

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



Ferry terminal at Lungi

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:

Thursday, 17 May 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court Spokesman off to The Hague

The spokesperson and also Public Affairs Officer of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Peter Anderson depart the shores of Sierra Leone today to The Hague.

Speaking to this press, Anderson stated that Special Court is and will be in charge of the trials of Charles Taylor due to start June 2nd in The Hague. He is going to The Hague to make arrangement for journalists in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

According to Anderson the International Criminal

Court had earlier stated that they should be in charge of Charles Taylor's trial but the Special Court in Sierra Leone did not agree to that arrangement. The Special Court agreed for Charles Taylor to be tried in The Hague because of security concerns raised by the Mano River Union

and the sub-region as a whole.

The Special Court has hired Solomon Moriba to be the outreach press officer whose duty will be to assist journalists in terms of materials about the trial in The Hague.

Judges of Chamber Trial II and other Special Court staff will be going to The Hague to work.

Independent Observer
Thursday, 17 May 2007

June 20 At 11 O'clock... Special Court Delivers 1st Judgement

First judgement of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, will be handed down next month.

On Monday, the court's Public Affairs Officer, Peter Anderson gave no-

tice that on June 20, the court shall deliver its judgement in the trial of the AFRC indictees at 11 a.m.

The three whose fate would be decided on that day are Ibrahim

Bazzy Koroma, Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Kanu alias 5-5.

If found guilty; the three will serve their jail sentence outside

Sierra Leone.

Before now, Sweden was one country that was willing to accommodate the indictees serving their imprisonment term in their country.

Note: this entire article is based on a short text message regarding trial chambers scheduling order.

Standard Times
Thursday, 17 May 2007

ECOWAS Court on sensitization tour

BY ISHMAEL DUMBUYA

The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice is presently in a sensitization tour in the country. The sensitization tour began on the 14th of May 2007 and is expected to end on the 18th of May 2007. A high delegation of the Court's President, Vice President and Judges formed part of the sensitization tour. The theme of the tour is "protecting the rights of community citizens under ECOWAS treaty and protocols".

The Court is created by virtue of Article 15 (1) of the revised treaty followed by Protocol A/P.1/7/91 of 6 July 1991 complemented by the protocols of 19 January 2005 and 14 June 2006.

The Community Court of justice was put in place by the Twenty Fourth- Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held at Bamako in Mali on the 15th & 16th December 2000. It became operational on January 2001, the date the judges were sworn in. it was signed by ECOWAS member states.

The judgement of the Court is however final as Article 15 (4) states that "judgments of the Court of Justice shall be binding on the Member states, the institutions of the Community and on individuals and corporate bodies"

The President of the Court Hon. Justice Aminata Malle Sanogo at a press conference held at the

Ministry of information conference hall yesterday stated that as the legal organ of the community, the Court has been entrusted with the duty of defining the norms for the protection of the rights of the citizens and to see to the proper interpretation and application of the provisions of the treaty and its related instruments.

She also noted that relations and cooperation in cases of prevalence may arise in questions of referral for preliminary determination by letters and methods of implementation.

She added that since ECOWAS Court is the only one qualified to interpret texts adopted by or under the auspices of ECOWAS, the national courts are obliged to stay their proceedings when provisions in an ECOWAS test which professes to propose a resolution of any dispute brought before them tend to be ambiguous and to refer the issue to the community court for interpretation.

The competence of the court in respect of the interpretation of the provisions of the Revised Treaty and instruments adopted by or under the auspices of ECOWAS is an exclusively reserved power. In other words, the interpretation given by the court shall prevail and effectively take precedence over decisions of the national courts.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 16 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Machete-wielding pirates steal ship off Liberia

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, May 15 (Reuters) - Pirates armed with machetes boarded a broken-down cargo ship off Liberia's capital Monrovia, beat up the crew and later towed it away towards Ivory Coast, the vessel's Bulgarian owner said on Tuesday.

