

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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"You are all aware of the dangers of a lack of things to do for young people, and of a sense on their part, not only that their personal futures are uncertain, but most dangerously that others in society continue to profit from corrupt behaviour" - UK Development Minister

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VOLUME 6 NUMBER 3

Editor: Victor Sylvester

MAY 15, 2004

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR PRESS RELEASE

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Freetown, 17 May 2004

Reminders

Prosecutor Welcomes Arraignment of RUF and AFRC indictees on charges related to forced marriage

Prosecutor David M. Crane welcomed today's arraignment of RUF and AFRC indictees on new charges "other inhumane acts" relating to forced marriage, which the Trial Chamber approved ten days ago.

Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao of the RUF, and Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu of the AFRC, were in court today to enter pleas to the new charges.

"These additional charges of crimes against humanity reflect the fact that women and girls suffered greatly during the war, including through widespread forced marriage," said Mr Crane. "The Office of the Prosecutor is committed to telling the world what happened in Sierra Leone during the war, and gender crimes have been at the core of our cases from the beginning. These new charges recognise another way that women and girls suffered during the conflict."

At the Special Court for Sierra Leone, acts of forced marriage will be prosecuted as an "inhumane act" – a crime against humanity – for the first time in the history of international law.



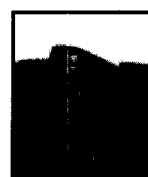
Is the President able and willing to tackle corruption?



When will ministers like Dr Prince Harding account to the people?



How did this man get into the Special Court?



When will Kanji Daramy face the ACC and the courts for his SALPOST corruption?

Nailing one of the many lies of Expo Times editor Ibrahim Seaga Shaw

Smashing the Expo Times web of deceit, lies and outright dishonesty

Who hounded the late SLENA boss?

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Tuesday May 18, 2004

RUF, AFRC charged with forced marriage

Erstwhile Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Interim leader, Gen. Issah Sesay together with Morris Kallon, Augustine Gbao and Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) were in court yesterday to enter pleas to their new charge of forced marriage, a Special Court Press Release states yesterday.

It says, the Prosecutor, David Crane welcomes the arraignment of the indictees on this new charge, " which the Trial Chamber approved ten days ago."

"These additional charges of crimes against humanity reflect the fact that

women and girls suffered greatly during the war, including through widespread forced marriage," Crane was quoted as saying.

The Office of the Prosecutor is committed to telling the world what happened in Sierra Leone during the war, and gender crimes have been at the core of our cases from the beginning.

These new charges recognise another way that women and girls suffered during the conflict," the Release also maintained.

This is the first time acts of forced marriage will be prosecuted as, 'a crime against humanity.'

Where is the TRC Report?

By Tamba Borbor

The patience of the general populace is wearing thin as they are yet to set eyes on the much talked about report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It would be recalled that the Commission did say that the report would be out by March; which is almost two months behind schedule. At another time, the Commission disclosed that they have finally decided to send the report to Ghana to be printed. However, interested people in the reconciliation

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From Front Page

process in this country are of the opinion that the current delay in the release of the report would not be far unconnected with the problem the Commission had sometime ago with an international organisation commonly called Geneva. The problem the Commission faced with Geneva saw the removal of office equipment and furniture, telephone and electricity facilities cut off at the headquarters of the Commission at Brookfields. The release of the report is much awaited by all concerned citizens in the

reconciliation process including human rights organisations, as it would address the very paramount issue of reparation. During a Press briefing last week, the amputees and war-wounded have asked for \$100 million as reparation for all they suffered during the ten-year civil conflict. Presently, the Commission's former headquarters is been occupied by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources as they have been evicted at their former office building at Marine House. One human rights activist remarked, "if the TRC

officials have closed functioning, let them release the report which we all are awaiting in order to address the burning issues of benefits which those who suffered during the war should have especially the amputees and war-wounded. Already, they are behind schedule and the Commission should prove wrong the claim by many people that they have mismanaged the funds meant for the completion of the entire work of the Commission including that for the printing of the report."

Awoko

Tuesday May 18, 2004

Concord Times

Tuesday May 18, 2004

Kamajor fights SLPP candidate in Kenema

By Nimalty Kamara

When Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) Local Council contestant in Kenema, Chief Benson Suwu left his residence yesterday morning, little did he realized that a bad omen awaits him at the Party's 18 Hanga Road office.

