

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:

Thursday, 2 February 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Kabbah blamed for enlisting child soldiers

By Joseph Turay

His Excellency the President Alhaji Ahamad Tejan Kabba has been blamed for the recruitment of children under 15 into the Civil Defence Forces (CDF).

Giving his testimony yesterday at the special court, New England in Freetown, the former C.D.F national co-ordinator, Chief Sam Hinga Norman revealed to the court

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Kabbah blamed for enlisting child soldiers

from front page

that the statement last made by the President requesting all Sierra Leoneans to join forces and reinstate his government, necessitated the conscription of children into the Kamajor fighting forces (CDF). The C.D.F indigee, who was

being led in evidence by his defence lawyer Dr. Bubaki Jabbie, testified that it was the President's announcement that also brought about students demonstration which saw many young men involving in fighting along side other civilians for the restoration of the S.L.P.P.

Chief Norman said even before his appointment as Deputy Minister of Defence and national coordinator, he had seen child combatants below 15 fighting alongside the military and other civil groups.

The first accused out rightly

denied his involvement in the enlistment of children into any of these fighting forces. "I played no role in getting children involved in active combat" the witness said adding that in spite of efforts he made to meet President Kabbah and other government authorities to discourage the children from taking part in the hostilities no effort was made by those responsible. Norman also argued that he received or gave no instructions to any person or group for children to be conscripted. The C.D.F indigee catalogued previous instances when he had rescued

child combatant from involving in military missions.

He insisted that the former child combatants who are presently under his care are pursuing their education. Norman recalled when as a Regent Chief in his village reports were made to him about missing children who had been involved in the conflict as child soldiers. He said they lost young boys and girls below the age of 10 when they were attacked by the AFRC and RUF fighters. This, the witness said, gave determination to the local hunters who had been defending their towns and villages.

"Kabbah Incited The People Against The Junta..."

-Norman Tells Special Court

By Mohamed Kai

Special Court indictee Sam Hinga Norman, yesterday informed the court that in 1998, His Excellency President Alhaji

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in his nation-wide broadcast called on Sierra Leoneans to assist in any way possible to reinstate

the democratically elected government following its violent overthrow by the RUF/AFRC junta forces in May 25, 1997.

He said many Sierra Leoneans including stu-

dents, young people and even children below the age of fifteen, physically participated in the armed conflict following the presidential broadcast.

Norman also intimated the

court that immediately after the clarion call by the president he saw students of all ages of description took to the street of Freetown and various district headquarter

towns, violently demanding the immediately restoration of the democratically elected government of President Ahmad tejan Kabbah.

"Even children under the

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"Kabbah Incited The People Against The Junta..."

From front page

age of fifteen actively participated in the hostility," Norman said.

In 1994, he said, he was appointed Regent Chief of Jaima Bongor Chiefdom and when the conflict escalated, the chiefdom authorities met him and discussed plans to recruit abled bodied men to protect their people, towns and villages against the marauders.

He said after the restoration of Kabbah's government, the President visited Bo where some thirty children under the age of fifteen were relocated by a non governmental organisation called Children Associated with War (CAW), and also facilitated plans with government to further change the minds of the children.

When asked by Defence Counsel; Dr. Bu-buakei Jabbie, when he (Norman) recruited children under the age of fifteen to participate in the armed conflict, Mr Norman responded no and further asserted that the able bodied men recruited to protect their towns and villages, captured children under fifteen from the rebel outfit. The trial continues today.

Contrary to prosecution's claim ...

Norman denies child soldier use

By Tom E. Tomuny & Saffia S. Kabbah

Chief Sam Hinga Norman continued his Defence yesterday at the Special Court for Sierra Leone with refutation of allegations that he was using or

initiating children into the Civil Defence Force (CDF) to fully participate in the war. He was led in defence by his Defence Lawyer, Dr. Bu-buakei Jabbie. According to Chief Norman "I never used

children to participate fully in the hostility". To substantiate this, he said after the reinstatement of the government of Sierra Leone from exile, he personally approached government through His

Excellency the President, and Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff discouraging the use of children in the hostility. Chief Norman went on that, although it was not within his power to stop

Sierra Leoneans from defending themselves, he however requested the government to stop the enlistment of children under 15 into the army and as National Coordinator for the CDF he said he

personally stopped the initiation of children under 15 into the CDF movement.

