

# **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:**

Monday, April 19, 2004

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## Sunday's Paper

Location: Sunday 18 Apr 2004 &gt; National news



### Ex-dictator dreams of being a Jimmy Carter

**Deposed Liberian president says he wants to devote his life to others**

**Festus Eriye: Lagos**

Former Liberian strongman Charles Taylor says he would like to become Liberia's Jimmy Carter.



Strongman: Charles Taylor during Liberia's civil war

The former Liberian president claims that if he ever returns to his homeland, he hopes to emulate the former US president by devoting his life to the improvement of others.

Speaking on Nigerian television, Taylor, indicted on war-crimes charges at the United Nations special court in Sierra Leone for such atrocities as cutting off limbs, says international investigators and countries tracking money he allegedly stole while in office would come up empty-handed.

The hour-long interview on the Lagos-based independent television station Channels TV was a defiant and often emotional performance.

When he was answering a question about life as a former head of state forced to live in a foreign land, his voice choked up and tears welled up in his eyes. The interview had to stop for about half a minute @to allow Taylor to compose himself.

Speaking about the UN resolution that ordered his assets frozen worldwide, Taylor said: "I challenge the nations that sponsored the resolution; they have a responsibility to provide proof. In fact, I demand that they do because my honour is at stake.

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**Daily back page**

"I hope they do the search diligently. I invite them to go back 10 years. If they find any foreign bank account in any country on the planet, with monies for me, or if they find property - as has been alleged - then I stand guilty."

He said that as much as he welcomed the probe into his assets, he wanted a time limit to be set. "I have to live. I have children. My children cannot move - their rights are being violated."

Taylor, who continues to reject the indictment that requires him to present himself for trial at the court in Sierra Leone, says he is not responsible for the atrocities that happened in the country.

"Is it proper to say that a black president or a Liberian president cannot be honest?" he asked. "Is honesty the possession of only foreigners or white men? I served my country and was not involved in any diamond trade in Sierra Leone."

Taylor said that one of the greatest regrets he had about his tenure in office was his inability to get the US to accept him, saying that for any Liberian president to succeed he had to be in the good books of the Americans.

He said: "I was never able to get the US to understand me. I am not the type of guy that you can pick up the telephone and command. I don't take that. I didn't take that from Washington. I am not a coward."

Newspapers in Nigeria had been reporting that Taylor was getting bored in his exile home in Calabar. He told his interviewer he missed his social activities back home in Liberia.

He denied that he was exerting any form of remote control on events in Liberia - describing such charges as an insult to the interim government.

He describes the head of the interim administration, Gyude Bryant, as an old friend. But Bryant has been saying unfriendly things. In a speech recently, he said the honourable thing for his predecessor to do was face the music.


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*Africa News April 16, 2004 Friday*

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Africa News

**April 16, 2004 Friday**

**LENGTH:** 263 words

**HEADLINE: West Africa;  
Terrorism Worries Obasanjo, Liberian Leader**

**BYLINE:** This Day

**BODY:**

President Olusegun **Obasanjo** and the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Mr. Charles Byrant, have in a joint communique, expressed concern over the increasing incidence of international **terrorism** and terrorist acts.

Both **leaders** also expressed concern over the increase in conflicts in Africa and lent full support to initiatives aimed at preventing, mediating and resolving them.

In the communique signed at the end of the two-day state visit of Byrant who was accompanied by his wife, Rosie-Lee, the **leaders** "underscored the need for the return to countries of origin, illegally transferred funds and artefacts to facilitate the process of economic and social development of these countries."

They also called on the international community to act in concert to deal with HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases, the excruciating debt burden of developing countries, the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as rising poverty in developing countries."

According to the communique, the **leaders** have "appealed to African countries to devote their resources and energy to the urgent growth and development so as to enhance the well being of their peoples and thereby preposition them to face the challenges of the future."

It added that "the two **leaders** reiterated the importance of global peace and stability to economic growth and development and sustainable democracy. In this regard, they urged the international community to take every step that will promote the attainment of this objective."

