

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



The Freetown skyline and waterfront

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:

Monday, 2 July 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko

Monday, 2 July 2007

Prosecutor Rapp explains AFRC judgment to Makeni people

By Betty Milton

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp, on Thursday briefed the people of Makeni about the verdict passed on the

three indicted Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) members.

Speaking at the town council hall, the prosecutor explained that he was proud to be part of the court though he had been in trials in other

African countries.

The judgment, he went on, was contained in a document of 630 pages, and that the judges looked into the evidences adduced by both the prosecution and defence after which judgment was passed.

Prosecution Rapp stated

that, "the judgment will serve as a deterrent to other people who want to use violence as a means of venting out their fury".

On the verdict of the enlisting of children in hostilities Mr Rapp said, "this judgment will send a strong message not only to Sierra Leoneans but other parts of Africa not to enlist child soldiers.

This particular judgment is the first in the history of war crimes."

Talking about the court, the Chief Prosecutor maintained that the court here was different as its came into operations by the request of the government.

"About 60% of the staff are

Sierra Leoneans, so everything we are doing is for the people of this country as we want justice to prevail," he said.

On the court's mandate, the Chief Prosecutor said there were more than 13 people who committed atrocities during the 11 years war. "But our mandate covers only those who bear the greatest responsibility," he reaffirmed.

In his statement Paramount Chief Bai Sheborah Kasangha II said though this was the first visit by the prosecutor they had had other visits by other personalities of the court.

PC Kasangha disclosed that Makeni town was the

second seat of the rebels and that seeing them face judgment many residents would be delighted about it.

In a meeting with the Bishop of Makeni, George Biguzzi Bishop observed that "the people here have religious tolerance; you will see Muslims and Christians mixing without any problems."

The Bishop said with the trials of the war crimes indictees, "this is a clear indication that no matter how high a man is he is going to account for his works".

Talking to an amputee, Mariatu Sesay, about the judgment of the three AFRC indictees, she said she was happy because justice had been done.

The News
Monday, 2 July 2007

VIEW POINT

By Pastor Mohamed Sesay

President Kabbah's legacy (Part 3) The May 27th 1997 coup: Why it happened?

When Corporal Gborie, the man who announced the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) coup, came on air around 12:30 p.m. on that fateful day of Sunday 27th May 1997, the reasons he gave for their take-over of the government included a problem which he termed "the Kamajor problem." He mentioned, among other things, that the government of President Kabbah was giving preference to the Kamajors at the expense of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA). Reason number two was, 'the other ranks problem.' He said among other things that the high ranking officers in the army were bullying them, the other ranks. He talked of low pay and unbearable conditions. How did his reasons measured up?

If there are regrets of his presidency that will forever haunt him the topmost among them was President Kabbah's initial failure to take full control of the country after his election in 1996. He was made to believe by men in Khaki that the transition from military to civilian was whole-heartedly done when in fact there were elements in the army that were totally displeased with the new situation.

When President Kabbah came to office he found himself in a dilemma; the war was still going on so he needed the help of the military to keep the rebels at bay until the time for talking came but at the same time he wanted them to know that his administration was a civilian one and not a military junta. The problem was, how he could maintain his hold on power while at the same time leave the soldiers still running riot all over the country.

The soldiers on their part, just still believed that Tejan Kabbah's government was a continuation of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) junta. Nothing changed with them. While President Kabbah was in power soldiers based at Koribondo stopped and searched every vehicle traveling to the Pujehun area, not for arms and ammunition but for diamond-mining equipment. Every passenger had to pay a fee of Le1000. A list is also made of every passenger to be submitted to the soldiers based at Bandajuma Sowa. There, a roll-call was made and passengers had to pay Le500 each to the soldiers. The soldiers also imposed curfew in their operational areas at will. Since President Kabbah came to office up to his overthrow, soldiers maintained a dusk to dawn curfew at all the areas between Gobaru, Pujehun, Gbondapi, Yoni, Massam Kparak, Boama and Blama Massaquo. No civilian dared breach their curfew. All this unbeknown to President Kabbah.

