

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Some of the hard-working members of the Finance Section. This not the actual view from their windows!

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as at

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion please contact
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Awareness Times
Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Sierra Leonean becomes President of Special Court

By Abu Bakar Munu

Justice George Gelaga King of Sierra Leone has been elected Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, a post which makes him President of the Special

Court for Sierra Leone for a period of one year. Justice King will succeed as President Justice Raja Fernando of Sri Lanka, whose term ends on 26 May,

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Sierra Leonean becomes President of Special Court

From front page

this year.

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Justice King taught law at the Sierra

Leone Law School from 1990 to 2005. He is Chairman of both the Sierra Leone Law Journal and the Gambian National Council for Law Reporting, and was a member of the Sierra Leone Council of Legal Education. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He has been a Judge of the Special Court for Sierra Leone since December 2002. Meanwhile, the Appeals Court Judges have also selected Justice Emmanuel Ayoola of Nigeria as Vice-President. He will succeed Justice Renate Winter of Austria.

Awoko

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Witness denied...

150 were not buried in Tongo

The defence witness in the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) trial at the Special Court, B.J. Sei has denied allegations that 150 corpses were buried in a grave in Tongo.

Mr. Sei, who was also a Chiefdom Commander for the Kamajors in the Lower Bambara Chiefdom,

stated that after Tongo was captured from soldiers and rebels, he went around the town and never saw civilians' corpses.

Narrating further, the witness said the Kamajors attacked Tongo three times after which it fell in their hands though he was not present on all the attacks.

He further stated that

they were in Tongo for about 11 days after which they were dislodged and they went to Kpanguma.

During their stay in Kpanguma, he went on, a Kamajor by the name of Kamagbote usually went with some civilians to him for protections.

"But I told them that they should go back to where

they came from as they were in a war zone. The first batch of civilians he came with were over one hundred and other one hundred were bought again."

The Chiefdom Commander further said he first saw Moinina Fofanah when he together with Chief Norman went to Kenema, after the reinstatement of the government, to thank [Kamajors] them for their role.

The witness denied allegations that the ammunition used in the

fighting were sent to them from Base Zero. He disclosed that they only used single barrel guns.

During cross-examination by Joseph Kamara of the prosecution team, the witness said he knew Musa Junisa was a Battalion Commander for Dudu and that after they had been dislodged from Tongo, Musa Junisa and Mohamed Orinko Musa went to Bo Waterside and when they returned they had certain positions.

Musa Junisa, he said, was

reporting to Arthur Koroma who was the then Administrator in Kenema and the only ammunition he came with from Base Zero were only cartages which he told them had been given by Eddie Massally.

Mr. Kamara then read from a transcript by a witness, which stated that Mohamed Junisa wrote to Hinga Norman requesting for arms and ammunition for the attack of Tongo. But the witness denied that the request was not granted.

Democrat
Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Salone Judge Becomes Special Court President

The Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday announced the appointment of Justice George Gelaga King, a Sierra Leonean, as its new Presiding Judge of the Appeals Chamber, a post that makes him President of the UN-backed court for a period of one year.

He will succeed Justice Raja Fernando from Sri Lanka, whose term ends on 26 May, this year. Justice Emmanuel Ayoola of

Nigeria who was selected by the Appeals Court Judges is his Vice. The position is the highest to be occupied by a Sierra Leonean since the

Court's inception in 2002. The appointment of a foreign national to the position of Deputy Chief Prosecutor last year provoked strong

protest from the Sierra Leone Bar Association which argued that the

agreement between government and the UN that established the Court,

is unclear whether that move is the result of this decision.

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clearly stipulated that the position should be occupied by a Sierra Leonean. It

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From Front Page

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Exclusive

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Kamajors to Protest

By David A. Jabati Jnr

Some members of the Kamajor militia group have raised serious concerns over the current state of health of their former Head, Chief Sam Hinga Norman who is currently detained by the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"we would not sit and

watch our hero die like Sankoh," one of the ex-Kamajors told The Exclusive, adding that, "We would let the world know that Chief Norman is a hero and not a villain and should be given the required medical attention" He said that anytime from now, they would organize a peaceful march to the Special Court to express their dissatisfaction over the current state of their former

boss.

