

**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:**

Friday, 16 February 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
Martin Royston-Wright  
Ext 7217

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Awareness Times  
Friday, 16 February 2007

## COMMENTARY

By Abdul Karim Bangura & Sami Gandy-Gorgla  
The Policy Sciences Research Section of the Sierra Leone Working Group

### The Special Court's Push for an Unfair Advantage for the Prosecutor

From the first day of the proceedings of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Prosecutor has been given an unfair advantage to win guilty verdicts and convictions in the case against Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Aliou Kondewa. The proceedings of the closing arguments were not different. The following are some examples for our assertion.

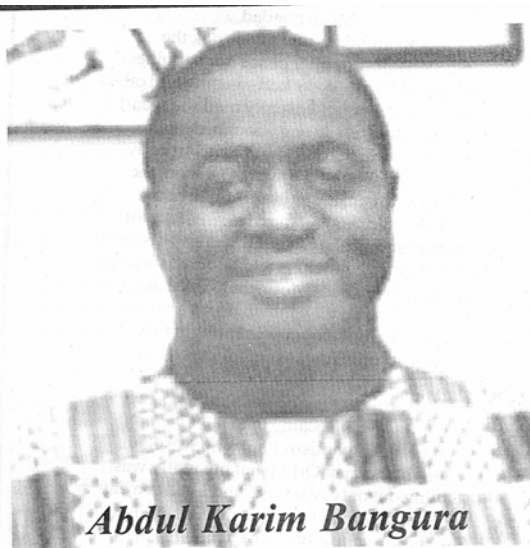
First, Rule 86 of the Court's Rules of Procedure and Evidence stipulates that after the presentation of all evidence, the Prosecutor *shall* and the defense *may* present a closing argument. In essence, while the Prosecutor is mandated to offer a closing argument, the Defense can do so if, and only if, it chooses to do so. One must wonder why both the Prosecutor and the Defense were not given the same mandate, as it is not uncommon for a Prosecutor to forgo a closing argument, if s/he believes that doing so would serve no worthwhile purpose. This seems to be the case for the Prosecutor in the case against the Civil Defense Force defendants, as the Prosecutor has not been able to prove his case.

Second, because the Chamber was not advised as to the methodology of the third accused, it was *assumed* by the Bench that his methodology would follow the sequence, thematic or otherwise, as indicated in the final trial briefs of all three men. Is this not the same Court that in the beginning of the trial rejected the plea by the accused that they be given a consolidated and proper indictment?

Third, the Prosecution team was granted leave to file two annexes to the final trial brief some six days after the final trial brief by the Defense team contrary to Rule 86 (B) which states that "A party shall file a trial brief with the Trial Chamber not later than 5 days prior to the day set for the presentation of the party's closing argument." Is this not a case of the Prosecutor breaking his own rule? It is quite obvious that the Prosecutor who has overwhelming financial, human and technical resources in his possession could not put his case together on time. Again, the reason for this is that he has no case; thus, he must continue to scramble past his own deadline to *make up* a case.

Third, the Presiding Judge had a document addressed to the Court and certified by Raymond Ewing, a detention officer, which read that the first accused would not attend court on the day of the closing arguments for reasons which he, the first accused, would only disclose to the judges. The Prosecutor, however, submitted, and the Court agreed, that the Trial Chamber could conclude that the first accused had waived his right to be tried in his presence because the document was not signed. At least three questions can be raised on this issue. First, why could a detention officer trained by the Court certify a letter that was not signed? Second, why would the Trial Chamber agree with the Prosecutor's argument that the first accused had waived his right to attend court for closing arguments when it is expressly stated in the letter that he would like to talk to the judges? Third, how did the judges know that the letter is from the first accused when they had already rejected it on the ground that it was not signed?