To be able to tame the soldiers there must be an understanding of their operations. As President Kabbah did not ask and no one told him, he got himself caught in all the snares that were laid out for him. The school of thought he depended on which involved a cleaning up process failed him.

First, he never knew the number of people in uniform and armed to the teeth roaming in the provinces. He was told there were 7000 when in fact there were 21,000. The 7,000 were the genuine soldiers. The rest were a make up of fighters that were referred to as Sierra Leone Border Guards who were not entitled to salaries but to an allowance called a 'risk allowance' and the Vigilantes whose survival depended on their harassment of innocent civilians. At check points drivers had to dish out cash in three different places. The first place was called 'Bomeh'. Amount collected there was shared between commissioned and non-commissioned officers. 'Track' money was meant for private soldiers and the Border Guards. At the 'gate' were the unpaid vigilantes who will not take 'no' for an answer. When President Kabbah called for verification it left the army shaken. Their problem was how they were going to hide fourteen thousand of their colleagues and at the same time maintain their services. There has to be a way, an abnormal way, they discussed.

The military is like a secret society which never likes to wash its dirty linen in the open. President Kabbah's mistake was to release announcements that made the soldiers feel humiliated. Things could never have been the same if a hush-hush approach had been taken and also if the work of doing the dirty had been

The verification process and the collection of weapons angered them. The sacking of people like Captain Chendeka, a soldier's soldier, made them feel insecure. The retirement of old-age soldiers with only a bundle of zinc and a few thousand Leones as gratuity sent alarm bells ringing. The powder-key was being primed for explosion.

Corporal Gborie was right about the problems, the other ranks were facing. Officers like the late Captain Yamaokachi Barghra and the late Lieutenant Tumani were in the habit of pocketing soldiers' salaries lying to them that their names had fallen in other vouchers in far away places while at the same time refusing them passes to go and collect those non-existent salaries.

Many soldiers went months without receiving a cent in wages. Those soldiers were hopeful that the practice will discontinue under a civilian government but when it continued they laid the blame squarely on the commander in chief.

What Corporal Gborie was not right about was his assumption that special preference was given to the Kamajors. The Kamajors were also a head-ache for President Kabbah's administration. They too had to be tamed but the know-how to do it was not there.

Even though they were working in partnership with the soldiers to fight the RUF rebels, when the transition came, the Kamajors saw the soldiers as bitter enemies and saw the period as their 'time' and prepared themselves for the 'last battle.'

Within a month of President Kabbah's reign the Kamajors swelled their numbers from a few thousand to over sixty thousand. Recruits were trained at places like Majehun, Mokobo, Taninahun, Kapoma and Kangahun in the Moyamba district, Baoma Konta and Mongeri in the Bo district and Quiva and Gbagbatoke in the Bonthe district. Within a few weeks of President Kabbah's taking office Kamajors began testing the resolve of soldiers. In April 1996, at a place called Nyandehun in the Bonthe district Kamajors cold-bloodedly murdered a Corporal Mayele, an SLA soldier and two Special Task Force (STF) soldiers who were fighting alongside Sierra Leone government soldiers. They were all based at Kabati. There was panic among soldiers after those unprovoked killings. The commander based at Mokañji, Colonel Lawrence Conteh took desperate action when it was learnt that Kamajors based at Quiva were mobilizing to attack soldiers at Mokaba. He dispatched a team led by a Lieutenant Marah (Bush Doctor) to make peace with the Kamajors at Mowini. After this there were clashes between government soldiers and Kamajors all over the country and all along the soldiers kept assuming wrongly that the Kamajors were getting government backing.

The soldiers' suspicion of the Kamajor-government marriage' grew strong when, after a major clash at Mokañji in February 1997 which left three government soldiers and over one hundred Kamajors dead, decision was taken for all soldiers to leave the Bonthe and Moyamba districts.

The final mistake was to gather those 'wounded' soldiers at Sumbuya, a village just 34 miles from Freetown, to join other elite forces including the Brown Berets or Junglers and the Rapid Reaction Force (RDF).

At midnight May 27th 1997, the order was given for those wild lions to move to the city and capture it. Some took the route round the Peninsular; others followed the straight road to Freetown. All went quiet until after the release of their man, Johnny Paul Koroma, from Pademba Road Prisons, and then all hell was left loose...

