

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

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

Monday, 19 December 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.  
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact  
Ibrahim Tommy  
Ext 7248

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# Margai, 10 others may be tried in Freetown

When Charles Francis Margai and 10 others make their second appearance today at the Bo Magistrate Court, it would probably be the last time, as legal procedures have started at the Freetown High Court for it to be transferred to the city. Legal procedures started last Friday before Justice Samuel Ademusu at the Freetown High Court, but were adjourned to Wednesday. The reason advanced by the acting Director of Public

Prosecution was that all the accused persons named in the 11-count indictment have not been served with the notice that would be argued at the High Court. Despite this development, the matter would come up this morning at the Bo Magistrate Court, where State Counsel Monfred Sesay is expected to request an adjournment following moves that are being contemplated by the State to seek leave from the High Court to transfer

the hearings to Freetown. When the legal luminary and 10 others appeared before

Magistrate Deen Tarawallie on December 8th, they were granted a Le500m

bail each. The charges ranged from conspiracy, holding public

meeting without notifying the Paramount Chief, functioning as a *Chief* without

## Margai, 10 others may be tried in Freetown

*From Front Page*  
registering, inciting riotous conduct and others. Lawyers Charles Margai, Arrow John Bockarie, (third accused) and Aggrey Albert Aruna, (sixth accused) all applied for self-representation, but were objected to. In relation to the arrest and charges, four diplomatic Missions – the European Union, the British High Commission, the United States Embassy and the

Embassy of France in a joint statement registered their concern over the arrest of Charles Margai and his eventual court charges. The statement reads in part, "we are concerned this may have implications for Sierra Leone's security and stability, and also for preparations for credible and democratic elections in 2007. It is important that all parties and candidates for the elections should be

able to prepare for these on an equal basis. We encourage all parties, their leaders and supporters in Sierra Leone to now act moderately and responsibly and avoid any actions or statements that could heighten tensions. We hope that the court proceedings against Margai will now proceed expeditiously, and accounting to due process. We remain in close touch with all parties and continue to monitor development

closely." The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Alhaji Momodu Koroma was quick to register government's displeasure over the statement, citing that

the Missions should have waited for the appropriate time. He therefore cautioned the diplomatic Missions not to interfere in 'our' internal affairs adding, some of these statements do not tell well.

*For Security reasons...*

# Charles Margai's trial may be held in Freetown

State counsel, Monfred Momoh Sesay representing the state in the matter Inspector General of Police Vs Charles Margai leader of the yet to be registered Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) political party and ten others, which is pending before a Magistrate court Bo has signed an affidavit transferring the matter to a Freetown High Court for security reasons, a Notice of Motion issued by the Law Officers Department stated last Wednesday.

The statement stated, " that I am informed by the security unit in the said province of Bo and I

verily believe that for security reasons generally it will be in the interest of all parties concerned if this matter be heard in Freetown."

The affidavit maintained that lawyer Sesay who is assigned in Bo has conducted criminal matters before the Magistrate court in that township that received his attention and the matter was adjourned to 19 December (today) in which no evidence has yet been led.

Defendant Charles Francis Margai Friday argued in court in Freetown that the matter should be heard in Bo where the alleged incident occurred, not in Freetown.



*Charles Margai -  
on the day he was arrested*

The other defendants in the matter are Sahr Kobio Foryoh, Arrow John Bockarie, Mohamed Borbor Sannoh, Lamin Vonjoe Ngobeh, Aggrey Albert Aruna, Edward Joe Kamanda Bongay, Didikie Janneh, Samuel Joseph Peter Stevens, Mammie Bockarie and Rachael Lagao aka Baby Four.

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# Daily OBSERVER

U.S. Lawmakers Pursue Taylor

Published: **15 December, 2005**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., December 14** – Saying they would feel considerably more optimistic about Liberia's future if former Liberian President Charles Taylor faced his war crimes indictment at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, lead by U.S. Representative Ed Royce (R-CA-40) and U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The letter, coming before Secretary Rice's meeting with Liberian President-Elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf today, asks Rice to make the status of Charles Taylor, who continues to enjoy asylum in Nigeria, a paramount concern of the United States in her conversations with the President-Elect.

"It is my hope that Secretary Rice will strongly recommend to President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf that she call upon the government of Nigeria to transfer Charles Taylor to the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has indicted him for war crimes and crimes against humanity," said Royce, who noted that Nigerian President Obasanjo has committed to consider an extradition request made by a democratically-elected Liberian government.

"The present situation provides a unique window of opportunity. Delay only works to Mr. Taylor's advantage. The time for action is now. For if we fail to act, and Mr. Taylor is allowed to escape justice, history will look poorly upon the international community, and the future of millions of West Africans will be needlessly imperiled," Royce continued.

