongo to go and mine diamonds for him there. The witness said that when he returned to Tongo, the mining policy had changed and that the soldiers and rebels were more harsh with civilians.

Court adjourned for the day.



United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 13 November 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

5,000 Ex-Combatants Qualified for Next Phase of RR Programme

The Informer, The News, New Democrat)

- Over 5000 ex-combatants have been qualified for the next phase of the Reintegration, Rehabilitation (RR) component of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) programme expected to begin April 2009.
- Making the disclosure Wednesday at UNMIL's weekly press briefing, the head of the Reintegration and Rehabilitation Section of UNMIL, Andrea Tamagnini said over 7,000 ex-combatants underwent the evaluation process for the next phase but only 5,000 were qualified.
- He said the present batch was not part of the previous programme that was held in collaboration with the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (NCDDRR).
- Mr. Tamagnini said jobs would be available for ex-combatants in the leeward counties beginning with Nimba and Bong under the RR component.
- He said the ex-combatants would be involved in road-side brushing and undertake agricultural projects.
- Mr. Tamagnini also said the projects would not only be restricted to former combatants alone but also to community dwellers, the Ministries of Public Works, and Agriculture to ensure that these projects are implemented.

Students Protest over Demolition of School

(The News, The Monitor)

- A group of elementary school children on Wednesday went on the rampage setting road blocks in Congo Town, outside Monrovia, to protest the demolition of their school building and a church edifice.
- Students of the Light Stream Academy obstructed the free flow of traffic during the morning rush hours when they blocked the entire road with damaged benches and blackboards from the debris of their demolished school building.
- The elementary students, most of them between the ages of 8 to 12 years, said their protest action was intended to claim the attention of the government to the alleged illegal demolition of their school by police officers upon the orders of a lady identified as Monica Cooper.
- Nine year old student Victoria B. Grimes of the 1st grade class said they were shocked when they met the entire school broken down.
- "We have come prepared to do our 2nd period test, which we started Monday when we met the entire school damaged," she said.

Ex-Rutgers Dean appointed President of Liberia's Premier University

(The Informer, The News)

- The President of the Republic of Liberia and Visitor to the University of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has announced the appointment of Dr. Emmet A. Dennis as President of the University.
- Dr. Dennis served as a professor of Cell Biology and Neuroscience and Vice President for Student Affairs at Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, USA. Prior to his appointment, Dr. Dennis served as Dean of Rutgers University.
- An Executive Mansion release said the President's decision to name Dr. Dennis was based upon the results of the Search Committee and endorsement of her nomination by the Board of Trustees.

President Sirleaf Dedicates Projects in Grand Bassa County

(National Chronicle, Liberian, The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Tuesday dedicated two newly constructed administrative buildings in Grand Bassa County under the government's drive towards improving infrastructure across the country.
- The President dedicated an administrative building for Grand Bassa County District Number One under the county's development fund. The structure had been dilapidated for more than 10 years until it was recently renovated. During her tour of Grand Bassa County District Number Two, the Liberian leader and District Representative Vinicius Hodges jointly dedicated the administrative building of the district.
- The dedicatory ceremonies brought together hundreds of county residents, members of the county's legislative caucus, the National Traditional Council of Liberia, county authorities as well as non-governmental organizations operating in the county.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

Liberia's Auditing Commission Expresses Willingness to audit County Development Funds

- The General Auditing Commission says it is prepared to audit development funds allotted Liberia's 15 political sub-divisions.
- The GAC said it takes seriously continuous cries of the alleged misuse of the County development funds in some regions.
- The Strategic Planning and Policy Advisor to the Auditor General said the GAC would move in to audit the development funds of some Counties.
- Mr. James Jensen said the calls for audits into the County development funds were out of the desire of some Liberians to develop their regions.
- Mr. Jensen said the GAC is also thinking about setting up sub-divisions into the various Counties.
- The statement comes amidst the growing calls for the GAC to audit the County Development Funds of Grand Gedeh, Margibi and Sinoe Counties.

Forum on violence against women ends in Sinoe County

- A one-day violence against women workshop has ended in Greenville, Sinoe County.
- The workshop which was held in the Po-river community brought together over fifty residents of the area.
- The facilitator, Madam Roselyn Thomas Richards said the workshop educated the women about violations carried out against them and how they can be reduced in the communities. Mrs. Richards said men attended the workshop to enable them understand the various violations against women and how they can help to reduce them. She encouraged the women

to report any violence against them to avoid death or injury. The facilitator said a women forum is being planned to discuss women issues.