An innocent President Kabbah was made to pay the price for things he did not do. What a sad episode in his term as President! That's life. We are all only human.

When President Kabbah came to office he found himself in a dilemma; the war was still going on so he needed the help of the military to keep the rebels at bay until the time for talking came but at the same time he wanted them to know that his administration was a civilian one and not a military junta. The problem was, how he could maintain his hold on power while at the same time leave the soldiers still running riot all over the country.

The Spark
Monday, 2 July 2007

UN To Monitor Prisons

By Abu Bakarr Jalloh

The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone has conducted a nation wide survey to assess the various prisons in Sierra Leone. The report was launched at the Staff Welfare Centre, Mammy Yoko Hotel in Freetown.

The Executive Representative of the Secretary General, Victor Angelo said during the presentation of the report 'Behind the Hall' that the failure to protect and promote Human Rights for a particular group of people is a serious threat to the nation.

He noted that the prison is considered as a place where those who break the law are rehabilitated and trained to ensure their reintegration into society after they are released. He however said a large number of prisoners are either remanded or awaiting trial. According to him, prisoners have basic human rights that should be protected.

Mr. Angelo said such a survey was in line with the United Na-

tions mandate to assist the government of Sierra Leone in strengthening the capacity of the correct system by carrying out an assessment of the conditions of prisons all over the country. He went further to say that, there are 1,693 prisoners all over the country of which 53% are non-convicted meaning that they are either on remand or under trial.

Mr. Angelo said the report was therefore an instrument for all stakeholders and through cooperation to improve conditions in the prisons.

He said, UNIOSL Human Rights Officers would continue to monitor prisons countrywide. 'I am pleased to announce that in this regard UNIOSL has solicited some funding from UNDP to provide emergency relief supply of food and other items to Pademba Road Prison', he remarked. He said UNIOSL is currently working towards developing a project under the Peace Building Fund to strengthen the capacity of prisons'

The Minister of Internal Affairs Hon Pascal Egbanda said the paramount reason for establishing prisons as institutions in any country relates to reformation and rehabilitation of offenders of the law and order with the aim of transforming them into more responsible and useful citizens there by taking their rightful place in society and contributing meaningfully to national development.

He further revealed that the Prisons Ordinance Act of 1961 under which the Sierra Leone Prisons was established to hold and rehabilitate without eroding their human rights of persons who have either been sentenced to prison terms or are awaiting trial by court of compliant jurisdiction.

He said during the war, prison as an institution became targets for destruction and conditions in the prisons fell below international standards but government and its development partners to improve conditions in the Prisons Department are applying efforts.

Cotton Tree Radio website

Friday, 29 June 2007

Special Court Prosecutor Visits Makeni

Written by Abubakarr Turay

The prosecution outreach of the Special Court for Sierra Leone has held a one day interactive session with the people of Makeni. Stephen Rapp is the prosecutor of the court. He said the session was organized to inform the people about the outcome of the recent court judgment of the AFRC cases. He said the three indictees had been convicted of eleven count charges. He said they included murder, rape and pillage. The prosecutor added that they would ensure the people were informed about the proceedings outcome of the pending cases. Bai Shebora Kasangha the Second is the paramount chief of Bombali Shebora Chiefdom. He said his people appreciated the activities of the court. He said that was because the town suffered a lot during the war. Adikalie Bangura is an amputee whose two limbs were chopped off during the war in Port Loko. He said he was still not a happy man despite the court verdict. He said that was because of the difficult situation in which he found himself.

Toronto Star

Monday, 2 July 2007

Opinion

Just verdict for forcing kids to fight

Out of the tiny country of Sierra Leone has come a huge victory for human rights.

The recent conviction of three of its former rebel fighters for recruiting and using child soldiers was truly historic. The first of its kind by a U.N. court, the ruling sends a message that those who turn children into killers will not escape justice.

The message is overdue. More than 300,000 children are in combat around the globe.

Until now, those responsible for it have escaped prosecution. But that is beginning to change.