Finally, the Prosecutor noted that the Civil Defense Force was not



**Abdul Karim Bangura**

*Indeed, the preceding evidence clearly shows that the Court has bent backwards to allow the Prosecutor to manipulate the proceedings to win guilty verdicts against the three Civil Defense Force defendants. In doing so, however, the Court has also exposed the fact that the Prosecutor has no case. Indeed, to turn one of the Prosecutor's statements upside its head, it would be "ridiculous" to find the three "accused guilty of the crimes for which they stand trial," and they should be "acquitted."*

illegal, considering its aims of restoring the democratically elected government. Nonetheless, he argued that he should use uncorroborated evidence against the defendants, and the Court agreed with him. How can the Court be perceived to be fair if it allows the Prosecutor to use evidence that has not been proven in the proceedings?

Indeed, the preceding evidence clearly shows that the Court has bent backwards to allow the Prosecutor to manipulate the proceedings to win guilty verdicts against the three Civil Defense Force defendants. In doing so, however, the Court has also exposed the fact that the Prosecutor has no case. Indeed, to turn one of the Prosecutor's statements upside its head, it would be "ridiculous" to find the three "accused guilty of the crimes for which they stand trial," and they should be "acquitted."

## Awareness Times (website)

Thursday, 15 February 2007

[http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article\\_20054753.shtml](http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_20054753.shtml)

### **Surgeons Operates on Indictees in Senegal**

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has announced that two indictee persons have undergone what has been described as a successful Surgical Operations at a Military Hospital in Dakar, Senegal where they have been held since their arrival for Medical Treatments. Sources further revealed that the two indictees had not been maltreated at the hands of their Host and are said to be responding to treatments.

## Spectator

Friday, 16 February 2007

### **Kamajors reaffirm support for Berewa**

Representatives of the Kamajor Militia from Bo in the southern Province have reaffirmed their total support for the leadership of the Honorable Vice President, Solomon Berewa.

Speaking to the Chairlady of the Sierra Leone People's Party of the York District Constituency, Madam Martha Kanagboh, during a courtesy call at Waterloo Street yesterday, the Kamajors said that they had come to Freetown to re-echo their words of support which they had earlier expressed in Bo. They condemned any information which purports that they the militia have joined the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which they described as a composition of renegades and frustrated elements that have broken away from the SLPP. Senior Security guards to Chief Sam Hinga Norman also confirmed that on to the time he was going to Senegal for medical check-up, Chief Norman made it categorically clear that he has not left, and submitted will not leave, the SLPP for any other political group. The representatives further described the PMDC interim leader, Mr. Charles Margai as a congenital liar who misinformed people in Bo that he is defending Mr. Norman in the special court. In fact, they added, when Mr. Hinga Norman called on him (Margai) for legal service before the trial, the latter called for a fee which was so exorbitant that Mr. Norman could not imagine. Chief Hinga Norman thought

that Margai would have considerate on the grounds that they are all brothers.

The militia representatives therefore implored Madam Kanagboh to convey their love and best wishes to Honorable Vice President Berewa and to further assure him that they the Kamajors will ever continue to give him their unflinching support for his leadership of the SLPP.

Responding, the SLPP Chairlady thanked the representatives for what she called their positive initiatives and a clear demonstration of their love for the Vice President and the SLPP as a whole. She advised and encouraged them remain steadfast, firmly committed and dedicated to the SLPP which, she noted is the only way out and though to success in post-war Sierra Leone. The leadership of Mr. Solomon Berewa, she noted, is perhaps the most competent one that will effectively and successfully accomplish the very good work which President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah had begun with the true spirit of democracy and good governance. Giving her message to the representatives on behalf of the entire SLPP, Madam Kanagboh finally pleaded with them to go and assure the people of Bo and the rest of the region that Vice President Berewa remembers them in good faith, and that they shall all live by God's grace to realize a good reward for their invaluable sacrifices they have made in the context of constructive nationalism and patriotism, she concluded.

## Spark

Friday, 16 February 2007

Commentary

# Trouble Coming In The Land

As Guinea is simmering in its self-inflicted problems CRAFTILY organised by no one else but its President, Lansana Conte who changed guns for votes by hook or crook, Bra Rabbit being the busy-body he usually is, went all the way to Conakry to sniff what he could from the once robust, lively city. Behold the record of it all was that Bra rabbit had to sleep almost all day long, as there was a TWENTY HOURS CURFEW and poor Bra Rabbit had to do without his carrots for a day.

