

**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 at:

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 19 July 2007

Former AFRC Leaders Sentenced to Long Prison Sentences for Crimes in Sierra Leone

Three former members of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) have been sentenced to lengthy prison sentences for their part in crimes committed during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil conflict.

These are the first sentences handed down at the Special Court.

Alex Tamba Brima, aka "Gullit"; Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu, alias "Five-Five" were each convicted on June 20 on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Court imposed single "global" sentences of 50 years for Brima, 45 years for Kamara, and 50 years for Kanu. They will be given credit for time served since their arrests in 2003. The Court ordered that the three men begin serving their sentences immediately.

In announcing the sentences today, Presiding Judge Justice Julia Sebutinde noted that the three had been found guilty of "some of the most heinous, brutal and atrocious crimes ever recorded in human history".

The Trial Chamber, consisting of Justice Sebutinde, Justice Richard Lussick and Justice Teresa Doherty, considered a number of aggravating circumstances when deliberating on the sentences. They found that there were no mitigating circumstances which would have argued for lower sentences.

The Judges noted that none of the accused had expressed remorse for their crimes.

#END

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, 19 July 2007

Prosecutor Welcomes Sentences in AFRC Case

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone welcomed today's decision of Trial Chamber II to sentence the three AFRC defendants to prison terms ranging from 45 to 50 years. The sentences follow last month's verdicts convicting all three defendants of eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were sentenced to 50 years in prison, while Brima Bazzy Kamara was sentenced to 45 years.

"This punishment reflects the horrific crimes for which each defendant was convicted", said Stephen Rapp, the Prosecutor.

The crimes include murder and extermination; sexual violence and rape; amputation and mutilation; terror, slavery and pillage. Today's decision also includes the first sentences in history for the crime of the recruitment and use in hostilities of child soldiers.

Brima, Kamara and Kanu committed "some of the most heinous, brutal and atrocious crimes ever recorded in human history", said Presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde. "Innocent men, women and children hacked to death, burned alive, women gang-raped to death, sons forced to rape mothers, brothers forced to rape sisters, women's pregnant stomachs slit open to settle bets on the sex of the fetus, arms chopped off, heads placed on sticks..."

"The Trial Chamber cannot recall any other conflict in human warfare where the civilian population was subjected to such horrific acts," Justice Sebutinde went on to say.

The defendants not only ordered, but also directly participated in, the commission of these grave crimes. One showed his men how to cut off the hands and arms of victims. Another ordered that entire families be burned alive in their homes.

"These are crimes that shock the conscience of humankind", said Prosecutor Rapp. "These sentences represent an international recognition of the horrible suffering inflicted on the people of Sierra Leone. But they also send a signal to similar leaders, wherever they may be: If you brutalise civilians to gain or hold power you too can face condemnation and punishment".

#END

Awoko

Thursday, 19 July 2007

report states...**The root causes of the war continue to haunt Salone**

A study by Action Aid, CAFOD and CARE International which viewed Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peace building Commission (UNPBC) states that "...the root causes of the conflict continue to haunt Sierra Leone in its post-conflict period."

The study, which graphically analyzed both conflicts and post-conflicts, explains that from 1991 to 2002 Sierra Leone experienced a civil war influenced by local, regional and international interests, which some analysts have suggested that "'ancient hatreds' drove the fighting," while others emphasize the conflict on the economic agendas of rebel leaders such as Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor.

The study unearths that "...the origins of the war were more complex, rooted in a long history of political violence and social exclusion," and heightens that "while progress towards peace has been made, the root causes of the conflict continue to haunt Sierra Leone in its post-conflict period."

Scrutinizing the genesis and dynamics of the conflict, the study states that, "both in terms of its origins and factors that sustained the violence, the conflict reflected a complex relationship between 'greed' (economic factors) and 'grievance' (political), social and psychological factors."

It maintains that at the time, analysts claimed that economic factors were "largely responsible for [the war's] inception and protracted duration."

Factions on all sides, the study states "...were estimated to have earned between US\$25-125 million through trading so-called 'conflict diamonds'. Yet political and social grievances were also critical in driving the conflict, emerging from a history of exploitation and oppression that characterized relations between urban elites and the rural population, as well as power imbalances within rural communities."