Reflecting on his days at Jaima Bongo Chiefdom, he said on his arrival, he met

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Norman denies child soldier use

From front page

with the chiefs in order for them to get some young able men to be initiated and subsequently which he maintained, was however successful, and emphasised that these were above 15 years of age.

From March to April 1996, Chief Norman noted that whenever they were attacked by the rebels at Jaima Bongo Chiefdom, children under 15 years were targeted and killed. He pointed out that this was evidenced by the number of corpse that they saw later. He also noted that some of these children were taken as prisoners by these attackers, which he said was reported to him by the CDF Commander on the ground at Bo point. Ask by Defence lawyer Bubuakie Jabbie whether he has personally protected

any child from the war, he answered he has going further, he said one of them (name withheld) was ask of his parent but answered he host them during the war, he (Norman) then enrolled him into school at Pujehun. This boy who on the 14th September 2004 testified as witness and was described s TF2140. According to Norman he then took the boy in house and took care of him.

How he met these boy's, he said, they were catered for by children associated with the war (CAW) when Bo town was attacked by the then RUF, he said upon their coming to rescue them, he met these boys (three of them) and took them to the part of the Kamajors and so he said he met them.

During the military period from the 25 may 1996 unto

the 10th march 1997, he said that the fighters were divided in to 2 groups, that was the Armed forces Revolutionary council (AFRC) and the loyal Soldier, the AFRC, he said, was adopting and using children under 15 to fight, while the loyal soldiers leaded by Maxwell Khobe, were not adopting or using children to fight. After the overthrow of government by the AFRC, he said the went to Guinea together with ministers and the president.

After the reinstatement of government, he said, a lot of attacks were taking place in small villages by the junta.

The president, while in exile, Norman said, did requested all Sierra Leoneans to join hands together to restore his government back to power.

Norman explains role of young people in the war

By Betty Milton

Answering questions posed by his defence counsel Dr. Bu-

Buakei Jabbe, Chief Samuel Hinga Norman yesterday explained about the role young people, between the ages of 15

and below, played during the war.

He maintained that even before he became Regent Chief, young boys were

trained as vigilantes for the soldiers and were also trained in the use of conventional weapons after which they were

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Norman explains role of young people in the war

From Front Page

given uniforms. The young boys, he said, were also deployed alongside soldiers at battlefield areas and sometimes guarding and protecting the township.

He noted that the mode of participation between the hunters and the civilians, especially children and parents, was that they were not armed with the sort of weapons their parents were carrying, but when they were attacked, they would use sticks, irons, pestles and other things they could lay their hands on to defend themselves. They also served as informants for their parents as they often gave information about the occupation and non-occupation of rebels in the towns so that their parents or guardians could return or stay in their hiding places.

The witness explained that before he became Regent Chief of Jaiama Gbongo, he played no role but only observed. But that when he became Chief, he became responsible for the administration of the chiefdom and also protecting the people and therefore participated in the protection of the Chiefdom and its people.

Chief Norman stated that he therefore met with Chiefdom authorities to arrange for the defence of

the various villages as the township had about 96 villages. He said he only requested for able-bodied young men but that young people below the ages of 15-years were not enlisted and so they [Kamajors] did not use them in hostility. He further stated that during the frequent attacks by the rebels he saw young people who by his estimation were even below the ages of 15 years. During the course of the attacks, the witness maintained, they lost many young boys between the ages of ten and their corpses could not be found.

Some of these boys, Chief Norman narrated, were captured by them and brought to safety in some parts of Bo Town. Some of these boys, he told the Court, were taken to child protection agencies such as Children Affected with War (CAW) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

"Because the process was long, I decided to take two of them as they claimed that they didn't know where their parents were and that they wanted to go to school. "One of these boys gave evidence against me in this Court. And I personally cross-examined him," he disclosed, and stressed that one of the boys would be taking his BECE examinations this year and the another he sent to the

Catholic Pre-Major Seminary in Bo.

After the coup in May 1997 and the reinstatement of the elected government in March 1998, he said the Military had become two groups: one was the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the other was the loyal Forces. The AFRC, he stressed, had linked up with the RUF forming the People's Army and that they used very young boys and girls in their military purposes. The loyal soldiers, he said, under General Khobe were never seen with young boys and girls for various services. The regular Police, he also stressed, that had not joined the services of AFRC, also did not have young boys and girls.

