

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



Outreach at Masiaka attended by members of the Management Committee. For more photos see today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

## **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, 18 February 2008**

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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Concord Times  
Monday, 18 February 2008

# Ahead of July local elections Francis Kaikai damns Kamajor recruitment claims

**Bhohvy Jalloh**

Erstwhile Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), Dr Francis Kaikai has described as 'laughable' claims of recruiting ex-fighters ahead of the elections.

The allegations were that he has paid over 30 million Leone to mobilize Kamajor support to disrupt the forthcoming Local Government elections to be held in July.

According to a story published on the new State House website (www.statehouse.gov.sl) but now removed, Kaikai, who until recently was UN Chief of the DDR program in Sudan was alleged to have given the said sum to his uncle, a former Kamajor strongman, to mobilize

ex-Kamajors to disrupt the Local Government elections."

He was also accused to have hired the services of ex-finance minister John Benjamin and former National Revenue Authority boss John Karimu to travel to neighboring Liberia, "with huge sums of money to also regroup veteran Kamajor fighters."

Speaking to Concord Times yesterday Kaikai said, "My reputation nationally and internationally runs contrary to what the article (the story in question) represents."

While claiming that the writer(s) might have other intentions, he also stressed that the story was, "deliberately concocted to tarnish the image of somebody who loves Sierra Leone."

In a letter of complaint sent to the chairperson of the Independent Media



Commission on Wednesday, Kaikai wrote, "I would like to state here categorically that this is a direct attempt to smear my good name and character in our beloved country. This is clearly malicious. I have never contemplated and will never contemplate such actions as spelt out by the author." He also asked for the commission to intervene, "to ensure that justice is done and my rights as a citizen are effectively protected from unprofessional journalism."



## BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 15 February 2008

By Joseph Cheeseman at The Hague

CHEESEMAN: The Special Court for Sierra Leone has admitted into evidence several exhibits tendered by both Prosecution and Defence.

These exhibits were testified to by Suwandi Camara, the Prosecution eleventh witness, a Gambian who said he was an instructor at Taylor's NPFL Cobra base in Gbartala, Bong County, Liberia.

The Prosecution exhibits included documents containing the NPFL command structure, the RUF command structure, RUF's letter to his then-Excellency C-I-C Charles Ghangay Taylor in 1992. The Prosecution also tendered into evidence a confidential letter from the RUF, then in the Sierra Leonean town of Buedu, to Dr. Charles Taylor.

The Defence team did not object to any of the exhibits proffered into evidence by the Prosecution.

The Defence also tendered into evidence a letter from the former leader of the AFRC, Johnny Paul Koroma, seeking assistance to attack ECOMOG, and a DVD watched by the parties and the Court in closed session. But the Prosecution said the admission into evidence of the DVD titled "Empire in Africa" raises an issue of trial practice because the Defence did not share a hard copy of the DVD with the Prosecution.

The Defence also proffered into evidence a letter dated August 12, 1998 from the Liberian Embassy in Guinea. But the Prosecution said the Defence did not establish the relevance of that letter to the trial.

PROSECUTOR BRENDA HOLLIS: Prosecution does have an issue with this document. Relevance was not established of the document and the witness was unable to assist because the witness was unaware of the document and the trip made by one of the individuals mentioned in the document to the witness's knowledge was in the same year but for a different purpose. We do object to this exhibit.

CHEESEMAN: Defence lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths made a submission and established the relevance the letter rejected by the Prosecution.

GRIFFITHS: Your Honour will see reference in the second paragraph of that letter to Major Kanneh and it was in connection with the timing of Mr. Kanneh's arrival in Liberia why we put this document to the witness...it is relevant to that issue.

CHEESEMAN: After the argument by both Defence and Prosecution, Presiding Judge Teresa Doherty came out with the determination of the Bench.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: By majority that will be admitted as Defence exhibit D-7.

CHEESEMAN: Also admitted into evidence was the Expert Report of Miss Berth Vann, a Field Supervisor of Human Rights Watch. Miss Vann wrote a report on the sexual violence against Sierra Leonean women. Miss Vann's report discussed mutilation, amputation and sexual violence against women during the Sierra Leonean conflict. She said victims interviewed blamed the sexual violence on the RUF, the ECOMOG Peacekeepers, and Sierra Leonean Army.

This is Joseph Cheeseman reporting for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground, from The Hague.

## Star Radio (Liberia)

Thursday, 14 February 2008

### **RUF Victim Testifies Against Taylor**

The 12th witness for the prosecution in the trial of detained former President Charles Taylor took the stand Thursday in The Hague.

