

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Pademba Road Prison

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, 17 December 2007

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

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The New Citizen
Monday, 17 December 2007

'DIFFICULT CHALLENGES AHEAD OF APC'

- US Ambassador

The new United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone, June Carter Perry, has commended the government and people of Sierra Leone during her inaugural address at the US Embassy, Hill Station in Freetown past Friday, December 14th 2007 when she formally met members of the fourth estate for the first time as she also underscored that there are difficult challenges ahead, as no government can meet all the expectations of its citizens.

She congratulated the government, most especially for the pledge of the government of President Ernest Bai Koroma, to unite all Sierra



June Carter Perry, U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone

Leoneans which she described as a laudable goal. She praised President

Koroma for his commitment to fight corruption and said

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she was encouraged by the President's first steps in that direction. The U.S. Ambassador said that fighting corruption was not an easy task but governments must commit themselves to eliminate corruption in societies. She also commended President Ernest Bai Koroma for his zero tolerance for corruption and said that the President has already taken the first steps in the fight against corruption by handing over the report of the transition team to the Anti-Corruption Commission. She praised the Commissioner of the National Electoral Commission, Dr. Christiana Thorpe, for what she described as free and fair elections that will serve as an example for the

U.S. AMBASSADOR

whole world to emulate.

She also congratulated the police for their exemplary role of making sure the electoral process was smooth and orderly.

June-Carter Perry also congratulated the individual Sierra Leone who under difficult circumstances such as inclement weather ventured out of their homes to cast their ballots, thereby strengthening the democratic dispensation in Sierra Leone.

She pledged the cooperation of the United States government especially her Embassy in helping Sierra Leoneans on their role to the strengthening of democracy and building democratic institutions and structures that would ensure the perpetuation of democracy in Sierra Leone.

She mentioned the setting

of a Le 50 million fund for the work of the Special Court in Sierra Leone geared towards ending impunity which she said, if allowed to continue, would motivate other states or groups to engage in acts of violence and the violation of human rights without fear of reprisals.

June Carter Perry defended the need to have institutions like the Special Court which is an international body comprising Sierra Leoneans and other nationals to try to end impunity and make Sierra Leone and the world a safer place through bringing to justice people who bear the greatest responsibility for human rights violations such as Charles Taylor.

She assured her audience that her Embassy, the United States Embassy, and the government of the United States would continue to help Sierra Leone by providing funds for developing partnerships to help in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

She reminded members of the fourth estate that it was necessary to include women in governance since women are evidently the greater majority in the world.

June Carter Perry promised her government's cooperation in helping Sierra Leone meet the Millennium Development Goals through the AGOA initiative where nationals are encouraged to form cooperatives for the purpose of engaging in productive activities whose goods may be imported to the United States and other Western countries.

She praised Rwanda, a country coming out of war, for her strides in the area of production of goods and services that are marketable outside its borders and encouraged Sierra Leoneans to learn good examples from another country that has suffered from a debilitating war. Asked what help her government could render in the promotion of journalism in Sierra Leone, the U.S. Ambassador enumerated the many

training programmes awaiting journalists and asked members of the fourth estate to liaise with the Public Affairs Office at the US Embassy to learn how many other assistance may be available adding, "up to this point, Sierra Leone is a much secured country and this situation is an encouraging terrain for investors to come into the country and invest their monies."

At question time, the Ambassador was asked whether presidents who have won elections in the United States are bound to

keep in important positions government officials of a party that has lost power in spite of the fear that keeping their opponents in government might backfire through disloyalty to the government of the day.

The Ambassador replied that that was optional for any presidency of any given country to hire or not to hire members of the opposition party and added that Sierra Leone is no exception.

We publish the full text of the Ambassador's inaugural address to members of the fourth estate on page 2

Interested?

The New Citizen
Monday, 17 December 2007

PRESS RELEASE

UNIOSIL Augments Human Rights Education in Southeast

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 12 December 2007 — As a way of creating awareness and promoting human rights education in the country, the Human Rights and Rule of Law Section of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) representing the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), commissions two human rights and rule of law reference libraries in Bo and Kenema, on Wednesday, 12th December. The event forms part of the celebrations of this year's International Human Rights Day and the year-long global human rights advocacy campaign on the theme: "Dignity and Justice for All of Us."