One gruelling scene was an empty street as the RPGS, AK 47's and you name it sang carols and hymns on the poor people who had no business in politics or the running of government. As poor Bra Rabbit laid in his makeshift burrow, he heard the Guineans grumbling under their teeth 'Monsieur Conte au revoir.' Like Christ said, it is finished, but Conte wants a state funeral so he does not want to leave the bitterness of office or rather he does not want to leave his ignoble office without the shedding of blood and loss of innocent lives just because he wants to become another Hitler in present day Germany which

should not be the case in this twenty first century.

Another bone of contention is that the lives of Sierra Leoneans are in jeopardy as it has become apparently clear that our existence depends entirely on the road from Guinea to Salone and vice versa.

Poor Rabbit, without his laissez-passer had to find all the bush paths to struggle back to his native land as the Fullahs and Madingos of Poppay Kabs origin started scouting foreigners in their land whereas our sleeping prez has given all Guineans diplomatic immunity to enter, smuggle and deal in all sorts of illegal business without headache.

So far, hundreds of poor souls have died in our brotherland, yet the hypocritical United Nations is still sleeping, the Paris Club is still partying while the African Union and other UN agencies are turning a blind eye to all the ills especially in Africa while they rush to the aid of mini skirmishes in their blue eyed nations. Uganda, Rwanda and

other African countries, like Darfur are still burying poor innocent women and children and with their diplomatic hypocrisy like the one they played in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the sixties, they sit in their patios drinking milk and honey at the expense of Africa's wealth only to tell us we are poor! Can the U.N. not butt in to tell Lansana that enough is enough? Or rather do we Sierra Leoneans

have to always be second hand smokers to suffer unwittingly for others' ills?

Now, onions are five hundred or one thousand leones a-piece. Irish potatoes going for three thousand leones a heap, fish gone scarce just because Guinea has gone berserk. Why? Are we so donor driven? "Papa Govment", the rabbit needs his carrot or do we have to wait for another 2007 to have our food?

Exclusive

Friday, 16 February 2007

# Amputee Nations Cup Ghana Are Champs

The Ghanaian Amputee who lost their opening match against the host side (Sierra Leone) on past Wednesday defeated Liberia 4-3 to claim the maiden edition of the Amputee Nations Cup. Striker Gyamfie put the champions ahead just two minutes from the start. His goal was cancelled ten minutes later by Boye Khakwe who made use of Tengbeh cross. Gyamfie appears on the score sheet again when he gave the Ghanaians a temporary lead in the 16th minute but the Liberians responded again with Abraham Mopeh settling the match to all apiece before the break. Joseph Armah and Collins Gyamfie completed the rout in the second half before Mopeh gave the



Liberians their final consolation.

Both sides missed series of golden opportunities, with the Liberians missing two penalties and one on the Ghanaian side.

#### Awards

Amadu Kamara - Best Player (Sierra Leone I)  
Collins Gyamfie - Goalkeeping - (Ghana)  
Sierra Leone II - FIFA fair play

Awoko

Friday, 16 February 2007

# Salone amputees to play in World Cup

The Minister of Youths and Sports Dr Dennis Bright has during his address at the National Stadium after the end of the first all Africa Amputee Nations cup disclosed that he has learnt that Sierra Leone will take part in this year's Amputee World Cup in Turkey.

He also mentioned that "when we are in Turkey for the competition the boys are going to show the world what Sierra Leone can do."

He also praised all the

participating countries for their brilliant performances throughout the tournament. The Sports Minister also noted that it was a very important day in the history of Africa especially for Ghanaians who won the competition which coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> Independence anniversary celebrations of their country.

Minister Bright also mentioned that the brilliant performance of the Sierra Leone amputee teams

throughout the tourney has made amputee football to be recognised as any other sport in the country.

