SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

A member of the St. Edward's Secondary School band holds up his music during a performance.

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:
Monday, 16 April 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
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Standard Times
Monday, 16 April 2007

How US State Department Exposes Human Rights Violation in Sierra Leone

There were reports that supporters of the opposition political parties also faced other forms of discrimination. Early in the year, the Ministry of Lands officials marked a house for demolition that had been built on chiefdom-owned land. The church leader (a PMDC supporter) who owned the house claimed that he had prior permission to build on the land. The house was still marked for demolition at the year's end.

There were reports that membership in the ruling SLPP was required in order to access certain government benefits, particularly micro-credit and other development assistance. On July 7, a Paramount Chief in the Kenema district denied a woman micro-credit because she did not possess an SLPP party card.

In August the Chairman of the Kenema District Council denied the issuance of seed rice to councilors who joined the PMDC. There were reports also that the government punished family members for alleged violations by individuals. In late August a young man in Barri Chiefdom (Pujehun District) was summoned to the Paramount Chief's residence for wearing a PMDC T-shirt. The Paramount Chief ordered the man to remove the shirt. When he refused, the paramount chief summoned the man's mother and threatened that she would be "dealt with" if her son continued to defy him.

In April the father of a PMDC member was fired from his job at the Pujehun District Council office where he had worked for 26 years after his son joined the PMDC. The father was fired from a subsequent job at the Office of National Security in August.

Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the government at times restrict these rights in practice. The press frequently published stories critical of the government; however, self-censorship occurred.

More than 25 newspapers were published in Freetown during the year, covering a wide spectrum of interests and editorial opinion. Most of the newspapers were independent and several were associated with opposition political parties. Reporting was often politicized and inaccurate, in large part because of poor journalistic skills, insufficient resources, and lack of professional ethics. Corruption among journalists was widespread. The number of newspapers fluctuated weekly. Newspapers openly and routinely criticized the government and its officials, as well as opposition parties, but also libeled individuals.

How US State Department exposes human rights violation in Sierra Leone

Due to the low level of literacy and the relatively high cost of newspapers and televisions, radio remained the most important medium for public dissemination of information. Several government and private radio and television stations broadcast, featuring domestic news coverage and political commentary. UN Radio provided additional coverage of news and other current events.

International media could operate freely; they only needed to register with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to obtain a license. Unlike in the previous years, there were no reports that journalists were killed; however, security forces harassed and detained journalists. In May 2005 five people beat Harry Yansanneh, the acting editor of the For di People Newspaper, who died two and one-half months later from his injuries. Police detained a parliamentarian, Fatmata Hassan Komeh, who allegedly ordered and oversaw the beating, and two others, but released them on bail. Komeh's children, who also were suspects in the beating, returned to their residence in the United Kingdom. On August 4, the High Court requested the extradition of Komeh's children; the extraditions were pending at year's end.

The Public Order Act of 1965 criminalizes both defamatory and seditious libel; however, the law was rarely applied and only in cases involving top officials. Punishment for first-time offenders can be up to three years' imprisonment, and subsequent seditious libel convictions are punishable by prison terms of up to seven years. Officials used libel laws to suppress criticism of political or other leaders, and during the year the attorney general ordered security forces to arrest a journalist. On March 20, police detained for three hours the editor of the Concord Times newspaper, Sahr Musa Yamba, reportedly to receive a reprimand from the attorney general. The IMC regulated independent media organizations; however, did not demonstrate independence from government influence. During the year, the IMC determined that the criminal libel provisions of the Public Order Act should remain, although many journalists later complained that the IMC's assessment of public opinion used to make the recommendation was insufficient.

During the year the Paramount Chief of Bo reportedly twice threatened to close a local independent radio station for airing programs that were critical of the ruling SLPP, although he did not follow through on the threats. In April the station had hosted a call-in show to discuss a letter reportedly written by SCSL indictee Hinga Norman. Callers questioned the authenticity of the letter, which instructed former Kamajor fighters to support the ruling SLPP.

Internet Freedom

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in the peaceful expression of views via the Internet, including by electronic mail. There were at least five Internet service providers in the country. In Freetown there were many internet cafes, but few in rural areas due to infrastructure constraints.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events.

Freedom of Assembly

The constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly, and the government generally respect this right in practice; however, there were numerous reports that the government monitored meetings of opposition political parties. Civil servants who attended such meetings were at risk of losing their jobs or government housing.

Police forcibly dispersed demonstrators, opposition political parties also had difficulty obtaining permission from traditional chiefs to hold meetings, especially in remote areas.