According to a Memorandum of Understanding signed between OHCHR and the Sierra Leone Library Board, the OHCHR would undertake the construction and equipping of the libraries with human rights and legal reading material, while in the interest of sustainability the Sierra Leone Library Board would monitor the work of the contractors and manage the premises upon their completion. Materials in the libraries include human rights and legal instruments offered by the OHCHR and other materials donated by various Nations Agencies, including the UN Office in Vienna, Austria, and NGOs.

Government ministries and institutions, as well as the courts, the police and prisons; educational institutions; civil society groups; NGOs, UN agencies and media in both provinces will become obvious beneficiaries of the new reference libraries.

A Representative of the Executive Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Sierra Leone and the President of the Sierra Leone Library Board will grace the occasion.

Cotton Tree News

Saturday, 15 December 2007

Peace Building Commission

Written by James Lebbie

The UN says the Peace Building Commission and the government have adopted a cooperation framework. The move is to guide the work of the United Nations advisory body over the next three years. The Peace Building Commission was set up last year to help countries emerging from conflict avert a slide back to war. Ambassador Yukio Takaso of Japan, Chairman of the Commission's Organisation Committee described the adoption of the framework as a milestone. He added however that the international community should marshal its support and resources to ensure that Sierra Leone achieve tangible results.

The UN said the framework outlined some key challenges and threats facing Sierra Leone after an eleven-year brutal civil war. The challenges include good governance, security and justice sector reform, youth employment, energy sector development and training. Victor Angelo is the Secretary-General's Executive Representative in Sierra Leone. He said while Sierra Leone was a success story in terms of its progress on the humanitarian and security sector fronts, it had not matched that progress in job creation, gender equality or good governance.

The Peace Building Commission is backed by the Peace Building Fund. It is standing trust fund that has so far collected almost one hundred and forty four million US Dollars from donor countries out of a target of two hundred and fifty million US Dollars.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
14 December 2007**

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

Newspaper Summary

UN approves US\$15M Peace-building Fund for Liberia

(Daily Observer, Heritage, National Chronicle and The Informer)

- Addressing a farewell news briefing in Monrovia on Thursday, the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss disclosed that the United Nations approved US\$15 million from its peace-building funds to help sustain the peace in Liberia. He said that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had instructed him to announce the approval of the money. Mr. Doss, who is due to take up his new assignment in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), described the grant as a major step forward for the future of Liberia.
- He said the fund will be used to promote peace and reconciliation, deal with reintegration, promote rule of law and improve other areas.
- Also, speaking on a wide range of issues especially the progress that has been made over the period since UNMIL and other partners have been working to secure and maintain the peace, he stressed that no one must be complacent and everyone must work together to ensure peace and stability in the country

SRSG Doss Says his Mission was Successful

(The Analyst, New Democrat and The News)

- The outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss has described his tenure in Liberia as successful.
- Mr. Doss who has been around for two and a half years said great things have happened during this period, adding that Liberia is now at peace as compared to other countries.
- He said improvements in infrastructure, fair and peaceful elections, more children in school than ever before, extended LNP coverage throughout the country and an increasingly positive security situation were among the achievements Liberia has made in the last four years.

Treason suspect feels impotent due to alleged torture

(Public Agenda, Daily Observer and Heritage)

- Retired army colonel Andrew Dorbor who had earlier testified in the treason trial told the court on Thursday that his private part can no longer function due to an alleged torture meted out against him at the headquarters of the National Security Agency(NSA).
- Dorbor made the allegation against the Chief of General Investigation at the NSA, Col. Nelson S. Jallah, while answering questions from the prosecution about a document.

Liberia's Press Union Rallies Solidarity for journalist in libel case but...

(The News and Public Agenda)

- Press Union of Liberia (PUL) called on all journalists to rally behind a group of journalists and Public Agenda newspaper who will appear in court Monday to answer charges of libel and defamation brought against them by Renaissance Communication Incorporated Director Ambrose Nmah on the one hand and the Company itself on the other.

- A statement said the PUL is challenged by this trial because never before in its defense for media rights and free speech has a journalist taken other colleagues to court on such a matter. But the Union's President George Barpeen disassociated himself from the statement.