Report says the witness testified from behind a screen with her face and her voice distorted by a mechanical technology.

This is a protective measure put in place by the court and the parties for this Sierra Leonean woman only identified as TF1-026.

The female witness started her testimony with confidence but was later overwhelmed by distress when she broke down in tears.

This followed her testimony that four RUF fighters raped her in 1999.

The court called off the trial proceeding five minutes to allow the distressed female witness recovered from her grief.

However, the defence said it was not necessary for the prosecution to prove the guilt of Mr. Taylor by subjecting a witness to her distressful past.

But the prosecution said it was this cruelty of the RUF under the command of the accused former Liberian President that brought the parties to court.

The prosecution maintained the testimony was necessary no matter how unbearable it was.

## Middle East Online (UK)

Sunday, 17 February 2008

### **The War against Women**

The Iraq debacle has monopolized attention and obscured 'lesser' wars - now officially 'over' - but millions of West African women are struggling to recover. For them, the war isn't really over at all, not by a long shot, says Ann Jones.

### **A Dispatch from the West African Front**

Kailahun, Sierra Leone -- Greetings from a war zone that's not Iraq. And not Afghanistan either.

I'm checking in from West Africa, where I've been working with women in three neighboring countries, all recently torn apart by civil wars: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. The Iraq debacle has monopolized attention and obscured these "lesser" wars -- now officially "over" -- but millions of West African women are struggling to recover. For them, the war isn't really over at all, not by a long shot. This is the war story that's never truly told. Let me explain.

Surely you remember these conflicts. Liberia's war came in three successive waves lasting 14 years altogether, from 1989 to 2003. Sierra Leone's war started in 1991 when guerillas of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone, trained in Liberia, invaded their own country. The war drew many players and lasted until January 2002, a decade in all. In Côte d'Ivoire, a civil war started in 2002 when northern rebels attempted a coup to oust President Laurent Gbagbo, but by that time the international community had decided to act to prevent any further destabilization of the region. French, African, and later UN peacekeepers stepped in and a treaty was signed in 2003.

So, officially, these countries are no longer "war zones." Accords have been signed. Peacekeeping forces are on duty or close at hand. The UN and international aid agencies are assisting "recovery." Some arms have been surrendered; some refugees have returned from exile. Some men are making mud bricks and building huts to replace the spacious houses of embossed concrete and tile that once graced towns and villages throughout the region. Officially, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire are now designated "post-conflict zones," but they are so fractured, so traumatized, and -- especially in the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone -- so devastated and impoverished that they cannot be said to be securely at peace either. Sierra Leone has replaced Afghanistan as the poorest country on the planet and, like Afghanistan, it is a nation of widows.

Visit one of these countries and you'll see for yourself that, at best, real peace will take a long, slow time to come. The destruction in Sierra Leone's Kailahun District, for instance, is as shocking as anything I ever saw in the devastated Afghan capital, Kabul. UN officials and an array of international aid organizations like to use the term "post-conflict" for such places in such moments. It sounds vaguely hopeful, even if it designates a desperate place embarked on a difficult period of "recovery" that may or may not be recognizable after a decade or two, or even a generation or two, as peace.

That's what our leaders don't bother to mention (possibly don't even grasp) when they talk blithely about war and peace as if they were simply opposite sides of the same coin, attained with equal ease with a heads-or-tails flip. Any fool can start a war swiftly with a shock and awe assault -- as George Bush did from the air in Iraq or the RUF did on the ground in Sierra Leone -- but peace is no sudden acquisition.

Just last month, the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague resumed proceedings begun last June against Charles Taylor, the charming American-educated sociopath and former president of Liberia. Taylor faces 11 charges for war crimes related to matters including terrorizing civilians, murder, rape, sexual slavery, amputations, and enslavement. These atrocities were committed not against his own country but against his neighbor. It was Taylor who backed RUF rebels as they terrorized the populace and augmented their numbers by abducting civilians.

Both Taylor and RUF leader Foday Sankoh reportedly received tactical training in Libya from Muammar Gaddafi, who aimed to disrupt the West African region. Yet these wars were largely not about ideology or even politics. They were about greed, about the power to control and exploit the natural resources of the region -- Liberia's primal rain forests and especially Sierra Leone's "blood diamonds." Political scientists and military historians may eventually advance other theories to explain these wars -- though they'll be hard pressed to find any redeeming features, any "just cause" -- but West Africans will tell you that they took place simply because a few "bad, bad men" craved power and wealth. When Foday Sankoh's RUF forces invaded Sierra Leone, they numbered no more than 150 men, but what they started laid waste to a promising country.