- The workshop was sponsored by the Movement for Peace and Democracy in Liberia.

Government releases Calendar for 2009/2010 National Budget

- Government has issued the official calendar for the preparation of the 2009/2010 national budget.
- According to the Department of Budget at the Finance Ministry, the budget process would be characterized by a number of new features.
- A release said the new features are intended to strengthen and give greater clarity to resource allocation and capital accumulation.
- Meanwhile the Finance Ministry has added to the budget process a Medium Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF).
- The Ministry said the MTFF would give the budget a multi-year perspective within the context of the poverty reduction strategy.
- Under the MTFF, the Ministry said revenue and expenditure estimates would be presented as a three year forecast which would be revised at the start of each fiscal year.
- The medium term fiscal framework was advanced by a former Finance Minister Baron Tarr during a public hearing early this year.
- Dr. Tarr at the time criticized the current annual budget process saying it was outdated and described it as the worst ill-designed in West Africa.

Indian female police officers inspire women to join Liberian Police to support rule of law

Monrovia, Liberia – The presence of the all-female Indian Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Liberia has inspired Liberian women to join the Liberia National Police (LNP), Head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, said when she awarded UN peacekeeping medals to more than 120 Indian police officers in Monrovia.

“You have made a real difference, not only to us in UNMIL, but to a cross-section of Liberians, especially women and girls. Your presence in Liberia has demonstrated that women can play and have an increasingly crucial role in the establishment of the rule of law in post-conflict countries,” she stated.

Commenting on the prevalence of rape and atrocities consistently being committed against Liberian girls and women, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) emphasized that the deployment of the Indian female police officers was reassuring as “you greatly contribute to the healing that is needed by all Liberians recovering from the civil war and you have shown that women need not be victims, but healers and protectors in the new Liberia”.

Ms. Løj described the professional and community outreach activities of the Indian female police officers as “symbolic of the policing qualities” they have displayed while serving in Liberia. She commended the Government of India for the tremendous contribution it continues to make to United Nations peace operations, especially here in Liberia, and expressed appreciation for the decision of the Indian Government to provide an additional formed police unit to UNMIL. In September, the Security Council endorsed the Secretary-General’s recommendation to boost the UNPOL presence in Liberia at this stage of the Mission’s drawdown.

Meanwhile, Contingent Commander, Rakhi Sahi, described India’s initiative to send the first ever all-female police unit to participate in the UN peacekeeping operations in Liberia during January 2007 as an “unprecedented contribution signifying the emerging role of female police officers in post-conflict zones”. She noted that it also demonstrated the significance that India attached to gender mainstreaming.

This second all-female Indian Formed Police Unit was deployed to Liberia in January 2008 and has been carrying out static monitoring, stand-by, town, mobile and anti-robbery patrols in Monrovia, as well as supporting crowd and traffic control for the LNP and protecting UNMIL staff and assets.

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu, UN Police Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gautam Sawang, Ambassador of Lebanon and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Liberia, His Excellency Mansour Abdallah, Honorary Consul General of India in Liberia, Mr. Upjit Jeety were among others who attended the ceremony.

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Former child soldier gets cold welcome from Canada

Jared Ferrie, Foreign Correspondent



Kabba Williams, centre, walks with two other former child soldiers in Lumley, a village on the outskirts of Freetown. Jared Ferrie / The National

VANCOUVER // For a former child soldier who speaks for the voiceless even while struggling against grinding poverty, the invitation to participate in an international conference must have seemed a golden opportunity. But Kabba Williams's elation soon turned to anguish when Canada refused to let him into the country, branding him a war criminal despite legal observers who say child soldiers are victims.

Mr Williams's story has a happy ending – to the surprise of those watching events unfold. After months of bureaucratic wrangling, at the 11th hour, Canadian immigration issued him a special visitor's permit.

Today, a day after Salman Rushdie gives the keynote address at the University of Alberta's Festival of Ideas, Mr Williams will participate in a panel discussion on violence and youth.