Radio Summary

Lawmakers Dialogue with Presidency on Budgetary Transfer

- According to the Press Director of the National Legislature Isaac Reed, the leadership of the Legislature was currently dialoguing with the Presidency to transfer more than US\$600,000 to furnish offices at the newly renovated Capitol Building, the seat of the National Legislature, correcting a newspaper report that the Lawmakers needed more than US\$800,000 for the furnishing of the offices of the Lawmakers.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Doss Encourages Journalists to Report Accurately

- During a meeting with journalists, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss encouraged Liberian journalists to adhere to the ethics of good journalism by providing accurate and balanced information in their reportage, adding that the press should not report anything that infringes on the privacy of others.
- Mr. Doss assured Liberians that UNMIL will continue to maintain peace and protect the borders of the Country. He lauded the Liberian media for the cordial interaction that existed with UNMIL during his tenure.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Rights Advocate Sees Biased Dealing with Impunity Issues

- In an interview, the Regional Programme Officer of the Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) Dixon Gblar said that the issue of impunity under the law was biased, contending that government officials who allegedly misused the Country's funds should be held accountable. He called on Government officials to respect and uphold the Oath of Office they have taken.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner wants Liberians Ignore the Past

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Chairman Cllr. Jerome Verdier said that Liberians should now forget the bitter experiences of the civil conflict and forge ahead with the reconciliation process.
- Speaking during a tour of Butuo in Nimba County, Chairman Verdier said that in addition the TRC's effort to promote sustainable peace, security, unity and reconciliation; it was still responsibility to visit every part of the Country to explain the reconciliation process.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

The Associated Press

Monday, 17 December 2007

Defense in torture case against Charles Taylor's son faces unusual problems in Africa

MIAMI: Witnesses are difficult or impossible to find, some having moved to remote African villages accessible only by muddy roads rarely patrolled by police. Many survivors of Liberia's bloody civil war who witnessed acts of torture are reluctant to talk to anyone about what happened, let alone a defense lawyer for the notorious son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

Then there are the language and cultural barriers. These and other problems have forced a delay until spring in the trial in Miami federal court of Taylor's son Charles McArthur Emmanuel, or Chuckie Taylor, the first person to be prosecuted under a law making it a crime for a U.S. citizen to commit torture or war crimes overseas.

People who have dealt with similar issues in war-torn western Africa say the difficulties are not surprising, given rampant official corruption and an almost complete lack of functional government institutions.

"It will take a generation for Sierra Leone and Liberia to recover from the horrors that Charles Taylor and his henchmen, including Chuckie, have wrought on their fellow man," said David Crane, a law professor at Syracuse University in New York and former chief prosecutor for the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Emmanuel, 30, is charged in an eight-count indictment with involvement in horrific acts of torture and killings from spring 1999 to late 2002 as head of the Anti-Terrorist Unit — also called the Demon Forces — during his father's presidency. Emmanuel was born in Boston to an ex-girlfriend of Taylor, who studied economics at Bentley College there.

The indictment accuses Emmanuel of shooting three people chosen from a group at a bridge checkpoint in April 1999 and ordering the throat of another victim cut after the man tried to escape. Torture methods allegedly used include burning with hot irons, scalding water and lit cigarettes; beatings with weapons and iron bars; and stinging by ants.

Emmanuel's job as head of the paramilitary unit was to eliminate or intimidate his father's political opponents through whatever means he saw fit, federal prosecutors maintain.

"He had a reputation for mindless evil who enjoyed personally torturing individuals," Crane said.

Like any defendant in a U.S. court, Emmanuel has rights to see the evidence against him, find possibly favorable witnesses and confront his accusers. But his court-appointed attorney, Miguel Caridad, said it has been a formidable task meeting those obligations.

"We're going to a bridge where people's heads were cut off and put on top of the bridge and to a police station where people were tortured," Caridad said at a recent court hearing. "We need to know the names of witnesses and whether they know of any other people who might have been there."

Caridad said he has traveled twice to Liberia and neighboring African countries in attempts to locate people who may have seen the alleged crimes, sometimes finding they have moved hours away to rural

areas reachable only by difficult-to-traverse roads. Often there is no electricity, water or police protection and intermittent cell phone capabilities, and Caridad and his assistants are forced to carry cash brought from home for basic expenses.

"It's just a very, very difficult thing to get done," Caridad said.

Because of these problems, U.S. District Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga postponed Emmanuel's trial from January to April of next year, with prosecutors agreeing that mounting a proper defense in this case poses unique challenges.

"The government does not want to prevent the defense from completing a thorough and professional investigation," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Rochlin. "We don't want to be unreasonable."

There is a lot at stake in making sure Emmanuel is properly tried on the charges beyond his own rights as a defendant.