Here's what I want to remind you of, though: When you think about these men who start wars, remember what they've done not to soldiers on either side, but to civilian populations -- especially to women. Today, it is civilians who are by far the most numerous casualties of war. Each successive conflict of recent times has recorded a greater proportion of civilians displaced, exiled, assaulted, tortured, wounded, maimed, killed, or disappeared. In every modern war, most of the suffering civilians are women and children.

In many wars, maimed and dead civilians are counted (if at all) merely as "collateral damage" -- like the estimated 3,000 innocent citizens who died in the initial American bombing of Afghanistan in 2001. In the West African wars, civilians became the designated targets. Foday Sankoh intended to conquer Sierra Leone, but having only 150 fighters, he resorted to forcible recruitment. Like Charles Taylor's forces in Liberia, Sankoh's destroyed whole villages, murdering most of the residents and taking away only those who might serve them as soldiers, porters, cooks, or "wives." Again, many of the dead and most of the abducted were women and children.

And here's a little-known reality: When any conflict of this sort officially ends, violence against women continues and often actually grows worse. Not surprisingly, murderous aggression cannot be turned off overnight. When men stop attacking one another, women continue to be convenient targets. Here in West Africa, as in so many other places where rape was used as a weapon of war, it has become a habit carried seamlessly into the "post-conflict" era. Where normal structures of law enforcement and justice have been disabled by war, male soldiers and civilians alike can prey upon women and children with impunity. And they do.

So I'm writing to you, here in "post-conflict" West Africa, from an active war zone. I'm writing from the heart of the war against women and children.

### **Counting Casualties**

Listen to this report from Amnesty International. It describes the least of the West African wars, the relatively short civil war in Côte d'Ivoire:

"The scale of rape and sexual violence in Côte d'Ivoire in the course of the armed conflict has been largely underestimated. Many women have been gang-raped or have been abducted and reduced to sexual slavery by fighters. Rape has often been accompanied by the beating or torture (including torture of a sexual

nature) of the victim... All armed factions have perpetrated and continue to perpetrate sexual violence with impunity."

Human Rights Watch points out that "cases of sexual abuse may be significantly underreported," because women fear "the possibility of reprisals by perpetrators... ostracism by families and communities, and cultural taboos."

The Amnesty report documents case after case of girls and women, aged "under 12" to 63, assaulted by armed men. The more recent and thoroughgoing report by Human Rights Watch records the rape of children as young as three years-old. During the civil war, women and girls were seized in their village homes or at military roadblocks, or were discovered hiding in the bush. Some were raped in public. Some were raped in front of their husbands and children. Some were forced to witness the murder of husbands or parents. Then they were taken away to soldiers' camps to be held along with many other women. They were forced to cook for the soldiers during the day and every night they were gang-raped, in some cases by 30 to 40 men. They were also beaten and tortured. They saw women who resisted being beaten or killed by a simple slicing of the throat.

Many women were raped so incessantly and so brutally -- with sticks, knives, gun barrels, burning coals -- that they died. Many others were left with injuries and pain that still linger long after the war. Many who had been scarred as girls by "excision" or FMG (female genital mutilation) were literally ripped apart.

The Amnesty report coolly says: "The brutality of rape frequently causes serious physical injuries that require long-term and complex treatment including uterine prolapses (the descent of the uterus into the vagina or beyond)" -- one has to wonder what lies "beyond" the vagina -- "vesico-vaginal or recto-vaginal fistulas and other injuries to the reproductive system or rectum, often accompanied by internal and external bleeding or discharge." It notes that such women usually can't "access the medical care they need." Some still find it hard to sit down, or stand up, or walk. Some still spit up blood. Some have lost their eyesight or their memories. Some miscarried. Many contracted sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. No one knows how many of them died, or are dying, as a result.

And many are still missing, perhaps dragged across borders when rogue militias from a neighboring country went home. Perhaps slaughtered along the way.

## **War and Its Sequel**

Historically, women have long been counted among "the spoils of war," free for the taking; but, in our own time, women in large numbers have also been pawns in deliberate military and political strategies intended to humiliate the men to whom they "belong" and to exterminate their ethnic groups. (Think of Bosnia.) The Amnesty report traces the wholesale violence against women in Côte d'Ivoire to December 2000 when a number of women were arrested, raped, and tortured at the government's Police Training School in Dioula -- because their presumed ethnicity and political affiliation allied them with the opposition. According to Human Rights Watch, this was but one of many such cases incited by government-sponsored propaganda before the civil war even began.