"We would march with placards with inscriptions like "Free Norman," "he is a Hero not a villain," "Norman must live to see justice," and more" he said.

According to sources close to the Special Court, plans are currently under way to fly Norman out of the country for proper medical attention.

Exclusive

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Former Kamajor Chief Exonerates Hinga Norman Over Tongo Attack

By Joseph Turay

Brima John Sei, who identified himself as former Kamajor chiefdom commander, has told the court that first accused Hinga Norman never took part in the planning of the 1997 and 1998 Tongo attack as alleged by witnesses that have testified at the Special Court.

The witness who was being cross examined yesterday at the Special Court trial chamber one, by Prosecuting Counsel Joseph Kamara, told the court that the Tongo attack was planned by him together with other senior CDF com-

manders to dislodge the junta forces. Mr. Sei also told the court that Norman had never supplied arms and ammunition for the attack, and that neither he nor his co-accused persons Fofana and Kondewa participated in the planning of the attack. "We planned the attack in Panguma," the witness said, noting that nothing was done at Base Zero for the attack as had been alleged by the prosecution.

The former kamajor commander admitted that the attack was launched by boys under his com-

mand together with other kamajor fighters. He further noted that he personally, never took part in any of the attacks in Tongo, but that reports were later made to him by his boys. The witness also denied the killing of one Brima Conteh, by one of his boys. He said that his fighters used single barrels for the attack which resulted in heavy casualties on both sides of the fighting forces after they (kamajors) had captured the town.

"I strolled round the town I did not see any civilian casualty," the witness said.

Exclusive

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

What if Norman Dies?

The deteriorating health condition of the Special Court indictee, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, who was the CDF National Coordinator and Minister of Internal Affairs, in the Kabbah government continues to dominate newspaper headlines.

Chief Norman, as he is fondly called, was one among the three, who were indicted by the Special Court for bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the CDF outfit, in the course of the civil war in Sierra Leone.

Since his indictment a little over two years ago, there has been mixed reactions from various quarters over whether or not Mr. Norman, deserves been brought to book, for what many people saw as a brave and noble role played by him to muster civil support in defence of Sierra Leone which at the time, was on the verge of dismemberment from the world community of nations by the combined forces of the RUF/AFRC. The two onslaughts on the capital Freetown by the rebel forces saw Kabbah and his government fleeing for refuge in neighbouring Guinea. Mr. Norman, in defence of democracy, the maintenance of which at the time was the inevitable bench mark stipulated by the country's main benefactor Britain, for support and funding for the rehabilitation of devastated public and private infrastructures and of course, the kick-start of development programmes in Sierra Leone, and with the blessing of the Sierra Leone government, garnered civil support and cooperation to flush out the marauders and eventually, leading to the restoration of the Kabbah government in power.

For over two years now, Mr. Norman has been kept behind bars for what many described as his rendering of a patriotic service to his country, with limited access to his family and the basic essentials of life. Now reports say he is ailing and dying in detention and with the Special Court still to deliver a verdict.

What would be the fate of our fledging democracy and the people of Sierra Leone, should Mr. Norman die in custody now, more so when he still enjoys the respect of his followers who times without number, have called for his unconditional release?

Yes, Britain has assured this nation that they would come in handy to defend the country in the event of any arms unrest from any quarters, external or internal. But experience has taught us that such support, more often than not, comes when it is already too late. Moreover, the last thing that Sierra Leoneans would wish is for this country to once more slide to another vicious cycle of what ever form of unrest that would lead to blood letting. This is why, we at The Exclusive are calling on the authorities to make sure that the Norman issue is gingerly handled in order to prevent a devastating backlash of the aims and objectives of the Special Court. We are saying this out of experience quite from what we witnessed at the peak of the war.

