

**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 Press and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Wednesday, 15 August 2007

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

Wednesday, 15 August 2007

Will The Next Government Consider The Plight of Women and Children?

This question may sound some how quibble to those who still consider women as inferior beings and, children as insignificant figures in societies.

However, they have failed to recognize the fact that women and children have right to life as declared by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instrument.

On the 11th August 2007 elections, registered Sierra Leoneans through out the country exercised their franchise in a violence free atmosphere and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections.

Even though women emancipation groups in Sierra Leone like the 50/50, Sisters Unite to name but a few, agitated for a 30% women representation in each political party yet their demand was not adequately given. Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) was very much active in championing the course of women full participation in governance and in decision making. Advocacy programmes, workshops and handbooks targeting the educated elites, market women, civil society organizations and other humanitarian organizations were about the plights of women and children in Sierra Leone. In an exclusive interview with this press, the Director of LAWCLA, Melron Nicol-Wilson pointed out that some bad laws of Sierra Leone lawfully discriminate against the women folks.

The Director added that tradition and customary practices elude women's rights in Sierra Leone. Mr. Nicol-Wilson also stated that women do not play active role in political participation and government.

"Women's participation in a local government has always been low," indicated the LAWCLA Director pointed who cited that traditional governance structures such as community development committees, paramount chiefs and district officers are in most cases male dominated with the exception for the few mammy queens.

He challenged that such are contrary to the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the United General Assembly Resolution 34/180 of December 1979 and entered into force on the 3rd September 1981, in accordance with article 27 (1).

The charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the

human person and in the equal rights of men and women. Also, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and therefore everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without discrimination of any kind including distinction based on sex. This clearly indicates that the international covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, social, civil and political rights, discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity.

The next government should take cognizance of the fact that when the military junta in 1996 attempted to derail the process of legitimizing multi-party democracy both men and women took to the streets in protest against the khaki boys government. The cam-

paign period preceding the August 11th elections saw some violent incidences but the women added their voice in denouncing violence practice.

Like women, children of Sierra Leone are also prone to all forms of discriminations. Most of them do not enjoy the necessary encouragements their colleagues are having in other parts of the world. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the United Nation General Assembly Resolution 44/25 on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2nd September 1990 in accordance with article 49. Sierra Leone is a signatory to this Convention and yet children are living in a miserable life. Quite a large percentage of Sierra Leonean children cannot access primary school education perhaps due to high school charges. Most of these children whose parents cannot afford to provide them with the basic necessities of life are visibly seen in lorry parks, market squares and other places finding their livelihood. According to the MNJD report, most

of these children spend their entire lives in mining areas as labourers. Will the next elected government consider the plights of these children?

Another report also states that most of the children are being trafficked from the provinces under the pretext of providing them educational opportunities which in most cases do not turned out to be so. The children ended up on the streets Freetown vending for their 'traffickers'. Young girls between the ages of 15-18 are forced into prostitution; young boys are engaged in gambling, smoking and drugs taking. In essence, primary education should be affordable and accessible to all children in a bid to curtail the uneducated gap.

Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "state parties shall undertake all appropriate legislation, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, states parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and where needed, within the frame work of international cooperation."

If this is anything to go by then it suffices to state here that much has not been done in that capacity - as children are yet to have the maximum share of state resources.

Never the less, the passing of the three gender bills in the last parliament and that of the child right bills are step in the right direction even though the out-going president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah has not yet given his assent for these bills to be come law. It is hoped that the next president will pen down his signature on these bills for them to be enforced.

Another important thing which the Constitution Reform Commission left out is how the women of Sierra Leone should be represented in parliament. The Commission should set aside a percentage of women representation in parliament in a bid to curb the gender discrimination in Sierra Leone.

Conclusively, it is incumbent on the next government to ensure that women are fully represented in all the spheres of state governance. As the old adage goes "If women are not free, a nation will not free." Therefore, what men has done women can do more. The likes of Dr. Christiana Thorpe, Zainab Bangura, Dr. Kadie Sesay, Dr. Abator Thomas to name but a few have exhibited the qualities of Sierra Leonean women in democracy and good governance .

Allafrica.com

Tuesday, 14 August 2007

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200708140311.html>

Taylor Seeks to Postpone Trial Again

By Faatimah Hendricks

The special court trying the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, will next week consider an application by defence lawyers to postpone the trial until January next year.