According to Concord Times sources in the township, it was while he was at the office that he was confronted by a former Kamajor Administrative Officer, Arthur Koroma who pounced on him and gave him the beating of his life which left him rushed to the Kenema Government Hospital for treatment.

Police yesterday confirmed that

Koroma has been arrested and the matter will soon be charged to court.

Reasons for the fight could not be ascertained as at press time but reports have indicated that both All Peoples Congress (APC) and Independent Candidates have promised to make Suwu Town Council Chairman as against his opponent, Chief Brima Kargbo should they be elected into council.

This latest form of violence came in the wake of Vice President Solomon Berewa's visit to the township yesterday to add oil to the SLPP's campaign machinery in the area.

The Daunting Task Towards In Sierra Leone Law Reformation

The Executive Secretary of the Law Reform Commission, Miss Jusu Sheriff explains

Courtesy LAWCLA bi-monthly bulletin

As a newly constituted Commission what are your duties as Commission?

The functions of the Commission are set out in the statute that established the new Law Reform Commission. By Act No. 17 1994, the commission has it's function, to keep under review all legislations enforced in Sierra Leone for the purpose reforming, developing, consolidating or codifying the law. In carrying out these functions, the commission adopts a participatory approach by inviting the public to contribute and be involved in the law reform commission.

Which areas of the Law do you intend to target specifically?

Well, there are many areas of the law that require reformation. In February the commission had its strategic planning workshop, and the commissioners have identified a number of statutes that they will be addressing over the next three years. These will include looking at the family law, the law related to the commercial use of land, review of the sexual offences, consumer protection, review of offences against persons including the law relating to abortion, and a review of the criminal law relating to property. We shall also look at the family law, succession and inheritance issues, as well as the Bills of Exchange Act, looking at environmental issues, which are in our three-plan of action.

It is no secret that most of our laws are obsolete, and if we are to catch up with contemporary happenings to meet modern legal standards then you have a big task to perform. Can you comment on this?

Yes, the commission has a huge task ahead of it. There is a saying that the longest journey starts with the first step. Since last year we have been looking at the commercial use of land across the country. We have been looking at reform that will benefit women, consumer protection, and also the statute relating to the law reform commission itself.

If your commission is to be a successful one then the vast majority of our citizens in the provinces have to be properly educated about their rights and obligations. What mechanisms have you put in place?

The commission doesn't have the mandate or responsibility to educate the public. We believe there are national commissions such as the National Commission for Democracy and Human Right (NCDHR), and Human Rights NGOs such as LAWCLA that have the greater responsibility to educate the people about their rights. We do consult the public on specific areas of the law; we do educate them on the current law and ask them for their views and opinion on what kind of change they will like to see in responsibility.

You are yet to officially kick-start your work. If not can you explain the reasons for the delay?

That is not correct. Since the establishment of the commission in February last year, it has been at work. We have had some constraints. The commissioners worked last year without any kind of honorarium, but they are committed to do their work effectively. The Chairman and the Secretariat had been working very hard. In fact we are already in the process of making recommendations on certain statutes, and we have already consulted members of the public. So we are already at work.

Women all over the world are advocating for gender parity, what do you intend to do to pay heed to their demands?

Women in Sierra Leone have often raised the question of inequality and injustices that have been meted out to them by the legal system. In February the commission at its strategic planning workshop adopted a proposal which was initiated by the Chairman Dr. Peter Tucker to set up a gender discrimination in particular and then go on to address discrimination issues more generally. The commission is aware of the enormity of the problem that requires some serious and dedicated work, looking at the law to address the question of discrimination and gender related issues more generally. The commission has plans to set up a unit to address these matters. It will be established initially for a pilot period of 3-4 months and the commission's work, and the gender unit will be directly under the chairman of the commission.

The number of rape cases is escalating. The Rainbo Centre has documented over five hundred cases related to sexual offences. How do you intend to reform laws relating to sexual offences that may serve as a deterrent to people who commit these criminal offences?