The precedent comes just as former Liberian president Charles Taylor goes on trial for war crimes in The Hague. He is accused of orchestrating Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war by funding the rebel army known for forcing children to murder their families, mutilate villagers and engage in cannibalism.

Taylor faces 11 charges, including the conscription of child soldiers. Once feared throughout West Africa, he is the first former African head of state to face such charges.

Taylor has long denied the charges, saying he "did not and could not" have played a role in Sierra Leone's war. Child soldiers tell a different story.

On our most recent trip to Sierra Leone, we met John Mafinder, a 15-year-old former soldier captured by rebels at the age of 12. He spent more than a year as the bodyguard for a senior rebel nicknamed Rambo.

Skinny and shy, with a look of exhaustion and bags under his eyes, he had never spoken to anyone about his life as a soldier, not even his family, until we met him in the war-torn Kono district.

John and his friends were captured by rebels as they fled the country. Those too small for combat were killed, the others were turned into soldiers.

He explained how he was trained by Liberian mercenaries to raid villages and murder locals, and use heavy weaponry.

The weapons, from handguns to AK-47s, were flown by helicopter from Liberia. John told us they were brought by English-speaking white men who were often paid in diamonds.

He said shipments, as many as six per day, were arranged by senior rebels and Liberian officials. John remembers the rebels being in regular contact with supporters in Liberia, including Taylor himself.

In fact, on one occasion he even saw Taylor spend the night at his rebel commander's home.

John's experiences, as well as those of many other child soldiers we spoke to, add to the evidence indicating the Liberian warlord collaborated with rebels in Sierra Leone.

The war in this West African country was one of the most horrific in recent memory, especially for the 10,000 or more children like John who were given drugs – often a mix of cocaine and gunpowder called "brown" – to induce a kill-or-be-killed mentality. Many are scarred for life.

For too long, rebels and dictators who arm children have found impunity. That is why the legal precedent set in Sierra Leone is so important – it ensures that war's youngest victims are not forgotten.

As the world turns to the trial of Charles Taylor, the stories of these children must be told. While they have had the tragic misfortune of bearing witness to atrocities, they also have the power to bring perpetrators to justice.

Craig and Marc Kielburger are children's rights activists and co-founded Free The Children, which is active in the developing world.

Daily Monitor (Uganda)

Monday, 2 July 2007

Opinion

OPINIONS & COMMENTARIES

INTERNATIONAL LAW | Jamil D. Mujuzi



Special Court for Sierra Leone: Enforcing politics?

JULY 2, 2007

Ugandan Judge Ssebutinde is head of the special court trying human rights violations and war crimes during the civil strike that wrecked Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Below find a close look at the credibility of the court as seen by an independent observer:-

In his article in the Sunday Monitor of June 10, Mr Mohammed Matovu clearly demonstrated how international criminal tribunals are driven by both politics and international law. He is right that if a judge at such a court is not careful he/she might end up delivering political judgements.

This is true because of the circumstances that surround the establishing and functioning of those courts. This is not a new phenomenon in international criminal law. Those who are familiar with international criminal law will agree with me that the Nuremburg and Tokyo Tribunals that were established after World War II were more political than legal.

They enforced what international criminal law experts call "Victor's Justice" as opposed to real justice. How will the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) (where our own Justice Julie Ssebutinde is based) be remembered?

While appearing before the SCSL in early February 2006, one of the accused, Mr Sam Hinga Norman (former Deputy Minister of Defence and later Minister of Internal Affairs in Sierra Leone who has since died), called upon the SCSL to indict the President of Sierra Leone, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, for some of the atrocities that were committed during a 10-year-civil war that wrecked Sierra Leone.

What Norman was saying was that if indeed the SCSL is in place to bring about justice in Sierra Leone, the prosecutor should have indicted Mr. Kabbah otherwise the court would be seen as an instrument being used by those in power in collaboration with the United Nations against those who are not in power.

The SCSL was established by an agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations with the "power to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since November 30, 1996, including those leaders who, in committing such crimes, have threatened the

establishment of and implementation of the peace process in Sierra Leone.” The internationally well-known former Liberian president Charles Taylor is one of the accused.