The use of young people by the CDF in the hostility came about as a result of a request by the government through President Kabbah who made a general broadcast for all Sierra Leoneans to assist in every way possible to reinstate the democratically elected government led by him. There were no specific instructions made to him, this call, he revealed, neither included nor excluded age limitations.

Chief Norman noted that he had knowledge of students of all age descriptions took to the streets of the various towns around the country, demonstrating to some extent violently demanding the reinstatement of the President and the restoration of democracy.

To testify in Norman's case

Peter Penfold

arrives

Friday



*Komrabai Penfold
- coming to testify
(AFRC) in May, 1997.*

Story: Ibrahim Seibure

Former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold Wednesday interviewed by Concord Times from London disclosed he will arrive in the country Friday to testify in the ongoing Special Court trial of Chief Sam Hinga Norman.

Penfold says he is coming on the invitation of the Special Court to testify as a witness in the case of the National Coordinator of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) and

former Minister of Defense, Norman.

The erstwhile High Commissioner says he will be at the Special Court on Monday 6th February 2006 to testify on the organizational structure of the CDF while he and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) under the leadership of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah were in exile in Guinea after the overthrow of the government by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

It could be recalled that Chief Norman in December last year lined up a barrage of witnesses including President Kabbah, Peter Penfold and a host of other senior diplomats and officers of the Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in his defense.

Penfold's testimony has been viewed as welcome as it will help throw light on many issues.

Vision Comment

Norman's Price For Loyalty

NOW that the brutal and senseless ten years war is over, a new headache still lies ahead.

WHAT would SLPP government tell over forty five thousand ex-combatants before 2007? Secondly will it also be possible to convince them that their former boss, Chief Sam Hinga Norman is not been treated fairly.

CHIEF Sam Hinga Norman will be remembered in Sierra Leone's history as a fine, patriotic, brave and nationalistic citizen who stood up to defend, protect and restore democracy to his country.

SINCE the Government of Sierra Leone provided immunity for all international war suspects who were mainly American and British citizens, it should have equally taken into consideration Chief Sam Hinga Norman's special case.

AFTER having fought, to defend his motherland, the only price that was paid to him was an indictment from the Special Court. The services of Chief Norman remain to be a mere history as his superiors have quickly forgotten all the sacrifices he made. Is this Norman's price for loyalty?

CHIEF Sam Hinga Norman's case has sadly ended as a tragedy. In his case the word tragedy implies the working out of a man's life to a rigorous fatality which transcends the individual's mind to comprehend.

IN as much as most people think Mr. Norman is paying a very dear and invaluable price for his loyalty, he should also be rewarded for such voluntary service which could have cost him losing his life and entire family. It was over ambition that led him to have committed crimes merely to save his own land.

EVEN though, Mr. Norman was very loyal to his authorities, he had been neglected at a time, he could have been protected by the same powers that be.

MR. Norman must by now be a very confused man as he is completely shock to find himself detained in Sierra Leone's Special Court prison which to most Sierra Leoneans was meant for detaining RUF detainees.

SIERRA LEONE: In historic hearing, top fighter appears in Special Court

01 Feb 2006 20:11:47 GMT

Source: IRIN

FREETOWN, 1 February (IRIN) - The former militia leader revered by many Sierra Leoneans as having fought off the country's dreaded rebels has appeared before a judge on war crimes charges, telling the UN-backed Special Court his militia answered to President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Samuel Hinga Norman - one of 13 people indicted by the Special Court for crimes against humanity in the country's decade-long civil war - led the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) militia, made up of traditional hunters who battled rebels alongside Kabbah's soldiers.

Norman, who initially rejected the Court's jurisdiction, made his first appearance before judges on Friday, saying President Kabbah had led the CDF defence effort and therefore should be indicted too.

Norman told the court that Kabbah enlisted his help, saying: "Chief, this is where we need the support of the [Kamajor] hunters of Sierra Leone in support of the people in rejecting military government."

In the absence of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, who is living in exile in Nigeria and backed the Sierra Leone Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, and RUF leader Foday Sankoh who died of a stroke while in the Court's custody, Norman is the most high profile figure to appear on war crimes charges.