International Clips on West Africa

First Sierra Leone war crimes court verdict due in June

FREETOWN, May 15, 2007 (AFP) - The UN-backed court in Sierra Leone will next month hand down its first verdicts on war crimes trials stemming from the west African country's brutal decade-long civil unrest, a statement said Tuesday. The court will rule whether three members of the former rebel Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) that toppled the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in 1997 are guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

VOA 16 May 2007

Disgruntled Guinea Soldiers Press for Back Pay, Wage Increases

By Howard Lesser, Washington, DC

In Guinea, a round of talks between disgruntled soldiers and the country's president and new Defense Minister have ended without signs of a breakthrough. The twice-delayed meeting followed more than a week of rioting, looting, and militant protests by troops demanding 100-thousand dollars in salary raises that they say President Lansana Conte promised them 11 years ago.

Local Media – Newspaper

Two Men Arrested for Stealing Russian Vessel

(The News, New Democrat, Heritage, The Analyst and Public Agenda)

- Police in Monrovia have apprehended two persons, a police officer and an ex-policeman in connection with the stealing of a vessel, MV Tahoma Reefer, which is owned and captained by a Russian national.
- Police identified the two men as Bai Dixon, a member of the Special Task Force Unit of the Liberia National Police and Alfred Tickey, a deactivated police officer who have already been charged with criminal conspiracy and would be prosecuted.

Broadway Gets Green light to Explore Offshore Oil in Liberia

(National Chronicle)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has signed into law an Act which gives Broadway Consolidated PLC the exploration rights to drill for off-shore oil, some 20 to 30 miles off the coast of Liberia.

Another Liberian Conference Gains Momentum in U.S.A.

(The Analyst)

- A pending conference aimed at encouraging humanitarian and private sector investments in Liberia is said to be gaining momentum in the United States of America.
- The proposed investment conference on Liberia which is organized by an American businessman, Maurice Morton, is scheduled to be held in Detroit Michigan, in October. The conference comes barely four months after the partnership forum on Liberia which generated millions of United States dollars in debt relief.

Repatriation of Liberian Refugees Ends in June

(The Analyst)

- [sic:] The repatriation of UNHCR-supported Liberian refugees still in Ghana ends June 30. Large scale resettlement has ended. According to the Public Affairs Office, UNHCR has helped more than 90,000 refugees return home since October, 2004. Some 200,000 have returned on their own without assistance. The UN Refugee Agency said the United States of America has spent US\$30 million on programmes in Liberia helping returnees reintegrate.

Guthrie and Rubber Planters' Agreement Backfires

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] The rubber farm management contract signed months ago by the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and the Rubber Planters Association of Liberia for the latter to manage the Guthrie rubber farm has backfired. The Minister of Agriculture, Dr. J. Chris Toe, apologized to members of the House of Representatives for not consulting them. Dr. Toe also admitted that neither the Ministry of Justice nor the Minister of Finance had signed the Agreement.

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

Police Arrest Suspected Thieves of Russian-owned Vessel in Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Todee Citizens Fear Activities of Armed Robbers

- The citizens of Marquoi Clan in Todee District complained to police that men armed with machetes including cutlasses, spears and other dangerous instruments attempted kidnapping a resident of the Dennis Farm area in the Clan. The District's spokesman Alieu Sheriff stated that the near victim escaped when, in self-defence, he raised his cutlass at the alleged kidnappers.
- As a result of the security problem, he added, parents in the Clan stopped their children from attending classes while farmers have halted farming activities temporarily.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Former President Blah Wants Retirement Benefits

- In a letter to the Senate, former Liberian President Moses Blah requested the Senate to intervene for him to get his benefits as former President of Liberia. He contended that as a former President, he needed to be paid at least US\$25,000 annually as benefit and 50 percent of the salary of a sitting President.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Cuttington Resumes Lectures following Closure over Student Riots

- Cuttington University authorities announced that academic activities have resumed at the University in Bong County, after two weeks of closure when students rioted for improved computer and other facilities on campus. As a result of the riot, the University administration expelled a student, suspended some and made others to file "Behaviors Bonds" before resuming classes.

(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.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 16 May 2007

Former Lurd Chief of Staff Dies

Former Chief of Staff of the Liberian United for Reconstruction and Development (LURD), a rebel movement that forced the exit of Charles Taylor's rule in Liberia has died.

He has since been buried in his hometown, Barkedou, Lofa County. Gen. Mohammed Sheriff alias Cobra died in Monrovia on Saturday, May 12, 2007 after a period of illness.