**LOAD-DATE:** April 16, 2004

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## **POLITICS-LIBERIA:**

### **Former Rebels Surrender Weapons in Return for Money**

**Abdullah Dukuly**

**After four months of uncertainty and anxiety, the 15,000-strong UN troops in war-ravaged Liberia this week resumed a six-month campaign to disarm tens of thousands of fighters. The 15-million-dollar exercise is designed to end the country's 14-year brutal civil war.**

**MONROVIA, Apr 17 (IPS)** - The first five days of the campaign was concentrated on the central Liberian city of Gbarnga, formerly controlled by the biggest rebel movement – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

The process started in Dec. 2003 but was stalled after militias of former president Charles Taylor rioted in the eastern suburb of the capital, Monrovia, in demand for 300 dollars as their resettlement benefits.

The peacekeepers – who numbered only 5,000 and were deployed in a single cantonment site – found themselves overwhelmed with hundreds of combatants queuing up at Camp Schefflin, 48 km east of the city, to surrender their weapons in return for money.

Now the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has constructed four cantonment sites around the country to disarm some 60,000 militias who fought most of the country's 14-year civil war.

The war killed over 200,000 of Liberia's 3.5 million people and displaced thousands others. The fighting also spilled over into neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, destabilising the sub-region.

The combatants include those who fought for Taylor and the eastern rebels of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Taylor went into exile seven months ago after rebels reached the outskirts of Monrovia.

Taylor, a descendant of freed American slaves who ruled Liberia until 1980, was himself a rebel leader who started a campaign to overthrow the government of Samuel Doe, an indigenous Liberia, in 1989. He eventually won an election in 1997.

However, the LURD rebels - backed by Guinea – launched a new bout of war in 1999.

The Bangladeshi component of UNMIL has since been deployed in the central town of Gbarnga, the site of sporadic shooting by LURD fighters who often attack travellers on the highway and dispossess them of their belongings.

Last week, LURD fighters went on the rampage and dislodged the Bangladeshi soldiers to Taylor's farm, about eight km from Gbarnga, sparking criticisms from the public.

The incident appeared to have infuriated Gen. Daniel Opande, the Kenyan force commander of UNMIL, who ordered his troops to "shoot to kill" any militias shooting at UNMIL. The force operates under Chapter seven mandate of the United Nations which allows the use of force to ensure peace.

At the resumption of the disarmament exercise in Gbarnga on Apr. 15, senior transitional government officials, faction leaders, UN personnel and diplomats hailed the operation as "a dream come through".

Abou Mousa, one of the UN special representatives in Liberia, emphasised the importance of ensuring that the combatants "are well fed and meet the aspirations of the Liberian people".

Both the transitional government and UNMIL also believe that the process would continue unhindered. "We are not expecting any problem from the former combatants. We think it will go on very well," Moses Jarbo, director of the state-controlled National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation and Reintegration, said.

Most of the disarmed fighters appeared in Gbarnga elated at the prospects of returning to civilian life. "I'm happy now that I've been disarmed. I feel that I'm a civilian now," says 18-year-old Henry Flomo. He plans to return to school.

Alphonso Jallah, 25, says, "I will return home to see my parents for the first time in four years and continue with my agricultural work".

Vamba Sheriff, 24, says he may not go back to war if he is given the opportunity to learn a trade. "If the international community can take a good care of me and give me a sustainable skill, I will have no reason to take up the guns again," he says.

The Bangladeshi soldiers in the central region – now in an apparent combat gear - say they will do everything to ensure that the rifles and other weapons held by the former combatants are handed over.

"We are prepared to ensure that the disarmament process is not hindered in any way," a Bangladeshi soldier told IPS in Gbarnga.

UNMIL military trucks are transporting hundreds of armed militias from nearby towns and villages for the demobilisation exercise. Once they have surrendered their weapons, the former fighters stay at the cantonment sites for a few days before being sent home after counselling.

Margaret Novicki, UNMIL's spokesperson, says, "We process 250 combatants a day. That is to ensure that the campaign is not overwhelmed." The former rebels receive 75 dollars each in return for their guns.

The disarmament of the combatants – who have been terrorising civilians - is expected to allow the return of thousands of people clustered at the camps for displaced people around Monrovia and the repatriation of thousands others from neighbouring countries before elections. It will also allow the transitional government to establish civil authority throughout the country.