The brutality of the Sierra Leonean civil war shocked the world. RUF rebel fighters hacked off the limbs of civilians as a trademark of their reign of terror. Drugged up fighters on both sides left 20,000 dead, more mutilated and millions displaced with AK-47 wielding child soldiers pushed to the front lines of the forest war.

On the opening day of his trial, 66-year-old Norman - a high chief in southern Sierra Leone - hobbled with the help of a cane to the witness chair to respond to over eight counts of war crimes including unlawful killings, the use of child soldiers, looting and burning, and terrorising civilians.

Norman's arrest while he was interior affairs minister in 2003, sparked debate over the legitimacy of the Special Court and its mandate to punish those bearing the "greatest responsibility" for the slaughter, rape and mutilation that terrorised the West African nation from 1991 to 2001.

Some Sierra Leoneans described Norman as a national hero for leading the Kamajor hunters against the RUF and said that he should be congratulated, not condemned, whatever his methods.

Dressed in his trademark white embroidered caftan and matching cap, Norman described himself as "the first child soldier," enlisted into the army of coloniser Britain in 1954 when he was just 14.

Norman served as President Kabbah's deputy defence minister and when Kabbah was toppled in a 1997 coup, Norman fled with him to Guinea. It was then, said Norman, that Kabbah enlisted his help to form a pro-government fighting force.

Whilst in Guinea, Norman said he was visited by "four respectable people" whom he identified as US Ambassador to Sierra Leone John Hirsh, the British High Commissioner Peter Penfold, Alhaji Abubakar of Nigeria - the country that led the ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone - and UN Special Envoy Berhanu Dimka.

Norman told the Court that the Nigerian diplomat implied that ECOMOG assistance would only be provided if Norman worked with Kabbah.

"Our countries are prepared to assist Sierra Leone from sinking further," said Norman, recounting the words of the Nigerian diplomat to the Court, "but resistance depends on the two of you, Mr President and you Chief Norman. That is, if you choose to work together in the interest of Sierra Leone then your country will get our assistance."

During the war, Kamajor fighters were under the direct command of ECOMOG, said Norman.

The president officially made Norman national coordinator of civil defence "to embrace all defence efforts by civilians and to support military operations of ECOMOG in restoring the democratically elected government back to power," the former minister told the Court.

And Kabbah's government financed Kamajor and CDF activities, said Norman.

ECOMOG, UN, and British forces supported by the CDF helped restore Kabbah to power in 1998. Peace-sealing elections gave Kabbah a landslide victory in 2002 and a further five-year mandate as president.

Also on trial are two other CDF leaders as well as leaders of the Armed Force Revolutionary Council (AFRC) that toppled Kabbah in 1997 and the RUF.

But the most senior AFRC and RUF leaders have escaped examination by the Court. AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma went into hiding three years ago, and the two RUF leaders Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie are deceased.

The likelihood of Charles Taylor being handed over to the Special Court before it is expected to wrap up proceedings in 2007, appear slim. Nigeria has said that it will only hand over Taylor on the request of an elected Liberian president.

But newly elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf recently told reporters that she has other, more important tasks to take care of like restoring electricity to Liberia's battered capital Monrovia.

With the failure to bring ringleaders Taylor, Sankoh, Koroma and Bockarie before the Special Court, the only remaining high-profile war crimes suspect is Chief Norman, hero to some, whose trial continues.

IRIN news

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Hinga Norman Stands Alone

By [Gibril Koroma](#) - Wednesday 1 February 2006.

Like a warrior in a battlefield who remains standing after his comrades have all fallen or escaped from the enemy's bullets, war crimes indictee Samuel Hinga Norman has been giving testimony on his own behalf, without lawyers, in the last couple of days at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown.



In his marathon testimony which he has not yet concluded, Norman spent the first few minutes narrating the history of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) which came into prominence following the overthrow of the Kabbah government on May 25 1997. Norman, who has been preparing for this opportunity for several months, also painted a verbal picture of the CDF command structure with President Kabbah (according to him) sitting at the top and giving commands and instructions.

For the first time since his arrest Norman, also divulged the names of the members of the "War Council" that directed the war against the AFRC junta from its exile headquarters in Conakry, Guinea. This council included President Kabbah, the present Foreign Minister Momodu Koroma, the late R.E.S. Largao, one T.K. Vandy and parliamentarians Ansu Kaikai, Momoh Pujeh and former Information Minister Abdul Thorlu-Bangura. This council, Norman explained, directed the war and gave instructions to him and his battlefield commanders. A significant absentee on this important list is former Vice President Dr. Albert Joe Demby who has been marginalized by Kabbah and is presently licking his wounds in the southern city of Bo.