Other lawmakers joining Royce and Obama in signing the letter were: Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA), Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), Representative Vic Snyder (D-AR), Representative Sue Kelly (R-NY), Representative Dianne Watson (D-CA), Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI), and Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ).

Royce chaired the House Subcommittee on Africa for eight years (1997-2005). He is currently the vice-chairman of the panel. Following this release is a copy of the letter.

**Text of the letter to Secretary Rice:**

December 13, 2005

Dear Madame Secretary:

On the occasion of Liberian President-Elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's visit to Washington, we write to respectfully request that you make the status of former Liberian President Charles Taylor a paramount concern of the United States in your conversations with the President-Elect. It is our hope that you will strongly recommend to President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf that she call upon the government of Nigeria to transfer Charles Taylor to the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has indicted him for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The treatment of Taylor is a matter of security and justice for the West African people.

The election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in November promises a new beginning for Liberia. Liberians enthusiastically demonstrated their faith in the democratic process, marking the freest and fairest election in their country's history. In 2003, Congress, on a bipartisan basis, played a leadership role in appropriating \$200 million for relief and reconstruction efforts in Liberia. Since that time, Congress has worked to ensure strong funding for Liberia during the appropriations process to see that the basic needs of the Liberian people are met. Many in Congress look forward to continued work with you and the new Liberian government to confront the country's many political, development, and other challenges.

We would be considerably more optimistic about Liberia's future, however, if Mr. Taylor faced the 17-counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity charges that the Special Court has lodged against him. In our view, progress in Liberia, and the international community's considerable investment in the region, is in jeopardy so long as Mr. Taylor is permitted to elude justice and meddle in Liberian politics. Of equal importance, justice must be pursued for the people of West Africa, who were brutalized in the war Taylor is accused of fueling. The United States and other governments have strongly supported the Special Court and its mandate, both financially and politically. This investment risks producing little return, however, if Mr. Taylor remains outside of its reach.

Unfortunately, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has resisted numerous calls, including by the United States Congress, to transfer Mr. Taylor to the custody of the Special Court. However, President Obasanjo has committed to consider an extradition request made by a democratically-elected Liberian government. That is why we are asking you to request that President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf now call for the Nigerian government to deliver Mr. Taylor to the Special Court.

Last month, we were encouraged to see the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopt a resolution, cosponsored by the United States, mandating that the U.N. peacekeeping force in Liberia arrest and transfer Mr. Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to stand trial if he were to return to Liberia. This resolution -- which emphasized that Taylor's stay in Nigeria is temporary and recognized him as a threat to the region -- is further indication of the international community's strong desire to see Mr. Taylor face the Special Court. Additionally, the European Union, days after President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf's election, issued a statement that the new Liberian government "must cooperate fully with the international community to ensure that former President Charles Taylor is brought to court." Should Mr. Taylor continue to evade justice, the international community may show reluctance to continue with its strong support for the reconstruction of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf has a strong democratic mandate to call for Mr. Taylor to be placed in the custody of the Special Court. Such a call by the Liberian President-Elect would send a powerful message that the use of violence to achieve political ends is no longer acceptable in West Africa, and would help usher in a new era for the rule of law in the region.

Madame Secretary, Mr. Taylor must be held accountable. Achieving this end will require decisive and quick action by President-Elect Johnson-Sirleaf, backed by the United States. While some will argue that the "timing is not right," we believe that the present situation provides a unique window of opportunity. Delay only works to Mr. Taylor's advantage. The time for action is now.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

/S/

Representative Ed Royce, Senator Barack Obama,  
Representative Henry Hyde, Senator Lincoln Chafee,  
Representative Betty McCollum, Senator Patrick Leahy,  
Representative Frank Wolf, Senator Jack Reed,  
Representative Vic Snyder, Representative Sue Kelly,  
Representative Dianne Watson, Senator Russ Feingold,  
Representative Chris Smith

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 15 Dec. 2005**

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

**International Clips on Liberia**

15/12/2005 06:13:29

**Observer missions say no fraud in Liberian run-off election**

Monrovia (dpa) - A United Nations official in Liberia called on the defeated Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) party to prevent further disturbances, media reports said Thursday, after two U.S.-based international election observer missions dismissed allegations of "systematic fraud" in the recent run-off election.

Alan Doss, the head of U.N. Mission in Liberia and Special Representative of the U.N. secretary-general, blamed the CDC standard bearer the December 11 violence which resulted in several deaths, injuries as well as property damage.

Doss urged presidential candidate soccer icon George Weah and other leaders of the CDC to call on their partisans to prevent any further disturbances.

14/12/2005 20:55:11

**Annan urges Weah's party in Liberia to respect poll outcome**

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 14 (AFP) - UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Wednesday called on leaders and supporters of ex-soccer star George Weah's party to respect results of the recent presidential election in Liberia and to refrain from violence.