Well I said the commission's responsibility is to review the law. We do not administer the law. That is for the police and the Judiciary. But we can look at the statutes, and that's what we are doing. The commission has a sub-committee headed by Justice Virginia Wright, (JSC), which is making recommendations for reform of the laws relating to sexual offences, and other gender based violence issues, and we are doing this in response to the recommendations and proposals made by the National Women's Conference on law reform agenda last year in July 2003. That conference was organized jointly by the Law Reform Commission, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) that support the Rainbo Centre.

As a commission what do you intend to do with regards the

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Independent Observer

Tuesday May 18, 2004

Continuation:
Independent Observer
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Law Reformation In Sierra Leone

From Page 2

judiciary so as to bolster the confidences of aggrieved persons who are seeking redress and to expedite the work of the court to be more efficacious?

I really don't think that's the function of the commission. We are directly addressing the working methods of the commission. This is not our mandate. Our mandate is to review and reform the law.

How independent is your commission? In other words do you have any political interference.

I don't think there is any political interference in the work of the commission. I think every one in the country agree that we need to reform and modernize our laws to take account of our current reality, so there is no tendency for political interference.

One major bottleneck with the land tenure sys-

tem in the country, especially in the provinces is the political interference, thereby impeding any positive change well meaning people may propose. What can you say about this?

Well the Law Reform Commission is not going to change the land tenure system in the country. It is considering how to improve access to use the land working within the confines of the existing land tenure system and what we have had on our people in the provinces are not averse to make land available to people who have resources to develop it. There was no unwillingness to look at how the use of land can be improved and how women access to land can be improved. We don't think the land tenure system itself is a problem, and we found out from the people in the provinces e.g. the chiefs, private land users, commercial land users, family landowners, foreign-

ers, that at the end of the day it was not land tenure system that had the problem but the lack of resources to

develop the land that was the limiting factor.

Most people are of the view that if the commission is to be a successful one then the necessary human resources must be available. Do you have all these at your advantage to do your work effectively?

Well the task ahead of the law reform commission is huge. And maybe if the commissioners wanted to address all the problems

within the three years time frame, certainly we need far more resources than we have now. But since government is our main supporter (sponsor) and it is cash trapped, we have decided to start with what we have. We can grow larger as funds and adequate support from other donors in addition to government become available. However the commission wants to make sure that they do a

good job on whatever they turn their hands to rather than trying to do everything which doesn't end up not properly done.

Are you seeking assistance from foreign donors?

Yes, we will be. We have been doing and we will continue to do so and we have had some support from external donors.



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Riots meet U.N. disarmament plan in Liberia

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) -- U.N. peacekeepers fired tear gas to quell a deadly riot by Liberian fighters on Monday in the latest violence stemming from a U.N. disarmament program meant to rid the ruined west African nation of guns from its ruinous civil war.

Witnesses said between 50 and 100 fighters loyal to ex-President Charles Taylor confronted the peacekeepers, demanding full payment in connection with a U.N. program meant to collect weapons used in more than a decade of near-constant war.

"We are going to maintain a substantial presence in the area," said the U.N. police commander in Liberia, Mark Kroeker, of the Monrovia suburb where the militia fighters rampaged after being told they wouldn't be given money immediately.

Kroeker, a former Los Angeles deputy police chief, said that one man was "seriously assaulted" by rioters and died before Jordanian peace forces firing tear gas restored calm. Four others were injured in the riot, he said.

Kroeker called the violence "unfortunate and unnecessary" in the midst of a disarmament process that has taken guns from 25,000 of Liberia's estimated 40,000 fighters since its violence-marred beginning last year.

On December 9, the first of the Liberian fighters set to give up their arms rioted to demand immediate cash handouts, sparking deadly gunfights and looting in Monrovia, Liberia's capital.

After officials of the U.N. mission agreed to initial payments of \$75, thousands of government fighters swamped U.N. facilities. Officials suspended the drive on December 17 but successfully relaunched an amended version this year.

U.N. officials say it will likely take months to disarm all of Liberia's ill-trained, often-drugged fighters. Many Liberians worry that fighters will turn in only one weapon apiece, burying others for a later fight.

Taylor launched Liberia into crisis with his 1989-1996 insurgency before winning elections in 1997. Rebels who took up arms against him in 1999 besieged Monrovia in June, helping drive him into exile in early August.

