

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



No. 14A

HUMAN OCTOPUSES—DIVING BOYS IN THEIR FRAIL DUG-OUT CANOES, HARBOUR, FREETOWN
SIERRA LEONE

Photo: Courtesy Lisc-Carew Brothers

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Monday, 18 January 2010

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

Local News

Justice Sebutinde Elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II	Page 3
Taylor Gave Blood Diamonds to Naomi Campbell / Premier News	Page 4
Taylor Gave Supermodel Blood Diamond / The Spectator	Pages 5 -8

International News

SCSL Elects New Presiding Judge / <i>Radio Netherlands Worldwide</i>	Page 9
Court Hears About Model Campbell's 'Blood Diamond' / <i>Dispatch Online</i>	Page 10
ICC delays Guinea 'War Crimes' Probe Visit / <i>Agence France Presse</i>	Page 11
Guinea Leader Camara Breaks Exile Silence / <i>BBC Online</i>	Pages 12-13
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 14-18
Two New ICC Judges to Be Sworn in / <i>Radio Netherlands Worldwide</i>	Page 19



Special Court for Sierra Leone
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 18 January 2010

Justice Julia Sebutinde Elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II

Justice Julia Sebutinde from Uganda has been elected Presiding Judge of Trial Chamber II. She succeeds Justice Richard Lussick, who ended his one-year term as Presiding Judge on the 17 January 2010.



Pursuant to rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the Presiding Judge of each Trial Chamber is elected for a renewable term of one year. It has, however been the practice of both Trial Chambers to rotate the position of Presiding Judge at the end of each one-year term. This is the second time Justice Sebutinde is serving as Presiding judge in Trial Chamber II. She previously served in that capacity from 18 January 2007 to 17 January 2008.

Justice Julia Sebutinde, British-trained Ugandan lawyer, was called to the Ugandan Bar in 1979. From 1978-1991 she worked with Uganda's Ministry of Justice, where she rose to the level of Principal State Attorney / Principal Legislative Counsel. From 1991-1996 she worked for the Commonwealth Secretariat, London as a Legislative Consultant and was seconded to the newly-independent Republic of Namibia, where she was attached to the Ministry of Justice as a Legislative expert.

In 1996 she was appointed Judge of the High Court of Uganda. Between 1999 and 2003 Judge Sebutinde chaired three high-level Commissions which investigated allegations of corruption in the Ugandan Police Force, the Ministry of Defence, and the Uganda Revenue Authority, respectively. In June 2009 Justice Julia Sebutinde received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws degree from her alma mater The University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Trial Chamber II consisting of Justice Sebutinde, Justice Richard Lussick, Justice Theresa Doherty, and Alternate judge El Hadji Malick Sow are currently hearing cross examination of Mr. Charles Taylor who is testifying in his own defense in the case of Prosecutor vs Charles Ghankay Taylor.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

Produced by the
Outreach and Public Affairs Office
Special Court for Sierra Leone
Mobile: 232 76 655732
Email: SCSL-pressooffice@un.org

Visit our website at www.sc-sl.org

Premier News
Monday, 18 January 2010

Taylor Gave Diamonds To Naomi Campbell

Despite all efforts, prosecutors were banned from using new evidence alleging that Charles Taylor gave supermodel, Naomi Campbell, a diamond, received from Sierra Leone's junta in 1997.

By Alpha Sesay



Prosecutors tried on Thursday to introduce a document from actress, Mia Farrow, alleging that Naomi Campbell informed her that Mr. Taylor sent his men to give her a rough-cut

diamond after they attended a dinner hosted by former South African President, Nelson Mandela.

Defense lawyers for Mr. Taylor objected to the use

of the document, arguing that while the document was a declaration by Ms. Farrow to Special Court for Sierra Leone prosecutor, Nicholas Koumjian, there is nothing indicating that the declaration was made under oath or whether it was a sworn affidavit. Mr. Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, further stated that Ms. Farrow's declaration that certain guests at the dinner, including Mrs. Mandela, raised concern about the presence of Mr. Taylor at the dinner, meant that the document was prejudicial, and that the best person to have made any statement about the transfer of the diamond would have been Ms. Campbell herself, not a third party. Mr. Griffiths called the document "third-hand hearsay."

The Spectator
Monday, 18 January 2010

Startling Special Court Revelation...