"The Secretary General is concerned about the recent disturbances in Monrovia and the tensions resulting from protests by supporters of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) against the results of the run-off presidential election of 8 November," a UN statement said.

14/12/2005 13:18:47

**U.S. legislators push for handover of Liberia's Taylor to war**

WASHINGTON (AP) \_ A group of U.S. lawmakers and a leading human rights group are urging that former Liberian President Charles Taylor be handed over to a U.N.-backed war crimes court, saying that the move is a "matter of security and justice for the West African people."

The lawmakers' call came in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who is scheduled to meet Thursday with Liberian President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.



## **Sierra Leone: Blue Helmets Quit, But "Peace Elusive"**

Goderich, Dec 14, 2005 (UN IRIN/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The largest UN peacekeeping operation in its time is about to wind up but despite the broad successes of the mission, war battered Sierra Leone is still at the beginning of the long road to recovery.

"If you imagine that UNAMSIL was spread over the country like a beautiful carpet, well now the time has come to roll that carpet back, and what you might find underneath may not be very good," said Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, head of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL.

NewsEdge Corporation 15/12/2005 04:08:08

## **French general blames Gbagbo's allies for Nov. 6 airstrike**

PARIS, Dec 14, 2005 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Gen. Henri Poncet, former commander of the French forces in Cote d'Ivoire, blamed Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo's senior allies for the airstrike on French forces in the country last year, a government official said Wednesday.

### **Local Media – Newspapers**

#### **No One Can Stop Inauguration of President-Elect Says UN Envoy**

*(The News, The Inquirer and The Analyst)*

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss told UNMIL weekly press briefing yesterday that the pending inauguration of President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf would be held on schedule, saying that no one has the right to prevent the implementation of any aspect of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Mr. Doss said that Liberians elected Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf in a process—the final phase of the CPA-- which was generally certified as free, fair and transparent.

#### **Pro-Democracy Groups Reject Systematic Fraud Allegation**

*(The News, The Inquirer and Liberian Express)*

- In a joint press release issued in Monrovia yesterday, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Carter Center (CC)—observers of the elections—said that there were no evidence of systematic fraud as claimed by the Congress for Democratic Change.

#### **President-Elect Confers with UN Secretary-General**

*(The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst and The Liberian Diaspora)*

- A Unity Party press release issued in Monrovia yesterday said that President-elect Johnson-Sirleaf has held discussions in New York with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan focusing on the future of Liberia and the role of the UN mission in the country.

#### **Families of Rioters Call for their Release**

*(The News)*

- The families of partisans of the CDC who were arrested by Police following Sunday's riots yesterday converged on the Magisterial Court at the Temple of Justice to demand the release from detention of their children and relatives.

#### **Elections Commission Rules in Run-Off Fraud Case Friday**

*(Daily Observer and The Analyst)*

- Following the final arguments in the run-off election fraud complaint filed against the NEC by the CDC, NEC hearing officer Joseph Blidi announced yesterday that ruling into the case would be handed down Friday.

## **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

### **President-Elect Confers with UN Secretary-General**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **UNHCR Increases Repatriation Convoys**

- The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR said yesterday that it has accelerated repatriation activities overland due to improved weather and the improvement in the road condition.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Pro-Democracy Groups Reject Systematic Fraud Allegation**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

## **ELBS RADIO** *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

### **Religious Council Unhappy about Unwholesome Events**

- At a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia said that it was concerned about the slow pace hearing into the run-off election fraud complaint filed by the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC). CDC standard bearer George Weah's proclamation that he is the elected President of Liberia as well as the transitional government's report of security threat on the country.

### **Liberian Youth Hold Talks on National Youth Policy**

- Federation of Liberia Youths President George Wisner told journalists in Monrovia yesterday that a national validation meeting was underway to draft a national youth policy to help promote full participation of the youth in national affairs.

## **STAR RADIO** *(News culled from website at 09:00 am)*

### **Families of Rioters Call for their Release**

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 16 Dec. 2005**

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**International Clips on Liberia****Liberia's election commission dismisses Weah's fraud claim**

DAKAR, Dec 16 (AFP) - Liberia's National Elections Commission on Friday rejected a claim of vote fraud by ex-soccer star George Weah, who was beaten in a presidential election by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a commission spokesman said. "There was not enough evidence to substantiate their claim," NEC spokesman Bobby Livingstone said.

NewsEdge Corporation

**A.U. appeals to George Weah to embrace reconciliation in Liberia**

Addis Ababa (dpa) - The African Union on Friday appealed to George Weah, the defeated candidate in Liberia's recent presidential elections, to embrace peace and national reconciliation in order to help defuse the prevailing disturbing events in the country.

A.U. Commission chairman Alpha Oumar Konare expressed ``great concern over the unfolding events in Liberia which, if unchecked, could undermine the beginning of a democratic order ushered in by the recent elections in the country''.