According to the website established to cover proceedings, the Special Court for Sierra Leone announced in The Hague, in the Netherlands, that the trial would not proceed on August 20 as originally scheduled. Instead, a "status conference" would be held to determine the length of the delay.

In a motion posted on the website, Taylor's new defence team asked that the trial be postponed until January 7 to allow "adequate time and facilities for the preparation of [Taylor's] defence, as required by Article 17 of the Statute of the Special Court of Sierra Leone."

In its response, the prosecution said it was ready to begin leading evidence, but agreed that the defence team's reason for asking for a delay was justified. However, it left the duration of the delay in the court's discretion.

Taylor is accused of committing crimes against humanity and war crimes, including mutilations, murder, sexual slavery, sexual violence, recruiting and using child soldiers, abduction and using forced labour.

Diamond Intelligence Briefs

Wednesday, 15 August 2007

<http://www.diamondintelligence.com/magazine/magazine.asp?id=5347>

Charles Taylor Trial to be Postponed Again

The war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been postponed once again. The United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, responsible for trying Taylor, has announced at The Hague that the trial will not proceed on August 20 as previously scheduled. Instead, as explained on the Court's website, there will be a "status conference" on that date to determine the length of the delay.

A motion put forth by Taylor's new defense team has requested that the trial be postponed until January 7, 2008, to allow "adequate time and facilities for the preparation of [Taylor's] defence, as required by Article 17 of the Statute of the Special Court of Sierra Leone."

In response, the prosecution agreed that the defense had established "good cause" for a reasonable delay in which to allow time for preparation.. The prosecution left the duration of the delay up to the Court's discretion.

Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, including mass murder, mutilations, rape, sexual slavery and the use of child soldiers. The former Liberian President is accused of playing an active leading role in Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war.

Since his trial began in June, Taylor has caused dealys by firing his defense lawyers, refusing to appear in court, and claiming indigence. He is the first African head of state to stand trial before an international court for war crimes. The trial is being held at The Hague in the Netherlands.

The Voice

Monday, 13 August 2007

<http://www.voice-online.co.uk/content.php?show=11784>

Black UK lawyer to represent Charles Taylor

BY Dominic Bascombe



Top British criminal lawyer Courtenay Griffiths QC is to represent the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, in his ongoing trial at the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague.

Jamaican-born Griffiths, noted for his work in the Winston Silcott and Damilola Taylor trials, told The Voice: "I was initially approached last year, but at the time there was no funding in place to employ me. On June 4 of this year Mr. Taylor sacked his then defence team and I was approached and asked if I would care to take over his defence.

Following fairly lengthy discussions, I signed a contract last week, which commits me to defending him at the special Court for Sierra Leone."

Charles Taylor started Liberia's civil war as a warlord in 1989 before being elected president in 1997. He ruled for six years before heading into exile in Nigeria.

Sierra Leone

He faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity over his alleged role in the brutal civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where he is accused of backing rebels responsible for widespread atrocities.

Taylor is accused of selling diamonds and buying weapons for Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels, who were notorious for hacking off the hands and legs of civilians during their decade-long war.

Tens of thousands of people died in the interlinked conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The UN court's chief prosecutor described Taylor as the third most wanted war crimes suspect in the world.

Offences

However, Griffiths commented that the charges against Taylor were inconsistent with actions taken against other rogue leaders.

He said: "I am somewhat concerned at the fact that charges have been brought against Mr. Taylor, who has not been tried for offences committed against his own people in Liberia, but rather is charged with supporting one of the rebel organisations involved in the lengthy civil war in Sierra Leone."

He continued: "It seems to me that there is little to distinguish between a sovereign head of state like Mr. Taylor interfering in a neighbouring country, from, for example, America's support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan when they were fighting the Soviet Union. The only real difference between the two situations is that the United States is a superpower and consequently feels that it is above the law. hence, its reluctance to sign up to the international criminal court for fear that its nationals might find themselves facing criminal charges as a consequence of American imperialism, whereas the leader of a third world country in Africa can be used as a convenient scapegoat for the supposed spread of democracy and rule of law globally."

Taylor's trial is due to resume on 20 August, but it is likely that Griffiths will seek more time to prepare his case. It is unlikely that the former president would appear in court before the end of this year.

Griffiths is head of chambers at Garden Court chambers in London.

