

**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:

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Spark
Wednesday, 16 May 2007

Special Court Get's New Judge

By Hassan Y. Koroma

The Special Court is an independent tribunal, established jointly by the United Nation and the Government of Sierra Leone. It has a mandate to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed.

The solemn swearing in ceremony of the Senegalese National Judge, Justice El Haji Malick Sowe was held at the

Special Court building over the weekend as an alternate judge of the courts Trial chamber 11.

His fellow judges from the trial and appeals chambers and the diplomatic corps joined this declaration and other representatives were in well attendance. The new justice is the first alternate judge at the Special Court to join Justice Julia and others to hear evidence and make work

easier during the indictees' trials.

According to the quoted Article 12(4) of the statute of the Special Court, the essence of the swearing in of Justice Sowe is that he should be present at all stages of the trial and to replace a judge if that judge is unable to continue sitting.

The experience of Justice Sowe in Senegal's judiciary both at the regional and national level is extreme. Over

the years, he served in various capacities as Judge of the regional Tribunals of Ziguinchor and Diourbel, the labour Tribunal of Dakar. Justice Sowe has served as judge in the court of Senegal including the premiere chamber social and he was named President of his Criminal Chamber of the Appeals court in Dakarr. He was also a technical adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

IMPUNITY FOR WAR CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

By Louise Arbour

United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights

Word Count: 735

The plight of victims of sexual attacks during conflict has come to the fore once again when last week, the International Criminal Court's Prosecutor requested summons for two Sudanese connected with atrocities in Darfur.

According to the Prosecutor, there is strong evidence pointing to the suspects' responsibility for mass rape and other war crimes. Previously, the ICC had issued an arrest warrant for the leader of the Lord Resistance Army, a rebel group in Uganda, on the ground of war crimes, including ordering sexual enslavement and rape.

Thus, ICC action is gearing up to bolster the cumulative experience of international justice mechanisms that have brought to light specific types and patterns of sexual crimes targeting mainly women and girls in war torn zones, as well as identified individual responsibilities in their commission. The work of these courts has also highlighted the difficulties in prosecuting perpetrators and countering the culture of impunity that shields their criminal acts. Such impunity, of course, permeates all societies, be they peaceful or at war. Not by coincidence, this year

International Women Day is dedicated to combating this pervasive lack of accountability. It is, however, in times of war that the effects and consequences of impunity are at their starkest. This is due both to the widespread, systematic and often sustained nature of sexual attacks and to the number and callousness of perpetrators:

Although at their most brutal in war, sexual abuses against women often stem from longstanding prejudices, a lack of equality and discrimination that had condoned such violence all along. When perpetrators go unpunished, they are emboldened to strike again, perpetuating and encouraging vicious cycles of attack and reprisal even when a country emerges from conflict. Rendering justice to the victims is, therefore, not only a moral imperative, but also a precondition for reconciliation and peace to take hold.

Yet, sexual violence has been traditionally underreported and under-prosecuted. As a result, such crimes have long been considered as regrettable but unavoidable byproducts of armed confrontation. Women as victims or pawns of belligerents could demand no recourse.

Only recently has this powerlessness been addressed, primarily by the groundbreaking work of the International

Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The tribunals defined systematic violence against women as crimes for which those responsible could be held accountable, thereby empowering victims to have their day in court. The creation of the International Criminal Court gave an additional boost to such emerging jurisprudence and changing mind set. Its statute stipulates that rape, sexual slavery, enforced sterilization, or any other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity are considered as war crimes. If these acts are committed as part of widespread or systematic attacks on a civilian population, they constitute crimes against humanity. It now remains to be seen whether governments will accede to the Court's requests and surrender the suspects for trial.

But if government non-compliance is potentially the main obstacle to the course of international justice, there are other factors that hamper prosecution. Victims of all forms of violence are often reluctant to come forward, in large part because they have little confidence that justice will be done. Although some of the perpetrators may have been apprehended, others, as well as their accomplices, may remain at large and therefore capable of inflicting

further harm to victims, witnesses and their families.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has made strides in addressing such hindrances in the face of a monumental task: as the result of ten years of conflict and the belligerents' methods of warfare in that country, the brutality of sexual violence was extraordinary, and its victims were to be counted in the thousands.