Taylor Gave Supermodel Blood Diamond

The trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor got off to a slow start this week, as technical problems forced a two-day adjournment fresh on the heels of a month-long break. When court resumed on Thursday, prosecutors alleged that Mr. Taylor gave supermodel Naomi Campbell a rough-cut diamond that had been given to him by the Sierra Leone junta regime, which Mr. Taylor denied as "total nonsense." And in an ongoing battle over the use of "fresh evidence" during cross-examination of the former

president, judges did not allow prosecutors to use the document in which actress Mia Farrow made the blood diamond allegations against Mr. Taylor because it could prejudice his fair trial rights. "Mr. Taylor, that diamond that you sent to Naomi Campbell was one of the diamonds that you had been given by the junta in Sierra Leone. Isn't that correct?" Lead prosecutor Ms. Brenda Hollis asked Mr. Taylor.

"Total nonsense," the former president responded.

According to prosecutors, during Mr. Taylor's 1997 visit to South Africa, he attended a dinner that was hosted by former South African president Nelson Mandela. Also present at the dinner were celebrities such as Ms. Campbell, actress Mia Farrow and popular musician Quincy Jones. Prosecutors have alleged that after the dinner, Mr. Taylor sent his men to deliver the diamond to Ms. Campbell.

"From among the diamonds you took to South Africa, after this dinner that you attended, you sent your men to Ms. Campbell's room to provide her with a large rough-cut diamond," Ms. Hollis said.

Mr. Taylor dismissed the assertion as "totally incorrect." When Ms. Hollis sought to present a declaration made by actress Ms. Farrow to a member of the court's prosecution team that Ms. Campbell had relayed to her that Mr. Taylor sent his men to deliver the diamond to her, defense lawyers for Mr. Taylor objected to the use of such document, arguing that while the document was a declaration made by Ms. Farrow to Special Court for Sierra Leone prosecutor, Nicholas Koumjian, there was nothing indicating that the declaration was made under oath or whether it was a sworn affidavit. Mr. Taylor's lead defense counsel, Courtenay Griffiths, further stated that Ms. Farrow's declaration that certain guests at the dinner, including Mrs. Mandela, raised concern about the presence of Mr. Taylor at the dinner, meant that the document was prejudicial, and that the best person to have made any statement about the transfer of the the diamond would have been

Ms. Campbell herself, not a third party. Mr. Griffiths called the document "third-hand hearsay."

"This document is complete nonsense. It is ridiculous. It should not be allowed in a court of law. It has no probative value and it is highly prejudicial, and in that situation, any tribunal of fact has the discretion to exclude it on that basis, and I so invite you to do," Mr. Griffiths told the judges.

Despite prosecution arguments that "this document impeaches that categorical denial by this witness that he ever had any diamonds during the time he was in the NPFL [National Patriotic Front of Liberia] or president of Liberia except that maybe he had a couple of watches that had diamonds," the judges ruled in favor of the defense, stating that the document cannot be used in the cross-examination of Mr. Taylor.

Reading the order of the chamber, presiding judge Richard Lussick said that "The document allegedly is a statement by a person as to what she was told by a second person who was relating what she was told by a third person or persons. The accused, of course, has had no chance to challenge any of the allegations in this document or cross-examine the alleged makers of the various statements that embodied the document now before the court. We find that the document is highly prejudicial and we hold that the the criteria that are required to be met for the use of the document have not been met. In other words, there is nothing put before us that would allow us to say that its use in cross-examination is in the interest of justice or that it does not violate the fair trial rights of the accused. We therefore uphold the defense objection and will not allow the document to be used in cross-examination."

Also on Thursday prosecutors said that when Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels entered into negotiations with the Government of Sierra Leone in 1999, Mr. Taylor sent a negotiating team there to ensure that the peace agreement benefited the RUF rebels. Mr. Taylor denied

the assertion, stating that "I sent an observation team there."

Ms. Hollis read from a May 2000 Press Release that was issued by Mr. Taylor's government in Liberia in which it was quoted that the Liberian foreign affairs minister "served as special envoy and chief negotiator at the Lome Peace Agreement."

Mr. Taylor insisted that "the negotiations that were taking place were only between two parties. Liberia had a team there, Nigeria had a team there only to assist the process."

Meanwhile, earlier in the week, the proceedings were marked by feisty exchanges between Mr. Taylor and lead prosecution counsel, Ms. Hollis, as she tried to keep a tight grip on the former Liberian president's answers under cross-examination.