Running Africa

Tuesday, 14 August 2007

<http://runningafrica.com/news-08142007SL-Amputees.html>

Sierra Leonean amputees decry slow pace in Taylor's trial

- demanding to be recompensed

Amid Sierra Leonean massive elections campaign, victims say though they want speedy and fair trial for their alleged victimizer, the only justice they deserve is the compensation for their amputated arms, legs, and other parts of their bodies.

Speaking to reporters in Freetown, Sierra Leone during the presidential and parliamentary elections campaign, several amputees expressed dissatisfaction over their present conditions, adding that they are barely making end meets.

The Amputees said it is regrettable that they are left to fend for themselves in a country highly devastated by 10 years of war. "There are no fixed programs here for us. We are beggars-going from one place to another," an amputee, Saley Kafumah who is an artist told reporters.

"There are several artists here in Sierra Leone and the competition is high. I can't compete because I am a handicap," he said in a very painful tone.

Another amputee who refused to call his name said, "The world is wicked, adding, where is the diamond money? Where is the Timber money? What happens to the money Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor put in Swiss and other banks in Europe? We learned that Taylor's bank account had been frozen. But no other information on the money," the amputee said.

The alleged Charles Taylor's funded war in Sierra Leone left over 50,000 people dead and over 50, 000 others amputated. "The sentence of Charles Taylor to life time prison does not materially affect the amputees in Sierra Leone, a Sierra Leonean human rights," advocate said.

Authorities in Switzerland said they had frozen 2 million Swiss francs (\$1.47 million) in bank accounts linked to former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Justice Ministry said the accounts, held in Zurich and Geneva, belonged to two individuals associated with Taylor.

As it customary in Switzerland, it did not identify the account holders or the banks concerned.



Sierra Leonean amputees



Victims of Sierra Leone war

“No accounts held directly by former President Taylor have been found,” the ministry added.

The ministry, at the time, ordered Swiss banks to block and report any assets believed to be connected to Taylor. The move followed a request from a court in neighboring Sierra Leone, where Taylor has been indicted for his role in the country's vicious 1992-2001 civil war.

“There is no such thing as justice for us amputees other than a compensation,” a 61 year-old amputee told reporters.

The Special Court of Sierra Leone, which was set up under an agreement between the United Nations and the Sierra Leone government, has charged Taylor as being a key figure behind war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He is accused of providing financial and military support to two rebel groups and aiding them in their attacks on the civilian population.

Taylor is accused by the United Nations, rights groups and others of enriching himself off illegal gun and diamond trafficking in the region. He is believed to have received uncut diamonds from Sierra Leone's rebels in return for his help.

He is claimed to have invested the proceeds from the diamond sales in a number of countries, including Switzerland, the ministry said when it ordered the asset hunt last month. He also is alleged to have reaped much of the profits from timber sales in Liberia, which has West Africa's last rain forests.

Liberia accounts for more financial transactions with Switzerland than any other African nation. According to 2002 figures released by the Swiss National Bank, Liberian assets in Switzerland were worth 4.5 billion francs (\$3.3 billion), half of them Liberian-owned property.

Charles Taylor allegedly broke US jail and mysteriously fled to Africa. Neither the government of America nor the western mainstream media could break silence on the mysterious disappearance of Charles Taylor from the US.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 14 August 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

UN Envoy Urges Citizens to Prevent Mob Violence; another Police Station Opened

Monrovia, Aug 14, 2007 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Speaking at the opening of a new police station in Liberia, which was built by Nigerian blue helmets, the United Nations envoy to the West African country has called on local people to prevent mob violence while a senior Liberian police officer has urged his colleagues to be "servants of the community." The station, which is in New Kru Town Community in the capital Monrovia, will be staffed by officers from Liberia's National Police (LNP) and will serve around 28,000 people in the surrounding area, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) said in a press release.

International Clips on West Africa

BBC Last Updated: Tuesday, 14 August 2007, 11:37 GMT 12:37 UK

Sierra Leone's leader urges calm

Sierra Leone's outgoing president has appealed for calm and placed the police on alert as the results of Saturday's polls are counted. "I have instructed the police... to deal firmly with any threats to the peace and security," Ahmad Tejan Kabbah said in a statement on national radio. He made the comments as supporters of rival candidates used unofficial results to claim victory. The poll is the second since the end of a civil war that killed thousands.

VOA 14 August 2007

More Results Expected from Sierra Leone's Elections

By Peter Clotney, Washington, D.C.