No man responsible for any of these crimes has ever been brought to justice.

Next door in Liberia, by the time fighting ended in 2002, 1.4 million Liberians had been displaced within the country. Almost a million others had fled. In a country of three million people, that's one in three citizens gone. At least 270,000 people died. That's nearly 10% of the population. And here again the easy targets were women. A World Health Organization study in 2005 estimated that a staggering 90% of Liberian women had suffered physical or sexual violence; three out of four had been raped.



Typically, ending the war did not end the violence against women. A study in preparation by the International Rescue Committee -- the organization for which I currently work as a volunteer -- and Columbia University's School of Public Health concludes, "While the war officially ended in 2003, the war on women continued."

Well over half the women interviewed in two Liberian counties, including the capital city, Monrovia, had survived at least one violent physical attack during an 18-month period in 2006-2007, years after the conflict had officially ended. Well over half the women reported at least one violent sexual assault in the same period. Seventy-two percent said their husbands had forced them to have sex against their will. A 2003 IRC study among Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone found that 75% of the women had been sexually violated before they fled their country; after they fled, 55% were sexually assaulted again.

For women, war is not over when it's over.

### **Women Like Me**

Countless women will never recover from the assaults they suffered during the war. I met many such women in Liberia.

On a visit I made to Kolahun, in Lofa County, where fighting had been heavy, one showed me her scars: a series of parallel horizontal ridges starting just below one ear and moving toward the throat. Some guerilla in Charles Taylor's army had locked this whisper of a woman against his chest and slowly, inch by inch, laid open the flesh of her neck in ribbons of blood. But that wasn't all. Taylor's men had broken all the fingers of her left hand so that they now point backwards at seemingly impossible angles. They slammed her back so forcefully with rifle butts that one leg and one arm (the one with the useless hand) are now paralyzed. She can still walk, leaning on a homemade wooden crutch; but that leaves her without a good arm, and she can't carry anything on her head, having lost the ability to balance. She has five children, some of them fathered by rape. The soldiers held her a long time. How many raped her she cannot say.

In the tiny village of Dougoumai I met a woman people refer to only as "the sick lady." She lay on a bed in a one-room mud-brick house. As I came in, she managed to sit up with great difficulty, using her twisted hands to move her swollen, useless legs. Her sister says she was captured by a militia fighting against Charles Taylor and gang-raped repeatedly by ten men. Nobody can say how long they kept her. They rammed their gun butts into her back -- evidently a common technique -- paralyzing her legs. She cannot walk. They smashed her hands. She cannot hold anything or feed herself or comb her hair. Her mother and two sisters, who luckily survived the war, feed her by hand, their lives too now dominated by the consequences of the violence done to this woman.

Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) surveyed surviving women in Lofa County, the center of Charles Taylor's operations. More than 98% said that, during his war (1999-2003), they lost their homes; more than 90%, their livelihoods; more than 72%, at least one family member. Nearly 90% of them survived at least one violent physical assault; more than half, at least one violent sexual assault. No one inquired about the number of women now caring for the permanently disabled.

In Sierra Leone, where terrorizing the civilian population was the main tactic of war, the violence against women and children was, as Human Rights Watch has reported, even more brutal. All parties to the conflict committed countless atrocities. Official reports document appalling crimes: fathers forced to rape their own daughters; brothers forced to rape their sisters; boy soldiers gang-raping old women, then chopping off their arms; pregnant women eviscerated alive and the living fetus snatched from the womb

to satisfy soldiers betting on its sex. A brother is hacked to death and eviscerated; his heart and liver are placed in the hands of his 18-year-old sister who is commanded to eat them. She refuses. She is taken to a place where other women are being held. Among them is her sister. She sees her sister and other women murdered. Their heads are placed in her lap. These crimes, which violate primal taboos, aim to destroy not just individual victims but a whole culture as well; yet the individual victims are important in their own right, and in most cases they are women and children.

Perhaps the worst crime of the bad, bad men has been turning children -- mostly boys -- into armed guerillas as bad as themselves. In his bestselling autobiography *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah vividly describes his life as a boy soldier. Separated from his family by the war, he was captured by soldiers in the army of Sierra Leone, trained to fight, kept high on drugs (as all soldiers were), and forced to kill. When boy soldiers begin to rape and murder girls and women willingly at the instigation of men, civilization has collapsed.