Dr Kabbah, the President of Sierra Leone, is not one of those who were indicted by the SCSL yet his role in the civil war is well documented and this explains why his former Deputy Minister of Defence, Norman, called upon the court to indict him.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was put in place to make findings in relation to the causes, nature and extent of violations and abuses during the armed conflict in Sierra Leone concluded recommended that Dr Kabbah should be held responsible for the acts of his agents on the ground (paragraph 278).

The Commission also found that (at paragraph 283) the government (headed by Kabbah) was kept informed through its Security Committee briefings and through reports received from Ecomog that the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) were committing unspeakable human rights violations, but failed to take steps to stop them. The Commission concluded that the government was responsible for the violations and abuses of human rights committed by the CDF.

There is no reason why the SCSL should use different standards to prosecute people for the same offences. In cases of the former rebels (RUF and AFRC), the SCSL indicted the top brass and in cases where this was not possible, for example where the leaders died (Sankoh and Bockarie) or their whereabouts are not known (Koroma), the SCSL indicted those who deputised the leaders.

However, this was not done in the case of those in power. The SCSL indicted Hinga Norman who was the Deputy Minister of Defence and ignored Kabbah who was the Minister of Defence. This is so despite the fact that it is clear that Norman implemented orders that were given by Kabbah.

Dr Kabbah’s conduct and activities during the war automatically qualify him to ‘bear that greatest responsibility’ for the atrocities that were committed during that war and should therefore stand trial. Otherwise the SCSL will go on record as having furthered political interests and not delivering justice to the victims of Dr Kabbah actions and omissions.

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The Trial of Charles Taylor website

Thursday, 28 June 2007

<http://charlestaylortrial.org>

Taylor's Adequacy of Representation Issues Delay Trial Until August 20

Posted by trialmonitor1 on June 28th, 2007

Responding to ongoing issues concerning the adequacy of Charles Taylor's legal defense team, Trial Chamber II of the Special Court for Sierra Leone signaled to the Office of the Principal Defender and the Prosecution today that it would grant their request to postpone Taylor's trial until August 20, 2007. The Trial Chamber's order issued earlier this week mandating that the trial resume on July 3, 2007 will be replaced by an order at a brief hearing on July 3, 2007 that will delay resumption of the trial until August 20, 2007.

Principal Defender's Office and Prosecution Agree that Interests of Justice Support Modification of Trial Schedule

Earlier this week, the Special Court ordered the Registrar to assist the Principal Defender in assembling a defense team that would adequately represent Taylor in the proceedings consistent with his right to a fair trial under Article 17 of the Statute of the Special Court. The Office of the Principal Defender, along with the Prosecution, today filed a motion asking to postpone the trial, explaining that the current Duty Counsel assigned to Taylor's defense, Charles Jalloh, has not been engaged substantively in Taylor's defense. The motion explained that Duty Counsel has not received instruction from Taylor or reviewed any significant materials, including expert reports, disclosed by the Prosecution. The motion to postpone also noted that the Prosecution's proposed expert witnesses have been challenged by Taylor's former counsel, and Duty Counsel was not privy to the analysis and discussions that led to these challenges.

The Prosecution supported the motion to delay the proceedings because the future defense team's potential challenge to the Prosecution's expert witnesses would require those witnesses to travel repeatedly to The Hague to testify. These burdens, the Prosecution explained, could be avoided by postponing resumption of the trial until August.

The Special Court's ruling extends the start-date of the Prosecution's case until August 20, 2007. The Special Court will hold a brief hearing on July 3, 2007, to discuss their decision to postpone re-commencement of the trial. It is unknown at this stage whether a fully-composed defense team would seek further extensions.

Taylor Not Likely To Represent Himself

When the trial began on June 4, 2007, Taylor complained (through his then-current counsel) that he had not received adequate representation and lacked sufficient facilities and trial support to mount his defense. Taylor's counsel then informed the Special Court that Taylor wanted to represent himself. But when the proceedings resumed this past Monday, Taylor did not appear and the Special Court devoted its entire session to the issue of Taylor's representation in the proceedings.