Sierra Leone's Independent Electoral Commission is expected to release more results today (Tuesday) from Saturday's presidential and parliamentary elections. Preliminary results released Monday by the commission showed the opposition All People's Congress Party leading with incumbent Vice President Solomon Berewa trailing in second place. The elections have been declared free, fair and credible by both local and international observers.

Local Media – Newspaper

Presidency Says Findings of Discovered Ammunitions were Overstated

(The Inquirer, New Democrat, The Forum, Daily Observer, The Analyst, The News, The Informer, National Chronicle, New Vision, and The Liberian Diaspora)

- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio told a news conference Monday that findings of the discovery of arms and ammunitions in the provincial city of Gbarnga were "overstated." This assertion corroborates public perception that state security sources and the media raised unnecessary alarms over the discovery, whereas the items confiscated turned out not to be 'ammunitions infiltrated into the country' but some

empty shells made up of assorted pieces of iron apparently being collected by a scrap dealer for sale.

United States Deports 25 Liberians Wednesday

(The Inquirer, The Forum and The Informer)

- The United States Government says it will deport 25 Liberians from that country after serving their respective jail sentences for various crimes they committed in the U.S. The deportees are due to arrive in Monrovia Wednesday.

Treason Suspect Wants Bail

(The Inquirer, The Forum and The Informer)

- The lawyer representing one of the two suspects in the ongoing treason trial, former Armed Forces of Liberia General Charles Julu, has requested the Criminal Court "A" to release his client on bail. Counsellor Dempster Brown in a five-count motion filed before the Court argued that in order for defendant Julu to have a transparent trial, it was important to grant him relief which, according to the lawyer, was a matter of right under the Liberian law.

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

Government Admits Overstating Issues of Ammunition

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Telecom Regulators Probe Reason for Nullifying Provider's Permit

- Radio Veritas sources said that investigations were continuing to revoke the operation permit of the West Africa Telecommunications Company which had set aside August 8 for its official opening but was halted by the Liberia Telecommunication Authority (LTA), the regulatory body of telecommunication activities in the Country.
- The Radio said that it gathered that monies were paid to LTA Chairman, Dr. Saah Abdullai Vandi and he personally granted permit to the Company to operate, adding that the other Commissioners who were unaware of the transaction, revoked the permit preventing the Company from opening on August 8. However, Dr. Vandi denied ever collecting money from the West Africa Telecommunications Company for permit.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

SRSB Warns against Mob Violence and Collective Guilt

- Addressing residents of a key locality near Monrovia, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss cautioned Liberians against mob violence and collective guilt, stressing that Liberians should not resort to violence against individuals accused of wrongdoing. The SRSB's cautioning followed the recent discovery of huge cache of ammunition in Gbarnga, Bong County which sparked off a near ethnic violence.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Sea Erosion Renders Beach Dwellers Homeless

- Correspondents said that scores of people have been made homeless in the Sinkor area due to sea erosion. One of the victims, Mary Sondiyah said that she and her children have got nowhere to go. In recent time, sea erosion in the Sinkor area has rendered several homeless.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

United States Deports Liberians for Criminal Offences

- Presidential Press Secretary, Mr. Cyrus Badio announced that 25 Liberians who have served various jail sentences in the United States for crimes will tomorrow, Wednesday, to be deported from the US. The expected deportees reportedly served

various jail terms for crimes ranging from rape to possession of weapons, sexual assault, bank and armed robberies and cocaine selling.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

National Bar Opposes Fast Track Courts in Liberia

- In his remarks at the opening of the First Judicial Circuit Courts in Monrovia, the Secretary-General of the Liberia National Bar Association, Counsellor Jallah Barbo said that the Bar opposed the setting up of a fast track court for mainly rape cases as it looked like another form of the quick impact activities being carried out in the Country.
- Meanwhile, correspondents said that the Seven Judicial Circuit Court in Grand Gedeh County opened yesterday with the local authorities including the Superintendent and his Assistants boycotting the session in protest to the manner in which the Presiding Judge handled a rape case allegedly involving a Nigerian Instructor in the County.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberia Refugee Agency Re-echoes Closure of IDP Camps

- Speaking to reporters yesterday, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation Resettlement Commission Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Saah Nyumah re-echoed that people still living in the former internally displaced person camps are community dwellers and not vulnerable people, adding that the return process of IDPs ended in June, 2007 at which time over 300,000 were resettled to their places of origin.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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.