The first thing Britain and America did when it became obvious that the rebels would over run the city was to evacuate their nationals before coming to our aid militarily and I bet it is the same thing that they would do, should the Norman issue gets out of hand. What will be our fate in the interim? We are concerned.

Sierra News
Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Special Court gets new President

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Spectator
Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Sierra Leonean tops Special Court



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The Australian

Wednesday, 17 May 2006

Balkans overdue their day in court

The Hague should relinquish control of war crimes trials, says Adam M. Smith

FOUR years, 466 hearing days, more than 300 witnesses and more than \$US200million (\$260 million) after it began in The Hague, case number IT-02-54, Prosecutor v Slobodan Milosevic, was officially declared over on March 14, three days after Milosevic was found dead of an apparent heart attack in prison.

There will be no verdict. Following the dictates of international law, the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia does not prosecute defendants in absentia, which means that the Butcher of the Balkans died legally innocent of any of the war crimes charges so painstakingly and expensively arrayed against him. This result has led to disquiet and dissatisfaction in the halls of The Hague tribunal and, perhaps more important, at home in the Balkans. Images of thousands of weeping Serbs on the streets of Belgrade and proclamations of Slobo's martyr status by Serb hardliners have left many in the Balkans feeling robbed, not just by Milosevic's ill-timed demise but also by The Hague. Indeed, many think The Hague's days as the primary venue for war crimes trials are over. But how will justice be served in the future?

Michael Johnson may have the answer. When I first met Johnson at his office in Sarajevo in March last year, he was covered in sawdust and, after a quick introduction, he excused himself to move a safe. "Sometimes, if you want it done right ..." he said as he rolled up his sleeves. Outside his office doors, construction crews roamed the hallway, labouring to put the finishing touches to Bosnia and Herzegovina's new war crimes court, which Johnson, an American lawyer, had been asked to set up by the UN representative in Sarajevo.

At first glance, what Johnson and his staff have built may not seem novel. Architecturally, the courthouse, sitting on a hillside overlooking Sarajevo, fits unobtrusively into the Bosnian capital's Istanbul-meets-Innsbruck skyline. Even inside the building there is little to distinguish it from the world's other war crimes courts. Visitors familiar with the UN's Yugoslavia tribunal in The Hague, its Rwanda tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania or even the new International Criminal Court will immediately feel at home.

Johnson spent many years working at UN tribunals. And his decisions to place the polished-wood defence and prosecution stands at a particular angle in each court, to install a bevy of flat-panel monitors throughout the tribunal, even to use UN-quality microphones and translation headphones, confirm the emergence of a kind of war crimes chic in interior design.

In its operations, however, the court is unique for Bosnia and for the world. Unlike the UN's Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court (which is investigating Darfur) or South Africa's non-judicial, post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this court is a domestic judicial body. It uses existing domestic law and adheres to existing domestic judicial procedures. Rather than having the international community extradite and try war criminals, the new court raises the possibility of states dispensing post-conflict justice on their own terms, in their own courts, with only limited international involvement. It is a long overdue experiment and one that may hold the key to allowing states in the Balkans and elsewhere to deal with their vexed pasts.

Since 1993, The Hague tribunal has convicted more than 40 individuals who perpetrated war crimes during the 1991-95 Yugoslav civil war. Though most Bosnians supported the tribunal at first, since the 1995 Dayton Accords ended the conflict Bosnian citizens have expressed increasing dissatisfaction that they are standing on the sidelines in the search for justice. Not only is The Hague a world away from the conflict zone but also outside its translators.

Almost no Balkan citizen has been employed by the tribunal. A former Hague prosecutor argued that such discriminatory hiring was necessary to stem leaks of sensitive information. Regardless, in Bosnia, which is run as a fiefdom under the rule of a UN-authorized High Representative, this judicial impotence compounds a more pervasive emasculation of almost all government and civil society.