Norman who has been denied access to his lawyers by the Special Court while he is giving his testimony, mentioned the late First Lady, Mrs. Patricia Kabbah, as one of the supporters and sponsors of the CDF. He said Mrs. Kabbah at one time gave the sum of 10,000 dollars to the Kamajors (part of the CDF) for recapturing Bonthe, her home district, and chasing the AFRC-RUF forces out of the area. He regretted that another sum of 10,000 dollars donated to the Kamajors by Tegroma, an organization of South-easterners in the United States and other parts of the world was never handed to him by members of the then exiled government in Conakry. The testimony continues.

We publish below a summary of the week's activities at the Special Court:

Special Court for Sierra Leone Court Summary Week Ending 27 January 2006 Trial Proceedings - Courtroom No. I In the case of the CDF Accused: Norman, Fofana, Kondewa

During the week, the following witnesses were led in evidence by the Prosecution and subsequently cross-examined by the Defence:

1. First Accused Samuel Hinga Norman testified on his own behalf from 24th to 27th January and continues.

Trial Proceedings - Courtroom No. II In the case of the AFRC Accused: Brima, Kamara, Kanu
During the week, the following witnesses were led in evidence by the Prosecution and subsequently cross-examined by the Defence:

No witnesses testified during the week.

Press Releases 27 January - Justice Renate Winter to Serve as New Vice-President of the Court.

Court Documents During the week, the following documents were filed before the Court and circulated by Court Management: In the case of the AFRC Accused: Brima, Kamara, Kanu 27 January, Document No. SCSL-04-16-460 -

Confidential Kanu Defence reply to Prosecution response to Defence Motions for Judgment of Acquittal pursuant to Rule 98. 27 January, Document No. SCSL-04-16-459 - Public version of the Prosecution response to Defence Motions for Judgment of Acquittal pursuant to Rule 98.

23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-16-458 - Prosecution response to Defence motions for Judgment of Acquittal Pursuant to Rule 98. In the case of the CDF Accused: Norman, Fofana, Kondewa 26 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-546 - Fofana reply to the response of the Attorney-General to the Fofana motion for issuance of a subpoena ad testificandum to President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

24 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-545 - Decision on Prosecution application for leave to appeal proprio motu findings in decision on Motions for Judgment of Acquittal pursuant to Rule 98. 23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-544 - Corrigendum to majority decision on request for leave to appeal decision on Prosecution motion for a ruling on admissibility of evidence.

23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-543 - Materials filed by Third Accused Allieu Kondewa pursuant to consequential order to the Status Conference of 18th January 2006. 23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-542 - Materials for the First Accused as per consequential order to the Status Conference of 18th January 2006. 23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-541 - The response of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to the applications made by Moinina Fofana and Samuel Hinga Norman for issuance of a subpoena ad testificandum to President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. 23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-14-540 - Fofana materials filed pursuant to the order to the Status Conference of 18th January 2006. In the case of the RUF Accused: Sesay, Kallon, Gbao 26 January, Document No. SCSL-04-15-470 - Corrigendum to the reply to Prosecution response to investigate the matter of false testimony by Witness TF1-366 26 January, Document No. SCSL-04-15-469 - Reply to Prosecution response to the Sesay motion to direct the Prosecutor to investigate the matter of false testimony by Witness TF1-366. 26 January, Document No. SCSL-04-15-468 - Reply to Prosecution response to Defence motion requesting the exclusion of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 11 and 14 of the additional information provided by Witness TF1-117 dated 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th October 2005. 23 January,

Document No. SCSL-04-15-467 - Prosecution response to the Sesay motion to direct the Prosecutor to investigate the matter of false testimony by Witness TF1-366. 23 January, Document No. SCSL-04-15-466 - Prosecution response to the Defence motion requesting the exclusion of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 11 and 14 of the additional information provided by Witness TF1-117 dated 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th October 2005. Schedule of Courtroom Proceedings Trial Chamber I - The CDF trial resumed on 19th January and will continue through 24 February. The RUF trial resumes on 28th February with a Status Conference on 27th February. Trial Chamber II - No trial sessions are currently scheduled.