Taylor's departure for Nigeria paved the way for an August 17 peace deal to end the rebellion and for the formation of the United Nations' largest peacekeeping mission, now nearing its targeted 15,000 strength.

A national-unity government arranged under the peace pact is to lead Liberia until late-2005 elections.

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Alerting Humanitarians to Emergencies

Fighters riot in Liberia's capital over cash

17 May 2004 13:08:00 GMT

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA (Reuters) - Hundreds of fighters who backed former Liberian President Charles Taylor rampaged through a bustling district of the capital on Monday armed with sticks and knives, looting stores and smashing car windows.

United Nations peacekeepers in the West African nation raced to the Paynesville area of the capital Monrovia to quell the rioters, who say they have not been paid fully for handing over guns as part of a nation-wide disarmament programme.

Two fighters were badly beaten by civilians after trying to loot a store while hundreds more headed on foot towards the home of Jacques Klein, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's special representative for Liberia.

"We want to inform Jacques Klein that we are not stupid. We are responsible people who have decided to give up our arms," said General "Rambo", a member of a government militia which supported Taylor prior to his exile to Nigeria.

"If he does not give us our money this town is going to be hot. Some of us still have weapons hidden," he said.

United Nations officials estimate there are at least 40,000 fighters who must be disarmed if Liberia is to have any chance of ending nearly 14 years of brutal civil war in which at least 200,000 people were killed.

The U.N. disarmament programme was suspended last year after the same Taylor loyalists went on the rampage in Monrovia in a dispute over cash. But a revamped scheme kicked off successfully in rebel zones in April.


"If the fighters have any problems this is not the way to express it. Whatever it is, we are calling on them to remain calm," said a U.N. official, who declined to be named.

By the end of the month 19,000 fighters had disarmed under the scheme. Fighters get \$150 for handing in guns and spending a week at a demobilisation site. They receive a further \$150 three months later, after returning to their communities.

The fighters rioting on Monday said they were angry because they have not yet received their second instalment.

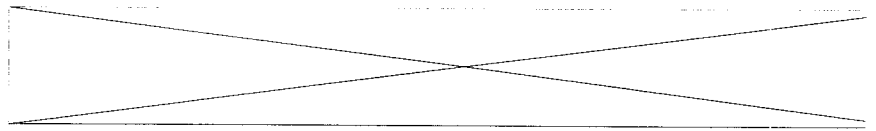
"We have decided to march today because the U.N. is not serious. They are trying to fool us," said Richard Moore, a member of the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU).

"We have disarmed completely and they are paying more attention to (rebel factions) Model and LURD."

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Sa. Leone DDRR Experts Make Recommendations

The Inquirer (Monrovia)

NEWS

May 17, 2004

Posted to the web May 17, 2004

Monrovia

Sierra Leonean experts on DDRR have advanced several recommendations to NTGL Chairman C. Gyude Bryant, aimed at building relevant institutions in the country to consolidate peace after the ultimate departure of UNMIL from Liberia; as Charles Crawford reports.

Speaking to journalists in Sinkor last Saturday at the offices of the NCDDRR, the head of the Sierra Leonean delegation, Dr. Francis Kaikai said the recommendations among other things, include strong policy issues regarding the smooth operations of the NCDDRR; technical advice to LRRRC in handling the plight of the population; the issue of providing assistance to war victims; the participation of ex-combatants in the capacity building process and other critical issues relevant to sustaining peace and stability in the country yea the sub region.

Dr. Kaikai said the recommendations, when put into action, will strengthen the NCDDRR and LRRRC to become more vibrant and organized in catering to the needs and aspirations of Liberians especially ex-combatants, adding that the recommendations cover areas that were specified by Chairman Bryant.

The documentation, according to Dr. Kaikai, also indicates technical support to be provided by Sierra Leone' President Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to his Liberian counterpart in a bid to consolidate peace not only in Liberia but the entire sub region.

Dr Kaikai, who is also former head of the DDRR program in Sierra Leone, stressed the need for UNMIL to empower Liberians and get them involved in the decision-making process of the DDRR program because when UNMIL shall have left Liberia, it will be the citizens of this country who will be charged with the responsibilities to manage what they put in place.

"We met with UNMIL and made them to understand that Liberians are clean people who need to be part of the decision-making process of the DDRR program. We told them to

encourage Liberians to get on board so that at the end of their operation in Liberia, the citizens will be able to sustain the peace in their own country," Dr. Kaikai iterated.