### **Crimes Against Women**

In recent years, every kind of horror has been inflicted on girls and women in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire because they are female. If females were a particular ethnic group -- Albanians, let's say, or Tutsis -- or if they espoused a particular religion, as did Bosnian Muslims, we could recognize what goes on as a kind of "gender cleansing" or mass femicide. But we don't speak of crimes against women in that way. When did you last hear someone speak of "crimes against women" at all?

Interviewed for a TV documentary on mass rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a smiling guerrilla says he's "made love" to many women. The interviewer asks if all the women were willing, and he laughs. He admits that many fight him, and he says -- still grinning -- "If they are strong, I call my friends to help me." Despite his use of euphemisms, he knows just what he's doing. When the interviewer labels his love-making "rape," he typically insists that rape happens in wartime and that when the war is over, he won't do it anymore. The state of war excuses men's crimes against women because rape -- so the claim goes -- is something that just naturally occurs in war.

The war against women in West Africa and elsewhere is different from other wars -- whether driven by ideology, politics, greed, or personal ambition -- in that every faction, every side, makes war on women. They all abduct and rape and force women to labor. They all murder women. In West Africa, only the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) in Sierra Leone refrained for a considerable time from rape. They were traditional hunters, recruited by the government to defend their own areas from the rebels. Their customs kept them from sexual intercourse, believed to deplete a warrior's power, and they operated close to home, where they were known; but, as the war went on, they, too, began to act like all the other fighters. Their initial restraint was important, however, offering evidence that rape does not have to be something that "just happens" in war, but is instead an elective, wildly popular choice.

After war, in the "post-conflict" era, even some international peacekeepers have joined the war against women. Human Rights Watch and others have documented cases of rape by peacekeeping soldiers in West Africa, but none have been prosecuted. Perpetrators are simply repatriated or moved to a new post. Human Rights Watch also reports on the widespread practice among peacekeepers of using children who have turned to prostitution to survive. (There are few other options for girls who have been orphaned or rejected by their families, and many of these child prostitutes had already been used as sex slaves during wartime.) But apparently the peacekeepers recruit many girls themselves.

Here in Kailahun District, the place where the Sierra Leone war started and ended, women are upset and angry about the sexual exploitation of their adolescent daughters. Parents in this part of the country -- many of them war widows -- take seriously the advice to send their daughters to school, which costs more

than most can easily afford. If a girl student becomes pregnant, she is required by law to drop out. (Consider the impact on a small village struggling to recover from war of the loss of even a few prospective teachers, nurses, or social workers.) If the father of the expected child is a fellow student, he can continue his studies, denying all responsibility. Often, however, it's not the boys who are to blame. Many still-virginal girls drop out of school early to escape predatory teachers, and women report that the incidence of teen pregnancy drops when peacekeeping forces leave town.

Even then, however, rape and child rape continue, largely unabated. It's hard to tell with certainty just how high this is, because raped women and girls are normally too shamed by the crime to report it. In war time, it was somewhat easier because they had so clearly been forced by armed men; with the war "over," rape once again becomes a woman's own fault. Nonetheless, angry parents in this region of Sierra Leone, increasingly report child rape to authorities. Here in Kailahun District, women mobilized to force the local magistrate to hear the case of a 7-year-old rape victim. The magistrate, apparently related to the admitted perpetrator, had prevented prosecution by postponing his trial, again and again.

Domestic violence -- wife-beating, marital rape, emotional abuse, torture, economic deprivation, and the like -- is common. Impoverished women with many children to feed have no choice but to endure "normal" levels of violence. But as in wartime, habitual violence invites the thrill of excess. Just the other day, a man in Moyamba District killed his wife and cut off her head.

### **Bad Men Make Good**

For bad, bad men, terrorizing civilians holds advantages -- beyond the immediate gratification of the rush of power. Such acts can land them important posts in government. When atrocities become sufficiently conspicuous and horrific -- such as the notorious amputations of arms and legs in Sierra Leone -- the international community steps in to initiate a peace process. Usually they bring to the negotiating table all the bad, bad men who have been causing so much trouble and buy them off with positions of power in a new "interim" or "transitional" government. Witness, in another part of the world where women are notoriously badly treated, all those well-known warlords the Afghan people wanted tried for war crimes who somehow wound up in President Hamid Karzai's cabinet, or -- after elections advertised as democratic -- in parliament.