Emmanuel was arrested in March 2006 at Miami International Airport on charges of lying about his father's identity on a U.S. passport application, to which he pleaded guilty. Emmanuel wound up in Trinidad after his father left the Liberian presidency in 2003 amid repeated calls by President George W. Bush and others for Taylor to step down.

Taylor is charged in a special U.N. court in The Hague, Netherlands, with arming and supporting rebels — some of them only children — in neighboring Sierra Leone who killed tens of thousands of people, hacking the limbs off thousands more. He is jailed and his trial, which he interrupted when it began last June, is scheduled to resume next month.

Crane said the twin prosecutions against Taylor and his son are important for millions of Africans who suffered during these conflicts, particularly as governments and international groups try to rebuild respect for the law in those nations.

"It sends a message to all Africans that their lives matter and that those who choose to commit acts of atrocity will be held accountable," Crane said.

The Emmanuel prosecution also marks the first test for the 1994 U.S. law making it a crime for an American citizen to commit torture or war crimes overseas. Judge Altonaga earlier this year rejected the defense argument that the law was unconstitutional, but Emmanuel could argue that point again on appeal if he is convicted.

Emmanuel, who is being held without bail, could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted on all charges against him.

Relief Web

Tuesday, 11 December 2007

Negotiating peace in Sierra Leone: Confronting the justice challenge

Introduction and overview

The 1999 peace agreement between the armed opposition and the Government of Sierra Leone received considerable international attention. It ended a war renowned for its brutality, with a rebel force that seemed to lack any clear political ideology or aim. The peace accord is often remembered internationally for the blanket, unconditional amnesty granted to all warring parties, which met strong international condemnation.(1)

Despite the attention given to the accord, and the huge efforts of implementation by the United Nations and others, there has been no close study of the negotiating dynamics and influences over the three months of talks that led to the final accord. This article intends to fill this gap. Based on interviews with many of those directly involved in the talks, and focused especially on issues pertaining to justice and accountability, this account tracks the discussions and varying influences that finally resulted in the Lomé Accord of 1999. (2) It also assesses the impact of this accord in the following years, from 1999 to mid-2007.

The unexpected moment that helped to define the Sierra Leone justice framework came at the signing of the accord on 7 July 1999, in Lomé, Togo. The blanket amnesty in the accord presented a considerable challenge for the UN representative to the talks, as UN policy prohibited him from signing an agreement that granted amnesty for serious international crimes. The UN representative's decision to add a disclaimer to the agreement – an agreement that had been carefully negotiated over the previous three months – wasn't taken until the day before the actual signing ceremony. None of the other delegates knew of it in advance.

As copies of the agreement were passed around for signature, everyone was surprised to see the following notation written next to the UN signature in the margin of one of the copies:

The United Nations holds the understanding that the amnesty and pardon in Article IX of the agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.(3)

Rebel leader Foday Sankoh had signed the document before the UN representative. When he saw the UN notation he was taken aback, and said, to no one in particular, 'What does this mean? Are you going to try us?' No one answered, and the signing ceremony continued.

The implications of the UN disclaimer were left open. It provided hope to those fighting the country's entrenched impunity and to those expecting formal judicial proceedings for the atrocities committed during the war. It also left the rebels suspicious of the intentions of the international community and the government. The possibility that the former rebels might in the end somehow be held to account was still hanging in the air through the first difficult, slow-moving months after the peace agreement was signed.

News of the amnesty was received differently inside and outside Sierra Leone. The abuses of the war had been so atrocious, and the war itself seemingly so senseless, that some, particularly internationally, saw an amnesty as profoundly unacceptable. As the UN disclaimer made clear, such an amnesty was also generally considered to be outside the bounds of international law and acceptable practice. The amnesty was less of a surprise at the national level. A broad amnesty was considered a virtual pre-condition by many of the national actors attending the peace talks, even before it was discussed by the parties. As explained below, almost none of those present, including the human rights advocates, now believe that a peace agreement would have been possible without some provision of amnesty for past crimes.

In many respects Sierra Leone presents a 'worst-case' context for trying to preserve international standards of justice while negotiating peace. Two primary factors made it all but impossible for the government to avoid granting amnesty to the rebel forces: the military weakness of the government, and the real threat of prosecution and punishment. First, the talks began just three months after the Sierra Leone capital, Freetown, had been overrun by the rebels, resulting in the destruction of much of the city and the killing, maiming or raping of thousands. The rebels controlled over two-thirds of the country. Meanwhile, much of the government's army had joined with the rebel forces after a coup two years previously. Military defence of the government was provided primarily by West African forces of ECOMOG, predominantly Nigerians, and Nigeria had already warned that it was likely to withdraw its troops from Sierra Leone after its imminent presidential elections.(4) When the talks began, the Sierra Leonean government had virtually no choice but to find a negotiated solution, or face the prospect of further attacks on the capital against which it would have had little defence.