The Hague tribunal has built an impressive body of international criminal law and has incarcerated several war criminals. But other goals of criminal law - reconciliation and deterrence, to name two - have remained effectively unmet. The UN seems to agree: its chief legal officer, assistant secretary-general for legal affairs Ralph Zacklin, has all but disowned the tribunal, calling its approach "no longer politically or financially viable".

A senior UN official in the region is even more direct, bluntly admitting to me that, although the tribunal has taken some of the Balkans' biggest thugs off the streets, it has not repaired Yugoslav society. "The [Hague] has failed; ironically, the Balkans are probably more likely to Balkanise now than at any time since Dayton," he laments.

The establishment of the new court was triggered by these mounting frustrations, as well as by the international community's fatigue at funding the remarkably expensive Hague tribunal (more than \$US250million for 2006-07). The UN has decided to conclude the tribunal's trials by 2008; in preparation, cases yet to be heard - and thousands of others that have been investigated but in which convictions have not yet been issued - will be sent back to domestic courts in the Balkans. Johnson's new Sarajevo court was designed, in part, to handle these cases.

The case transfers, however, have been stalled, largely because of suspicions that ethnic minority defendants will not receive fair trials at the hands of ethnic majority judges. Such apprehension is not without merit. Immediately after the conflict, Croatia began a

series of war crimes trials of its own, almost always prosecuting Serbs. The cases had a conviction rate of 90 per cent and often ended with absurd results. In a proceeding against Svetozar Karan, a Serb, the court found him not only guilty of war crimes, but also of the entire 500-year history of Serb crimes against Croatia.

The new Sarajevo court is designed to overcome such problems. Through a domestic court, the Bosnian Government received a \$US16 million grant (largely from the US) to build a tribunal whose facilities and technology equalled those of The Hague. To manage potential bias, court personnel have been recruited from across Bosnia and from abroad. International judges sit alongside domestic jurists, and locals and foreigners work throughout the tribunal. But, unlike other aspects of the international presence in Bosnia, the international role in the court is limited by a statutory provision calling for full domestication of court functions within five years.

The court has had a rocky start. Since opening last spring, it has battled a corruption investigation (allegations have been made against one of the international judges), an almost absent public profile (recent surveys indicate that fewer than 60 per cent of Bosnians are aware that the new court exists), and a tense relationship with the still-functioning Hague court.

But the court has also quickly increased its staff (it already employs several hundred) and it has made special efforts to ensure that local staff are not mere tokens; locals work at all levels of the court hierarchy.

After 50 years of communism, five years of war and the past decade of international control, Bosnia has developed a legal and political order that is decidedly not its own, from the country's new criminal code (which, by a strange twist of legal fate, is partially modelled on Alaska's) to its thoroughly compromised national symbols (which include a national anthem sung without any words). The court is an attempt to rebuild some local ownership over the state.

Its first real tests, now under way, are the transferred trials of two Bosnian Serbs - Radovan Stankovic and Gojko Jankovic - both accused of the systematic enslavement and rape of Muslim women. About a dozen further cases are set to be transferred from The Hague later this year. Already, the court represents a new chapter in home-grown justice for Bosnia and Herzegovina and a new model for other corners of the globe scarred by crimes against humanity. "It is time for justice to come home," an exasperated law student at the University of Sarajevo told me when I met a group of students at the law college, down the street from the bombed-out national library. "It is time for us to do some of this ourselves."

Adam M. Smith is a Chayes fellow at Harvard Law School.

New York Times
Wednesday, 17 May 2006

An American Embassy in Tripoli

There's something about the news that the United States is renewing diplomatic relations with Libya after more than 25 years that justifiably leaves a lot of Americans feeling dissatisfied. For almost three decades, Libya has been synonymous with terrorism, fanaticism and undiluted anti-Americanism.

This is the country that used its vast oil wealth to finance Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's fantasies of international revolutionary leadership by sponsoring coups, invasions, assassination attempts and terrorist atrocities across the world. Americans got a taste of Colonel Qaddafi's methods in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, an attack that killed 270 people. A year later, another Libyan terrorist bomb killed 170 people on a French airliner over Africa.