Foday Sankoh had been condemned to death for treason when he was summoned to just such peace negotiations. From them, he emerged as the head of the government commission in charge of managing Sierra Leone's natural resources, including the diamonds that financed his war. Charles Taylor, while committing mayhem and rape in refugee camps for displaced persons, was elected president of Liberia. Voters seemed to figure, as battered women often do, that the best way to stop the man's violence was to let him have his way, though this is a path to certain disaster.

Bad, bad men are quick to learn from the rapid advancement of their brothers elsewhere. Laurent Kunda in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), widely recognized as a prime candidate for trial before a war crimes tribunal, is now said to be jockeying for a high position in the government of the DRC in exchange for laying down his arms. The current rapid descent of Kenya into "tribal warfare" owes much to the same theory. Raila Odingo, having lost a clearly suspect presidential election, exploits genocidal violence with good reason to hope that international intervention will usher him into office by the back door.

Although UN Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for women to be included in all peace processes, they are rarely invited to the table. With men in charge of governments almost everywhere, the fearful fascination with bad, bad men continues and the perverse preference for predators trickles down. In Sierra Leone, ex-combatants were rewarded with motorcycles. The theory was that violent young men would be

less dangerous if they could serve a useful purpose and make some money carrying passengers on brand new highly-chromed bikes in a country where most cars had been torched. The result? Every public square in the dodgiest districts of Sierra Leone is now dominated by a motorcycle gang consisting mainly of young men already surely skilled in the sexual exploitation of girls. Perhaps in the end, the transport scheme will work out; but in Sierra Leone most women and girls still walk.

Here in Kailahun District, women tell the story -- possibly apocryphal -- of an old woman who was huddled over her cook fire when RUF rebels entered her village. She was frying some tasty frogs. Rebels surrounded her, peering into the pot to see what she was cooking, and one of them said: "We are freedom fighters of the Revolutionary United Front. We have come to save you from the government." The old woman -- unafraid -- replied: "Then you must go to the capital. The government is not in my pot." Women in Kailahun District tell that story over and over, and they laugh every time. They are so proud of that lone, bold, old woman who told those rebel men off. That's the spirit of survival, still alive in them, though they must know that the rebels probably shot the woman and ate her frogs.

*Ann Jones - Writer/photographer - is working as a volunteer with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on a special project for their Gender-Based Violence (read: Violence Against Women) unit called "A Global Crescendo: Women's Voices from Conflict Zones." Her blogs about the project can be found by clicking here. She is the author, most recently, of Kabul in Winter: Life Without Peace in Afghanistan (Metropolitan Books), a report from another war that's not over.*

## **UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 15 February 2008**

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

### **Newspaper Summary**

#### **President Sirleaf Says Liberia Business Act Is Discriminatory**

##### **...Opts for Change**

(New Liberia, Public Agenda, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The News, Heritage, The Analyst)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has backed government's decision to submit a new investment bill to the National Legislature amending the investment incentive Act for Liberian businesses and described the present act as discriminatory.
- Addressing journalists at her first press conference this year at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Sirleaf said her government needs to attract private investors to boost the economy of Liberia, and as such, any law that discriminates against foreign investors needs to be amended.
- She said although she was one of those who advocated for the Act in 1973 when she was at the Ministry of Finance, but said the Act has not helped Liberian entrepreneurs since its establishment.
- The President's justification was in apparent response to public sentiments against the bill. The Liberian business community and civil society criticized the Act to repeal the policy, saying it would further increase poverty.

#### **UNFPA Donates Vehicles to LISGIS**

(The News)

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has donated two Toyota Cruiser Jeeps and eight Motorcycles to the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS).
- Making the presentation on behalf of UNFPA, the Resident Representative, Mrs. Rose Gakuba said the donation was in continuation of her organization's support to LISGIS.
- She assured that UNFPA would continue to assist LISGIS to develop a roadmap for the conduct of the National Population and Housing Census in Liberia.
- Mrs. Gakuba disclosed that UNFPA has so far made available 12 vehicles aimed at helping LISGIS to carry out its mandate.

#### **Circuit Judge Threatens to Release 27 Detainees in Maryland**

(The News)

- There are reports that some 27 inmates are being detained at the Harper Central Prison in Maryland County without charge for more than a year now.
- The assigned judge of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Courts in Maryland and Grand Kru Counties respectively, told the NEWS Wednesday in Harper City that 27 out of 35 inmates at the prison are yet to be indicted by the government, despite spending more than a year behind bars.
- Scanning through a document from the Harper Prison Superintendent's office, Judge Albert C. Dweh disclosed that some of the inmates are yet to be indicted, and have been in jail for more than a year.
- "They have been illegally detained, and the government is holding them without charge...I think this is unjust," Judge Dweh emphasized.