Highlighting the crux of the conflict, the study states that lack of state authority and capacity was also a major factor in the war's protracted duration. "This was particularly evident in the security services, already accused of corruption and human rights abuses prior to the conflict. Failure by state forces to provide security for communities led to the mobilization of 'kamajor' civil defense forces in some areas. This deterioration of state authority culminated in a coup in 1997, plunging Freetown into renewed violence, and bringing diamond-rich areas under the control of Rebel United Front (RUF) and renegade state forces. Just as central state institutions were disintegrating prior to the conflict, so the fabric of governance and society in rural areas had become increasingly strained.

The study further explained that when the RUF launched its rebellion in the eastern border areas, the rural population's poverty and political disenfranchisement had already reached crisis point, adding that coupled with successive governments' neglect and persecution, rural Sierra Leone provided a ripe recruitment ground for the insurgency.

"The position of youth was a particularly critical factor in the conflict. Socially excluded youth comprised a majority of rebel and dissident state forces. RUF fighters consisted of mainly three categories of youth: long-term urban unemployed and criminal elements, alienated village youths, and young, uprooted migrants in border and diamond-mining areas. Significant numbers of young males had become increasingly frustrated by a lack of education and employment opportunities," the report highlights.

The study however notes that despite five years of peace and the departure of the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) in December 2005, many of the root causes of the conflict remain.

It continues that, "Youth unemployment remains widespread and governance issues continue to frame prospects for sustainable development and peace. Despite the creation of an Anti-Corruption Commission, challenges of accountability and transparency remain.

Regardless of the challenges, the study states that Sierra Leone has made important progress towards recovery and rebuilding the fabric of national society.

The study continues that despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, the World Bank estimates the country's 2006 annual growth rate at 7.3%.

The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued a comprehensive report in 2004, analyzing the causes and extent of the conflict, making more than 500 recommendations to promote national reconciliation and prevent

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The root causes of the war continue to haunt Salone

From Page 6

future conflict, adding that a National Recovery Strategy was developed in 2002 that outlined plans for the restoration of civil authority and decentralization, as well as

reconciliation and stimulation of the economy.

It also heightens that the first local government elections in 32 years were held in 2004, and a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, covering the period 2005-

2007, was drafted and is being implemented following consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Sierra Leone Police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces maintain national security.

Awoko

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Civil Society celebrates World Day for International justice

Tomorrow the Civil Society in Sierra Leone will join numerous activists around the globe to celebrate 'World Day for International Justice', based on the theme "Justice and impunity: the way forward in Sierra Leone" with support from the Justice Sector Development Programme.

July 17th, commemorates the day on which the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was adopted by the international community in 1998. The ICC is the world's first permanent international tribunal capable of trying individuals accused of the most serious crimes of

international concern, namely, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes; when the courts in the countries in which those crimes are committed are unable or unwilling to do so.

Each year, human rights activists around the world use this day to host events and activities to promote international justice, and specifically to raise support for the ICC. This year, activists in Sierra Leone will bring attention to the work of the International Criminal Court, the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) as justice mechanisms. Civil Society groups will work with justice sector institution

officials to pass a proclamation marking July 17 as International Justice Day in the country, and organize group discussions within various communities and on radio across all its regions. The international and national implications of justice and impunity would be discussed, to bring out the ordinary Sierra Leonean's perception of justice, taking into consideration the prevailing socio-economic situation.

As of 1st January 2007, 104 countries are State Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Sierra Leone signed the Rome Statute on 17 October

Contd. Page 8

Civil Society celebrates World Day for International justice

From Page 6
1998 and ratified it on 15 September 2000. The recognition of the evolving system of international justice that has emerged in the past century provides

new tools of accountability for the most serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

"Addressing justice and impunity in Sierra Leone is a great stride towards victory

for the protection of human rights, the advancement of human security, and the progress of our national legal systems", said Mr. John Caulker, Acting National Chairman of the CSJSCG.

Standard Times
Thursday, 19 July 2007

Stakeholders review Restatement of Customary Law in Moyamba

The Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) has hosted a meeting of key stakeholders in Moyamba, in Southern Sierra Leone from 16th July 2007 to review the draft report on the Restatement of Customary Law in the district.

In a release dated 16th July 2007, the JSDP stated that "In law, customary law consists of established patterns of behaviour that can be objectively verified within a particular social setting. Sierra Leone, like many other Commonwealth African countries was divided into two distinct territories during the colonial era: the colony (Freetown and other parts of the Western Area), operating laws received from England and other local enactments and the protectorate (now the Provinces), applying customary law to a large extent. With the merging of these territories after independence, both systems of law were not merged and continue to operate side by side with many potential conflicts. Unlike the general law, customary law is unwritten and it varies from one

community to another and from one tribe to another".