Last Saturday, Gyude Bryant – flanked by foreign envoys - asked Liberian civilians to forgive the former combatants. Bryant heads a broad-based transitional government that was formed under the terms of last August's peace accord to run the country until a permanent government is elected in Oct. 2005.

Jacque Klein, UN secretary general's special representative in Liberia, said all conditions for the resumption of the disarmament programme have been met.

He said the cooperation and support of the factions, the political leadership and military commanders was essential to the success of the disarmament campaign. "The United Nations family is here to help. Peace in Liberia is the responsibility of all the people of this nation. This programme will work if the former warring factions want it. I plead with them to help us make it a success," he said.

For his part, U.S. ambassador John Blaney announced a big package for disarmed former rebels, including job prospects for at least 10,000 former fighters in the areas of community revitalisation and rehabilitation.

"We hope to employ 2,000 by the end of May; another 2,000 by the end of June; another 2,000 by the end of June; another 2,000 by the end of July and so forth. Eventually, we hope to have 10,000 former combatants working for us alongside thousands of others," Blaney said.

"The fighters should stop fighting, the fighters should stop rioting, the fighters should stop looting: the fighters should realise that every time they destroy and steal something, there is less money and additional things to help them," says Geoffrey Rudd, the head of EU in Liberia.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other UN agencies have announced plans to provide essential services such as water and sanitation and medicine for the returnees in rural Liberia.

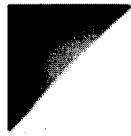
Thompson Adebayo, a human rights advocate, is also "optimistic that the disarmament process will remain on course. The faction leaders – who have drained the nation's resources and reduced the population to beggars - now appear ready to let their fighters disarm."

"The rebels vandalised our towns and villages and made it difficult and even impossible for us to stay in our homes. As soon as the disarmament begins in my town – western Liberia – I will return home along with my children and other relatives to begin to pick the pieces left behind by the rebels," he says.

UNMIL force has deployed in 13 of Liberia's 16 counties – and is expected to dispatch peacekeepers to Gbarpolu County near the northeastern border with Sierra Leone and Maryland County near the Ivorian border in the far southeast. Troops are expected to arrive from Ethiopia to be dispatched to Maryland (END/2004)

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## **DDRR Resumes On Smooth Footing, Ex-Combatants Impressed With Reception**

**The NEWS** (Monrovia)

NEWS

April 16, 2004

Posted to the web April 16, 2004

By Stanley McGill  
Gbarnga, Bong County

The long-awaited disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) program for combatants in the 14-year Liberian civil war resumed Thursday in Gbarnga, 120 kilometers north of Monrovia.

About 255 combatants of the main rebel group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) disarmed to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

The turnout by the fighters clearly indicated that the belligerents are actually willing to hand in their weapons to the multi national peacekeeping force.

Unlike last December when the program ran into problems, Thursday's resumption was exceptionally impressive and ran smoothly.

As early as 7 AM, the Bangladeshi contingent of UNMIL overseeing the DDRR program in Gbarnga had been adequately prepared to receive the fighters at the Yassa Zoe Integrated Farm, where the combatants were expected to physically hand over their weapons.

The fighters were trucked from designated points to the reception site and were briefed on the procedures.

Chanting slogans such as, "the war is over, we don't want no more war", the zealous combatants queued on orders by the Bangladeshi troops.

The combatants then orderly presented their weapons to the peacekeepers, after which they were trucked to the cantonment site located on the deserted compound of the Bong County Agricultural Development Project site, few kilometers away from the disarmament site.



Trauma counselors and the Lutheran World Federation met the ex-combatants upon arrival at the cantonment site.

The ex-combatants were given cloths, bedding, mats and other essentials for their livelihood. They were lodged, seven persons to a room and would be fed three times a day for the approximately seven days they would stay there.

The ex-fighters said they were impressed and satisfied with the reception they were given, and are calling on their colleagues to follow suit.

A 22-year-old fighter, A.B. Kromah vowed that no more would he take up guns to fight again.

He said he was drawn into the war after all his family members were killed.

Opting to be a heavy-duty mechanic, A.B. said he regretted taking up arms.