The Court benefited from its proximity to the victims, the parallel work of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a framework that protected the victims and ensured that their dignity was preserved. The ICC, too, is building on previous experiences and strengthening legal assistance and protection for victims.

Although the mandate and machinery of international courts have become increasingly more sophisticated and far-reaching over the years, gender justice continues to remain the exception rather than the rule.

Successfully prosecuted cases represent just the tip of the iceberg. The crux of the matter in combating impunity is the requisite political will to tackle it. Often slow to gear up into motion, such political will needs to be mobilized through domestic and international pressure as well as continuous scrutiny.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 15 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

St Vincent-registered ship stolen from Monrovia port

MONROVIA, May 14, 2007 (AFP) - A ship registered in the islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has gone missing from Liberia's main port of Monrovia after its crew was attacked by unknown assailants, its captain said Monday. Volodymyr Shteynberh, the Russian captain of 3,685 tonnes Tahoma Reefer was hijacked at the weekend while the 115-strong crew was in hospital nursing wounds inflicted during an attack by robbers armed with machetes.

Daily Oklahoman

Liberia's 'Iron Lady' speaks at Langston

Jeff Raymond

May 13--LANGSTON -- Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf knows how education can change a life. Johnson-Sirleaf took office in January 2006 as the first female president of the previously war-torn country. Speaking at Langston University's 107th commencement on a sunny Saturday, she told of how she left school at 17 to start a family. Unlike many women in the West African nation, which freed American and Caribbean slaves founded in 1847, her opportunities did not end with motherhood.

BBC Last Updated: Saturday, 12 May 2007, 11:19 GMT 12:19 UK

The comfort of a rusting roof

By **Elizabeth Blunt**, Liberia

The Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is continuing with her attempt to steer the country back towards stability after years of war. And while some parts of the capital Monrovia now seem to be getting back to normal, in other parts just having a roof on your house is a major struggle. The little houses in the villages along the road to Lofa County are neat and new, and - to an outside eye - the epitome of picturesque Africa.

International Clips on West Africa

France reduces Ivory Coast peacekeeping force

ABIDJAN, May 15 (Reuters) - Five hundred troops from the French "Unicorn" peacekeeping force which has kept government and rebel fighters apart in Ivory Coast since a 2002 civil war have left for France, a spokesman for the force said on Tuesday.

Ivory Coast agrees strict budget in return for more aid

ABIDJAN, May 14, 2007 (AFP) - Ivory Coast, wracked by years of division, Monday agreed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to adhere to a strictly managed budget in return for renewed reconstruction aid, an IMF official said.

BBC Last Updated: Monday, 14 May 2007, 13:31 GMT 14:31 UK

Crunch Guinea talks delayed again

Guinea's President Lansana Conte has again postponed talks with discontented soldiers in the capital, Conakry, after days of riots. Mr Conte failed to show up on Saturday, further angering troops who are demanding better pay and housing. He has now put back Monday's scheduled talks for 24 hours to allow the new defence minister and army chief to be installed in office.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberian President Signs MOU with American University

(The News, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Liberian Express, The Forum, The Analyst and The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Langston University President JoAnn Haysbert on Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding in which Langston would offer a study-abroad programme for its students to work with Liberian girls and women and provide scholarships for Liberian students to attend Langston.
- The University will also establish a working relationship between the Central Agricultural Research Institute and the Agricultural Programme of Langston, in reinventing agriculture with particular emphasis on the livestock sector.