On September 5, the Banderu Chiefdom (Kenema District) section speaker fined a PMDC member approximately $ 67 (200,000 Leones), five gallons of palm oil, and one goat for holding a PMDC meeting. The speaker also declared that the estimated 100 persons who attended the meeting were no longer allowed to farm or mine on chiefdom lands. However, the individuals challenged the orders and continued to farm and without interference. One student demonstrator reportedly died and other students were injured during a forcible dispersion of demonstrators by police.

Police were unable to control demonstration violence during the year, and demonstrators burned police stations.

The trial of 11 persons, who were arrested in November 2005 after a demonstration in support of presidential hopeful Charles Margai and charged with violation of the Public Order Act, was ongoing at year's end. All those charged remained free on bail at year's end.

There was no progress in the investigation into the death of an 18 year-old girl who was shot in the mouth during a student protest in Freetown in March 2005.

Freedom of Association

The constitution and law provide for freedom of association, and the government generally respected this right in practice; however, there were reports that civil servants, traditional leaders, and others who affiliated with opposition political parties lost jobs and faced other forms of discrimination The Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) became operational during the year, and a new political party, the PMDC, registered. There were reports that members of the new party were harassed, threatened, and lost their jobs.

Freedom of Religion

The constitution and law provide for freedom of religion, and the government generally respected this right in practice.

Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There were no reports of discrimination against members of religious groups. There reportedly was a very small Jewish community, whose leader was a self-proclaimed rabbi. He reportedly died in November. He had claimed to have a following of about 20 persons in Makeni and had applied to the Inter-Religious Council for official recognition of his group. The application was pending at year's end because the council had not decided what procedure it would use to register new members.

The constitution and law provide for freedom of movement, and the government generally respected them in practice; however, there were reports that police officers who operated security roadblocks outside the capital often extorted money from motorists.

The law does not provide for forced exile, and the government did not use it. The border shared with Liberia was officially opened, and authorities generally permitted refugees, returnees, and other persons to move regularly between the two countries; however, there were reports that police, customs, and army personnel demanded bribes at border crossing points.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Combatants from all sides targeted civilians during the county's 11-year civil war. Estimates of the number of IDPs in past years varied from 750,000 to two million persons. No officially registered IDPs remained; however, one camp for war-wounded persons and their families unofficially remained open in Grafton. At the end of 2005 the camp population was approximately 520; no update was available for the reporting period.

Protection of Refugees

The law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 protocol; however, in practice, the government provided protection against defilement, the return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. The government granted refugee status and asylum and cooperated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations in assisting refugees.

According to UNHCR, during the reporting period the government did not provide temporary protection to certain individuals who may not qualify as refugees under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. At year's end, according to UNHCR, there were 21,696 Liberian refugees living in refugee camps in the country and approximately 12,000 Liberian refugees living outside of the camps. There were 5,615 non-Liberian refugees in urban areas, and 302 asylum seekers.

There were reports that Liberian refugees were victims of sexual abuse. NGO observers noted that refugees were less willing than

CONTINUED PAGE 8

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HOW US STATE DEPARTMENT EXPOSES HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN SIERRA

FROM PGAE 7

previously to pursue cases in court against fellow refugees. In July a police officer raped a 10 year old Liberian refugee near the Liberian border at Zimmi. The trial was ongoing at year's end.

In February a three year old Liberian refugee was raped by another Liberian refugee in Tobanda Refugee Camp. The case was reported to the police's Family Support Unit (FSU), but the parties ultimately settled the case out of court.

The Right of Citizens to change their government.

The constitution and law provide citizens the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through generally free and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage; however, the 2002 and 2004 elections were marred by numerous reports of irregularities, although many observers judged them to be generally free and fair. Presidential and parliamentary elections were scheduled for July 2007, and during the year there were multiple reports of harassment and intimidation of members of opposition parties

Elections and Political Participation

Eleven political parties participated in the May 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections. President Kabbah of the SLPP was reelected with 70 percent of the popular vote. The Revolutionary United Front Party, the political successor to the RUF rebel forces, fielded presidential and parliamentary candidates, but it won only 1.7 percent of the vote. In parliament the SLPP won 83 of the 112 seats; only two other parties won seats. Many international monitors declared the elections to be generally free and fair; however, there were credible reports of significant abuse of incumbency, uneven voter registration, manipulation of vote counting, and partisan action by the National Electoral Commission (NEC). There also were reports of voter coercion by party bosses and traditional leaders.