He also noted that one important thing we have learned is what sport can do today, adding that what is happening is that some of the people who are playing today were victims yesterday but today they are heroes.

*Africell bringing people together*



United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 15 February 2007**

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **Germany forgives Liberia debt of 230 million US dollars**

WASHINGTON, Feb 14, 2007 (AFP) - Germany announced here Wednesday it would forgive Liberia's entire 230 million dollars in debt to Berlin. "Germany announces that it would forgive 100 percent of the bilateral debts owned in the context of the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) process," said the final statement of a conference of Liberia's donors in Washington. The HIPC initiative offers debt relief to governments that agree to meet International Monetary Fund conditions and to implement economic reforms. Germany's announcement came one day after Washington said it would erase the war-ravaged West African country's 391-million-dollar debt.

AP 02/14/2007 19:19:55

#### **Bush urges creditors to give Liberia debt relief for Liberia**

GEORGE GEDDA

WASHINGTON \_ President George W. Bush met Wednesday with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and urged donor countries to join the United States in providing debt relief for her impoverished country. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice disclosed Tuesday that the United States was forgiving Liberia's \$391 million (euro299 million) debt to the United States. As a follow-up, the Treasury Department said Wednesday it is asking Congress to authorize the use of \$35 million (euro26.75 million) in proposed debt reduction money to help finance the costs of forgiving Liberia's debt to international lending institutions.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

BBC Last Updated: Wednesday, 14 February 2007, 10:16 GMT

#### **Guinea's curfew partially lifted**

Guinea's army chief has partially lifted the curfew allowing people to go out between midday and 1800. Martial law was declared on Monday by the president after demonstrations following three days of violence. A BBC correspondent in Conakry says the capital is eerily quiet as businesses have shut down. The US is to airlift some of its citizens amid continuing protests against martial law. Four people are reported to have been shot in Labe.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **President Bush Asks Treasury to work towards Liberia's Debt Waiver**

*(The Informer, The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst, Heritage, Liberian Express The Analyst and New Vision)*

- United States President George Bush told Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Washington D.C. yesterday that he mandated the Treasury Department to work with

international financial institutions to cancel Liberia's debts, amounting to US\$3.7 billion.

- He added that the Treasury Department would provide money for the International Monetary Fund and other international financiers to have the confidence in cancelling the debts Liberia owes.
- President Bush emphasized that the move would give Liberia the chance to succeed in eliminating some of its burdens.

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

#### **President Bush Mandates Treasury to Lead Liberia's Debt Waiver**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Legislative Press Officer Resigns over House Leadership Saga**

- In an interview yesterday, the House of Representatives Press Public Affairs Director James Jensen announced that he was resigning the post and called on House Speaker Edwin Snowe to follow suite.
- Mr. Jensen stated that his decision stemmed from the gross violation of the Constitution of Liberia by "majority" members of the House of Representatives. He said that due to the trend the leadership crisis was taking, it was necessary for the Speaker to resign for the Liberian people's business to go on.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **UNHCR Prepares for Possible Guinean Refugees Influx to Liberia**

- Addressing a press conference yesterday, the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Ralph Mizeul said that the UNHCR was making preparation in Liberia to host an influx of people from Guinea if the security situation in that country escalated.
- He said that sites were being identified in Lofa, Bong and Nimba Counties to accommodate more than 50,000 people and that the UNHCR was collaborating with its partners to provide food and non-food items including health kits.

*(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](mailto:karpeh@un.org).*

## BBC Online

Thursday, 15 February 2007

### Guinea crisis 'could spark war'

The violence in Guinea could worsen and spill over into a bloody civil war, an international think tank has warned.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) criticised President Lansana Conte for declaring martial law and imposing an 18-hour curfew to curb demonstrations.

The African Union (AU) also called for an end to the "ominous situation involving the killing of citizens".

Union leaders, MPs and the government are due to meet later, as soldiers continue to patrol the streets.