Libyans themselves have endured decades of assassinations, abductions and torture. Somehow, the idea that this can all be washed down the memory drain with new diplomatic flourishes doesn't seem right.

Yet the reality is that the world has changed immeasurably since the days when relations were so bad that President Ronald Reagan bombed targets in Tripoli and Benghazi after accusing Libya of ordering the German disco bombing that killed three people. There is the obvious: the Sept. 11 attack, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions. But beyond that, the truth is that Libya isn't so much of a player in the world of state-sponsored terrorism anymore.

In recent years, Colonel Qaddafi has withdrawn from direct involvement in international terrorism. He also agreed in 2003 to dismantle Libya's unconventional weapons programs, and all reports say he has done just that. In addition, he has apparently refrained from channelling any funds into financing weapons programs or terrorism.

Colonel Qaddafi's one-time protégé, Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president and warlord, has now been neutered and is behind bars, where he belongs. There is a strong case for easing Libya's economic isolation and improving the lot of its people.

But the Bush administration's decision to make nice with Libya does highlight the apparent schizophrenia of America's relations with other countries — like Iran. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in announcing on Monday the restoration of full diplomatic ties with Libya, called Libya an "important model as nations around the world press for changes in behaviour by the Iranian and North Korean regimes."

That raises this question: Hasn't the breakthrough come about because the United States has held direct talks with Libyan officials? That certainly isn't the case with Iran. Perhaps it should be.

All Africa.com

Tuesday, 16 May 2006

SLPP's Deadly Mistakes Committed By Erudite Lawyers

OPINION

By Abraham Alimu Jalloh

The Sierra Leone People's Party, which was formed in 1951 under the auspices of the most revered medical doctor, Sir Augustus Strieby Margai, gained independence for Sierra Leone from British colonialism in 1961. Sir Milton became active in politics immediately after the Second World War when he joined the Sierra Leone Organization Society. His reign has been described as the golden age of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone's woes started when Lawyer Sir Albert Margai succeeded his brother, Dr. Sir Milton Margai in 1964, which saw the demise of the SLPP in 1967.

For 29 years the SLPP wallowed in the political wilderness. Its members started to change political colours from green to blue, to red, to yellow, and back to green like chameleons to regain the SLPP'S Miltonic glory.

The 1996 general elections overseen by the NPRC military junta saw Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabba, a legal luminary who had served the United Nations for about two decades, as leader of SLPP and head of state of the republic of Sierra Leone.

With corruption and " I don't care attitude" still rife in the Sierra Leone society, there are two regrettable mistakes that would haunt the SLPP for years committed by two legal luminaries, Pa Kabba and Solomon Berewa, heading the SLPP and the Nation.

It was Pa Kabba as president and Solomon Berewa as Attorney General and Minister of Justice who requested the United Nations to institute the Special Court for Sierra Leone to try those who committed atrocities and crimes against humanity during the RUF/AFRC massacre against Sierra Leoneans.

The government of the United States of America as one of the financiers for the Special Court clearly indicated that none of its citizens would face the Court either as victims, witnesses or perpetrators.

It was the prerogative of Pa Kabba as president of Sierra Leone and host for the Special Court, and Solomon Berewa as Attorney General and Minister of Justice to spell out their own interest for all those who fought to restore the SLPP government to be excluded from the trials. The United Nations excluded Ecomog (Economic Community Monitoring Group) from the trials.

It is a thought provoking debate that will last decades for two legal luminaries to sign a document that landed their own SLPP kith and kin (Hinga Norman, Allieu Kondowa and Moinina Fofanah) in jail.

It is a bitter lesson to be noted by every Sierra Leonean that even when your neighbour's house is in danger, you would sit back and watch. Because trying to save him or her would land you in jail.