With Taylor again absent from the courtroom on Monday, the Principal Defender, a representative from the Registry, and the Prosecution argued various points relating to the formation of Taylor's defense team and whether the trial should be delayed for an additional period of time to allow such a team to be put together. Noting Taylor's absence from the courtroom without any explanation as to why he was not present, the Court concluded that Taylor was, in effect, boycotting the trial:

The Trial Chamber notes that the accused's absence in court today, in absence of any explanation to the Court, is not only inconsistent with his indication to represent himself - for how can one represent oneself if they're absent? - but it's also tantamount to boycotting the proceedings, in the Chamber's view.

The Trial Chamber agrees with the Prosecutor that the accused does not have the option to appear before this Court as and when he chooses to. Regardless of the issues or difficulties he is encountering in sorting out his fair-trial issues - and we in no regard consider those issues as small or trivial; they are valid issues - but regardless of those issues, the accused is under an obligation to appear before the Court at all times. When he chooses not to appear, we can assume that he has deemed to absent himself or he is, in fact, boycotting the proceedings as a whole.

Despite this conclusion (and based on the Principal Defender's submissions), the Special Court accepted that Taylor no longer wished to represent himself and instead would accept assigned counsel to represent him.

Court Orders That A New Defense Team Be Assembled

The Special Court on Monday chided both the Principal Defender and the Acting Registrar for their failure to resolve the issue of inadequate representation, which "has been known to the Acting Registrar in general and the Principal Defender in particular since early March 2007 and nothing practical seems to have been done to address the problems." Specifically, Presiding Judge Sebutinde pointed to Articles 24 and 25 of the Directive on Assignment of Counsel, which describe the Principal Defender's obligations when assigned counsel withdraws, and indicated that "the Principal Defender should have endeavored, at least in the short term and in the interim, to comply with" these obligations.

Similarly, she took the Registry to task:

The focus of the Registry has not been to provide the accused with adequate representation as required by Article 17 of the Statute. Rather, the Registry's focus has been conserving funds and working within budgetary constraints. In the Trial Chamber's view, the whole issue has wrongly boiled down to availability of finances rather than fair-trial issues being addressed.

The Special Court emphasized the need for adequate representation and resources for Taylor, noted that it had warned the Registry of potential delays from its failure to resolve these issues, and stated that its "worst fears have been realized":

In our view, the resolution of this issue lies squarely with the Registrar, Acting Registrar, in consultation with the Office of the Principal Defender, and failure to resolve this issue has led to this and probably further delay of these proceedings.

On this basis the Special Court provided both short-term and long-term measures. In the short term, the Special Court ordered the Principal Defender to assign new counsel either from his list of available counsel or from the Office of the Principal Defender and retain if possible any remaining members of Taylor's former defense team. Further, the Special Court directed Duty Counsel to represent Taylor when proceedings were scheduled to resume on July 3, 2007.

In the long term, the Special Court ordered the Registrar to ensure that by July 31, 2007:

The Principal Defender is enabled to assemble a Defence team for Mr Taylor comprising the following: One lead counsel of the qualities described or mentioned in Rule 45(C) of the rules, two

co-counsel of the quality described in Rule 45(C) of the rules, and one senior investigator at a P4 level. These will supplement the residual members of the team of Charles Taylor as they now exist, the various assistants.

Now, the fully constituted Defence team should be in place by the 31st and ready to address the Chamber when we reconvene.

After explaining various logistics related to scheduling, the Special Court stated that the trial would resume from July 3 to July 11, 2007, before adjourning until August 20, 2007, to enable the judges to travel to Freetown for sentencing proceedings in another case.

At this point, the Principal Defender, Vincent Nmehielle, expressed concerns about assigning Duty Counsel as Taylor's interim counsel:

Now, of course, by the order of the Court, Duty Counsel is supposed to, in the interim, assist with the case. As indicated, this case, the trial, is to continue on the 3rd of July. There are a lot of pending motions which Duty Counsel does not have the — I mean, within the time period, the ability to respond to all of them, and of course the disclosures that he has not been privy to before now, to look into between 35 to 40,000 pages of disclosure, Prosecution disclosure, and continuing disclosure, for him to be ready to possibly participate in the case as of the 3rd of July, this will create real practical difficulties. And, your Honours, there are some issues I would like to address you in chambers rather than in public in terms of practical difficulties for the OPD regarding this issue. I wouldn't want to mention them in public.