Photo: Hinga Norman.

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 1 Feb 2006**

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

International Clips on Liberia**World Bank urged to consider debt relief for Liberia**

DAKAR, Feb 1, 2006 (AFP) - The UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has called on the World Bank to scale up its assistance to the impoverished and war-battered country and consider granting it debt relief.

UNMIL second in command Jordan Ryan, made the plea late Tuesday at a meeting with senior World Bank official Robin Cleveland, counsellor to the bank's president Paul Wolfowitz. Ryan "strongly recommended that the World Bank should consider debt relief for **Liberia** and the financing of labour-intensive projects with the aim of combating **Liberia's** high unemployment rate," said UNMIL in a statement received Wednesday in Dakar.

BBC News

Liberian ex-ministers travel ban

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia has told former transitional government members to stay in the country pending a financial audit. All former officials are to be audited in an attempt to ensure accountability and transparency, the government says.

International Clips on West Africa**Ivorian militia oppose return of UN troops to west**

By Ange Aboa

GUIGLO, Ivory Coast, Jan 31 (Reuters) - Militia loyal to Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo say they will oppose the return of United Nations peacekeeping troops to bases in the west which were evacuated during recent violent anti-U.N. riots.

The warning poses yet another challenge to the authority of the U.N. mission, which is struggling to enforce a long-delayed peace process in the volatile West African nation, divided into rebel and government zones since a 2002 civil war. "We don't want these trigger happy (U.N.) soldiers who kill without any punishment," local militia chief Denis Maho Glofiehi told Reuters in Guiglo, a western town where Bangladeshi U.N. troops shot dead five pro-Gbagbo protesters two weeks ago when a mob stormed their base.

Local Media – Newspapers**Street Peddlers Protest against Mass Demolitions of their Kiosks**

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst and New Democrat, Heritage and National Chronicle)

- Thousands of angry marketers yesterday blocked the main routes to central Monrovia in protest against the overnight demolition of their kiosks by police.

- When the police and UNMIL security intervened to calm the situation, the crowd stoned them and wounded three officers.
- Meanwhile, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday announced an immediate halt to the demolitions, saying Liberians needed time to adjust and government would properly address the relocation of the marketers.

President Makes Additional Appointments in Government

(Heritage)

- An Executive Mansion press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday said President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has appointed Harry Yuan as Managing Director of the Liberia Electricity Corporation, Ambullai Johnson as Minister of Internal Affairs and Emmanuel Roberts as Deputy Education Minister for Planning. The President also appointed Mohammed Sheriff as Deputy Health Minister for Administration, William Dennis as Chairman of the Board of Directors of National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, Charles Snetter as Liberia Broadcasting System Director-General, Soko Sackor as Deputy Internal Affairs Minister for Administration, Benjamin Matadi as Deputy Transport Minister for Administration, Nyan Martein as Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation Managing Director, Estella Liberty as Deputy Post and Telecommunications Minister for Administration and Vivian Wreh as Chief of Protocol, Republic of Liberia.

Lawmakers Annoyed Over Media Coverage

(Daily Observer and The News)

- During plenary session yesterday, members of the House of Representatives, including Speaker Edwin Snowe expressed displeasure over what they termed as insulting coverage of the legislature by certain media institutions.

Senate Reports on Confirmation Hearings Today

(New Democrat)

- The Senate will today return a verdict on confirmation hearings of an initial batch of cabinet nominees. Those concerned include Finance Minister-designate Antoinette Sayeh and her deputy Francis Karpeh, Health Minister-designate Walter Gwenigale and National Security Agency Director-designate Fumba Sirleaf.

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

President Makes Additional Appointments in Government

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Street Peddlers Protest against Mass Demolitions of their Kiosks

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Former National Transitional Government Chairman and Vice Chairman Exempted from Travel Restriction

- Speaking to reporters yesterday, Chief of Office Staff in the Office of the President Morris Dukuly said that former National Transitional Government Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant and Vice Chairman Wesley Johnson are exempted from the travel restrictions on former members of the NTGL. He also said the government is not restricting any former official, but that the government will need their cooperation in upcoming comprehensive audits of the ministries and agencies.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Solicitor General-Designate Calls on Government to Employ Competent Lawyers

- During a Senate confirmation hearing yesterday, Solicitor General-designate Tiawan Gongloe called on the government to employ more qualified lawyers to speedily prosecute cases brought before the Ministry of Justice.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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

Health Minister-Designate Wants National Health Policy Revised

- Speaking at a Senate confirmation hearing, Health Minister-designate Walter Gwengale stressed the need to revise the National Health Policy of Liberia.