"I feel extremely delighted. This is a great transformation in my life," said Mr Williams just two hours after touching down in Edmonton. "It's really, really chilly here."

The long road that brought Mr Williams from the jungle-clad hills of Sierra Leone to the frozen plains of Alberta was fraught with unforeseen twists and turns. Media pressure was a factor in the government's change of heart, as was an unexpected change of immigration ministers in Ottawa. Through it all, Mr Williams refused to lose hope, even after festival organisers cancelled his plane ticket.

"I was shocked actually," said Miki Andrejevic, the festival director. "We gave up and then suddenly we received a call that the visa would be granted."

Mr Williams was initially denied entry in August but he did not want to go public with the story because the university was lobbying Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) behind the scenes.

Mr Andrejevic said a member of parliament, whom he had promised not to name, made sure Mr Williams's file reached the desk of Diane Finley, the immigration minister at the time.

Mr Andrejevic said he learnt that Ms Finley reviewed the case and apparently supported the decision to

refuse Mr Williams a visa on the grounds that he possibly committed war crimes.

Mr Williams then gave the green light to releasing the story to the media and calls to the minister's office began.

Ms Finley's decision coincided with a cabinet shuffle and Danielle Norris, a CIC spokesman, asked for an extra day to respond with a comment. She explained that Jason Kenney, the new minister, might want to take another look at the file.

Mr Kenney personally granted Mr Williams a visa, according to Mr Andrejevic.

"The phone calls did a lot but, if nothing else, they prompted the minister to look again," he said, explaining that the story would have been embarrassing for the government and particularly for a minister in his first days on the job.

"In my opinion it was a smart political move," he said of Mr Kenney's decision to override the original ruling of J Tieman, a visa officer in Accra, Ghana.

In a letter made available to TheNational, Mr Tieman told Mr Williams: "There are reasonable grounds to believe that, during the civil war in Sierra Leone while you were a member of the RUF from 1991-1992, you committed a war crime, genocide or a crime against humanity."

Mr Williams was six years old in 1991. He was abducted by the Revolutionary United Front, drugged and forced to fight along with thousands of other children.

When making his decision, Mr Tieman appeared not to have taken into account international law which stipulates that children under 18 cannot be held responsible for actions committed during wartime.

"I think legally they're wrong," said David Matas, a well-known Canadian human rights lawyer. "It's my understanding of international law that a child can't commit a crime against humanity. Child soldiers are victims."

Douglas Cannon, an immigration lawyer in Vancouver, agreed that the government's decision could be challenged in court, but said that process would take a lot of time – something Mr Williams was running short on as the conference loomed.

"Practically speaking you're really only able to do anything about this politically," Mr Cannon said.

The political solution was not to issue Mr Williams a regular visitor's visa. He received a special permit which can be granted "in exceptional circumstances to persons otherwise inadmissible to Canada", according to Ms Norris of CIC.

In other words Canada still considers Mr Williams a possible war criminal – a fact that diminishes his joy and relief at being given permission to participate in what he regards as a seminal event in his life.

"Why are they still considering me a war criminal?" he asked. "I was used against my will."

Mr Williams was one of the first children to be abducted when rebels attacked his village at the start of the decade-long civil war, which was characterised by mass amputations and massacres of civilians. His father and uncle were killed in the attack.

“I had no choice but to do what I was ordered to do. If I refused I would have been killed,” he said.

After six months with the rebels, Mr Williams managed to escape into the bush. He was captured by government troops who made him fight on their side until he was turned over to the United Nations in 1994 for rehabilitation.

Mr Williams has managed to emerge from the tragedy that was his childhood with determination to make something of his life. Freetown, Sierra Leone’s capital, is teeming with former child soldiers who live on the street and often turn to crime for lack of other opportunities. But Mr Williams has worked with the United Nations and such human rights groups as Amnesty International and he now attends university.

Mr Williams’s achievements were what attracted the interest of festival organisers, said Mr Andrejevic, who called him “exceptional”.

He said CIC would have set a disastrous precedent if it had not granted Mr Williams access to Canada.

“Let’s face it, if he gets denied now I think the doors to North America would be closed forever,” Mr Andrejevic said.

That would have been tragic for Mr Williams, who said his dream is to study humanitarian law in Canada or the United States so that he can more effectively advocate for the rights of children affected by war in Sierra Leone and around the world.