- He considers their detention as a violation of their human rights and threatened to release the 27 inmates if the Ministry of Justice did not indict them during the February Term of Court, which opened last Tuesday. The term is expected to last for 42 days.
- "Under the rule of law, the court has the right to release these inmates. We will apply jail delivery because it is a violation of the court's rule and the rights of those detained," he added.

## **Radio Summary**

**Local Media – Star Radio** *(News culled today from website 11:00am)*

### **Couple charged with murder in Teenager's death**

- The Monrovia Magisterial Court at the Temple of Justice has formally charged Mr. Hans Williams and his fiancée, Madea Payku, with murder.
- The court also charged three others with criminal facilitation. The Magisterial Court named the three as Patrick Kollie, a security guard to Hans Williams and Oscar Payku and Henrietta Payku.
- The court has meanwhile granted a defense motion to allow Patrick Kollie and others allegedly tortured to undergo medical examination.
- Judge Milton Taylor ordered the clerk to write a formal communication to the John F. Kennedy Medical Centre, requesting a qualified doctor to conduct the examination.
- The prosecution earlier resisted the defense request on grounds that the torture claims were mere fabrication and must be quashed. Meanwhile, lawyers representing Hans Williams and his family say their clients were tortured in police custody.
- Counsellor Musa Dean alleged that Police officers only identified as Mr. Jabateh and Miss Itoka tortured Madea Payku. Counsellor Dean further alleged that a security guard to Mr. Williams, Patrick Kollie was also tortured in an attempt to force him to confess.
- According to Cllr. Dean, the police had asked the security guard to serve as state witness but apparently he refused. Hans Williams' lawyers described the torture allegation as a violation of their clients' rights.
- Mr. Dean said his team of lawyers has formally written the Justice Ministry protesting the alleged torture of their clients. Responding to the allegation of torture, Deputy Police Director for Operations, Gayflor Tarpeh says allegations of torture by lawyers of Hans Williams are shocking.
- Director Tarpeh wondered what could be the actual motive of Hans Williams' legal Counsel. Director Tarpeh however, said he would inquire from the two accused officers what might have happened.

*(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, ELBC, Radio Veritas)*

### **Murder Suspect Killed in mob violence in Nimba but UNMIL Restores Calm**

- One murder suspect was killed in the fire when angry mob burned down a police station in Tappita, Nimba County. Madam Vonyee Glahn was unable to escape the police station during the fire incident.
- Police in Tappita have re-arrested nine of the fifteen murder suspects. The prime suspect Prince Nah told police preliminary investigation he chopped Lorpu Mulbah after she attacked him on a highway near Tappita. Suspect Nah said he took Lorpu to be an armed robber.
- Angry mob Wednesday stormed the police station and took delivery of murder suspects held in police custody. Their action followed the discovery of the mutilated body of Lorpu Mulbah in Granpea, near Tappita.
- Meanwhile, UNMIL spokesman Ben Dotsei-Malor confirmed that UNMIL troops fired rounds in the air during Wednesday's mob action on the Tappita Police Station. Mr. Malor said UNMIL troops assigned in the county fired in the to disperse the angry crowd.
- According to Mr. Malor, the mob violence on the Police Station does not offer well for the future of the country. He said though when an incident occurred there is a ground for anger, it is not appropriate to exhibit anger on the law enforcement officers investigating.

- Mr. Malor however, said with the intervention of the UN Police in support of the LNP calm has been restored. The UNMIL spokesman called on the people of Tappita District to exercise restraint and allow the law to take its course.

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas)*

### **President Sirleaf Defends Liberia Incentive Act amidst Public Outcry**

- Despite public outcry against her new Liberia Incentive Bill which seeks to open 26 businesses exclusively for Liberians to non-Liberians, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has justified the Act.
- President Sirleaf said the policy has not worked over the years and therefore other means should be looked at to achieve the same goals. The Liberianization Policy set aside several businesses exclusively for Liberians in a bid to ensure that Liberians are empowered.
- The President attributed the failure of the act to the lack of access to capital and capacity building, a situation which led to Liberians fronting for foreigners.
- She said more was being done to empower Liberian businesses than just setting aside petit businesses. The President said Liberians are being given a margin of preference under the PPCC and money is being allocated to support Liberian businesses.
- Madam Sirleaf also said Liberia is at a stage where it needs to attract private capital and investment and any discriminatory law would create problem.
- The Liberian business community and civil society have criticized the Act to repeal the policy saying it would further increase poverty.
- The issue continue to dominate discussions in street corners and public sentiments appear to be firmly against the President's move.