The ICG estimates that more than 100 people have died since the general strikes and protests started in January.

### Uncertainty

"If the Conte regime continues to rely on military repression, it could rapidly bring Guinea to a dramatic spiral of violence: full popular insurgency, with increasing chaos that is likely to stimulate a bloody, military take-over," the ICG said in a statement.

This could lead "to a possible civil war comparable to those that have torn apart its neighbours in the past decade with uncontrollable consequences".

Guinea borders Sierra Leone and Liberia, which are both emerging from a decade of conflict.

Both the ICG and AU called for negotiations to end the crisis in Guinea.

"We call up upon the president and government of Guinea to use all peaceful means to restore normalcy to the country," Ghana's President John Kufuor, who is currently head of the AU, said at the Franco-African summit in the French resort of Cannes.

Correspondents say the violence has reduced since the introduction of martial law, but there is a great deal of uncertainty.

### Looting

Many businesses have shut and even residents organising funerals have had to apply to neighbourhood officials for permission to come together in a large group, AP news agency reports.



The 18-hour curfew has been imposed to stop further protests

“  
**hearing the news... because I  
 have been trying to  
 understand what makes a  
 human being kill an eight-**  
 ”

Guinean Dura Balde

Residents in different suburbs of the capital, Conakry, say that they often hear shooting.

"They started shooting again this morning. It's been two days that we haven't gone out and haven't slept," Aminata Cisse told AP.

Outside the capital, the UN's World Food Programme says that several of its warehouses have been looted.

An estimated \$350,000 worth of food was looted from three warehouses over the weekend.



A fourth warehouse was looted on Tuesday morning in the northern town of Labe, AFP reports.

Last month, the unions called off their 18-day strike after Mr Conte promised to hand over powers to a prime minister.

But they renewed the strike action call after saying the man named last Friday for the post, Eugene Camara, was too close to Mr Conte.

The unions want Mr Conte to step down, saying he has mismanaged the economy.

## Voice of America

Thursday, 15 February 2007

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2007-02-15-voa33.cfm>

### Unions in Guinea Prepare for Meetings to End Strike

By Naomi Schwarz

Dakar

15 February 2007

**Some union leaders in Guinea are preparing for a new round of talks with the government to end a crippling strike, but others say martial law must first be lifted. More than 100 people have been killed since an anti-government strike began in January. Naomi Schwarz reports from VOA's regional bureau in Dakar.**



**Ibrahima Fofana (c), Secretary General of the Union of Guinean workers (USTG) leaves the People's Palace with supporters after negotiations in Conakry, 27 Jan 2007**

Some union leaders are refusing to renew negotiations with the government, until it lifts the martial law that was imposed on Monday.

But other union leaders say they are ready to negotiate.

Yamadou Touré, a leader of the National Organization of Guinean Trade Unions, says the more than 400 unions need to decide together what demands to put to the government.

He also says he is optimistic a deal can be reached.

Radiatou Diallo, another union leader at the National Confederation of Guinean Workers, and the main leader when the strikes began, agreed to come to talks, but said she would not stay, if the head of the military is not present.



**Alpha Oumar Konaré (Aug 2006)**

Alpha Oumar Konaré, chief executive of the African Union, has written to Guinean President Lansana Conté condemning what he calls "the disproportionate violence against Guinea's civilian population," that led to many deaths.

Reports say there have been abuses by military forces and President Lansana Conté's guards, as well as looting and violence by civilians.

Gilles Yabi, an analyst with the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, says the African Union president has been an important voice condemning the violence since the beginning. But, he says, the international community needs to intervene more directly.

"We need an international mediator to engage directly with President Conté and the head of the military," he said. "I think, without heavy pressure from the African Union, but also a call to the leaders in Guinea to restrain and to go back to a political settlement, it is difficult to see a way out of the crisis."

However, aside from a visit by Guinea-Bissau's president, Mr. Conte has refused all other mediation attempts.