In May 2004 the first local elections in 32 years were held. International and domestic monitors judged them to be generally free and fair at the time; however, evidence of widespread electoral fraud by both the SLPP and the APC emerged after voter turnout numbers were analyzed and found in many districts to exceed the number of registered voters. A UNAMSIL electoral consultant concluded, however, that the fraud did not alter the outcome of the elections because it was equally spread across party lines.

During the year the NEC continued to make preparations for the scheduled 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections, including delimiting electoral boundaries for the first since 1985. On November 30, parliament approved the NEC's report on the Electoral Constituency Boundaries Delimitation process that stipulated that parliamentary elections again be constituency-based contests. However, its ability to restrict perceived government abuses in the election process was limited. On August 12, representatives from the Ministry of Local Government conducted an election of the Paramount Chief of Biriwa Chiefdom despite a public objection by the NEC, which had monitored chiefdom elections since 2002. The NEC objected to the conduct of the election because there was a dispute over the ministry's alteration of the register of tribal authorities and a risk of violence between the majority Limbas and minority Mandingos in the chiefdom. The sole candidate and winner of the government run elections was an ethnic Mandingo, the same tribe as that of the president (see section 5)

Although there were no formal government restrictions on the political opposition, the incumbent party enjoyed significant advantages, and there were numerous reports that members of opposition parties were denied government jobs and government benefits (see section 1.f.)

The PPRC became operational during the year; however, its activities were severely limited by a lack of capacity. The PPRC chairman resigned in August after an extended medical leave. The president sworn in a replacement and on November 23, the PPRC issued a Code of Conduct for Political Parties; however, by year's end, no political party had been sanctioned for inappropriate behavior in spite of widespread complaints of abuse, particularly by the ruling SLPP.

Individuals and political parties could freely declare their candidacies and stand for election; however, it was sometimes difficult to do so in another political party's stronghold.

A parallel unit of local government is the paramount chief, who is elected for a life term. Candidates for the position are limited to members of local ruling houses. Only tribal authorities (i.e. those who collected local taxes from at least 20 taxpayers) were allowed to vote for paramount chief, and in the north only men could be designated as tribal authorities. Although paramount chiefs' authority exists independently of the central government and local councils, they frequently displayed party affiliations and were influenced by the party in power. The election of paramount chiefs at times exacerbates ethnic tensions.

There were 16 women in the 112-seat parliament, three women in the 28-minister cabinet, three women out of 13 deputy ministers, four female judges out of seven judges on the High Court, and three out of six judges on the Court of Appeal. A significant number of women worked as civil servants.

PEEP!
Monday, 16 April 2007

'OLD' JUDGES COMPLAIN OVER 'NEW' JUDGES PAY

how many cases can they dispose of in just four months?

Senior 'long-term' judges are complaining that the three 'short-term' contract judges, employed for four months on sponsorship by the ***Justice Sector Development Programme***, are getting far better salaries and conditions of service than they do.

challenge

The appointments of the three judges, Mr Eku Roberts, President ***Bar Association,*** Mr Nicholas Browne Marke and Gambian national Ms Mary Sey, were challenged by this paper and by senior barrister Mr Blyden Jenkins-Johnson - on the grounds that all judges were liable to be screened by Parliament under Section 135(2) of the constitution.

This was refuted by the Bar Association President *Pro Tem* Mr Yada Williams and the Chief Justice Ade Renner Thomas who say the President of the Republic is entitled to chose 'short-term' judges under Section 136(4) and such judges serve at "the President's pleasure".

scepticism

We spoke to several senior judges who expressed scepticism over how many cases a contract judge could dispose of in four months.

One also was quite blunt about the 'fabolous sums' the DFID supported ***JSDP*** is paying the short term judges.

"At over 8,000 pounds a month, the new judges are definitely earning over four times what all other judges earn" the judge said.

"Many of us are not exactly over joyed over this" the judge pointed out.

Telegraph (UK)
Saturday, 14 April 2007
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/04/15/wliberia15.xml

Britain will pay high price for jailing former Liberia dictator, ministers warned

Melissa Kite, Deputy Political Editor, Sunday Telegraph

A pledge by Britain to imprison the former African dictator Charles Taylor, on trial for war crimes, was thrown into doubt last night as a leaked memo highlighted the potential costs.

The notorious former president of Liberia faces a lifetime in jail if he is found guilty at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The sentence will be served in Britain if emergency legislation is passed by Parliament this week. But in a leaked government briefing document prepared for ministers, concern centres on cost and safety issues.