*(Also reported on Radio Veritas)*

### **RUF victim testifies against Taylor**

- The 12<sup>th</sup> witness for the prosecution in the trial of detained former President Charles Taylor took the stand Thursday in The Hague.
- Report says the witness testified from behind a screen with her face and her voice distorted by a mechanical technology. This is a protective measure put in place by the court and the parties for this Sierra Leonean woman only identified as TF1-026.
- The female witness started her testimony with confidence but was later overwhelmed by distress when she broke down in tears. This followed her testimony that four RUF fighters raped her in 1999.
- The court called off the trial proceeding five minutes to allow the distressed female witness recovered from her grief.
- However, the defense counsel said it was not necessary for the prosecution to prove the guilt of Mr. Taylor by subjecting a witness to her distressful past. But the prosecution said it was this cruelty of the RUF under the command of the accused former Liberian President that brought the parties to court.
- The prosecution maintained the testimony was necessary no matter how unbearable it was.

### **Opposition Liberty Party Wants NEC Chairman resigned**

- The opposition Liberty has called for the resignation of the Chairman of the National Elections Commission (NEC). The Chairman of the Liberty Party told a new conference that Mr. James Fromoyan has lost his credibility as chairman of the elections commission.
- Mr. Israel Akinsanya said statement by Mr. Fromoyan that the Liberty Party has the record of hooliganism is a clear indication that he's partial. Mr. Akinsanya accused Mr. Fromoyan of being a political tool for the ruling Unity Party.
- He said the Liberty Party has since lost confidence in the ability of Mr. Fromoyan to head the National Elections Commission. The LP Chairman alleged that Mr. Fromoyan campaigned for the Unity Party in the 2005 general and presidential elections. According to the LP chairman, the Margibi by-election was marred by massive fraud.

*(Also reported on Sky FM, ELBC, Truth FM, Radio Veritas)*

## Associated Press

Wednesday, 13 February 2008

### Congolese militant's war crimes trial delayed

Thomas Lubanga's lawyers say they need more time to prepare

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) -- The first trial at the world's first permanent war crimes court is likely to be delayed by more than two months because defense attorneys for a Congolese militia leader have been given insufficient time to prepare, a judge said Wednesday.



Judges at the International Criminal Court had been aiming to start the trial of Thomas Lubanga on March 31.

Lubanga is charged with conscripting and using child soldiers to fight a vicious tribal conflict in eastern Congo in 2002-2003. He denies the charges.

Two unresolved problems are holding up the case: the involvement of victims in the trial and disclosure of evidence by prosecutors to defense attorneys, said presiding judge Adrian Fulford.

"It seems that ... it is a fool's errand to continue striving for March 31," Fulford said. He said that a start date of June 9 or June 16 was more likely, although he called even those dates "aspirational."

Lubanga's lawyer, Catherine Mabilie, said she has only received a fraction of the evidence she needs to prepare his defense.

"Your honor, I am quite a flexible person, but this is no longer reasonable," she told Fulford. "I think it's quite ridiculous. In fact, I think there is a clear lack of professionalism here."

Judges last year ordered prosecutors to disclose to the defense all their evidence three months before trial to give Lubanga time to prepare.

Deputy prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said she plans to call 35 witnesses and already has given defense attorneys details of many of them. "From the office of the prosecutor, we were working on starting on March 31," she added.

But Fulford was clearly unsatisfied and angry, and said the three-judge panel would "minutely investigate" the disclosure issue.

The Lubanga trial in The Hague, Netherlands, will see the first appearance at an international war crimes tribunal of victims as a third party in the proceedings, an innovation drafted into the rules when the court was created in 2002. But the appeals chamber is still considering how many victims will be allowed to participate and the limits of their role.

Their possible involvement could range from questioning witnesses to simply observing the proceedings. The trial is unlikely to start before a decision on that.



Prosecutors say Lubanga forced hundreds of children to fight in the armed wing of his political party, the Union of Congolese Patriots, in the lawless Ituri region of eastern Congo from July 2002 to December 2003.

Human rights groups and authorities in Congo have welcomed the decision to put Lubanga on trial as a major step for victims of the country's civil war and tribal conflicts, which left up to 5 million people dead through fighting, famine or disease.

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