The nation-wide strike began on January 10 as union leaders and the Guinean public called for a new government following a corruption scandal. Mr. Conté, who came to power in a 1984 coup, is seriously ill and the union leaders said he was unable to lead the country out of its deteriorating economic situation.

The strike was suspended after nearly three weeks, when Mr. Conté agreed to union leaders' demands to appoint a consensus prime minister, and to give him wide-ranging reform powers.

Violence erupted, and the strike resumed on February 9, when Mr. Conté nominated Eugene Camara, a former prime minister and staunch supporter of the president, who, opponents said, could not be independent.



**Protesters march during a demonstration, part of a general strike in Conakry, 22 Jan 2007**

## Star Radio (Liberia)

Thursday, 15 February 2007

<http://www.starradio.org.lr/latest-news/liberia-needs-more-to-end-impunity-says-ai.html>

### **Liberia needs more to end impunity, says AI**

Written by Vivian Gartyn

Amnesty International says more needs to be done to put an end to impunity in Liberia.

The Researcher of the West African Team of the group says people who allegedly committed crimes during the war should be prosecuted.

Madam Tania Bernath said interviews with people around the country suggest that justice is what Liberians want.

She said though the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a good framework to address issues of the past, it should not be a substitute for a court of law.

Madam Bernath recommended that consultations be held to put in place the right mechanism to address the situation.

She did not state what kind of mechanism would be necessary but said the establishment of a war crimes court could not be ruled out.

## Star Radio (Liberia)

Thursday, 15 February 2007

<http://www.starradio.org.lr/latest-news/amnesty-international-releases-report-on-liberia.html>

### **Amnesty International releases report on Liberia**

Written by Vivian Gartyn

Amnesty International has launched its research report on the Liberian civil crises.

The report titled, Liberia: Time for Truth, Justice and reparation for Liberia's victims highlighted the commission of heinous crimes during the war.

The research conducted in 2006 found that war-crimes and crimes against humanity were committed by all parties to the conflict.

It also said an estimated number of twenty-one thousand child soldiers were used to carry out rape, torture, massacres among other crimes.

The report recommends the development of a comprehensive action plan to address the violations.

Amnesty International also recommends the strengthening of the judicial system to try alleged perpetrators.



## Star Radio (Liberia)

Thursday, 15 February 2007

<http://www.starradio.org.lr/latest-news/pro-war-crimes-forum-head-released-on-bail.html>

### **Pro-war crimes forum head released on bail**

Written by Joseph Cheeseman

The Chairman of the Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court has been released on bail.

Human Rights lawyer, Counselor Dempster Brown on Thursday filed a Criminal Cash Appearance bond on behalf of Mr. Mulbah Morlu.

Mr. Morlu and two others were charged with rioting, failure to disperse and aggravated assault.

They were arrested for their alleged involvement in a demonstration held at the ELWA Junction in Paynesville one week ago.

## Human Rights Watch

Thursday, 15 February 2007

Press Release

### **Guinea: Security Forces Abuse Population Under Martial Law**

Government Must Hold Security Forces Responsible for Killings, Rape and Robbery to Account

(Dakar, February 15, 2007) - The Guinean government has failed to control security forces responsible for rapes, robberies and more than 110 killings since mid-January, Human Rights Watch said today. After the imposition of martial law on February 12, security forces committed numerous abuses during house-to-house searches for weapons earlier seized by a small group of violent protesters from police stations and other government installations.

"Guinean security forces are using martial law as an excuse to terrorize ordinary Guineans," said Peter Takirambudde, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Under the guise of reestablishing law and order, they're acting like common criminals, beating, robbing and brutalizing the population they're supposed to protect."

Human Rights Watch interviewed numerous witnesses in Conakry's outlying suburbs who report that in the last several days, security forces - particularly the presidential guard - went house-to-house, breaking down doors, and looting everything of value inside, including cell phones, cameras, and money. In conducting these searches, members of the security forces have seriously beaten individuals with clubs and rifle butts, and have even shot and wounded individuals protesting the theft of their household goods. The terror caused by the security forces has succeeded in frightening most families in Conakry, particularly in the suburbs, into staying locked inside their homes.