Konare described the Liberian elections as peaceful, free and fair, "culminating in the run-off elections of November 8, 2005, with far-reaching implications for constitutional order in the country".

**Liberia president-elect urges Weah to overcome loss**

By Sue Fleming

WASHINGTON, Dec 15 (Reuters) - Liberian President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf expressed confidence on Thursday her main opponent, who says last month's election was rigged, would overcome his "disappointment" and support her new government.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a private visit to the United States, Johnson-Sirleaf said claims by soccer millionaire George Weah he had been cheated in the vote were unfortunate.

NewsEdge Corporation

**UN military observers to recommend Ethiopian peacekeepers stay in Liberia**

Addis Ababa, 15 December: A Military Observers' Team sent from the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission announced that it would recommend Ethiopia to

continue the peacekeeping operations in Liberia under its sectors.

Public Relations Service of the Ministry of National Defense said in a statement Tuesday [13 December] that the team indicated the intent in a deliberation they made with commanding officers of the brigade after paying a visit recently to the Ethiopian Peacekeeping Force under various areas of responsibility.

THE IRISH TIMES 16/12/2005 05:33:57

## **Troops in Liberia to assist war court in Sierra Leone**

Marie O'Halloran

Irish troops serving in Liberia in West Africa are to expand their operation to provide back-up security for a war crimes court in neighboring Sierra Leone. The Dail unanimously supported the UN proposal, introduced by Minister for Defense Willie O'Dea. The decision means personnel from the Defense Forces' contingent of 427 will provide back-up to Mongolian troops guarding a special court in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown.

In the event of a "serious security crisis", the troops will evacuate the court's personnel and the security detail. It is understood they will be responsible for securing a helicopter landing strip near the court.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **UN Secretary-General Rejects Street Protests over Election Result**

*(The Inquirer, The Analyst and New Democrat)*

- United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called on the leaders and supporters of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) to respect the internationally certified result of the election and adhere to universally accepted standards of democratic governance and the rule of law as well as refrain from any violence, which, according to him, is absolutely unacceptable, a press release quoted a spokesman for Mr. Annan.

#### **Annan Pledges Support for Total Peace in Liberia**

*(New Democrat)*

- A press release from the Liberian embassy in Washington said yesterday that during a meeting early this week with President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf at the UN headquarters in New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan promised that UN troops' presence in Liberia will last until the country achieves total peace.

#### **Cote d'Ivoire Recruiting Liberian Mercenaries Says Deputy Defense Minister**

*(The Liberian Diaspora and New Democrat)*

- Addressing a cross-section of pro-democracy groups in Monrovia recently, Deputy Defense Minister Joe Wylie said that the continuous recruitment of Liberian ex-combatants by both the Ivorian Government and rebels was not a good sign for the Liberian peace process.

#### **West Africa Civil Society Forum denounces Sunday's Violence**

*(The News, The Inquirer and The Analyst)*

- In a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, West Africa Civil Society Forum Liberia Chapter Coordinator Malcolm Joseph said that the organization was unhappy about Sunday's disturbances in Monrovia, and appealed to Liberians to refrain from all forms of violence.

#### **CDC Standard Bearer Visits Ivorian President**

*(National Chronicle and Plain Truth)*

- CDC Secretary-General Eugene Nagbe said yesterday that the CDC standard bearer George Weah had received invitation to attend a meeting with Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo to discuss issues relating to the Liberian peace process.

### **Investigation of Destabilization Plan Gains Momentum**

*(Heritage)*

- Information Minister William Allen told UNMIL Radio yesterday that a joint security investigation of alleged plans to destabilize Liberia was gaining momentum with substantial evidence being unearthed.

### **Elections Commission to Certificate Winners on Monday**

*(The Inquirer)*

- The National Elections Commission said yesterday in a press release that the official ceremony to certificate winners of the 11 October presidential and legislative elections and the 8 November runoff would be held on Monday, 19 December at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

### **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

#### **Transitional Government Chairman Wants CDC Supporters to Eschew Violence**

- In a press release issued in Monrovia yesterday, Transitional Government Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant called on Congress for Democratic Change standard bearer George Weah to caution supporters of the party to refrain from disturbing public peace and damaging public properties.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **CDC Standard Bearer Visits Ivorian President**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Sierra Leonean Government Concerned about Developments in Liberia**

- Sierra Leone's Minister of Information and Broadcasting Septimus Kaikai said in Freetown yesterday that the Government of Sierra Leone was concerned about the developments in Liberia since the end of the elections. He said such developments could negatively impact on other countries in West Africa. He urged Liberians to allow peace to reign.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **STAR RADIO** *(News culled from website at 09:00 am)*

#### **West Africa Civil Society Forum Denounces Sunday's Violence**

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