The JSDP aims to support the development of an effective and accountable justice sector that is capable of meeting the needs and interests of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized people in the country. It commissioned the study on the Restatement of Customary Law in Moyamba District in May 2006 and has since in line with the Sierra Leone's Local Courts Act which states that "customary law must conform to natural justice", believed that restating customary law greatly reduces the arbitrary abuse of power and predicting the outcomes of cases dealing with customary law will be made possible, due to the documentation of actual customary practices that have evolved into law as a result of their long usage. "Documenting customary law shall, to a large extent, infuse the much-needed confidence in not only litigants, but also the courts' administrators", the release adds.

The Manager for the Administration of Justice at JSDP Miss

Glenna Thompson remarked that "For the very first time in the history of Sierras Leone, the restatement of customary law is underway to develop a more accountable and responsive justice system for the benefit of court users. Furthermore, the local court decisions will be a true reflection of the people's custom and customary law will be consistent with human rights principles".

The Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) is a Government of Sierra Leone initiative that is funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by the British Council. It is a five-year programme that started in March 2005 and operates in Freetown and the Moyamba District for the initial two-year phase of the programme.

The primary objective of the programme is to improve safety, security and access to justice for the people of Sierra Leone, in particular the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. JSDP is located at the British Council on Tower Hill in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

BBC Online

Thursday, 19 July 2007

First S Leone war crime sentences

Sierra Leone's UN-backed war crimes court has sentenced three leaders of a militia for war crimes including murder, rape and mutilating civilians.

Alex Tamba Brima and Santigie Borbor Kanu were jailed for 50 years each and Brima Kamara for 45 years.

All three were senior members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council that toppled the government in 1997.

They are the first sentences given by the court, following the end of Sierra Leone's civil war five years ago.



Rebel forces raped and mutilated defenceless innocent civilians

They are also the first people convicted by an international court of recruiting child soldiers.

'Slavery'

The three defendants have the right to appeal.

If they lose, they are likely to serve their prison sentences in Europe rather than Sierra Leone because of security concerns, court officials said.

The charges linked them to fighters, who raped women, burned villages, conscripted thousands of child soldiers and forced others to work as labourers in diamond mines.

"The three accused persons have committed violations of human rights in which civilians were mutilated, [and] other civilians were killed and burnt in their houses," Judge Julia Sebutinde said, passing sentence in the capital Freetown.



"They also were participants in abducting children for slavery and as child soldiers," she said.

Some say the UN-backed court has been too slow

After seizing power, the AFRC joined forces with the rebel Revolutionary United Front, before being driven out of the capital, Freetown by the West African peacekeeping force, Ecomog, in 1998.

The court has indicted a total of 12 people in connection with the war, including the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is accused of backing the rebels.

Mr Taylor is on trial in The Hague because of fears that trying him in West Africa could jeopardise the new-found peace of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Critics say the UN-backed court has been too slow in delivering justice to the people of Sierra Leone.

Three of those indicted, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh, died before their verdicts were delivered.

Voice of America
Wednesday, 18 July 2007

Three-Man Team Appointed to Defend Former Liberian President

By Selah Hennessy
Dakar

A new team has been appointed to defend former Liberian president Charles Taylor. Mr. Taylor fired his original lawyer in the opening days of his trial last month. Selah Hennessy reports from VOA's West Africa bureau in Dakar.

London-based attorney Courtenay Griffiths has been named chief lawyer, along with two assistants, Andrew Cayley and Terry Munyard.

Vincent Nmehielle is the principal defender for the Special Court of Sierra Leone. He says Mr. Taylor has a strong team.

"Of course Mr. Courtenay Griffiths is one of the very formidable and leading QCs in the UK," he said. "Andrew Cayley comes with a robust criminal international lawyer experience as well, and Terry Munyard also comes with quite a number of years of criminal advocacy."

He says many attorneys were interested in the case and met with Mr. Taylor, but the former president decided this team would be best suited to his case.

"Out of the many that saw Mr. Taylor he thought that these individuals bring quite a lot that will be very useful to his case," said Nmehielle.