The security forces have been responsible for at least 22 killings in the past five days. According to a witness interviewed by Human Rights Watch, presidential guardsmen fired into a group of people outside a mosque in Conakry's outer suburbs, killing a man in his 60s. Other credible sources report that at least three women living within Conakry's suburbs have been raped in the last four days by uniformed personnel, including soldiers and presidential guardsmen. At least one victim was reportedly gang-raped.

"The government's response to economic protests has become increasingly deadly, culminating in the bloodbath we've witnessed this month," said Takirambudde. "It's imperative the Guinean government rein in the security forces, and investigate and hold to account those responsible for recent abuses."

The current crisis began after labor unions declared a nationwide strike in early January to protest against deteriorating economic conditions, including rampant inflation and corruption. According to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch, nearly all those killed have been shot by members of the security forces including the presidential guard, police, and gendarmes. The unrest subsided for several days after ailing President Lansana Conte agreed to appoint a consensus prime minister. However, Conte's February 9 appointment of a close ally as prime minister resulted in another wave of protests and the subsequent declaration of martial law.

Over the weekend, protestors across the country - angered by the nomination of the new prime minister - attacked government installations, burned the private homes of government and military officials, looted guns from police stations, blocked roads, attacked cars and passersby, and engaged in running gun battles with security forces.

The martial law decree, issued by Conte on February 12, bans all demonstrations and meetings, and imposes severe restrictions of movement on the population. It also authorizes the military to detain or put under house arrest anyone deemed to present a danger to public security; to conduct searches of private property and monitor all means of communication without a warrant; and to exercise draconian restrictions on the media. Prior to the decree, the military had already forcibly entered one private radio station, broken its equipment, and arrested some of its employees.

Human Rights Watch called on the government to ensure that the security forces respect Guinea's obligations under international human rights law and take appropriate action against perpetrators of abuses. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Guinea ratified in 1978, permits some restrictions on rights during an officially proclaimed public emergency that threatens the life of the nation. According to the Human Rights Committee, the expert body that monitors compliance with the ICCPR, any derogation of rights during a public emergency must be of an exceptional and temporary nature, and must be "limited to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation." Certain fundamental rights, such as the right to life and the right to be secure from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, must always be respected.

Human Rights Watch also called on the Guinean security forces to abide by the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials in policing demonstrations. The principles state that law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, apply nonviolent means as far as possible before resorting to the use of force. Whenever the lawful use of force is unavoidable, law enforcement officials must use restraint and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offense.

## TomPaine.Commonsense

Thursday, 15 February 2007

[http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2007/02/15/waging\\_peace\\_in\\_africa.php](http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2007/02/15/waging_peace_in_africa.php)

### **Waging Peace In Africa**

Eric Nicholls

*Eric Nicholls is a researcher at the Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia.*

**News from Sub-Saharan Africa** these days is mostly bad. Stories of extreme poverty, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and political instability fill the media and the region's prognosis seems bleak.

But not all the news is bad. For one thing, Africa is no longer the world's most violent region—indeed it is more peaceful today than at any other point since sub-Saharan nations gained their independence 40 years ago. Increased peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities deserve much of the credit. The good news is revealed in a recent report from the University of British Columbia's Human Security Centre, the Human Security Brief 2006, which shows some startling declines in the number and intensity of wars throughout the continent.

The worldwide armed conflict total began to fall after peaking in the early 1990's. Yet, as other regions began to improve, political violence in much of Africa increased. At least 22 Sub-Saharan countries—around half the total—suffered war during the 1990's, and others fought in neighbouring states.

The violence peaked in 1999, with 16 wars in the region. Then came a major decline. By 2005 there were only five (in Burundi, Chad, Uganda and two in Ethiopia), a decline of close to 70 percent. Notably, these are all civil wars—there hasn't been a war between African states since 2000. (The report considers Sudan to be in the Middle East and North Africa region, and not in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, including Sudan would do little to alter the trends described.)