The memo states: "A possible objection to the Bill relates to the potential cost of imprisoning Taylor in the UK. Some may argue that, with the UK prison system heavily loaded and given the other demands on the UK taxpayer, it is not appropriate to commit government funds to imprison foreign nationals." It says the cost of keeping an inmate in high security detention is "in the region of £44,000" a year.

Taylor is standing trial on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is said to have armed rebel forces, including child soldiers high on drugs, who raped and mutilated civilians during the 1991-2002 civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone which left 200,000 dead. He has pleaded not guilty.

The memo also raises the issue of risk. It says Taylor might choose to remain in Britain after his release, claiming asylum, and that this "might represent a danger to the public or a drain on public resources".

Advising ministers on how best to present the Bill, the memo concludes: "Overall, the argument will be that the Government does not enter into such commitments lightly but that, by making this relatively modest financial contribution, the UK will be making a major contribution to the cause of international justice."

The move comes at a time when Britain faces an unprecedented crisis in both the prison and immigration services and following the debacle over the release of foreign prisoners facing deportation. This week it was reported that the prison population has hit a record high of 80,220 - with prison overcrowding costing the Home Office almost £5 million a month in payments for emergency accommodation in police cells.

The Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, agreed last summer that Britain would allow Taylor to be kept in a British jail after other European countries, among them Sweden, Denmark and Austria, refused and no African country was deemed suitable.

Agence France-Presse
Monday, 16 April 2007

Govt concerned over cost of jailing Liberia's Taylor

LONDON: The government's offer to jail former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is convicted of war crimes is in doubt because of the potential costs of his detention, the Sunday Telegraph newspaper said.

The weekly published details of a leaked government memo that highlighted the cost of keeping such a high-profile inmate in jail as "in the region of £44,000" a year.

The House of Commons is to debate whether to pass emergency legislation allowing his detention here when it returns from its Easter break this week.

According to the newspaper, the memo states: "A possible objection to the Bill relates to the potential cost of imprisoning Taylor in the UK.

"Some may argue that, with the UK prison system heavily loaded and given the other demands on the UK taxpayer, it is not appropriate to commit government funds to imprison foreign nationals."

The memo also reportedly highlights the fact that Taylor may choose to stay in Britain after his release or claim asylum and that this "might represent a danger to the public or a drain on public resources". It advises the government to argue that such commitments are not entered into lightly but by its action "the UK will be making a major contribution to the cause of international justice".

Taylor is considered to be the single most powerful figure behind a series of civil wars in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone between 1989 and 2003, which between them left about 400,000 people dead. He has been indicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights.

He is accused of sponsoring and aiding rebel groups who perpetrated murder, sexual slavery, mutilation and conscription of child soldiers in Sierra Leone's civil war in exchange for a share in the lucrative diamond trade.

Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said last June that London had agreed to a request by the former UN secretary general Kofi Annan that if Taylor were convicted, he would serve his sentence in Britain. – AFP

The Daily Reflector
Friday, 13 April 2007
http://www.reflector.com/local/content/news/stories/2007/04/13/ECU_UN_speaker.html

U.N. judge speaks at ECU forum

Social justice is a familiar topic for Bankole Thompson.

JUDGE BANKOLE THOMPSON, right, talks with James Anderson, chairman of the department of criminal justice at East Carolina University.

A former prosecutor in his native Sierra Leone and longtime legal scholar there and in the United States, Thompson has a role in redressing social injustices in his home country.

Since 2002, he has been a judge on the United Nations Special Court on Sierra Leone, which considers war crimes stemming from the country's decade-long civil war.

"Nobody should have the right to ... assault human dignity in any way, much less the massive way" such violations occurred during the Sierra Leone war, Thompson told an ECU audience of more than 100 Thursday afternoon.

Although he touched on his work with the war crimes court, Thompson focused on the U.N.'s efforts to eliminate social injustices around the world.

"Social justice posits that all persons are entitled to basic human needs, regardless of superficial differences," in race, gender, economic status and elsewhere, he told an audience of more than 100 people at the A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall.

The U.N. has been intimately involved with social justice issues, most notably in the goals it adopted in September 2000, Thompson said. They include:

- the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty
- universal primary education
- empowering women and advancing gender equity
- reducing child mortality and improving maternal health
- combating the spread of HIV, malaria and other infectious diseases
- ensuring environmental sustainability and equitable global development.