"Mr Taylor, you are a witness and it is your job to answer questions, not to make speeches. Do you understand that?" Ms. Hollis asked. "I'm the accused. You do not - the judges are going to instruct me. I don't take instructions from you. There are contexts involved here and this is my life," Mr. Taylor retorted.

As the two traversed Mr. Taylor's prior testimony under direct examination over the course of four months last year, Ms Hollis challenged him on topics ranging outside the indictment timeframe and in relation to events in Liberia (not Sierra Leone where the charges are based) - but which nonetheless may go to testing Mr. Taylor's general credibility as a witness.

Ms. Hollis asserted that Mr. Taylor lied about his involvement in the 1985 coup to overthrow the then Liberian president Samuel Doe (Mr. Taylor rejected this: "I would not lie about it if I was a part of it"); that Mr. Taylor benefited from money he allegedly embezzled from Liberia while he was in the United States (Mr. Taylor agreed that he had received \$100,000 while in the US, but rejected that it was Liberian government money "and it was never proven that I embezzled any money"); and that Mr. Taylor knew rebel leader Foday Sankoh in Libya during the 1980s, well before Mr. Taylor said the two men met in 1991 ("Ms Hollis, I had never in my life met Foday Sankoh before 1991," Mr. Taylor said).

Prosecutors also tried to cast doubt over the truthfulness of Mr. Taylor's November 2009 testimony about his decision to step down from the Liberian presidency. Ms. Hollis focused on Mr. Taylor's description of the impact of an attack by Liberian rebels in 2003 which resulted in deaths of internally displaced people hiding in a targeted building called Greystone - an annex to the United

States Embassy in Monrovia located across the street where civilians took shelter from the fighting in Monrovia in 2003. Liberians took 18 dead bodies from this attack to the United States Embassy as a plea for the US to stop the bloodshed and restore peace.

In his November 2009 testimony, Mr. Taylor had asserted that this Greystone attack had triggered his decision to step down from power, as he realized that "they [Liberian rebels] would do anything to get rid of you as President, including victimizing your Liberian civilians, and so you decided to step down as President," Ms. Hollis said. "Do you remember telling the Court that, Mr Taylor?"

"I remember telling the Court that and most other things that are associated with that, yes, I remember telling them that," Mr. Taylor responded.

The Prosecutors went on to present evidence that this attack which resulted in 18 dead bodies being carried to the US Embassy in fact occurred in late July 2003, more than a month after Mr. Taylor was at the Accra peace talks where he indicated his willingness to step down from the presidency. In raising the inconsistency in timing, prosecutors were attempting to demonstrate that this attack could not have been the reason why Mr. Taylor decided to quit the presidency.

Instead, Ms Hollis suggested that other West African leaders had pressured Mr. Taylor to step down in Accra - an assertion that Mr. Taylor vigorously denied. "There was not one Head of State in that room that ever asked me to step down. On my honour, no President ever asked me to step down. I, Charles Taylor, just as I told these judges, volunteered. No one - if anyone in that room had asked me to step down, one, it would have been very much undiplomatic," Mr. Taylor told the court.

"Presidents don't just say, "Please step down." I, Charles Ghankay Taylor, volunteered to step down from office. No one pressured me in that room. No one asked me to at all."

Mr. Taylor is responding to charges that he was involved in a joint criminal enterprise with RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor has denied allegations that he supplied arms and ammunition to the rebels in return for Sierra Leone's blood diamonds and that he helped them plan certain operations during which atrocities such as rape, murder, and amputation of civilian arms were committed. Mr. Taylor has said that he did not have arms and ammunition to fight rebel forces in his own country and therefore could not have supplied any materials to the RUF. He has dismissed the charges as a scheme by western countries, specifically Britain and the United States to bring him down.

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Friday, 15 January 2010

SCSL elects new presiding judge

Justice Julia Sebutinde from Uganda is the new presiding Judge of the Charles Taylor Trial. Sebutinde takes over Trial Chamber II at the Special Court for Sierra Leone from Justice Richard Lussick who ended his one-year term as Presiding Judge today.

The court rotates the position of Presiding Judge every year. This is the second time Justice Sebutinde will take over the role.