Regrettably, the incarceration of Norman and his colleagues is going to cost the SLPP dearly its Mende and civil defense forces' vote in the 2007 general elections!

Hinga Norman has named Pa Kabba as a potential witness in his Special Court trial. Lawyer Carew as Attorney General and Minister of Justice is feigning defense on behalf of the Pa even when the Pa himself has on many occasions stated that no body is above the Special Court. Why then is the Pa shying away from the Special Court he so requested for?

Just like running from one's evil deeds, one regrettably mistakenly follows another to the detriment of the SLPP.

I wonder if the Pa and his vice Solo B. were aware of the 1991 constitution, which states that no member in government service will run for an office in the party without resigning his government post a year prior to the party's convention.

Hinga Norman (Norma in Mende stands for stubbornness, pressing or agitating for something) is still hell bent that Solo B. and members of the SLPP conclave violated the SLPP constitution to vote in Solo B. as party leader while he was and still is the vice president of the republic of Sierra Leone.

How are these two legal luminaries (Pa Kabba and Solo B.) going to convince Sierra Leoneans to vote for CONTINUITY. A continued bastardization of the constitution? A continued ungratefulness to members of the party who sacrificed their lives, energy, money and time for the party's interest? A continued calculated humiliation of potential party candidates for the presidency?

Sierra Leoneans need CHANGE to uphold the tenets of their party and the Nation's constitutions.

Pa Kabba must face the Special Court he created. A cook must taste his food! Solo B. must respect the SLPP constitution for him to become president.

When Napoleon and Squealer in George Orwell's magnum opus ANIMAL FARM were constantly bastardizing the constitution, it came to a boiling point that even Benjamin the donkey could not stand it any more when a clause was added to the seventh commandment overnight which read " All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others". There was huffing and sniffing in Animal kingdom!

Is that the scenario we are facing in Sierra Leone? It is the moral duty of lawyers, especially political lawyers, to interpret the constitution, not to misinterpret it for their morbid interest. How long sweet mother Salone?

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 16 May 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Kadhafi faults Nigeria for handing Taylor to war crimes tribunal

MONROVIA, May 16, 2006 (AFP) - Libyan leader Moammar Kadhafi has accused Nigeria of "betraying African solidarity" for agreeing to extradite former Liberian president Charles Taylor, now awaiting trial for war crimes, a Monrovia daily reported Tuesday. "Taylor's arrest and detention is a betrayal of African solidarity," said Kadhafi, a close ally of Taylor, in a speech he made at a dinner honoring Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during a weekend visit to Tripoli.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast loyalists, rebels to hammer out disarmament terms

ABIDJAN, May 15, 2006 (AFP) - Loyalist and rebel military leaders in divided Ivory Coast will meet Wednesday to hammer out the terms for disarmament and a critical citizenship census ahead of October elections, several sources said Monday. The heads of the National Armed Forces, loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo, and the 42,500-strong New Force combatants, which control northern Ivory Coast, "will meet Wednesday to see which activities will accompany the launching of the pilot phase of the identification operation," slated for Thursday, senior rebel leader Karim Ouattara told AFP.

Local Media – Newspapers

ECOWAS Calls for Lifting of Sanctions on Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, Heritage, The Forum, The Informer and The Monitor)

- Addressing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Foreign Ministers' summit in Monrovia yesterday, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Mohammed Ibn Chambas stressed that the UN Security Council needs to lift the sanctions on Liberia's diamond and timber industries to enable the government to execute its programs and improve the living standards of its citizens—who languish in poverty.

President Says Liberia Off Limits for Wars in Sub-Region

(Daily Observer, The News, New Democrat and Heritage)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf told the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers' summit yesterday that Liberia would never again serve as a launching pad for wars in the sub-region.
- She recommitted Liberia to play its historic role as a good ambassador of the African people, adding that Liberia stood for the continent at the League of Nations and at the founding of the United Nations.