He was 45. Sources said it was the deceased's wish to be laid to rest in this hometown. The late rebel commander led the LURD forces at several frontlines including the capture of Bushrod Island and parts of Monrovia.

According to Lusine Dolley, brother-in-law of the deceased, cobra's body was accompanied to Barkedou Saturday for burial by family members, some officials of government, former commanders and soldiers of the disbanded LURD.

"Gen. Sheriff will be remembered as a disciplinarian when he served as the top commander of the movement that forced Charles Taylor into exile and brought an end to the 14-year old civil war in Liberia," said Jusu, a former LURD rebel.

The late rebel Commander acquired the name "Cobra" because of his military accomplishments. He was one among many others who stood firmly for the defense of his country to restore our pride and dignity.

Prior to becoming a member of LURD, he once served as a member of the Black Beret, a military group that was recruited and trained by the former Liberian interim government headed by Dr. Amos Sawyer.

Some of his comrades in arm vividly remembered the leadership role Sheriff played during the leadership crisis that threatened to cause split between LURD's political leadership in Monrovia headed Sekou Conneh, former LURD leader and the movement's senior commanders who rallied behind Aisha, Sekou's estranged wife.

The crisis stemmed from the approach in which LURD's positions allocated in the transitional government were been distributed by the political leadership, an event which 40 of LURD's military commanders urged Aisha to take over control of the group from her increasingly invisible husband.

The commanders, who included Mohammed "Cobra" Sheriff, accused Sekou Conneh of not looking after their interests and accepting money in exchange for positions allocated to LURD in the transitional government.

The row was amicably resolved after intense negotiations spearheaded by the former transitional government headed by Gyude Bryant, which intervened and brought the two parties together.

Also in August 2003, Gen Sheriff came to the spotlight after Charles Taylor met some of his senior military commanders on a Sunday evening just after abandoning plans to make a valedictory radio broadcast to the nation.

But, he instead, distributed a cassette to foreign reporters in which he blamed the United States, Britain and Guinea for forcing him out of power and into exile. Taylor at the time declared: "God willing, I will be back."

The LURD military commander at the time in Monrovia rejected Taylor's plan to have Moses Blah become his replacement. Gen. Sheriff declared he would not accept Moses Blah as Taylor's substitute, after Taylor announced that his vice president was going to run the affairs of the country following his exit.

Sheriff at the time argued that the simple fact of Mr. Taylor handing over power to Blah would not be sufficient grounds for him to hand over control of Northwestern Monrovia to the peacekeepers and retreat to the city limits.

He cited serious security concern, adding, "We cannot accept this tricky arrangement where the same people who we fought against are going to head the interim government," he told IRIN. "You do not reject the father and accept the son."

"The late Cobra was very optimistic, practical and brave in his military missions as much as we knew him. He will always be remembered for his commitment and gallantry in his military performances," eulogizes QGMAA's interim President Lasana Trawally.

He expressed profound regrets for the untimely home-going of "our brother and friend. May his soul rest in perpetual peace and grant him save haven, and have our own lives prolong and end in good faith."

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Wednesday, 16 May 2007

<http://www.radionetherlands.nl/specialseries/changingarmies/070516army>

Armies in Africa - an expert's view

50 years of independent armed forces in Africa
by Kate Huber and Hélène Michaud

This month Radio Netherlands Worldwide is focusing on the changing role of the world's armed forces. More and more, the enemy is no longer the army of another state but rather a terrorist network or groups of armed civilians.

National armies are also increasingly involved in peace-enforcing and peacekeeping operations which require different skills.

In Africa, most countries gained their independence in the past 50 years and set up armed forces as a sign of sovereignty. So, what's been the role of the armed forces in Africa and how has it evolved over the past 50 years? To find out, RNW's Hélène Michaud spoke to Stephen Ellis, researcher at the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden, here in The Netherlands.



Can modern African armies help to contribute to the construction of countries?

"Governments have often tried to turn militaries into development units over the years, but that's a rather contradictory aspect of politics. As I see it, development is a social process and armies are not the main force in that process."

Increasingly, African armies are involved in peacekeeping missions, in preventing conflicts. Isn't this one of the most important developments in Africa in the last 50 years?