The delegation who left the country last Saturday for Sierra Leone, also disclosed that some 450 Liberian ex-combatants that fled into Sierra Leone during the days of fighting in Liberia, have been disarmed and demobilized and are currently undergoing skill training programs in that country. The ex-combatants are expected to be turned over to the NCDDRR at the appropriate time according to the Sierra Leone experts on DDDR.

Dr. Kaikai' delegation included Dr. Mustapha S. Tejan-Kella and Mr. Mohamed Sidi Bah as members. They are expected to be back in the country within two weeks with some other experts to help put in place what they have recommended to the Liberian government.

Also speaking, Sierra Leone' Ambassador to Liberia Dr. Patrick James Foyah maintained that peace in his country is tantamount to peace in Liberia, adding "that' why President Kabbah has deemed it necessary to dispatch Dr. Francis Kaikai and his team to Liberia to see how best they can work with their Liberian counterparts in putting into place mechanism that will sustain peace in Liberia when UNMIL shall have left the country."

Ambassador Foyah also indicated that the sending of the DDDR experts to Liberia by President Kabbah also manifests the growing of stronger ties between two neighboring countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Speaking earlier when the delegation arrived on Wednesday, the head of the NCDDRR, Dr. Moses Jarbo said the delegation' presence in the country was the result of Chairman Bryant' visit he paid to his Sierra Leonean counterpart President Kabbah, in search of peace in the sub-region..

The NCDDRR boss also briefed the Kaikai delegation about the progress made in the DDDR process since its resumption on April 15, 2004, while commending Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein and the rest of UNMIL team for the process.

Source: News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text) [i]

Terms: africa's endless war (Edit Search)

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Maclean's, May 17, 2004

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May 17, 2004

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LENGTH: 1482 words

HEADLINE: AFRICA'S ENDLESS WAR

BYLINE: BY ERIC HOSKINS

HIGHLIGHT:

Despite new atrocities, Sudan still hopes for peace

BODY:

*Over 20 years of **war** in Sudan have resulted in more than two million civilian deaths. In a concerted effort to bring peace to this troubled nation, the government and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement have been meeting in Kenya to negotiate an end to the conflict. Yet while a north-south peace agreement may be just months away, new violence, between rebel movements and government-backed militias, has erupted in Sudan's western region of Darfur, threatening hundreds of thousands of lives. Dr. Eric Hoskins of **War Child Canada**, who previously lived in Sudan for three years, filed this report from the southern part of the country.*

WHEN DAVID NOK was 13, government soldiers set fire to his family's mud and thatch hut. He escaped, but his brothers and sisters burned to death. "There has been **war** here since time began," Nok says. "My great-grandfather was killed by the British over 100 years ago, my grandfather was killed by the Arabs, and my father was killed after him." Nok, who runs a youth organization in Rumbek, the administrative centre of the rebel-held south of the country, worries that Sudan's best chance for peace in decades may be lost if there isn't a political agreement soon. Why such urgency, I ask him. "By the time of the U.S. elections, or if someone new comes after Bush, they will forget about Sudan," he says.

The United States, along with other countries, has been pushing hard for a peace agreement in Sudan, motivated in part by the wish to bring the Sudanese government -- previously accused of sponsoring terrorism -- back into the international fold. But peace would be only the first step in helping this ravaged nation. Sudan, roughly one-quarter the size of Canada, is **Africa's** largest country and one of its poorest. Over the years, it has been devastated by drought, famine and **war**. Entire generations have grown up without ever knowing peace, but with an intimate knowledge of hardship: in southern Sudan, one child in five dies before the age of 5; there is only one doctor for every 50,000 people (compared to one per 500 in Canada); and less than one-third of school-aged children attend school.

The **war** in Sudan is the world's longest ongoing conflict. In 1955, the southern and largely Christian Sudanese rebelled against the political dominance of the Arab and Muslim north. Fighting ceased temporarily in 1972 when the government in Khartoum granted the south limited autonomy. But in 1983 Khartoum revoked the south's autonomy and imposed Islamic

law. Since then, the **war** between government forces and John Garang's rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has claimed more than two million civilian lives, mostly women and children.