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Senate President Pro Tempore Justifies Daily Lunches with the President

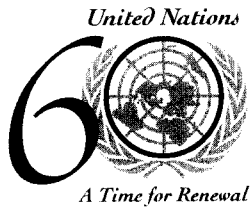
- Senate President Pro Tempore Isaac Nyenabo said that it is a good beginning that President Johnson-Sirleaf is hosting members of the Legislature. He said that the President will not use the daily lunch to manipulate the Lawmakers but to consult on issues of national concerns.

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

Immigration Commissioner-Designate to Review Work Permits of Non-Liberians

- Addressing the Senate yesterday, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Commissioner-designate Christopher Massaquoi called for the review of work permits issued to foreigners working in Liberia as such he would set up a task force to review the status of foreigners working in the country without permits.

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Secretary-General Press Release

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

SG/SM/10333
AFR/1322
1 February 2006

**SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS ATTACKS TARGETING UN IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED,
REMINDS TOP OFFICIALS OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE**

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about reported threats against the United Nations personnel in Côte d'Ivoire, and the possibility of major violence being unleashed in Abidjan and other areas of Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), supported by Licorne as needed, will take all necessary measures to protect United Nations personnel and property, as well as populations under imminent threats in its areas of deployment.

The Secretary-General wishes to remind, in the strongest possible terms, the highest civilian and military authorities of Côte d'Ivoire, including President Gbagbo and Chief of Staff General Mangou, of their personal responsibility for preventing violence, including attacks targeted against United Nations personnel and installations throughout the country, as well as ethnically motivated violence. Such acts will not be tolerated by the international community.

The Secretary-General calls once more on all Ivorian parties to work with their international partners to seek a peaceful solution to the Ivorian crisis.

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Saddam fails to appear in court

Saddam Hussein's trial has resumed in open session without the chief defendant or any defence lawyers.

Just three of eight defendants attended proceedings, and a court-appointed defence team was installed.

The regular defence team wants the Kurdish chief judge to quit, saying he is not impartial as his home town of Halabja was hit by poison gas in 1988.

The ex-Iraqi leader and seven others are on trial for the 1982 killings of 148 Shia villagers - charges they deny.

The trial, which resumed on Wednesday after a delay and a closed session blamed by court officials on "procedural issues", has been adjourned until Thursday.

Of the eight seats in the centre of the court usually occupied by Saddam Hussein and his co-defendants, just three were taken when legal arguments began.

Among the missing were the most senior defendants: Saddam Hussein's half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti, former Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan and ex-judge Awad Hamed al-Bandar.

The court heard five prosecution witnesses, among them a woman who testified that she was arrested by Saddam Hussein's security forces and tortured in prison.

She said she was stripped naked, hung by her feet and kicked repeatedly in the chest by then intelligence chief Barzan al-Tikriti, the Associated Press news agency reports.

Boycott threat

Earlier, defence lawyer Khalil Dulaimi issued a statement saying his team would "boycott the trial" until their demands were met.

Mr Dulaimi set out 11 conditions for the defence to end its boycott, including moving the trial "to a country which can offer security".

Saddam Hussein and two other defendants left the courtroom on Sunday, with one dragged out. The entire defence team subsequently left in protest.

Judge Raouf Abdul Rahman replaced Rizgar Amin as chief justice after he resigned in January over criticism that he had been too lenient towards the defendants, allowing them to dictate proceedings and thus letting the trial to descend into chaos.

The new chief judge says he wants to get on with the trial and will not tolerate disruption.

He took a much stronger line than his predecessor on Sunday, stating that he would not tolerate any defendants making political speeches or disobeying his authority.

The defendants could face the death penalty if convicted of the killings, which followed an assassination attempt on Saddam Hussein in the village of Dujail.



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Hussein a no-show in court

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) -- Saddam Hussein and four other defendants refused to attend their trial Wednesday, and their defense attorneys boycotted the proceedings, demanding the removal of the chief judge they claim is biased against the former Iraqi leader.