Second, it was clear to all that, without an amnesty, the threat of prosecution and punishment was considerable. Just five months earlier, 24 people had been executed for taking part in the coup of 1997 or the illegal regime that followed in 1997–98. Many others had been sentenced to death, having been convicted of treason in civilian courts.(5) The leader of the rebel forces, Foday Sankoh, was among them. His case was on appeal when the government agreed to release him from jail, provisionally, in order to attend the peace talks in Togo in April 1999.(6)

An additional factor was the intense pressure from the Sierra Leonean people, who bore the brunt of the rebel violence, for the war to be brought to an end by whatever means necessary. The rebels made it clear to the people that without amnesty there would be no peace. The public also believed that the war was the product of decades of bad governance, which reduced hatred of the rebels. The public support of forgiveness for the rebels unexpectedly strengthened in the face of continued human rights abuses, which the government could not stop or control. Statements like 'Give them what they want as long as they agree to stop killing us' were common at the grassroots level.

Apart from the amnesty, the peace agreement included some other limited measures for addressing the abuses of the past. It called for a broad inquiry into the truth of past human rights violations, and for reparations for war victims. It also established a process, though slow-moving over the following years, to demobilise combatants and normalise governance. It was notably silent on other elements of accountability and justice-related reforms, such as vetting of the security forces, or reforming an extremely weak judicial system. Some of these elements developed independently of the peace accord over the following years. However, Sierra Leone today still struggles with massive challenges pertaining to the rule of law and accountability.

Partly because of the weakness of the national justice system, a Special Court for Sierra Leone was created in the years following the Lomé Accord. Despite important justice efforts, some of which began with the Lomé Accord, there is still a very significant accountability gap, pertaining not only to past crimes, but also to ongoing justice challenges, including continuing charges of corruption. The concerns for Sierra Leone's future, with some observers worried that further violent conflict may emerge, are partly based on the lack of progress and reforms in the area of justice.

Notes:

(1) This paper is based on extensive interviews undertaken with many individuals involved in the Lomé peace talks and other close observers. In-country interviews were undertaken jointly with Kristina Thorne of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in August 2006. Additional research assistance was provided by Isaac Lappia.

(2) The text of the Lomé Accord can be found at www.usip.org/library.

(3) See UN Document S/1999/836, Par. 7. This is often cited as the wording of the UN disclaimer, but as neither the UN nor others reportedly have a copy of the marked-up document, it must be considered an approximation, based on reports from the UN representative and others at the time.

(4) In addition, the civil defence militias were providing some defence against the rebels, especially in the area where the government's party was particularly strong, in the south and in part of the eastern region.

(5) Those convicted of treason in civilian courts were appealing their sentence when they were freed from prison during the rebel assault on Freetown in January 1999, along with about 1000 other prisoners. Aware of the threat of attack, authorities removed Sankoh from the prison just beforehand; it was rumoured that he was taken to a nearby ship. Some reportedly turned themselves back in, to be cared for in prison by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and to await their formal release with the signing of the peace agreement.

(6) There was no logical person to take Sankoh's leadership position at the talks, and without his direct involvement it was expected that the talks would not bear fruit. This sentiment was confirmed by the deal-breaking role he himself threatened to play at the talks. It became clear to all that there would be no peace deal without his buy-in, and thus extraordinary efforts were made to win his support in the final hours. When Sankoh arrived at the talks, international supporters of the negotiations provided him with satellite phones to communicate with his forces in-country. When further massacres took place, he was directly confronted with photographic evidence, and acknowledged for the first time that perhaps the RUF was responsible. US Ambassador Joseph Melrose has written that Sankoh's demands for unconditional pardon 'almost caused the talks to end before they had begun', and that 'the position that the clemency was related to a peace agreement was not satisfactory to him and he often resorted to describing himself as a "prisoner of peace"' (Joseph H. Melrose Jr, 'The Sierra Leone Peace Process' in Eileen F. Babbitt and Ellen Lutz (eds), *Human Rights and Conflict Resolution in Context*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, forthcoming).