"I was not born crippled, but look at me today ", A.B. said as he boarded the UNMIL truck to be taken to the cantonment site.

For his part, Captain Robert Saah, an Arial Commander of LURD in the Jorquellie District area, reminded Liberian youths not to allow themselves to be fooled again by politicians.

He told his colleagues who were waiting along with him to be taken to the cantonment site that the war is over.

"We have to build our country", he said.

Almost all of the first batch of the 255 fighters who disarmed Thursday expressed disbelief. According to them, they had thought that promises of welfare made by the UN were false. But they said they were astonished by the "very good" reception at the disarmament and cantonment sites.

"Big brother, some of us do not have this to sleep on. We use our arms to sleep on them", one of the ex-combatants lamented as he displayed his mat and blankets to journalists.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Secretary General Special Representative to Liberia Abou Moussa has also expressed satisfaction over the smooth resumption of the process.

Mr. Moussa who visited the site himself on Thursday, said UNMIL has decided to take in 250 combatants per day to enable the peacekeepers contain the influx of combatants.

He said the UN does not want to have a repeat of the December 7, 2003 episode. Last December, the peacekeepers were overwhelmed when thousands of combatants turned out to be disarmed, far exceeding the number they had planned to cater to at a time.

The process was immediately suspended to allow for more planning. Our reporter described the resumption of the exercise Thursday as "perfect". The exercise is expected to continue this morning.

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## Facts of strife



Apr 16 2004  
South London Press

**LAST month, Camberwell and Peckham MP Harriet Harman travelled to Sierra Leone to find out more about the country which so many of her constituents call home.**

RACHEL EATON reports on the MP's African experience...

ALTHOUGH many Sierra Leoneans make their homes in Peckham, Harriet Harman knows that for many their hearts remain in the towns and villages of Africa.

Many still nurse horrific memories of the conflict which drove them from their homes and regularly send back money to their families.

In Ms Harman's constituency, more than 30 per cent of people come from Africa.

She thought the visit would be an ideal way to become more in touch with their needs and concerns - as well as helping the international aid efforts.

"My constituents bring photographs of Africa into my advice surgeries when they come to ask for my help," said Ms Harman.

"Long before the national newspapers began to report the appalling fighting and suffering in Sierra Leone, one of my constituents brought in two photos.

"One showed a picture of his home. It was a simple home in beautiful fertile countryside. The home was surrounded by a little garden full of flowers.

"The next photo was what that same home had become. It was burnt nearly to the ground. As I looked closer I saw, to my horror, what looked like parts of a body.

"My constituent told me that it was the body parts of his relatives who had been in the home when it was set on fire and were massacred as they fled."

Ms Harman thought it was about time to see for herself the continent from which so many of her constituents come.

"My first visit to Africa was to understand better their concerns, to see for myself what is going on in their country and to play my part in the UK government's important contribution to the future of Sierra Leone.

"The opportunity to visit came when I received two invitations. One from Geoffrey Robertson QC, inviting me in my capacity as Solicitor General, to the opening of the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

"And the other from Marie Staunton, director of Plan International, a children's charity which works with local communities rebuilding Sierra Leone."

One of the main focuses of Ms Harman's visit was to promote the task of rebuilding Sierra Leone and helping the children on whom its future depends.

According to Ms Harman, children have been the main victims of the fighting in Sierra Leone. She met youngsters who had lost their parents, seen their homes burnt out and witnessed dead bodies in the streets.

She added: "Girls told me of how they were taken as 'wives' by the rebels and bore their children.

"Boys told me how they were taken to work for the rebels and then to fight. Many had to flee their homes, thousands had their education disrupted.

"The children I met told me they want, above all, to be able to go to school and they told of their hopes to make something of their lives and help re-build their country."

Part of Plan International's work includes building schools and training teachers in Sierra Leone.

As part of the trip, Ms Harman was taken to see some of the work in the northern province of Bombali.

She visited the United Methodist Church Primary School and spoke to children who study in classes of up to 80.

"Some classes can't fit into the shells of the buildings and have to take place outside under the trees," she said.

One issue which Ms Harman was particularly surprised by was the acceptance of some practices which clearly marks the inequality between men and women.