The Taylor trial is the last case before the SCSL. All other cases were held in Freetown – the capital of Sierra Leone - but Taylor's case was moved to the ICC premises in The Hague for fear that his appearance in an African courtroom could destabilise Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Dispatch Online

Monday, 18 January 2010

<http://www.dispatch.co.za/article.aspx>

Court hears about model Campbell's 'blood diamond'

TOP British model Naomi Campbell may have to appear as a witness in the trial against former Liberian president Charles Taylor after allegations that he gave her a so-called blood diamond in 1997, reports said yesterday.

Taylor is standing trial at the United Nations- backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

A court spokesperson could not confirm whether Campbell would be a witness but confirmed the prosecution had been in touch with her.

Taylor is charged with having orchestrated war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11-year civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone that claimed an estimated 120 000 lives.

Taylor's response to prosecutor Brenda Hollis's cross-questioning on Thursday was to call the gift allegations "total nonsense".

Hollis said Taylor had given the diamond to Campbell after a dinner in South Africa attended by P resident Nelson Mandela. — Sapa-DPA

Agence France Presse

Saturday, 16 January 2010

ICC delays Guinea 'war crimes' probe visit

THE HAGUE — The International Criminal Court said Friday a visit by its deputy prosecutor to military-ruled Guinea to probe allegations of war crimes at an opposition rally has been delayed until next month.

The visit by Fatou Bensouda, initially planned for next week, was postponed for "logistical reasons", the prosecutor's office told AFP. The visit will take place at the invitation of Guinean authorities.

The office of the prosecutor announced in October that it had launched a preliminary examination of the September 28 violence to determine whether the alleged crimes fell within the court's jurisdiction.

The United Nations said at least 156 people were killed or went missing after the assault by forces loyal to coup leader Moussa Dadis Camara on an opposition protest at a stadium in the capital Conakry.

Camara is currently recovering in Burkina Faso after being shot in the head in an assassination attempt last month.

Guinea is a state party to the founding statute of the ICC, the world's only permanent tribunal for the adjudication of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

BBC Online

Monday, 18 January 2010

Guinea leader Camara breaks exile silence



World leaders have welcomed Capt Camara's absence from Guinea

By Caspar Leighton
BBC West Africa correspondent

The sidelined military leader of Guinea has spoken in public for the first time since he was seriously wounded by an assassination attempt in December.

Capt Moussa Dadis Camara is in the Burkina Faso capital, Ougadougou, where he backed a plan to let his deputy manage the transfer to civilian rule.

He said that his hand was not forced in signing the transition agreement.

He also urged Guineans to put aside ethnic differences and support the transfer to democracy.

The address to the nation given from voluntary exile by Capt Camara is a vital step on Guinea's path to civilian, democratic rule.

He has a near-mythical status among his followers, and the public support given to Guinea's transition from military rule by the man once in charge of it should lay many fears to rest.

Hurdles ahead

Visibly weakened, Capt Camara ruled himself out of running in future presidential elections.

With this speech, the key figures in Guinea's military hierarchy have all publicly vowed their support for the end of army rule.

CAMARA'S RULE

23, 24 December 2008

Strongman President Lansana Conte dies, Capt Camara takes over, promises 2010 election

15 August 2009

Says he may stand for president

28 September

Soldiers kill protesters in Conakry, reports of

The agreement reached on Friday bars any member of the military government from contesting the planned presidential election.

There are hurdles ahead, though. The civilian opposition has proposed two possible candidates to be prime minister in the transition government.

Made up of political parties and trade unions, they were unable to agree a single candidate and want the current military head, Gen Sekouba Konate to make the final choice.

The event that ignited Guinea's political crisis was the army's killing of more than 150 opposition supporters at the end of September. The call for justice has been strong and the United Nations blames Capt Camara and others for the killings. The International Criminal Court is examining the case and if arrest warrants are eventually issued, they are bound to cause shock waves in Guinea's fragile society.

atrocities and rapes

October

US, EU, African Union and Ecowas impose sanctions on junta

3 December

Capt Camara shot in the head in apparent assassination attempt

4 December

Flown to Morocco for surgery

12 January 2010

Capt Camara leaves hospital in Rabat and is flown to Burkina Faso

[Unearthing truth of 'bloodbath'](#)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 15 January 2010

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

International Clips on Liberia

CAMPBELL CAUGHT UP IN WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Daily and Sunday Express, Friday January 15, 2010