Woman Allegedly Locked Up in Intercourse with Snifer Dog at Firestone

(The News, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Forum, and The Analyst)

- Pandemonium broke out last Saturday when scores of Liberians stormed the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company's Hospital in Harbel, Margibi County in demand of a snifer dog, which they claimed was locked up in intercourse with an unknown Liberian woman.
- The dog, according to sources, belongs to the "K-9 Unit" contracted from abroad by the Company to assist its security guards fight crimes at the Plantation.
- Accordingly, the 24-year-old woman who is believed to be a prostitute was contracted by an expatriate staff of the Company to have intercourse with the dog for an unspecified amount of money.
- In the process, she and the dog got inseparable as in the case of male and female dogs – an incident which, according to the papers, resulted to public protest.

Doss Reassures UN Commitment to Liberia

(Daily Observer, Liberian Express, Heritage and the Inquirer)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss has pledged the United Nations Mission's security commitments to Liberia. He gave the assurance when he recently awarded UN peacekeeping medal to Military Observers and Staff Officer in Monrovia.
- Mr. Doss said UNMIL has made great strides in Liberia and still needed to do more to ensure that Liberia national security is not compromised.

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

President Johnson Sirleaf Meets UN Secretary-General Ban

- In a cell phone interview from the United States, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Wleh Badio reported that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf held an informal meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon as she continued her visit to the United States where she thanked the UN for its support to consolidating peace in Liberia.
- He said that the Liberian leader met with Greek ship-owners in New York, received promises from donors to the Liberia Education Trust, addressed the Commencement Programme of Langston University in Oklahoma and later signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University under which Langston will establish a working relationship with the Central Agriculture Research Institute in Bong County, Liberia, provide 5 scholarships for Liberian female students.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Vice President Boakai Says Holiday is one of Reflection

- According to a statement issued by the Office of the Vice President yesterday, Vice President Joseph Boakai stated that the celebration of National Unification Day reflected the current peace process and that the Government looked forward to holding programmes to benefit the day across Liberia.
- The Vice President added that giving the bad experience of hatred, disunity and diversity orchestrated by the civil war, the need for national healings was more important than ever before and assured the public that the Government was committed to sustainable reconciliation and unification among all Liberians.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Senator Insists Financial Autonomy will Make Lawmakers Independent

- Grand Kru County Senator Blamo Nelson clarified that the intent of the Financial Autonomy Act was to make the National Legislature independent contending that it was only in Liberia the Executive Branch of Government was controlling the budget of Lawmakers.
- Senator Blamo observed the intent of the Act was misinterpreted simply to put the Legislature against the public considering that the contentious issue of tax exemption was not a new policy in Liberia in that Article 72 of the Constitution of Liberia gives tax exemption entitlement to the Judiciary Branch of Government.
- On President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's position to veto the Bill, Senator Nelson said that the Legislature would override the veto if reasons given by the President were concrete.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Rights Campaigner Under-rates Government's effort to Unify Liberians

- The Executive Director of a local human rights organization, the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy, Aloysius Toe said that the Government was doing little to unify Liberians as its effort towards this was more theoretical than practical.
- In an interview with Radio Veritas yesterday, Mr. Toe suggested that in the face of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, the Government should be practical with its stance on unification by including opposition politicians in the political governance of the Country.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Justice Ministry Supports Police Call to Sign Court Arrest Warrants

- Justice Minister Frances Johnson-Morris announced that her Ministry backed Police Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh's decision to first sign all public arrest orders from the Courts before carrying out any arrests, adding that the decision was not to undermine the dispensation of justice. The decision comes when magisterial and circuit courts in Monrovia failed to arrest wanted persons having ordered such an arrest.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Child Rights Advocates Want Refugee Agencies Cater to Somali Refugees

- A local child rights advocacy group, FOCUS called on the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Liberian Refugee Rehabilitation and Reintegration Commission to begin to cater to Somali refugees whose children have now become beggars.
- In a statement issued in Monrovia, the group said that random sampling revealed that 500 Somali refugees including women and children arrived in the country and needed the protection of aid refugee agencies.

(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.