Ms Harman added: "There's a strong women's movement which is growing in confidence and places great emphasis on the importance of girls' education and equality of opportunity for women.

"But despite the strong belief among many that a change in the status of women is necessary, outside Freetown female circumcision continues to be carried out as routine on all girls, whether Muslim or Christian, from the age of six to 13 years.

"I found it perplexing to hear women who are so strongly for women's rights saying it is 'not an issue'.

"It is hard to think of something which so clearly marks inequality between men and women."

During her visit, Ms Harman also attended the opening of the Sierra Leone Special Court - set up to try those with the greatest responsibility for the most serious crimes during the fighting. Although during the visit Ms Harman was shown many of the country's problems her over-riding impression of the country is positive.

"Sierra Leone's people could be prosperous - their home is fertile agriculturally, their beaches are spectacular, and their country is rich in minerals.

"It's a beautiful country full of potential, no one can go to Sierra Leone and not be struck by the beauty."

Southwark residents from Sierra Leone are being invited to a reception at Southwark Town Hall to mark the first evidence gathering event of its kind.

The parliamentary select committee for international development is hearing evidence from a panel of Sierra Leoneans in London as part of an inquiry into migration and development. Harriet Harman and Southwark Mayor Columba Blango have invited people to the reception of the event on Monday, April 26, at 6.30pm.

For further information, contact Charlotte Smith in the Office of Harriet Harman on 020 7219 2057 or email [harmanh@parliament.uk](mailto:harmanh@parliament.uk)



## ⊕ A plan to strengthen UN peacekeeping

JeanMarie Guéhenno IHT

Monday, April 19, 2004

### Third World conflicts

**NEW YORK** Recent headlines notwithstanding, fewer people are being killed by war than at almost any time in the past century. Some 25,000 were killed in armed conflict in 2002, barely one tenth the number killed each year during the 1990s. Even Sept. 11, and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have not reversed the decline.

There are two basic reasons for this decline in war deaths: Fewer wars are starting and, even more important, many old wars are ending. This is particularly true in Africa. Wars in Angola, Congo and Sudan - in which some 7 million people have died - are over, or soon may be. Sierra Leone, recently home to the limb-hacking rebels, is stable. Neighboring Liberia seems to be moving in the same direction.

Nor is the trend limited to Africa. Europe and East Asia, which lost some 60 million people in the wars of the last century, are almost entirely at peace. Even the smoldering Balkans, after the recent violence in Kosovo, is more stable now. India and Pakistan are talking about a resolution of their differences. On April 24, the Annan plan for Cyprus will be put to a referendum in both parts of the divided island.

A word of caution, though, before concluding that world peace is about to break out. In 1914, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace declared that the great powers were "manifestly unwilling" to make war, just in time for World War I. The present positive trend could be reversed at any moment.

Only one thing is certain: A large number of conflicts are moving towards resolution, and millions of lives are being saved.

To ensure that some of these conflicts really do have a chance of ending completely, the UN Security Council is creating a number of new peacekeeping missions. Those for Liberia and Ivory Coast are already on the ground. In Haiti, a multinational force will soon be replaced by a UN force. There is a paradox, though, in this growing peace: The military resources needed to help keep the peace are being strained by so much peace to keep.

There are already 15 UN-led peacekeeping missions on three continents. Some 50,000 soldiers and police personnel are wearing the United Nations' blue helmet, mainly from developing countries, led by Pakistan and Bangladesh. The numbers could rise to 70,000 or more by the end of 2004.

In the scheme of world military activity, this is not much. Even if the bill for UN peacekeeping rises to \$4 billion a year, which is possible if the Security Council calls for new missions in all of the places currently on its list, UN peacekeeping will still cost less than 1 percent of what the United States alone spends each year on defense.

But in the UN context, the current surge will push the system to the outer limits of its capacity. For every person in the Peacekeeping Department at the New York headquarters, there will be more than 100 in the field, creating major challenges in the areas of planning, force generation, logistics, procurement and command and control. If this wind down in war is to work at all, there will have to be some hard decisions by the international community. Four well-established principles might help guide those decisions.