"Yes, this is a very important aspect and peacekeeping missions have become a major task for African armies. The last time I checked, there were seven UN peacekeeping missions in Africa in which African troops were serving. And African forces have previously worked under the AU in places such as Burundi and Darfur. This has led to many discussions about the role that African forces may play in the future in peacekeeping missions throughout the continent."

How do African armies perform alongside Western armies that are often better paid, more equipped and have more training?

"To put it crudely, Western armies are extremely effective in destroying things with a maximum efficiency. But when it comes to talking to people and getting to know what's going on, African armies are much more effective. They may speak the language or know the local customs. They certainly have a better understanding of the dynamics of African life, and, after all, cultivating good relations with local populations can be key to a successful peacekeeping operation."



You were involved as the director of the Africa programme with the International Crisis Group. How did that change your perceptions of African armies?

"It didn't. However, it did change my perception of what is currently needed for peacekeeping in Africa. My general conclusion was that a combination of African troops and troops from outside Africa is necessary."

"There are many times in peacekeeping missions when advanced training and specific supplies are required that can be readily provided from abroad but which few African armies possess. Yet, African armies are essential when it comes to knowledge of African languages and cultures, social backgrounds, and terrain. So there really needs to be a cooperation between both African and foreign military aid."

What do you think of prospects for a full-fledged pan-African army?

"Although there are plans for an African force, we're a long way off. The idea is that a united African army would emerge that would be divided up into five brigades. These would be stand-by forces that could be activated to intervene at a moment's notice to stabilize situations in their region. However, I've talked to an officer who has been intimately involved in the planning of such a full-fledged army, but he was saying that even in the best of circumstances, you're not going to have these types of forces for at least another ten years."

"As you can see with other proposals to create united military organisations, plans for multinational forces are always contentious. Sovereign states in Africa as well as other parts of the world don't easily give up the control of their armies. It continually causes political tensions."

What do you see as the most important change that warfare has taken?

"Warfare is something that increasingly involves the civilian population. We can see this in Iraq and Afghanistan, where professional Western armies are fighting an enemy who uses guerrilla warfare techniques. While this makes combat extremely difficult for professional armies, it also has enormous implications for political and social relations and structures within a country."

What role do women play?

"Women tend not to be armed combatants since they don't generally have much training. If we take Liberia, for example, in the 1990s, only about 10 to 12 percent of the combatants were women and maybe one or two of them had been senior officers before the war. But women do play a vital role in warfare, although they are more often victims or camp supporters, cooking and campaigning and such."

"Women also seem to play a prominent role in supporting ideologies. However, it is unclear as to whether that ideology supports the war or tries to discourage fighting. In any case, they do have a specific and vital role in transmitting ideologies."

What can you say about the future of African armies?

"They are here to stay! A professional army still signifies a sovereign state. Even though the presence of a military continues to cause tensions between the armed forces and civil politics, most countries feel they need an army. Again, if we take Liberia as an example, after Charles Taylor was obliged to resign in 2003, there were doubts as to whether Liberia needed an army. Whatever the debates were, the result was that there is one being trained right now."

"On the professional front, I think that African armed forces are going to have to spend more and more of their time on international peacekeeping missions. This is presently receiving a lot of international attention and encouragement, not only on the level of logistics and training, but especially on the level of the political agreements that ultimately support maintaining peace."

The New Republic

Thursday, 15 May 2007

Robert Mugabe shouldn't get immunity.

At long last, we seem to be approaching--fitfully--global agreement that Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's elected dictator, must go. He is presiding over 80 percent unemployment, an inflation rate of 1,700 percent, and shortages of nearly all basic goods. In response to his troubles, Mugabe has attacked and injured opposition leaders, opened fire on protestors, and beaten those who resist arrest. In a comparison that is as harsh as it gets in southern Africa, clerics have equated his tyrannical tactics to the worst of Pretoria's apartheid regime.

And, since many of his critics now believe that toppling his regime--and getting a fresh start for Zimbabwe--is more important than holding him to account, there are increasing calls for Mugabe to be forgiven. Zimbabwe's opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai--whose skull was cracked open in police custody last month--has hinted that Mugabe should be offered immunity if he agrees to step down. The International Crisis Group, in a March report, likewise assumed that immunity would be part of the solution. It is widely surmised that, if current efforts by South African President Thabo Mbeki help end to Mugabe's rule, protection from prosecution may be part of the deal.