British supermodel NAOMI CAMPBELL has been caught up in the war crimes trial of Liberia's former president - the disgraced ex-leader has been accused of gifting the catwalk beauty with a 'blood diamond'. Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor is currently on trial at The Hague, in the Netherlands, over allegations he backed rebel fighters responsible for widespread atrocities during the war in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Prosecutors have also alleged Taylor took diamonds mined in the area to South Africa to "sell... or exchange for weapons". They have accused Taylor of handing one of these 'blood diamonds' - a term for jewels sold to finance conflicts - to Campbell in 1997 when she attended a dinner party in South Africa, hosted by then-president Nelson Mandela. Prosecutor Brenda Hollis put the allegations to the court when cross-examining Taylor: "From among those diamonds that you took to South Africa, after this dinner that you attended you sent your men to Ms. Campbell's room to provide her with a large diamond. That diamond that you sent to Naomi Campbell was one of the diamonds that you had been given by the junta (board of military leaders) in Sierra Leone." Taylor denied he had given Campbell the gem, branding the claims "nonsense".

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

15 JANUARY 2010 - 05H56

US hopes Guinea coup leader will stay in Burkina Faso

AFP- The United States is hoping Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore will persuade the leader of a military coup in Guinea against returning home, a senior State Department official told AFP. Moussa Dadis Camara left Guinea after an aide tried to assassinate him on December 3, forcing him to travel first to Morocco for medical treatment and then on to Burkina Faso to convalesce. William Fitzgerald, deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, told AFP that Camara's continued absence could provide an opening for interim leader General Sekouba Konate. "We would hope that Blaise Compaore holds on to Dadis, allows him to convalesce there, because I don't think he's fully recovered, and Konate be given the opportunity to return and continue transition with civilians, " he said.

Guinea acting ruler threatens to quit

January 15 2010 iol.co.za

The interim head of Guinea's ruling junta has threatened to resign over the proposed return to the country of junta leader Moussa Dadis Camara, recovering from an assassination attempt in Burkina Faso. A split emerged within the junta when interim leader Sekouba Konate and other members met with Camara on Thursday in Ouagadougou to discuss his future on Thursday, an unnamed junta member told AFP from the Burkina Faso capital. Camara flew into Ouagadougou late Tuesday from Morocco, where he had received treatment after he was shot in the head in a December 3

assassination bid. Interim leader General Konate offered to resign when other junta members pressed for Camara's return to Conakry said the source contacted by telephone from Dakar. Guinea has been mired in a political crisis sparked by a military coup on December 23, 2008 and worsened by a massacre that killed more than 150 people, according to UN figures, on September 28, 2009.

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast to probe allegations of voters roll fraud

Source: BBC (Friday, 15 January 2010)

Registration of voters is a sensitive issue Ivory Coast's government has ordered an investigation into allegations of fraud by the electoral commission. Last weekend, President Laurent Gbagbo accused the commission of trying to register hundreds of thousands of ineligible people. Ivory Coast has long attracted migrants from neighboring countries and their eligibility to vote was a key cause of the civil war which started in 2002. The long-delayed presidential elections are due in a few weeks time. Interior Minister Desire Tagro said he had called in prosecutors following the heated row over the allegations. Since Mr. Gbagbo's comments there have been calls for the resignation of electoral commission head Robert Mambe, who is from an opposition party. Correspondents say the inquiry could further delay the polls. The vote has been put off several times since Mr Gbagbo's term ended in 2005.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone discuss Guinea Crisis

Billionaire George Soros says President Koroma is serious about moving Sierra Leone forward

Source : Cocorioko 15 January 2010

Soros Fund Management chairperson George Soros says that, after meeting Sierra Leone President Ernest Koroma and other members of government during his first visit to Freetown in 2007, he noted that Sierra Leone's new government was serious about moving the country forward. "Each subsequent meeting has boosted the confidence that, despite many challenges, Sierra Leone has significant, unrealised potential and is open for business and investment," he explains. He adds that, if investors look carefully at Sierra Leone, it is clear that the country has the potential to become a leading African economy.