Mr. Taylor fired his court-appointed defense lawyer, Karim Khan, at the beginning of his trial in June. He said the court had not provided him enough money to hire a strong defense team, capable of competing with the nine-member prosecution.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is conducting the trial from The Hague, has since increased his defense funding to \$100,000 a month - nearly three times the allowance given to other defense teams in the Special Court.

Nmehielle says the court agreed that a larger budget was needed to ensure Mr. Taylor is given a fair trial.

"The court looked into the objections raised by prior council in terms of adequacy of resources and fair trial," he said. "There was a good state effort in ensuring that more resources are made available and that is exactly what has happened."

But Alex Yearsley of the London-based non-governmental organization Global Witness says Mr. Taylor has tried to manipulate the trial, and firing his original lawyer was merely a means of delaying proceedings.

"I think it is very clear that that was a delaying tactic by Taylor to try and ensure that the trial basically takes as long as possible, but also so he can try and get some more money out of the court to pay for a defense team," he said.



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor makes his first appearance at the Special Court in Freetown, in this 3 Apr 2006 file photo

He says that Mr. Taylor, who has said he has no money to pay for a defense, clearly has millions stashed away.

"Personally speaking, I think it is absolutely disgusting that someone like Taylor is getting public money from the U.N. and the tax payer to pay for his legal defense," Yearsley said. "He has more than enough money that he had stolen from Liberia and the Liberian people and I think he should pay for his own defense."

Mr. Taylor is accused of giving arms and support to Sierra Leonean rebel groups, in exchange for diamonds, during the country's decade-long civil war.

He has pleaded not guilty on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including mass murder, rape, and the use of child soldiers. The trial is expected to resume August 20.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

Wednesday, July 2007

New defence team for former Liberian president Charles Taylor

By DPA

Amsterdam - The appointment of a new defence team for former Liberian president Charles Taylor was on Wednesday announced by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, before which the controversial figure is facing charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Vincent O Nmehielle, the main lawyer for the defence in the Taylor trial being held in the Hague for security reasons, said the court had approved the former Liberian's request to be allowed three defence lawyers instead of two.

Courtenay Griffiths was appointed as lead counsel, while Andrew Cayley and Terry Munyard would serve as co-counsel.

The former Liberian leader was indicted in March 2006 on 11 counts related to cruelties committed by the Revolutionary United Front rebels during the 11-year civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone that ended in 2002.

Taylor is alleged to have backed the rebels, who murdered, raped, mutilated, tortured, enslaved and terrorized civilians in Sierra Leone, while fighting for control of the country's diamond mines.

The former Liberian leader is the first former president of an African country to be indicted on war crimes under international law by an internationalized criminal court.

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The Trial of Charles Taylor website

Wednesday, 18 July 2007

<http://charlestaylortrial.org/>

Principal Defender Assigns Taylor New Counsel

In a submission dated July 17, 2007, Principal Defender Vincent Nmehielle assigned new counsel to Taylor. The new defense team consists of Lead Counsel Courtenay Griffiths and Co-Counsel Andrew Cayley and Terry Munyard. The filing states that “Mr. Taylor requested the Principal Defender assign him Mr. Courtenay Griffiths, QC of the Bar of England and Wales as Lead Counsel to represent him to the finality of the case following consultations between Mr. Taylor, the Defence Office and Mr. Griffiths.”

According to his bio posted at

http://www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk/barristers/courtenay_griffiths_qc.cfm, Griffiths was born in Jamaica and raised in England. The site states that he specializes “in all aspects of criminal justice, including the criminal law, civil actions against the police and inquests,” and his criminal practice “ranges from fraud to terrorism, murder and serious public order to drugs.” Of particular interest, the site notes that his criminal practice “has recently taken him to Sierra Leone where he was due to appear before the Special War Crimes Tribunal in that country.”

Associated Press

Thursday, 19 July 2007

London Lawyer to Defend Charles Taylor

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - The defense attorney for former Liberian President Charles Taylor said Wednesday he needs more time to prepare before the war crimes trial resumes.

Courtenay Griffiths, appointed Tuesday, leads Taylor's defense against charges of arming and supporting rebels who murdered, raped, tortured and mutilated thousands during neighboring Sierra Leone's savage 10-year civil war, which ended in 2002.

Taylor, the first African leader to face an international tribunal, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Last month, he boycotted the trial's first two days at the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. And he argued that his defense was underfunded and fired his lawyer.

The case was scheduled to resume Aug. 20. But in a telephone interview Griffiths said he needed more time to study the "voluminous" case file.