The U.N. set benchmarks to be met by 2015 on the eight goals. They won't be met without concerted efforts from the world's nations, Thompson said.

"The millennium development goals are both financially affordable and technically feasible," he said. "The international community has no excuse not to accomplish these goals."

Peter Romary, an attorney with ECU's Student Life Division, applauded Thompson's work with the war crimes court in Sierra Leone.

"Being a high court judge is one thing," he said. "Being a judge for the United Nations is quite another, and it is an honor to have you here."

Thompson delivered the 2007 Carolyn Freeze Baynes lecture on social justice. ECU's College of Human Ecology sponsors the lecture series, which memorializes Baynes, the late namesake of a $5 million gift. Thompson is on leave from his position as dean of graduate studies at Eastern Kentucky University to serve on the U.N. court.

United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 13 April 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC Last Updated: Thursday, 12 April 2007, 18:34 GMT 19:34 UK

Liberia shuts 'hide-out' cemetery

By Jonathan Paye-Layleh

Liberia's largest cemetery has been closed by the president because it is being used as a criminal hide-out. It has become a favorite haunt for Monrovia's underworld after makeshift structures in the capital's slums were demolished and squatters evicted. The assistant information minister said the graveyard had been turned into a drug den, which would not be tolerated.

UN Takes Home More Liberian Refugees

By Richard Attenkah

Tema, Apr 12, 2007 (Ghanaian Chronicle/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --THE UNITED Nations (UN) in collaboration with the International Organization of Immigrants (IOI) over the weekend repatriated a total of 213 Liberian refugees who were based in Ghana and Nigeria to their home country. Out of the total number, 167 were picked up in Nigeria on March 24 to Ghana where the additional 46, based here at the Buduburam Refugee Camp joined their colleagues at the Tema Port enroute to Monrovia, capital of Liberia.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast grants amnesty as peace plan advances

By Loucoumane Coulibaly

ABIDJAN, April 13 (Reuters) - Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo has signed into law an amnesty for crimes against the state in the latest boost for a new peace deal to reunite the country after a 2002/2003 civil war. The law, published in the government daily Fraternite Matin on Friday, covers crimes committed by soldiers and civilians living in the country and abroad, but excludes war crimes and economic crimes in what was once a thriving African economy.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

Former House Speaker Granted Bail for Theft

- Correspondents said that the former House Speaker Edwin Snowe was granted an insurance bond of US$1.8 million when he appeared in court yesterday on corruption charges having been arrested by the Monrovia City Court at the Temple of Justice for allegedly stealing more than US$1 million when he served as Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company during the tenure of the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Former Miners Want Government Intervention

- The Spokesman of some 2,000 workers of the former Bong Mining Company, Mohammed Goe called on the Government to intervene by ensuring that they get their money back from the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI).

- Mr. Goe said that the workers deposited US$677,000 at the Bank on an 18 percent investment rate annually for 18 months, adding that after the period expired in June, 2001, the LBDI failed to pay the money in question because it had been credited by some former officials of the regime of former President Charles Taylor. The workers said that the Civil Law Court had ruled in their favour and ordered the Bank to pay their money.

(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.

Star Radio (Liberia)
Sunday, 15 April 2007
http://www.starradio.org.lr/latest-news/president-orders-end-to-trial-by-ordeal-2.html

President orders end to trial by ordeal

Written by Vivian Gartyn

The Liberian leader has ordered an end to trial by ordeal in River Gee County.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf gave the order during her visit to the county.

The president warned that anyone caught conducting trial by ordeal locally known as sassy wood would be arrested and prosecuted in accordance with law.

River Gee is noted for the practice of sassy wood.

The Justice ministry had initially banned the practice of sassy wood throughout the country and threatened punitive measures for violators.

BBC
Friday, 13 April 2007
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6553547.stm

Amnesty for Ivory Coast conflict

The new PM (l) must now work with the president, his former foe

Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo has signed a law giving amnesty for crimes committed during the civil war.

The amnesty, part of a recent peace deal, applies to both the New Forces rebels and the armed forces loyal to President Gbagbo.

Last month human rights group Amnesty International condemned Ivory Coast's "climate of impunity" and said both sides were guilty of large-scale rape.

A BBC correspondent says there will be no local prosecutions for such crimes.

Any on-going prosecutions are to be dropped immediately, and prisoners convicted of crimes covered by the amnesty will be released.

Economic crimes are a notable exception, as they are not covered by the amnesty.

Fears

The BBC's James Copnall in Ivory Coast says the new law will go some way to reassuring both sides that they can move forward in the peace process without fear.