But, while immunity may seem a tempting solution--no worse than the way many other tyrants have left office--offering it to Mugabe now would represent a big step backward. As African countries struggle to crack down on corruption and clean up messes in their own neighborhood, allowing one of the continent's notorious strongmen to walk free--without ever holding him to account--would simply enable future despots. Mugabe missed his chance to take advantage of a long era of impunity for brutal heads of state--and, now, it's too late to make an exception.

An immunity offer has obvious appeal: If Mugabe can be coaxed to leave Harare voluntarily, he could obviate the need for either an internal coup or aggressive international action (by either South Africa's neighbors or the international community). Allowing Mugabe to while away the rest of his days (and, remember, he is already 83) on a beachfront may seem like a small price to pay for the return of stability in Zimbabwe. It may be of particular appeal to Mugabe's neighbors, who wish to resolve the region's crisis without turning on a longtime friend. (Solidarity with Mugabe, who helped throw off the colonial yoke of white-minority rule in Rhodesia, has stood in the way regional pressure.)

But while a temporary exile may be needed to get Mugabe to step aside, it should not be accompanied by permanent impunity for his crimes. Mugabe has orchestrated state-sponsored assassination, uprooted entire populations, and starved political opponents. The victims of these high crimes deserve justice, either by a domestic court or--failing that--an international one. Human rights violations like Mugabe's cannot simply be overlooked without threatening respect for human rights worldwide. If powerful human rights violators are above the law, other tyrants will continue their misery making, safe in the knowledge that they risk, at most, their authority, not their hides.

In fact, Mugabe's self-assuredness over the years owes in part to the comfortable exiles won by Marcos of the Philippines, Duvalier of Haiti, Mengistu of Ethiopia, Amin of Uganda, Stroessner of Paraguay, Mobutu of then-Zaire, the Shah of Iran, and Liberia's Charles Taylor. In most of these cases, exile meant de facto immunity, since no international courts were available to try the dictators' crimes.

Most of those countries were better off when those men left, but the mere fact of their departure isn't a good enough reason to insulate them from punishment. And this sentiment is gaining in popularity. That's why Taylor's story ended differently: After a few years spent lying low in Calabar, Nigeria's president finally succumbed to international pressure and turned him over to the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. By detailing Taylor's horrific crimes, proponents of accountability overcame Nigeria's promises to protect the fallen dictator.

Of course, this bodes well for justice, but poorly for precedent. By some accounts, Taylor's saga has complicated Mbeki's approach toward Mugabe: What good is exile if it is not accompanied by immunity? What use is an immunity offer if it can be unilaterally rescinded?

The answer is not much--and that's how it should be. But by taking a stand for accountability in Zimbabwe, instead of letting Mugabe skulk away, Mbeki and others could signal a new era for Africa--one that rejects corrupt and brutal leaders, no matter their revolutionary pedigree. Considerations of pan-African solidarity are too often allowed to trump both the fundamental values of Africa's democracies and the interests of its often defenseless populations. This pattern has helped prolong the crisis in Darfur and the strife in Congo. And the message is equally important for Zimbabwe's opposition: The regime that replaces Mugabe must mark a sharp break from the past--including true legal accountability.

Rejecting an immunity deal would also reflect the sea-change in international justice that has taken place in recent decades. The creation of the U.N.'s special tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone--as well as the creation of the International Criminal Court in 1998--have made justice available for perpetrators of some of the world's most notorious crimes. These courts are beyond the reach of tyrants, threats, and violence. At the same time, these bodies are beginning to reshape public expectations so that the idea of brutal thugs retiring in safe splendor is less accepted than it used to be. People have tasted international criminal justice, and they are asking for more.

Africa is at an inflection point when it comes to holding leaders responsible for corruption, incompetence, and human rights abuses. With the arrest of Charles Taylor, the continent shifted from willingness to let bygones be bygones (as the governments of Mozambique, Botswana, and Angola once avowed) to the beginnings of accountability. Having made these first steps, Africa should not let the likes of Mugabe drag it backward again.