"I cannot see it would be in the interests of Mr. Taylor for us to go ahead unprepared," he said.

Since June the court has increased Taylor's defense funds to \$100,000 per month, which covers office space in The Hague, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Griffiths said it was not clear if that would be enough.

"First we need to see what investigations have been carried out by the previous team and what further investigations we will need to carry out," he said. "It is important from our point of view that there be equality of arms between us and the prosecutor."

Taylor is accused of training Sierra Leone's rebels and shipping them arms, alcohol and drugs - often used to desensitize child soldiers before they were sent to the front lines - in return for diamonds often mined by slave laborers.

Taylor's trial is held in the Netherlands because of fears it could trigger violence if held in the court's headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital.

Griffiths has worked on high-profile cases, including the 1984 Irish Republican Army bombing of British hotel where then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was staying, and a deadly IRA bombing outside London's Harrods department store in 1983.

Cocorioko website

Thursday, 19 July 2007

<http://www.cocorioko.homestead.com/Wednesdayjuly182007p7.html>

Charles Taylor now Enjoying Conjugal Visits in Prison

.Former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor, may not be having a raw deal in prison at the Hague , after all. An international magazine, the Herald Tribune, quoting Mr. Marc Dubuisson, who is an administrator at the prison, said that a space has been provided for Taylor to have conjugal visits, and his wife, PRESUMABLY FROM NIGERIA, just visited him.

Other privileges that Taylor has were enumerated by the magazine, but the writer insinuated that these facilities were nowhere near to what Mr. Taylor enjoyed when he controlled the underworld in West Africa. READ THE FULL ARTICLE BELOW

COCORIOKO: THE SECOND MOST VISITED SIERRA LEONE SITE.

(According to ALEXA , the world-renowned Web Information - providing company) .. Alexa Internet, Inc. is a California-based subsidiary company of Amazon.com that is best known for operating a website that provides information on the web traffic to other websites. Alexa collects information from users allowing them to provide statistics on web site traffic, as well as lists of related links ALEXA has determined that COCORIOKO is the second most visited Sierra Leone site after Peter Andersen's Sierra Leone Web. We were right after all. See details Click here: [READ](#)

Other Facets (Partnership Africa Canada) July 2007

TAYLOR TRIAL BEGINS **War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity**

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor began in The Hague in June, with the dramatic charges against him somewhat overshadowed by his dramatic non-appearance on the opening day, and by the firing of his lawyer. Taylor, who claims to be indigent, said that he had not been given the time or resources to prepare his case, and that because the trial is being held in The Hague, he did not have access to his family and visitors. He announced that he would not attend the trial until adequate facilities were provided, calling the process a "charade".

The Court ruled that Taylor's failure to appear was tantamount to a boycott of the proceedings and that he, therefore, could not be permitted to represent himself – a possibility that had presented itself briefly. The issue is not that Taylor has refused to be defended, rather it has to do with the composition and cost of his defence team, and the implications this might have on the timing of the trial. The Court directed the Principal Defender to appoint new counsel to assume control of Taylor's defence. This is to be in place by July 31, 2007. The first Prosecution witnesses were expected to appear between

July 3 and July 11, followed by a judicial adjournment until Aug. 20.

Taylor is charged with five counts of crimes against humanity, five war crimes counts and one count of other serious violation of international humanitarian law. The Prosecution has laid out a case which placed Taylor at the centre of a systematic campaign of terror waged against civilians in Sierra Leone after November 30, 1996, which included murder; rape; sexual slavery; amputation of limbs; looting; setting fire to property and conscripting child soldiers.

The website of the Special Court, which includes background and transcripts as well as audio and video feeds is <http://www.sc-sl.org/index.html>. A new website called "The Trial of Charles Taylor" contains additional information and commentary: <http://charlestaylortrial.org/>. This site is a project of the Open Society Institute, the International Senior Lawyers Project and the law firm of Clifford Chance.

Other Facets (Partnership Africa Canada) July 2007

Freetown Verdict First Diamond War Convictions

On June 20, the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone brought down its first verdicts in the war crimes trial that began more than three years ago.

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu were senior members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), an armed faction that overthrew the government in 1997, bringing the Revolutionary United Front into a violent coalition that terrorized the country for six months.

The three men were found guilty on 11 of the 14 charges, but they were acquitted of charges dealing with sexual slavery and other inhuman acts. The verdict was significant, because it is the first time that an international court has issued a verdict on the recruitment of child soldiers.