Amid international pressure in the wake of Sept. 11, the government and the SPLM signed the landmark Machakos Protocol in July 2002, paving the way for peace. The accord acknowledges the south's key demand for a referendum on self-determination (after a 6 1/2-year interim period), and the government's desire to retain Islamic law in the north. Since then, agreement has also been reached on security arrangements for the interim period and wealth sharing, under which revenue from oil -- a divisive issue ever since its discovery in the south in the 1970s -- will be split equally.

Two difficult problems remain to be resolved before a peace agreement can be signed. One is the precise mechanism for power-sharing during the interim period. The second is the status of three disputed areas. But Washington is putting renewed pressure on both sides to reach a deal as soon as possible. And peace will bring other rewards: international donors have said they will provide significant aid and development assistance to Sudan once an agreement is finalized. (Until now, most assistance has been short-term emergency aid; Canada has provided more than \$ 40 million in humanitarian relief to Sudan since 2000.)

With the prospect of peace come new concerns. During the past 20 years, up to four million southern Sudanese fled their **war**-torn region and migrated to other parts of the country. Roughly two million of them have relocated in Khartoum. With a peace deal, the UN expects that many of the displaced, as well as the estimated 400,000 refugees living in neighbouring countries, will return to the south. That could create huge problems as returnees and local residents compete for scarce resources and services. "This is one of the biggest challenges facing us," says Apollo Madok Chol, regional director of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, southern Sudan's fledgling civil administration. "The returnees need education, health care, shelter, water, clothing and above all security. And they are coming with different views and perspectives."

Frank Marita, the UNICEF representative in Nyal, a tiny village east of Rumbek on the edge of the Nile, agrees. "We expect a lot of shocks, as the two cultures come together," he says. "The returnees will have enjoyed a lot of freedom and may not want to stick to local customs. The youth will have grown up in urban areas, with lots of activities that don't fit in here. The returnees will be better educated and will get the good jobs. But some of the local people will say, 'You ran away and we stayed, so we should have the jobs.'"

Another major challenge will be demobilizing the fighting forces -- including child soldiers. More than 15,000 of them have already been demobilized in the south. Instead of organizing demobilization transit camps, the UN plans to quickly reunite children with their families, and provide economic and other support to the communities receiving them.

But, according to one UN official, "the donors don't want to go too far, too fast, before the peace deal is signed." This carrot-and-stick approach to peace may work, encouraging both parties to take negotiations seriously. But there's a downside: as long as negotiations are still underway, the donors' economic and social assistance remains on hold, and, consequently, vital preparations remain incomplete.

And even as some efforts to rebuild the south get underway, another conflict is raging. A year ago, violence in the western region of Darfur between pro-government forces and rebels began to escalate. Since then, more than 10,000 people have been killed and one million have been forcibly displaced. Militias loyal to Khartoum are accused of indiscriminate killings, widespread rape, looting, burning villages and abducting children. Rebel groups, accused of similar atrocities, say Khartoum has marginalized the western region. In March, Mukesh Kapila, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Sudan, described Darfur as "the world's greatest

humanitarian and human rights catastrophe." And in a recently leaked report, a UN investigative team visiting the area in late April found evidence of atrocities serious enough to warrant charges of "**war** crimes and crimes against humanity."

Although a ceasefire was agreed to in early April, each side has accused the other of breaking it. Talks, brokered by neighbouring Chad, have yet to yield results. And as the UN and aid groups desperately try to improve access to the remote region and ramp up relief efforts, there is fear of starvation and all-out famine. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for an urgent international effort to end the conflict, including, if necessary, UN-sanctioned military intervention.

Back in the south, in Nyal, along the edge of thick papyrus marshes blanketing the banks of the Nile, I spend time with Thomas Gatjuol and his family. Thomas was six when, in 1988, he was separated from his parents. He joined thousands of boys fleeing the civil **war** by walking to refugee camps in neighbouring Ethiopia -- a two-month journey. Called "the lost boys," more than 25,000 of them tried to make the perilous trip, and then a second dangerous trek to Kenya. Over half of the boys died, succumbing to starvation, dehydration and disease.