Judge Sebutinde responded:

Mr Nmehielle, the orders we've made are made in light of the existing rules and the existing articles on — the existing Directive on Assignment of Counsel. We have not come out with any directives that fall outside of these provisions. We've not invented anything new.

Now, practical difficulties or no difficulties, we cannot have a vacuum situation whereby the trial is held to ransom or the progress of the trial is held to ransom because you've not been able to assign counsel. It is precisely for such a situation that Duty Counsel has been appointed. If you think that the present Duty Counsel is not able to handle the case, then please come up with someone who can. And I don't think that Duty Counsel is required, for the purposes of responding to the motions, to be conversant with the 40,000 pages of disclosure. That is one.

But the Special Court left open the possibility that filings could be made addressing the Principal Defender's concerns:

But, secondly, it is all the more reason that you should expedite the appointment of this other counsel, Assigned Counsel, that we've directed in the short term. And if counsel, on the

3rd of July, have any problems addressing the Court or dealing with any issues, surely they are capable of making their own applications in that regard.

The Proceedings Going Forward

The issues concerning the adequacy of Taylor's defense team have effectively stalled resumption of the trial until August 20, 2007, at the earliest. What remains to be seen is whether and how the Registry and the Office of the Principal Defender will resolve these issues to the Special Court's satisfaction and whether and to what extent recurring concerns about Taylor's fair trial rights will impact future proceedings. The Prosecution appears intent on resuming the trial in earnest on August 20th and to begin presenting its case through examination of its first witnesses. But any failure by Taylor to appear in the future or the inability of the Registry and the Principal Defender's Office to establish a sufficient defense team as mandated by the Special Court could potentially alter scheduling of future trial proceedings.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 29 June 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberia's Truth Commission Three Months Behind Schedule, Says Chairman

By James Butty
 Washington, D.C.
 29 June 2007

The chairman of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) said his work is three months behind schedule and faces serious financial problems. But chairman Jerome Verdier hoped through the commitment of his staff and the international donor community, the commission can make up for the lost time.

17 Years After, Farewell to Oru Camp Refugees

Lagos, Jun 29, 2007 (This Day/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- From July 1, refugees hitherto sheltered in the comfort zone of the Oru camp will have to face the challenges of a new lifestyle either in Nigeria or in their home countries where peace and normalcy have returned after the civil war years that plagued Sierra Leone and **Liberia**. Oke Epia writes

Country Repatriation to End This Weekend

Jun 29, 2007 (United Nations High Commission for Refugees/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- After two and a half years, UNHCR will end tomorrow (June 30) its repatriation program for Liberian refugees. Launched in October 2004, the UNHCR operation helped repatriate more than 105,000 refugees, mostly from Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria.

Taylor War Crimes Trial Delayed Again

THE HAGUE, Netherlands AP Online Regional - Africa: June 28, 2007_Judges on Thursday ordered the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor delayed until Aug. 20 to provide time for a new defense team to prepare its case.

International Clips on West Africa

Security Council Urges Support for War Crimes Tribunal

Jun 29, 2007 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The Security Council today called on the international community to maintain its financial support of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), saying the war crimes tribunal needs more help to complete its efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the worst crimes during the country's prolonged civil war.

Rocket fired at Ivorian PM Plane

BBC

Friday, 29 June 2007

A rocket has been fired at a plane carrying Ivory Coast Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, who was not hurt in the attack, his New Forces group says.

Three people were killed in the attack in Bouake, the headquarters of Mr Soro's former rebel group, it says.