Tens of thousands of people were killed during the conflict, as rebel forces raped and mutilated defenceless innocent civilians.

In all, the court indicted 12 people – those “bearing the greatest responsibility” for the atrocities that had been committed during the war. Several, however, have escaped the verdict of the court. RUF leader Foday Sankoh died in prison. Sam Bockarie, his murderous henchman, was killed in Liberia, and Hinga Norman, head of the Kamajors, the Civil Defence Force that fought against the RUF, died earlier this year following a medical operation in Senegal. Johnny Paul Koroma, head of the AFRC, escaped to Liberia, and is presumed dead. Verdicts in other trials are expected soon.

Voice of America

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Convicted Coup Plotters Face Sentencing in Sierra Leone

By Howard Lesser

In Freetown, the Special Court for Sierra Leone is scheduled to hand down sentences today to three convicted former leaders of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), who helped carry out a coup d'état against President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah ten years ago. Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu were convicted in June on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. From New York, researcher Tania Bernath of Amnesty International says that those being sentenced may not be as high-profile suspects as former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is also being tried by the Special Court, but learning about their 1997 actions, that toppled the Kabbah government merits the full attention of the country's population.

"We had a meeting with (Sierra Leone Special Prosecutor) Stephen Rapp last week in London. And based on the evidence, he said these guys were highly responsible for what they've actually been convicted of and these are important cases. And I think what's most important is that the information gets out to Sierra Leoneans to make sure that people understand, that they're following the trial, the proceedings, and also they hear what's happened in the process itself," she said.

The Special Court trial in the Netherlands of Charles Taylor, who is also charged with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone, has been put on hold while he works on his case with a new Court-appointed defense attorney. Britain's Courtenay Griffiths was named by the Special Court yesterday as Taylor's lead counsel after Taylor claimed he lacked the money to pay for a defense team. Amnesty International's Tania Bernath says Sierra Leoneans and other West Africans should pursue the Court's extensive media resources to learn all they can about proceedings in the Taylor trial.

"We're going to be following the Charles Taylor trial quite closely because I think it has implications also in other countries like Liberia—not just in Sierra Leone about how their justice should proceed," she said.

Earlier this week, the court approved the findings of a medical probe of another suspect indicted by the Special Court, Sam Hinga Norman, who died suddenly of a heart attack in Senegal in late February, just days before a court verdict was to be rendered in his trial. Bernath says her group is satisfied with the findings of the independent inquiry.

"I was in Sierra Leone when he actually died, and I spoke with some people. Obviously, everybody was surprised, and it was strange that it just happened to happen in Senegal. But I think we're quite satisfied with what the Special Court did and they were open to an independent inquiry to reveal that there was no foul play," said Bernath.

With general and presidential elections scheduled for next month in Sierra Leone, Bernath says it is important that voters pay attention to daily goings-on in the courtroom. But she says she does not think the trials were purposely scheduled to occur so close to the elections in order to influence their outcome.

"These cases have been going on for a long time, and they're trying to do them as quickly as possible. I think that's more the motive, rather than linking it to the election process," she explains.

Patriotic Vanguard website

Wednesday, 18 July 2007

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=1504

Gullit, others, to be sentenced Thursday

According to a Special Court press alert, sentencing in the trial of three convicted former leaders of Sierra Leone's Armed Forced Revolutionary Council (AFRC) will take place on Thursday, 19 July 2007 at 11:30 a.m.

Alex Tamba Brima, aka: "Gullit", Brima Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu, aka: "Five-Five" were convicted last month on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Oral arguments on the sentencing were heard on Monday.



The hearing will be held at the Special Court's courthouse in Freetown. Overflow seating will be available, but members of the press are advised to arrive early.

Brief bios of the three:

Alex Tamba Brima(photo) was born on 23 November 1971 in the village of Yaryah in the district of Kono in Sierra Leone. In April 1985, he joined the Sierra Leone Army, where he was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Alex Tamba Brima is alleged to have been a member of a group of 17 soldiers(including Santigie Borbor Kanu and Brima Bazy Kamara) which took power by force on 25 May 1997 in Freetown and overthrew the democratically elected government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Brima Bazy Kamara was born on 7 May 1968 in the village of Wilberforce, Freetown. On 20 May 1991, he joined the Sierra Leone Army, where he was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Santigie Borbor Kanu was born in March 1965 in Freetown. On 27 November 1990, he joined the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), where he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 18 July 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

AP 07/18/2007 03:58:59

London lawyer appointed to defend Liberia's Charles Taylor at war crimes trial

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - London-based lawyer has been appointed to defend Charles Taylor against charges of arming and supporting murderous Sierra Leone rebels, according to an order by the U.N. court trying the former Liberian president. The order issued Tuesday and released early Wednesday appointed Courtenay Griffiths to lead Taylor's defense against charges of arming and supporting rebels who murdered, raped, tortured and mutilated thousands during Sierra Leone's savage 10-year civil war, which ended in 2002.