"The foundations for a prosperous future are being laid in Sierra Leone right now. There is significant opportunity for high future returns on investment. Investing in, and strengthening, the economy in Sierra Leone and its neighboring countries is crucial for building open societies in West Africa," he concludes

Local Media – Newspaper

U.S. Government Dedicates US\$200,000 Rehabilitated Border Post

(The News and The Inquirer)

- The Liberia Community Infrastructure Programme (LCIP) with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) dedicated a US\$200,000 border post building erected at Bo-Waterside in Grand Cape Mount County.
- USAID deputy mission director Carolyn Teddy Bryan said the construction of the border post was part of her group's assistance to Liberia's economic reform programme.

- Ms. Bryan said the Bo-waterside border post is one of four facilities USAID is funding across the country, which would also host other key government revenue generating and security agencies.
- The three other border post currently under construction are in Yella, Lofa County, Ganta in Nimba County and the Toe Town border post in Grand Gedeh.
- The United States Government provided the Ministry of Finance a grant US\$800,000 for the revitalization of the four border posts.
- Minister Augustine Ngafuan praised USAID for the numerous contributions to government's poverty reduction programme.

Ex-soldiers' Widows Hold Lawmakers Hostage...Demand Benefits

(Daily Observer, Heritage and The Analyst)

- Hundreds of protesting widows of former security men Thursday blocked the entrances of the Capitol Building preventing lawmakers from leaving shortly after a meeting with House Speaker Alex Tyler.
- The widows claimed Speaker Tyler told them their concerns would be addressed anytime the House deems necessary something which infuriated them into blocking the entrances.
- A spokesperson for the women said they later opened the gates following the intervention of Justice Minister Christiana Tarr and Senator John Ballout.
- The widows are demanding US\$5,000 each for the services of their husbands who were killed in "active combat" during the war.

Liberia, Nigeria to Set Up Joint Commission

(The Inquirer and The News)

- Nigeria and Liberia have agreed to foster relations that will positively impact the lives of their respective peoples.
- Speaking at a joint news conference, Liberian Foreign Minister Olubanke King Akerele disclosed that the Nigerian government has pledged to increase its support in the agriculture, health, education and security sectors of Liberia.
- Mrs. Akerele said the Government of Nigeria has also agreed to assist Liberia in the area of commerce and industry particularly in the production of finished goods.
- Nigerian Foreign Minister Chief Ojo Maduekwe challenged Liberians to support government's effort in the maintenance of peace.

Senator Nyenabo Still Wants TRC Act Amended

((Daily Observer, The Analyst, Heritage and The Inquirer)

- Former President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate, Isaac Nyenabo has called for the amendment of certain provisions of the Act that established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- The draft bill proposed that the act which brought the commission into being was illegal and unconstitutional.
- The introduction of the bill by the Grand Gedeh lawmaker [who is listed among a host of former warlords and alleged financiers of the Liberian civil crisis] comes a week after he expressed indignation at the recommendations in the TRC final report.
- Like a number of Liberians, the one-time President Pro-tempore Nyenabo have been contending that the recommendations of the TRC's final Consolidated report were unenforceable and against the law.
- However, supporters of the TRC recommendation are optimistic of its implementation saying it offers the best framework for justice and reconciliation in the country.

Over US\$200m Investment for Freeport

(The Inquirer)

- [SIC] As investigation continues into the bidding process for the takeover of the Freeport of Monrovia, it has been gathered that Bollore Group, one of the companies that has expressed interest in the Freeport of Monrovia, is willing to invest over US\$200 million to “operate and maintain the Freeport of Monrovia.
- According to sources, the more than US\$200 million is intended for quay construction, structures for terminals and others for the smooth running of the Freeport.
- Sources said the amount is to improve conditions at the port with the view of modernizing it to increase productivity as well as revenue intake.
- The bidding process for the Freeport is taking place at a time there are mounting concerns about services at the Freeport, which is considered as the “gateway to the country's economy.”

Seventeen Senators Seek Passage Of Threshold Bill...Write Senate

(FrontPage)

- A team of 17 Senators has written the Senate seeking a concurrence vote on the ‘controversial’ Population Threshold Bill.
- The Senators said the passage of the threshold bill is a constitutional imperative and a conditional precedent for the 2011 presidential and general elections.
- The senators in a two-page letter pledged support for the 40,000 threshold passed by the House of Representatives asking the Senate to take a decision on the threshold bill by Tuesday, January 19.
- Meanwhile, the Senate has announced that debate on the threshold bill would begin next Tuesday.