In 1999, Thomas returned to his parents' village. To his surprise, his mother was still alive. Now 22, Thomas is married, with two small children of his own. "I sometimes wonder how I survived at all," he tells me. "Things are improving, though. We will have peace again soon. Hopefully, my children will not go through what I did. What I want for them is this: to be happy and to go to school. Nothing more."

Thomas proudly shows me his home: a mud hut surrounded by a bamboo fence. He introduces me to his mother, who chases me until she can kiss me on both cheeks. His wife comforts their newborn. Later, as the UN plane leaves the airstrip in Nyal, I look back toward the village, past the crowd of children who have come to see us off, and hope peace will come soon enough for Thomas to realize his dreams.

GRAPHIC: Photo 1, A father cradles his malnourished daughter at a mobile medical clinic, JEROEN OERLEMANS/PANOS PICTURES; Photo 2, Gatjuol and his mother. 'Sometimes I wonder how I survived at all.', NAOMI JOHNSON/**WAR** CHILD CANADA

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Still Long Way to Go to End Africa's Internal Conflicts

Business Day (Johannesburg)

COLUMN

May 17, 2004

Posted to the web May 17, 2004

By Dianna Games

Johannesburg

A REFLECTION about events in Africa in this month so far would suggest we are not doing as well as we think in the area of conflict prevention.

A cursory glance reveals a disturbing breakdown of peace and security in many places. What is more disturbing is that most incidents relate to long-running conflicts or persistent flashpoints. They include:

Heavy fighting in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, in which nearly 60 have died with dozens more hurt. The violence was sparked by disagreement between two militias of the same clan (since the collapse of its government, Mogadishu has been run by clans).

The killing of about 12 people in southwest Somalia in interclan fighting over the running of a town, Bulo Hawa. The violence has displaced more than 3000.

Continuing violence by militias in Darfur, western Sudan, which has led to massive refugee movements across the region. Since May 6, the United Nations has moved nearly 53000 refugees from Sudan's border with Chad.

Continuing attacks on Sudanese refugee camps in northern Uganda. About 30000 people have been displaced from their settlements recently as a result of multiple raids by the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army, which after 18 years of terrorising Ugandans appears pleased to have new targets.

Bloody interfaith violence in central and northern Nigeria. This began early this month in the town of Yelwa in central Plateau State after more than 600 Muslims were killed by Christian gunmen. The violence spread to Kano in the north where dozens more people have been killed. Now tensions are mounting in five Igbo-dominated states as a result of the killing of their people in reprisal attacks by Muslims.

Also in Nigeria, several people have been killed and dozens wounded in fresh violence in the Ogoni community of Rivers State in what is believed to be a chieftancy struggle, while in Benue State, more than 20 died this month in political violence.

The continent is awash with plans to control, end and prevent conflict. The African Union (AU) and other continental programmes hail the successful tackling of conflicts in the Great Lakes, Burundi and Liberia as signs of the progress Africa is making in conflict resolution.

These are indeed noteworthy successes. However, even as those conflicts are being resolved through multistate and multiparty interventions, thousands of people are being killed in equally serious and persistent localised conflicts. In many cases, while the AU's early warning mechanisms are still being activated, whole cities are in flames.

Most flashpoints are not new the conflicts are primarily driven by reprisals for actions that have taken place days, and sometimes weeks or months, before. Some are localised power struggles dating back years.

Is the answer to long-standing tribal and religious clashes a military one? A negotiated solution? A bit of both?

There is much talk about a pan-African force but would this be the right response to a highly charged situation such as the religious conflict in northern Nigeria, for example?

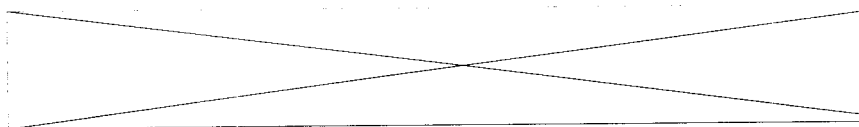
African solutions for African problems has the right ring to it but even this notion stands to be undermined by regional baggage carried by the peacemakers themselves. Deep divisions between states and issues of self-interest have contributed to the difficulties of solving regional conflicts in east Africa and elsewhere.

Conversely, Nigeria has been a key player in resolving the Liberia conflict but seems unable to solve problems on its own doorstep.