Chief judge Raouf Abdel-Rahman pressed ahead with court-appointed defense lawyers and only three defendants present, hearing five prosecution witnesses. After a 4 1/2-hour session, the trial was adjourned until Thursday.

Abdel-Rahman first held a half-hour closed session Wednesday, barring media from the courtroom. It was not clear whether Hussein was brought in for the closed hearing, and court officials did not say what took place.

Hussein and four other co-defendants were not present when the session was opened to the public.

One witness -- a woman whose identity was withheld and who spoke from behind a beige curtain -- testified that she was arrested by Hussein's security forces and tortured in prison.

She said she was stripped naked, hung by her feet and kicked repeatedly in the chest by Barzan Ibrahim, Hussein's intelligence chief at the time and the top co-defendant in the trial.

"What crime have we all committed to go through this agony?" she said.

Chief prosecutor Jaafar al-Moussawi asked the judge to force all defendants to attend. Abdel-Rahman ruled that the court proceedings would continue but that the five-judge panel would consider the request in future hearings.

Abdel-Rahman then turned to the three remaining defendants, surrounded by empty chairs in the pen set up in front of the bench.

"Because your lawyers stayed away and dropped your cases, the court has decided to appoint the lawyers who are in the courtroom," he told them.

"I have a lawyer. I paid 16 million dinars!" exclaimed defendant Abdullah Kazim Ruwayyid. The sum is about \$8,000.

Abdel-Rahman raised his hand sharply to interrupt him.

"If your lawyers attend the next sessions, they will take their positions as your attorneys," he said. "Until they attend, you will be having the gentlemen who are in the courtroom now to defend your rights."

The boycott by the defendants and lawyers is the latest problem to plague Hussein's tumultuous trial, which in its previous eight sessions saw numerous delays, a shake-up among the judges, and outbursts by Hussein and Ibrahim, his half brother.

Abdel-Rahman was brought in as chief judge Sunday to replace a predecessor who resigned amid criticism he was not doing enough to control the proceedings.

In a stormy session Sunday, Abdel-Rahman took a tough line, throwing out Ibrahim and a defense lawyer. The entire defense team walked out in protest and Hussein was escorted out after he rejected new court-appointed attorneys.

Now Abdel-Rahman must decide how long to continue the trial without most of the defendants and with court-appointed lawyers -- who have already come under criticism for being too passive. On Sunday, they declined to cross-examine any of the witnesses.

Hussein's defense lawyers have said they would not attend the trial until Abdel-Rahman is removed. The former Iraqi leader

and four other defendants have refused to work with the replacement lawyers.

Hussein's chief attorney, Khaled al-Dulaimi, who stayed in the Jordanian capital of Amman on Wednesday, criticized the court for holding the closed session. He did not know whether Hussein was forced to attend the closed portion.

"It's dangerous to hold a closed-door hearing. Our clients may be forced to attend, they may coerced, and this is illegal," he told The Associated Press. "The trial is unfair and the judge is acting on behalf of the prosecution, which means that he has lost impartiality."

The defense team accuses Abdel-Rahman, a Kurd, of having a "personal feud" with Hussein because the judge was born in the village of Halabja, which was subjected to a 1988 poison gas attack allegedly ordered by Hussein. Some 5,000 Kurds were killed in that attack, including several of Abdel-Rahman's relatives.

Speaking Wednesday to Al-Jazeera television, al-Dulaimi also said Hussein's regime tried Abdel-Rahman in absentia and sentenced him to life in prison in 1977. He said the judge was a member of a Kurdish opposition party that "was an enemy to my client."

Al-Dulaimi's claims could not be immediately confirmed.

"During our search in the archives, we have found that (Abdel-Rahman) has a personal and political feud with President Saddam Hussein and the (Baathist) command," al-Dulaimi said.

Hussein and co-defendants are on trial for the killing of more than 140 Shiites after a 1982 attempt on his life in the town of Dujail north of Baghdad. They face death by hanging if convicted.

Arab media reports claimed Abdel-Rahman was detained and tortured in the 1980s by Hussein's security agents. Efforts to contact Abdel-Rahman were unsuccessful.

However, another judge who is not part of the Dujail trial said Abdel-Rahman suffered permanent injuries to his back and one of his legs due to torture. The judge spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the Hussein case.

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