International Clips on West Africa

Violence mars Sierra Leone's first week of election campaign

By Rod MacJohnson

FREETOWN, July 17, 2007 (AFP) - Persistent reports of violence in the first week of Sierra Leone's electoral campaign are undermining the war-scarred nation's chances of definitively turning its back on conflict, analysts said Wednesday. The small and still fragile West African country ravaged by a decade of one of the most brutal civil wars in modern history is holding presidential and parliamentary elections on August 11. But the first seven days of the campaign has been bedeviled by violent inter-party clashes.

Concord Times 07/18/2007 04:05:02

'Britain Must Warn APC for Election Violence' - J J Saffa

Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP), Jacob Jusu Saffa yesterday told this medium that they want the British Government to warn the All Peoples Congress (APC) to desist from perpetrating violence against innocent Sierra Leoneans. Saffa stated he expected the British would have warned the leader of the APC, Ernest Koroma against the use of violence during a meeting that was held at Posseh's Hotel, Babadorie, Lumley between the latter and the British. Reacting to the news of the meeting, he said he thought Britain would have used the meeting to warn the APC leader about the behaviour of his party supporters last Wednesday.

Local Media – Newspaper

Ex-Army Officers Arrested in Connection with Subversive Activities

(Public Agenda and Daily Observer)

- The Liberian Government has confirmed the arrest of two senior former officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) for their alleged involvement in subversive activities. But a concerned citizen group from Grand Gedeh County equated the arrest to witch-hunting.

- Retired General Charles Julu, a former commander of the Executive Mansion Guard Battalion during the administration of the late President Samuel Doe and retired Colonel Andrew Dorbor were recently picked up by the National Security Agency in connection with alleged subversive activities.
- Justice Minister Frances Johnson Morris, according to the *Daily Observer* newspaper, confirmed the arrest, saying it was a normal security procedure, especially for individuals suspected of involvement in subversive and clandestine activities. The arrest follows accusation by the Justice Minister that some forces, including opposition party members were plotting to unseat the administration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, an accusation which drew criticisms from various political groups.
- It can be recalled that Julu abruptly seized power in 1994 following a coup against the transitional administration of David Kpomakpor, but was overpowered and driven out of the Executive Mansion by the West African Peacekeeping Force. Julu escaped un-arrested and unharmed and fled to an unknown destination where he remained until he quietly returned to Liberia recently.

Public Opinion Divided Over Proposed Sacking of Police Chief

(The Informer, The News, Heritage, The Inquirer, The Analyst and New Vision)

- The public appears to be divided over a recommendation to sack Police Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh.
- The presidential board of inquiry which was looking into last week's scuffle between national security personnel at the National Port Authority concluded that the Police Chief was found liable for the incidents, and therefore recommended that the Inspector-General of Police be dismissed.
- *The Inquirer, The Informer and New Vision* newspapers ran editorials on the same subject but from a different point of view. *The Inquirer and The Informer* in their editorials opted for a lesser penalty but the *New Vision* encouraged President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to implement the recommendations advanced by the committee to the latter. President Sirleaf is currently out of the country attending a Mano River Union Summit in the Republic of Guinea.

Sinoe County at Cut-Off Point, Superintendent Appeals for Help

(Daily Observer)

- The Superintendent of Sinoe County, Sylvester Grigsby, called on the Government and well-meaning individuals to help rescue the County from being cut-off from the rest of the Country. Superintendent Grigsby said all roads network in the area has virtually been cut off, making living condition unbearable in the County.