First, no UN engagement in hot wars. The United Nations cannot fight wars, and cannot keep the peace where there is no peace to keep. At best, it can stare down some of the "spoilers" who renege on peace agreements after the UN is deployed. If there is real campaigning to be done, then military coalitions, such as the one the Security Council authorized in the Gulf in 1990, should be used.

Second, partners count. The last few years has seen the rise of partnership peacekeeping – the U.N. working alongside the regional organizations like the European Union, NATO and Ecowas, the West African grouping. These arrangements have their complications, but the neighbors and friends have an interest in seeing problems through. In a world of short attention spans, there is a need for those who won't turn away.

Third, no job without the tools. When U.S. forces withdrew from Somalia a decade ago, the UN mission failed. If the community of nations wants peacekeeping to be done, the support must be there to do it well – the men and women in uniform from developed and developing countries alike; the specialized military support services from those countries that have them, the financial resources, the strategic force reserves, the sustained commitment. Without that support, the peace will invariably fail.

Fourth, stick with it until peace takes root. Building peace from the ashes of war takes time and the international community must be willing to work with local institutions until they are ready to shoulder responsibility for democratic governance, the rule of law and continued economic development. Peacekeeping operations must be linked to a longer term plan for achieving this sort of stability.

There is a peace dividend to be had, but not without a clear-headed investment.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno is United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping.

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April 16, 2004

**LENGTH:** 598 words

**HEADLINE:** THE **CLEANSING** OF OEBLOOD **DIAMONDS**

**BODY:**

The United Nations' decision to delay its withdrawal from Sierra Leone, originally scheduled for December, by another six months confirms the grave doubts and misgivings felt by many here about the government's ability to maintain peace and security once the peace-keepers leave. There is widespread unease over the speed at which money is pouring into Sierra Leone's **diamond** fields, given the government's lack of control over them.

In its latest assessment, the UN security council underlined as a priority the need for the government to establish its authority 'in the sensitive **diamond** -producing areas and in the border areas'. As **diamond**-fuelled corruption and smuggling was at the heart of ten years of brutal civil war, there is a serious risk that the gem trade could once again tear apart the fragile peace in this land. With the UN currently investigating one of its own Ukrainian soldiers over allegations that he has been giving 'unauthorised' assistance to the Sierra Leone mining company in Kenema District, it is clear that no one is immune to the temptations of corruption.

The UN Special Court's prosecutor David Crane and chief investigator Alan White allege that several senior al Qaeda members are involved in the local **diamond** business, according to Washington Post reporter Douglas Farah. In his upcoming book, 'Blood from Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror', Farah claims that al Qaeda bought some \$ 30m to \$ 50m of **diamonds** in Sierra Leone in the eight months leading up to 11 September 2001. Giving evidence to the US House of Representatives Africa sub-committee earlier this month, he also alleged that Hezbollah is doing a lucrative trade in **diamonds** in Sierra Leone, with the help of unscrupulous local Lebanese businessmen, who have long owned most of the export licences in the country. This echoes an earlier warning by President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the danger of foreign elements taking over the **diamond** business for illicit purposes, including money laundering.

Legal mining began again two years ago and exports were re-authorised in June 2003 by the UN after a three-year ban. In January alone, 5,000 carats of gem-quality stones were sold for \$ 6.7m, according to the mines ministry.

While Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Kimberley Process, the international certification scheme designed to cut off sources of illegal **diamonds**, its government lacks the financial capacity, and perhaps also the political will, to participate effectively. Government officials

readily admit that smuggling remains substantial and may even be larger than the legitimate export trade.

Attempts to restrict trade to rough **diamonds** shipped with certificates of origin are unrealistic in a country where mining is dominated by some 200,000 artisanal miners working in remote locations. There are even questions over the transparency of the **Diamond** Area Community Development Fund, which receives a portion of the government's 3% **diamond** export tax to spend on small-scale development in **diamond** communities.

To focus attention on the need to ensure that Sierra Leone's OEblood' **diamonds** are transformed into OEdevelopment' **diamonds**, the Network Movement for Justice and Development and Partnership Africa Canada have begun publishing an annual review of the industry.