ECOWAS to Set Up Task Force to Prevent Armed Conflicts

(New Democrat)

- ECOWAS will set up a task force to prevent armed conflicts in the sub-region, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Chambas said in Monrovia yesterday. According to Dr. Chambas, the task force will be comprised of 6,500 personnel--1,500 civilians and 5000 military personnel.

House Speaker Concurs with Advocates for War Crimes Court

(New Democrat, Heritage and The Monitor)

- Receiving a petition from a group advocating the establishment of a war crimes court in Liberia, House Speaker Edwin Snowe pledged to support the initiative by lobbying his colleagues to pass a resolution endorsing the petition. He said that people who committed grievous crimes against humanity and are masquerading as decent citizens need to face justice.

UNDP Staff Member Victimized By Angry Crowd in Bong County

(The News, New Democrat, Heritage and The Forum)

- UNDP said in a press release yesterday that it was temporarily suspending its Reintegration and Rehabilitation program at its Bong County office following an assault on its Field Officer Alexander Anokam in Sergeant Kollie Town. UNDP said that it had launched an investigation into the incident. *The News* reported that Mr. Anokam was brutalized by an angry crowd, which accused him of involvement in the abduction of a male resident of the area. The crowd also reportedly ransacked the UNDP office.

Over 700 Ex-Combatants Acquire Vocational Skills

(The Informer)

- As part of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration program, the Monrovia Vocational Training Center over the weekend graduated over 700 ex-combatants and war affected youth, a UNDP press release said.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President Says ECOWAS Peace Initiative Unprecedented

- In her address to open a summit of West African foreign ministers in Monrovia yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played an unprecedented role in restoring order to Liberia. President Johnson-Sirleaf told the foreign ministers that the sub-region was moving away from violence to social development.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Sub-Regional Foreign Ministers Want End to UN Sanction on Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Former Foreign Minister Says Liberians Ready for Reconstruction

- Former Foreign Minister H. Boima Fahnbulleh said that Liberia was now stable and ready for reconstruction. Dr. Fahnbulleh told journalists after the summit of West African foreign ministers in Monrovia yesterday that Liberia was positively engaged with the ECOWAS to ensure the practice of good governance.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

UN Travel Ban Is Divisive Says Lawmaker

- In an interview after the meeting in Monrovia of foreign ministers from West Africa, House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe said that the continuous travel restriction on selected individuals amounted to an attempt by the UN to divide Liberians.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Interior Ministry Uncovers Over 90 Unclaimed Salary Checks

- Internal Affairs Minister Ambullai Johnson told journalists in an interview that the ministry had uncovered over 90 unclaimed salary checks during its disbursement exercise and added that the ministry would carefully study its payroll to weed out ghost names.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Run-Off Requires Following Rivercess County Legislative By-Election

- In a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the National Elections Commission said that a run-off was likely required following the Rivercess County legislative by-election. The run-off is necessary to determine a winner since none of the candidates obtained an absolute majority of the votes last week.
- Unity Party's candidate Elizabeth Williams won 41 percent of the votes, followed by Charles Bartee of the New Deal Movement and William Knowlden of the National Patriotic Party.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Lawmaker Dismisses Claims of Child Trafficking in Liberia

- The House of Representatives Committee on Health and Social Welfare Chairman Edwin Gaye has dismissed allegations of child trafficking in Liberia. Representative Gaye said that the Committee's investigation found no evidence of child trafficking.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

Ex-Combatants Attack Local Coordinator of NCDDRR

- Briefing journalists in Monrovia recently, the National Commission on Disarmament, Demolition, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) Executive Director Moses Jarbo said that some ex-combatants in Maryland County attacked the Commission's Coordinator for the county, Matthew Jaye, and destroyed its properties.

STAR RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

Bong County Citizens Want Peacekeeper Expelled

- A Star Radio correspondent said that some citizens of Bong County have called for the expulsion from the county of an UNMIL peacekeeper for allegedly attempting to abduct their kinsman for ritual purposes.

UNDP Field Officer Injured in Riot of Bong County Citizens

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