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)

Vice President Boakai Assures Journalists

- Addressing a programme to dedicate the offices of the Star Radio in Monrovia, Vice President Joseph Boakai assured that no media house would be shutdown during the tenure of the Government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for reporting the truth. He said that though some media institutions report untrue stories, such reports would not cause the Government to clampdown on press freedom.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmakers Reduce Recess Period

- According to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alex Tyler, the National Legislature yesterday passed a bill to reduce from 6 to three its "Agriculture Break" although Maryland County Representative Bhofal Chambers filed a motion to reconsider the bill on grounds that it was unnecessary. Meanwhile, Speaker Tyler said

that the Ways Means and Finance Committee of the House of Representatives yesterday failed to report to Plenary on the progress it has made that would lead to a debate of the fiscal budget currently before the National Legislature for passage.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Former Solicitor-General Abhors Calls to Sack Police Inspector-General

- Correspondents said that the former Solicitor-General Theophilus Gould described as "harsh" the recommendation of a Special Presidential Probe Committee, to sack Police Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh over the Freeport saga, asserting that the Police Chief has done well and for the first offense, should be suspended to serve as deterrence.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Major State-Hospital Administrator Clarifies Claims of Mass dismissals

- The Administrator of the John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Mambu David dismissed reports that the Administrator of Nursing Services at the Hospital, Jacqueline Greene, was dismissed adding that the administration never sanctioned the dismissal of Madam Greene and other workers. However, Mr. David admitted that a nurse was dismissed in June for sleeping on duty when a patient died. Meanwhile, the striking workers vowed to continue their action until their demands to remove the hospital's General Administrator and the Chief Medical Officer, are met.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Arrest 7 Suspected Armed Robbers

- Correspondents said that the Liberia National Police this morning arrested seven suspected armed robbers in the Caldwell area following a tip-off of their whereabouts.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberian Chapter of Union Children Parliament Elects Leadership

- Correspondents said that the leadership of the Liberian Chapter of the Mano River Union Youth Parliament yesterday elected Ernest Varfee, Speaker, Teequoi Youllay, 1st Deputy Speaker, and Alieu Yuahn, 2nd Deputy Speaker to run the Chapter for four years.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

BBC Online

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Arrests over Liberia 'coup plot'

A former Liberian army commander has been arrested for "subversive activities" - the first such arrests since landmark elections in 2005.

Gen Charles Julu headed the presidential guard under former leader Samuel Doe and led a 1994 coup attempt.

Deputy Information Minister Gabriel Williams said he understood Gen Julu had been plotting a coup but the government said there was no threat.

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf took power in 2006 after a 14-year war.

The BBC's Jonathan Paye-Layleh in the capital, Monrovia, says people are shocked at the possibility of renewed unrest in the country.

The United Nations has some 15,000 peacekeepers in Liberia - the second largest deployment in the world.

"This man [Julu] was detained by the National Security Agency for subversive acts against the state," Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh told Reuters news agency.

He refused to say whether this meant a coup plot and said an investigation was under way.

"The Liberian public should remain calm. There is no immediate threat to the state," he said. Student groups from Doe's Krahn ethnic group have condemned the arrests and called for the release of Gen Julu and the other former officer also arrested.

Government of Liberia (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 18 July 2007

Mano River Union Leaders End Summit - Agree to Consolidate Peace

A summit of leaders of the Mano River Union has ended in the Guinean border town of Gueckedou with an agreement to promote development in the sub-region. The leaders also agreed to consolidate peace and security through collaboration among Intelligent and Security Chiefs of the sub-region to avoid conflict.

An Executive Mansion release says the leaders have also agreed to strengthen the secretariat of the Union to make it more effective.

The summit held on Tuesday, brought together Sierra-Leonean President Tejan Kabbah; Guinean Prime Minister, Lansana Koyoute and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who served as Chairperson.

On the Yenga land dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone, the Liberian President told reporters that historical documents on the disputed land are being retrieved to set the basis for a peaceful resolution of the dispute between the two neighboring countries. The President, who is mediating in the conflict, was on Tuesday taken on a guided tour of the disputed area across the Makona River by Sierra-Leonean President Tejan Kabbah.

Meanwhile, the President has been inspecting development projects in Lofa County. Projects inspected included the Voinjama Multilateral High School, currently being renovated under the auspices of a Japanese NGO, Peace Wings.

At an Indoor program in Voinjama, celebrating the safe arrival of the President from Guinea, President Johnson Sirleaf reminded the citizens of government's responsibility to improve their living conditions, but urged Liberians to take self initiatives to contribute to the development of their respective counties and stop relying only on government and development partners to do what they could do for themselves.

The President returns to the capital later on Wednesday.