Washington Post
Wednesday, 16 May 2007

U.S. Aims to Establish International Tribunal in Hariri Assassination

By Colum Lynch
Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, May 15 -- The United States will introduce a draft Security Council resolution as early as this week to establish an international tribunal that would try alleged perpetrators of the 2005 car-bomb assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri and 22 others, according to Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Khalilzad's announcement came one day after Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora asked the 15-nation council to help break an impasse in Lebanon over the creation of an international court. But Siniora, who supports a tribunal, faces stiff domestic opposition, including from Lebanon's pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud, who warned Tuesday that the establishment of such a court could lead to civil violence in Lebanon.

Siniora's request marked a critical new phase in the U.N. investigation of the February 2005 assassination that has implicated senior Lebanese officials and top Syrian officials linked to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. And it set the stage for a Security Council confrontation between the United States and Russia, which has sought to accommodate Syria's concerns in the council.

"It's very important that people who have participated in political murder be brought to justice," Khalilzad told reporters outside the Security Council chamber. "We understand that there are some risks with regard to taking action, but we believe the risks of not taking action are greater."

A Russian official said that Moscow had no formal reaction to Siniora's request but that the government believes a tribunal requires support from all major parties in Lebanon. Moscow fears that a decision to move forward with a court might plunge Lebanon into civil war, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment on the letter.

The United Nations and Siniora's government agreed in November 2006 on a draft statute to create a new court, which would be modeled on war crimes tribunals in Sierra Leone and in Cambodia. The court enjoys the backing of a majority in Lebanon's pro-Western parliament.

But Lahoud and lawmakers loyal to the country's Shiite militant group, Hezbollah, say that Siniora's government lacks constitutional legitimacy -- and they resigned en masse in November to protest Siniora's refusal to grant them greater power over national affairs. Lebanon's parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri, leader of the Shiite Amal movement, has refused to convene the parliament to vote on whether to establish the court.

Lahoud warned that a council decision to set up a new court would "imply a full bypass" of Lebanon's constitution and would "threaten Lebanon's stability," according to a Reuters report. He charged that Siniora was "falsifying fact" to persuade the council to back one side in an internal Lebanese dispute.

Assad has suggested that his government may not cooperate with the court. "We consider that the international tribunal concerns only Lebanon and the U.N. and that we are not directly

concerned," he said in a speech this month. "Any cooperation requested from Syria which could compromise our national sovereignty is rejected."

Nicolas Michel, the United Nations' top legal expert, traveled to Beirut last month seeking to break the deadlock. After his return, he said that the talks produced "no progress" and that Lebanese opposition figures were unwilling to negotiate the terms of a tribunal.

"For all practical purpose, the domestic route to ratification has reached a dead end," Siniora wrote in his letter. "The Lebanese government believes that the time has come for the Security Council to help make the Special Tribunal for Lebanon a reality."

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon briefed the Security Council on Siniora's plan during a luncheon at U.N. headquarters on Tuesday. He urged them to support Siniora's request to establish a new tribunal, saying further negotiations would not resolve the issue.

"It is absolutely necessary to send a strong message that there should be no impunity for perpetrators who committed crimes and particularly for political assassinations," Ban said after the luncheon.

The tribunal statute calls for the appointment of an international prosecutor, backed by a Lebanese deputy, to try suspects who would be identified by U.N. chief investigator Serge Brammertz of Belgium. The court would consist of a pretrial chamber; a trial chamber, headed by two international judges and one Lebanese judge; and an appeals chamber, with three international judges and two Lebanese judges. The court might also gain jurisdiction over attacks against Lebanese journalists and opposition political figures that occurred between October 2004 and December 2006. A venue has not been chosen, but the court would probably be established in Cyprus, U.N. officials said.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 16 May 2007

Peace Negotiations Between Ugandan Govt and LRA Rebels Stalls

The current peace talks between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in the Southern Sudan capital of Juba have stalled again. This time the disagreement is about the third item on the agenda, which is accountability and reconciliation. The disagreement came after the government reportedly demanded the rebels accept they committed atrocities in northern Uganda. But the LRA insists the international arrest warrants issued against its top leadership should be either suspended or lifted before they sign any comprehensive agreement with the government.

Major Felix Kulayigye is the spokesman for Uganda's defense ministry. From the capital Kampala, he told Voice Of America more about the stalled peace talks.