Significantly, the amnesty is backdated to September 2000.

That means that crimes committed by loyalist soldiers before the war broke out will also be wiped off the slate.

The amnesty law is one of a number of measures aimed at bringing the country to free and fair elections within 10 months.

Two weeks ago, rebel leader Guillaume Soro was named prime minister, and next Monday the removal of a buffer zone between the belligerent parties is due to begin.

But our correspondent says the man Mr Soro replaced - Charles Konan Banny - voiced the fears of many Ivorians when he told the BBC he thought both Mr Soro and President Gbagbo had hidden agendas behind their apparent drive to peace.

Ivory Coast, previously the richest state in West Africa, has been split in two since rebels seized the north in 2002.

BBC
Monday, 16 April 2007
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6558617.stm

Macedonia pair begin Hague trial

Ljuboten is remembering its dead as the trial begins

The first trial of men suspected of committing war crimes in Macedonia is due to begin at The Hague.

Former Macedonian Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski and his ex-bodyguard Johan Tarculovski are accused of killing seven ethnic Albanians in 2001.

Mr Tarculovski ran a private security unit loyal to Mr Boskovski during a six-month ethnic Albanian rebellion.

Prosecutors say there were no military targets in the area where the attack took place. Both men deny the charges.

Mr Boskovski, 46, who was the last man indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, was said to have effective command and control over the forces from his position as interior minister.

Mr Tarculovski, 32, is accused of directing the attack on the village of Ljuboten, the prosecution says.

A five-year-old was among those who died in Ljuboten, the court says.

According to charges presented by the court, the attack on Ljuboten was launched as a retaliation for an attack which killed eight Macedonian soldiers.

First but not last?

During Macedonia's six-month insurgency in 2001 the country's nationalist government fought to suppress guerrillas from the country's ethnic Albanian militias.

Mr Tarculovski and Mr Boskovski were the last two men to be indicted by the war crimes tribunal in The Hague over alleged atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia.

The BBC's Geraldine Coughlan, in The Hague, says while they are the first to face charges over events in Macedonia, more could arrive before the tribunal winds down in 2010.

United Nations News

Friday, 13 April 2007
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=22209&Cr=icty&Cr1=

UN tribunal transfers Bosnian Croat convicted over deadly village attack to Spain

Ivica Rajić

13 April 2007 – A former Bosnian Croat militia commander who was sentenced to 12 years' jail for a notorious attack on a village where more than three dozen Muslims were killed will serve the rest of his sentence in Spain after being transferred today by the United Nations war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Ivica Rajić, 48, became the 27th person to be transferred by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which sits in The Hague in the Netherlands, to another European country to serve out the remainder of his custodial sentence.

As a result of agreements signed by countries and the ICTY, men or women convicted by the Tribunal are now serving their sentence in Austria, Germany, Spain, Norway, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rajić, former commander of the Second Operational Group of the Bosnian Croat Army, pleaded guilty in October 2005 to four charges relating to breaches of the Geneva conventions: wilful killing, inhumane treatment (including sexual assault), extensive destruction, and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.

At his trial the ICTY judges found that Mr. Rajić's crimes in the central Bosnian village of Stupni Do on 23 October 2003 "were committed on a large scale, were of particularly violent nature and caused severe pain to the victims and their relatives."

Under the command of Mr. Rajić, Bosnian Croat forces attacked and gained control of Stupni Do, forcing residents out of their homes and robbing them of valuables before sexually assaulting some of the women. The village was largely destroyed and 37 Muslims, almost all non-combatants, were killed.

When one group of villagers tried to flee, two women and three children were murdered in front of their home, while another group were found hiding in a cellar and killed. The bodies of other victims – including elderly women and young children – were found burned inside their house or their shelter.

In a separate attack on the same day, Mr. Rajić and his forces rounded up more than 250 Muslim men, regardless of their civilian or military status, in the nearby town of Vareš. The men were arrested, often robbed, and then detained at two schools under treacherous conditions in which many were beaten.

The ICTY noted the importance of the role Mr. Rajić played in these events when, following orders of his own superiors, he planned and ordered the attacks and further ordered the rounding up of Muslim civilians, knowing the substantial likelihood that criminal acts would ensue following these orders.

As mitigating circumstances, the Tribunal held that Mr. Rajić's guilty plea helped to establish the truth surrounding the crimes committed in Stupni Do and Vareš, and also noted the remorse he expressed at his sentencing hearing.