Who Goes To Information Ministry... Several Names Emerge

(The Inquirer)

- As there are indications that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is to shortly carry on a reshuffle in government, five persons have been tipped to replace former Minister Lawrence Bropleh as Minister of information, Culture and Tourism.
- Those many political observers have named are Mr. Lamini Waritay, a Commissioner at the Liberia Telecommunications Agency (LTA); Mrs. Medina Wesseh, a former aide to the President; Dr. C. William Allen, Director General of the Civil Service Agency, Mr. Morris Dukuly, former Minister of State and Mr. Abdulai Dukuly, a media specialist.
- Sources say these individuals understand the workings of the government information dissemination mechanism as well as public relations aspect which is needed at this time.

Suspended Information Minister Poised to Resign

(Liberia Express, New Democrat, Public Agenda)

- Reports say suspended Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh has reconsidered the option of resigning his post to calm the mounting tension and save the embarrassment his “action” has caused the Administration.
- Although, the suspended Minister told journalists he has not reached that point of resigning, a close aide said he had been holding consultations with trusted aides on his decision to tender his resignation.
- Bropleh had earlier defied all odds to let go his Ministerial portfolio contending that he was innocent of all allegations of financial misconduct and could not bow to pressure to step down.
- However, addressing a live news conference today, the Minister said he was stepping down would submit to whatever process to “clear his name.

Local Media – Star Radio *(culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Seventeen Senators Seek Passage Of Threshold Bill...Write Senate

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

Representatives Fail To Attend Session

- The House of Representatives Thursday failed to conduct session due to lack of quorum.
- Reports say majority members of the House failed to attend session forcing Speaker Alex Tyler to cut-off Thursday's sitting.
- Eight of the 64 representatives including Speaker Tyler, Matthew Darblo, Dickson Yarsiah, Moses Kollie, Titus Barclay, Armah Sarnor, Samuel Bondo and Byron Brown were in session.
- No reason was given for the absence of the other lawmakers.

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

State Asks For Delay In Angel Togba's Murder Case

- The State has asked for a delay in the Angel Togba murder case till Friday to enable it presents another international witness who was expected to testify today.
- The State had earlier presented two international witnesses including Ghanaian Police Investigator Charles Appiah and Deputy Police Superintendent Alex Frimpong.
- The two men helped with the investigation of the murder of Angel Togba in 2007.
- Mr. Appiah in his testimony said it was impossible for little Angel to have hanged herself where the accused claimed she committed suicide.

Civil Rights Group Wants Claims Court Establish

- A rights group, the Joe Karpeh Civil Rights Institute has called for the establishment of a Claims Court in the country.
- The group's Executive Director Weah Karpeh said his call was in line with Article 34 of the Liberian Constitution which mandates the Legislature to constitute courts inferior to the Supreme Court including a claims court.
- Mr. Karpeh said the court when established would exclusively try cases of human rights violations and conflict of interest.
- The rights activist observes the absence of a Claims Court has served as a recipe for abuse of human rights in Liberia.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)

LCIP Turnovers Newly Constructed Customs House To Government

Ex-soldiers' Widows Hold Lawmakers Hostage...Demand Benefits

Fire Disaster Leaves Nearly One Hundred Persons Homeless

- A fire disaster early Thursday morning destroyed at least five houses in the Clara Town Community, Bushrod Island, leaving about 100 persons homeless.
- The victims of the disaster said they were unable to save any of their belongings.
- Eyewitnesses say a lighted candle caused the fire.
- Montserrado district number ten representative Regina Sokan Teah visited the scene of the disaster and described it as pitiful.
- Representative Teah called on the Liberian National Red Cross and government's Disaster Relief Committee to come to the aid of the fire disaster victims.

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

"I Am Suffering From Heart Problem" – Former President Moses Blah

- Former Liberian President Moses Blah says he is suffering from a heart problem that has restrained him from attending public functions.
- President Blah however said he is recuperating but has been asked by doctors attending to him to have enough bed rest.

Truth FM *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)*

Nigeria, Liberia Agree To Foster Good Relations

Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Monday, 18 January 2010

Two new ICC judges to be sworn in

On Wednesday 20 January, 2010, two new judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) elected by the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute in November last year, shall make a solemn undertaking in open court to exercise their functions impartially and conscientiously.

The new judges to be sworn in are:

Ms Silvia FERNÁNDEZ DE GURMENDI (Argentina);

Ms Kuniko OZAKI (Japan).