The biggest legitimate investor in Sierra Leone's **diamond** trade is Koidu Holdings, in which Israeli tycoon Beny Steinmetz has a controlling stake. He recently won a licence to develop the Tongo **diamond** fields in Kenema district, his fifth operation to date.

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Awoko

Monday April 19, 2004

Police brutality continues as...

# Human Right Activists Harassed



**This OSD Officer was carrying a gun**

The Sierra Leone Police has been accused of misuse of their power in the township of Koidu in the Kono district recently.

This recent misuse of the powers of the Police was exhibited in the Manjmandu village in the Tankoro chiefdom

where two non-governmental organizations- Green Scenery and the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) were holding a meeting with the communities affected by the Kimberlite operations of the Koidu Holdings Limited. The essence of the meeting according to a Press Release issued by Green Scenery was to listen to the concerns of the people who fear that they are losing all they

have that makes them live a life in dignity to a Company that cares very little about their concerns and fears. "We had scarcely concluded the meeting when a Police Land Rover vehicle drove to the scene with armed Police personnel and intercepted our vehicle. The officers, one with a radio handset questioned us about our mission. We told him we were having a meeting with the community people. He further demanded the permission that was



**Officer in plain cloth looking on and held a handset**

granted us to have such a meeting. They also confirmed that a security clearance was needed before a meeting can be organised," the

*Contd. Page 2*

## **From Front Page**

release went on; adding that the concern of the Police misusing their power had also been raised by the Executive Committee of the Affected Property Owners Association which accuses the Police of continuous security harassment, creating a fear in them to assemble to address matters bordering on their development. Green Scenery went on to state that, as the country is a democratic one, everyone is free to peacefully

assemble and associate with whomsoever they wish to and that it is also the responsibility of the Police to protect citizens from human rights violations including their right to development and self-realization by virtue of their obligation to the international conventions and treaties ratified by the state. It observed that the Police is not upholding the tenets of democracy while recommending that the Police desist from

perpetuating any form of harassment and intimidation to the affected communities within the Koidu Holdings Limited zone. Furthermore, Green Scenery proffered that the Police should take on the role of building peace between the company and the affected communities rather than being a catalyst for conflict. Above all, it recommends that the Police work with human rights organizations to receive guidance regarding how it

should relate to the international human rights standards for law enforcement to ensure that the Force is adhering to the state's international obligations. Added to its

proofs of the Police having misused their power in Koidu Town, Green Scenery retained pictures of the security officers from a short video clip which they have offered to

share with the Inspector General of Police- Brima Acha Kamara, so that he would clearly see how some of his officers are contributing to earning the Force an unenviable image of 'a Force for brutality'.

Standard Times

Monday April 19, 2004

# SRSOG appeals for free and fair elections

BY ABUBAKAR KARGBO

The Head of UNAMSIL, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago has said in a press conference held on Friday that candidates of the forthcoming local elections must be allowed to demonstrate their right by conducting a free and fair elections, as the constitution of Sierra Leone makes provision for freedom of expression.

The SRSOG said the coming election will serve as a test case for Sierra Leone if it is to gain credibility in the international community.

"This country has just

come out from war and more than three decades of mismanagement. You must ensure a free and fair elections so that when I get to the Security Council in June, I will be able to give them a good report, which we can only have if we maintain the peace we now have," the SRSOG said.

Ambassador Mwakawago said he visited some Western Area nomination centres on Friday to acquaint himself with the procedures involved, and reported that he is well impressed with regards to the parties and progress of the arrangements.

"The returning officers were very efficient and very alert. I have no doubt that the elections will be very successful. It is very vital that the elections should be given the opportunity to be local. UNAMSIL has got a wonderful cooperation from NEC and will replicate this by continuing its support with logistics," Ambassador Mwakawago said.

The head of the National Electoral Commission, Mr. Eugene Davies promised to continue to work with the people.

"We are quite determined to do things in the right way,

in order to make sure that all candidates have a level of playing ground. We will make sure that the elections are free and fair, and with the help of the SLP we'll make it

peaceful," Mr. Davies said, adding, "there will be no intimidation, and I hope the candidates of the various political parties as well as independents will cooperate

solve problems

with us."

The NEC boss however told journalists that there has been no nomination as yet for the RUF, which has been very cooperative.