It is to be hoped the new Peace and Security Council and related structures do not focus their attentions only on high-profile, national or cross-border wars. Violence within borders, between communities, is equally corrosive to development and in the long run maybe harder to solve.

It is good to point out our successes to date, but not enough to rest on our laurels in this regard.

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Cote D Ivoire: UN Announces Wider Human Rights Probe

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

NEWS

May 17, 2004

Posted to the web May 17, 2004

Abidjan

The United Nations has published the official report of its inquiry into the bloody repression of an opposition demonstration on 25 March and has announced plans for a wider probe into human rights abuses since the beginning of the country's civil war in September 2002.

The report, which was leaked to Radio France Internationale on 3 May, accused "the highest authority of the state" of orchestrating "the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians by the security forces."

The official UN report, like its leaked forerunner, said at least 120 people were killed, 20 disappeared and 274 were injured during two days of violence by the police, the army and their paramilitary allies. This was particularly targetted at people from the rebel-held north of Cote d'Ivoire and immigrants from neighbouring countries, it added.

The UN Security Council debated the report on Friday and urged "that those responsible for violations of human rights, in particular those committed on 25-26 March, be held accountable."

However it stopped short of endorsing the implicit charge by the three international human rights investigators who probed the killings that President Laurent Gbagbo was personally responsible for unleashing the bloodshed.

The President of the Security Council, Munir Akram, said in a statement that the council welcomed the intention of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to launch a broader commission of inquiry "to look into events going back to September 2002" when the civil war began.

Diplomats said this would look at human rights abuses committed by the rebels as well as those carried out government forces.

Akram also spoke of "concrete steps" to ensure that those who are responsible for all the violations of human rights perpetrated in Cote d'Ivoire since September 2002 are held accountable for their actions."

Diplomats said this raised the possibility that a special war crimes tribunal might be created for Cote d'Ivoire, similar to the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone.

The report by the UN human rights investigators recommended the establishment of "a mixed human rights court with the participation of international judges."

Gbagbo rejected their report as "clearly biased" in a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan which was published by the government daily *Fraternite Matin*.

In the letter, he called for another investigation into the March event, a wider international commission of inquiry to look at human rights abuses in Cote d'Ivoire since the civil war began. The UN Security Council has effectively agreed to that.

The government closed down FM relay broadcasts of RFI in Abidjan for 24 hours on Saturday to prevent the French state-run broadcaster from rubbing in the fact that the damning report on the March killings which it published two weeks ago was in fact genuine.

The UN dead toll compared with an Ivorian government figure of 37 and opposition estimates of up to 500.

A political science professor at the University of Abidjan said on Monday Gbagbo was wasting his time trying to rebutt the conclusions of the UN investigation because these were "clear cut."

"He needs to save his breath, there will be more important battles to fight," he told IRIN.

The rebel "New Forces" movement hundred welcomed the publication of the UN report on the March killings, but said any wider human rights investigation in Cote d'Ivoire should go back as far October 2000, when Gbagbo was elected president.

Several dozen people died in an outburst of political violence immediately after that election, 57 of whom were subsequently discovered buried in a mass grave.

"We are not totally satisfied," Amadou Kone, a senior aide to rebel leader Guillaume Soro told IRIN. He noted in particular that the Security Council had not taken any formal steps towards setting up an international tribunal to try those responsible for human rights abuses in Cote d'Ivoire.

Opposition newspapers in Abidjan had speculated that the Security Council might impose travel sanctions on Gbagbo and certain members of his entourage and freeze their assets

overseas in imitation of measures taken against Charles Taylor when he was president of Liberia.

Gbagbo appears to have been lobbying hard to ward off any UN sanctions against himself or his government. He travelled to the Cape Verde islands last week to meet Angolan president Jose Eduardo dos Santos who was in transit to the United States and then to Tripoli to meet Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. A few days earlier, he flew to neighbouring Guinea where he met with President Lansana Conte.

His efforts were rewarded when Gaddafi told a West African summit in Mali at the weekend that the international community should keep its nose out of Cote d'Ivoire. The Libyan leader endorsed Gbagbo as an elected president and dismissed the rebels as "trouble makers" and "adventurers."

The full text of the report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the political violence in Abidjan at the end of March is available at <http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/340/77/PDF/N0434077.pdf?OpenElement>]

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