"The point of contention is that this agenda item number three requires the perpetrators of crime to admit to the crimes, apologize to the victims and indeed that will lay ground for the traditional justice mechanism to be employed so that so that these people can go to the victims, apologize to them, and some punitive action would be dictated by the victims themselves. And that would be based on agenda item number three, if it's agreed upon by both sides," Kulayigye noted.

He explains the role both the government and the victims of the rebels are playing in the ongoing peace talks.

"There are two issues here; one the people of Acholi sub region in northern Uganda who indeed have been victims of the LRA activities, demanded that for them they wanted that for them they wanted reconciliation and not the externalization of the case. Now, for us to facilitate the peace talks and the peace process, the government of Uganda, indeed accepted to enable the traditional justice mechanism to be applied after which the government would engage the International Criminal Court (ICC) offering alternatives of addressing impunity," he pointed out.

Kulayigye applauded the LRA's apology to its victims in northern Uganda, but urged the rebels to include the apology in their proposal at the peace negotiations in Juba.

"Well if that apology could be included in their paper because each side normally writes a paper, submits to the mediation and then the two papers are synchronized. If they are agreed upon, then the signing takes place. What is the snag as of now, much as Martin Ojul has apologized verbally they have not included that apology in their paper presented to their mediation team," Kulayigye said.

He said the government has continuously shown its willingness to finding a lasting peace by granting amnesty to the top leadership of the LRA rebels rather than charge them with treason.

"First and foremost, once for the peace process to start the government on its part offered amnesty. Nonetheless. It remains an issue between the LRA leadership and the people who had been the victims. As you know, the government should have charged them with treason. So with the amnesty, the treason charge automatically is lifted. The question of the ICC still holds, and the Uganda government certainly, will work very closely with the ICC to ensure that the question of impunity is addressed," he said.

Kulayigye said some people are advocating the use of the traditional justice system.

"Now the point being discussed as of now is that the traditional justice mechanisms should be allowed to take effect so that in addition of punishing the perpetrators of crime, it also facilitates reconciliation as opposed to the modern legal systems that punishes the perpetrators, but leaves the wounds of the victims unaddressed," he said.

Voice of America

Tuesday, 15 May 2007

Chad Schools Try to Stop Child Soldier Recruitment

By Phuong Tran
Habile, Chad

Just this past week, Chad's government admitted there are child soldiers in its army. But schools along the troubled eastern zone, near Sudan, have long known that, when a child suddenly disappears from the classroom, chances are he may have joined one of the fighting groups. Phuong Tran visits one school, 60 kilometers from the Sudanese border, to see how its educators are trying to stop children from becoming young soldiers.

Until recently, this primary school in Habile, Chad, had 300 students.

But, after waves of violence forced families from surrounding villages to seek safety in Habile, more than 1500 students now fill the blue classroom tents in the desert.

Many of the teachers come from the displaced community and most of the new students have never before attended school.

Here, the students face bigger challenges than just memorizing their multiplication tables.

Attacks often force the school to cancel classes.

To help track students during these waves of violence, Jesuit Relief Services' School Project Director Gonzalo Sanchez Teran helped create a student registration system that started last month.

Teran says this is one way schools can protect children from the many armed groups that look for young soldiers.

"We can control when they are not there," he said. "We follow what is going on. What happens with the kid [who] has not gone to school one, two days? Why is he not there? Go to visit the families. Talk to them. Talk to the teachers and try to get him back to school."

He says schools in Chad do not normally have registration processes, which has made it hard for teachers to track students.

For example, in the nearby community, Gouroukoum - home to more than 10,000 displaced Chadians - one man remembers when his grandson did not come home from school, three years ago.

The 57-year-old man does not give his family's name, to protect his grandson.

The man says he learned his grandson, then 14-years-old, had secretly joined the Chad national army.

The year before, Janjaweed militia had killed the boy's father.

After having lost his only son, this man says there is nothing he can do to bring home his only grandson from the fighting.