Over the past six years, peace agreements have been signed in Angola (2002), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2002), Eritrea-Ethiopia (2000), Ivory Coast (2005), Liberia (2003), Senegal (2004), Sierra Leone (2000) and Southern Sudan (2005). Several more conflicts have ended in military victory or simply petered out. And other countries are moving towards peace: Burundi's last active rebel group signed a ceasefire in September, negotiations between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government may end a brutal 19-year old war and recent events in Somalia could bring some much-needed stability.

But it's not just the number of wars that is down. The number of countries beset by wars in Sub-Saharan Africa also declined from 13 to 4 between 1999 and 2005, allowing more governments to focus on development.

Perhaps most importantly, the severity of conflicts is way down in Sub-Saharan Africa (and globally). Although combat deaths are notoriously tricky to measure accurately, the number of combatants and civilians killed directly by the fighting ('battle-deaths') dropped over 95 percent, from close to 100,000 in 1999 to around 2,000 in 2005. In 1999, the average conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa had over 6,000 battle-deaths per year. In 2005, the figure was less than 400.

Data on conflicts that don't involve governments—for instance, intracommunal warfare and fighting between rebel groups—tell a similar story. In Sub-Saharan Africa such conflicts declined in number from 24 to 14 between 2002 and 2005. Over the same period, the number of countries experiencing

such conflicts declined from seven to five, and the number of battle-deaths from 4,500 to 900.

Terrorist incidents and deaths also seem to be down somewhat. Likewise, the number of campaigns of violence against civilians seems to be on average lower now than in the 1990's (there were six campaigns in 2005). And the number of refugees is down dramatically, from around 6.8 million in 1994 to about 2.6 million at the end of 2005, though the trend for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's)—i.e. those who have not crossed an international border—is less clear.

What can explain these dramatic improvements? The end of the Cold War clearly played a role. But the key factor seems to have been the extraordinary increase in international efforts to stop and prevent wars. The United Nations has taken the lead here, but regional organizations, NGO's and individual countries have all made important contributions. Perhaps most importantly, African organizations and states have increasingly been assuming the burdens of peacekeeping, mediation and enforcement of democratic norms.

Until 1989 there had only ever been one U.N. peacekeeping mission in Sub-Saharan Africa. By 1994 there were seven missions in the region, and in 2005, eight out of 17 U.N. operations worldwide were Africa-based. A growing number of U.N. offices—in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, the Central African Republic and elsewhere—support conflict prevention, the consolidation of peace and post-conflict reconstruction.

The U.N. has not acted alone. Troops from the European Union are helping to keep the peace in the DRC. France has peacekeepers in the Ivory Coast. African countries and organizations have also undertaken their own peace operations, in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Darfur and West Africa. There is talk of African peacekeepers supporting the transitional government in Somalia.

Diplomacy is playing a greater role, too. The African Union and other bodies are helping prevent new conflicts from breaking out. And individual countries are choosing to resolve their differences peacefully, as exemplified by Nigeria's handover of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon last August, following a ruling by the International Court of Justice and U.N. mediation.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa human rights abusers are under growing pressure: The former dictator of Chad, Hissène Habré, is set to be tried under African Union mandate in Senegal; a special court is trying former Liberian leader Charles Taylor and others for war crimes during Sierra Leone's civil war; Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun examining human rights violations in that country; and the International Criminal Court has started proceedings against accused war criminals in the DRC and Uganda.

The news is far from uniformly good, however. The ongoing tragedy in Darfur, where a massive civilian death toll continues to rise, is of such severity that it understandably overshadows the positive developments elsewhere. The instability in Sudan has fuelled conflict in Chad and the Central African Republic. Violence continues in the Niger Delta and in parts of the DRC. In some Sub-Saharan countries violent crime kills more people than most wars. Millions of civilians remain displaced by violence.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge the very real progress the region has made. More Africans live in peace than ever before. With enough political will and concerted action, there is no reason this positive trend should stop.