Local Media – Newspaper

Budget Director Admits Errors in Controversial Budget but Accuses Auditor General of Committing Perjury

(The Analyst, New Democrat, The Forum, Daily Observer, Plain Truth, Heritage, Public Agenda, The Inquirer, The Informer)

- Budget Director Augustine Ngafuan who appeared before lawmakers Thursday to testify in the budget debate admitted to errors in the controversial 2007/2008 draft budget but accused the Auditor General, John Morlu of committing perjury. The debate was rescheduled for Thursday after Tuesday's disruption.
- Public sentiment continues to be mixed regarding the ongoing budget debate. Some people are of the opinion that Morlu was stalling the passage of the budget and deliberately inciting public suspicion about the government. Others think it is a more transparent process that would ensure accountability on the part of the Government.

President Sirleaf Launches First National Census in 23 years

(The Analyst, Daily Observer, Heritage, The Liberian Diaspora, The News and The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Thursday launched Liberia's first National Population Census, 23 years since it was conducted.
- Mrs. Sirleaf said the census will give Government a workable tool to foster the development and transformation of the country.

Taylor's Associates Say the Accused will not Appear in Court

(The Inquirer)

- [sic] The Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Taylor says it has observed that the trial proceedings of Mr. Taylor at the International Court in The Hague would go on without the presence of the accused. The Association in a press release issued last evening said it would be a good thing if the Court would hold the trial without Mr. Taylor and pronounce the pre-determined verdict upon him because the Court has failed to address the concerns raised by the accused.
- Meanwhile, the Heritage newspaper quoted the Association for the Legal Defense of Charles Taylor as saying fear that Mr. Taylor may not receive a fair trial at the hands of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will soon materialize.

Sea Erosion Renders 100 Homeless in Monrovia

(The Analyst)

- Violent sea erosion has destroyed five houses, leaving 100 residents of Sinkor in Monrovia homeless. The incident occurred Wednesday night in the 24th Street Community near the Atlantic Ocean.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 pm)*

Budget Director Admits Errors in 2007/2008 Proposed Budget

- Speaking during a budget debate yesterday, Budget Director, Augustine N'gafuan admitted to some errors in 2007/2008 draft budget but dismissed claims by the Auditor General that it was sub-standard.
- The budget debate was rescheduled for yesterday after Tuesday's disruption.
- Director N'gafuan said the errors were a result of mistakes made by budget analysts at the Bureau which was discovered later. He said his threats to dismissed those involved could not be done due to the misinterpretation of the budget by Auditor General Morlu.

(Also reported on ELBS)

LTA Debunks Claims by Four GSM Companies

- In an interview, the Commissioner of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA), Lamini Waritay rejected criticism by four GSM Companies that the Universal Access Fund imposes additional financial burden on service providers.
- Minister Waritay said the imposition of the fund was the corporate responsibility of the companies and warned them to be mindful of their obligations to the government and people of Liberia.
- The LTA bill was passed by the House of Representative this week.

French Company to Lift "Toxic" Chemicals from Monrovia

- A French company has agreed to ship "toxic" chemicals brought into the country by Mobil Oil Company 25 years ago.
- Speaking to reporters yesterday, the Managing Director of Total-Liberia, Musa Gaydel said the toxic chemicals STK 2414 were brought into the country to be used as jet fuel but said it will now be taken to France.
- Mr. Gaydel said the contract signed between Total and the company amounts to US\$120,000.

Former Sports Minister Confirmed as Associate Justice

- The Liberian Senate has confirmed former Minister of Youth and Sports, Counsellor Jamesetta Howard Wolokollie as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS)

Foreign Minister Wallace attends AU Meeting in Accra

- Foreign Minister George Wallace is in the Ghanaian Capital, Accra to attend a meeting in advance of the African Union Heads of State summit next week.
- The Foreign Ministers are expected to formulate an agenda to be discussed by the Heads of State which will predominately centre on calls for a united states of Africa as well as issues of trade and economy.
- Liberia's voting rights at the summit was suspended for many years due to the huge arrears owed the body. The rights were recently restored following the payment of some of its arrears.
- President Sirleaf is expected to address the summit on Liberia's emergence from war to peace and democracy.

UN News Centre

Friday, 29 June 2007

Secretary-General hails work of International Criminal Court

29 June 2007 – The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is one of the “major achievements in international law during the past century,” providing the opportunity to hold to account the world’s worst war criminals, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement released today to mark a key anniversary in the ICC’s founding.

Sunday will be the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the ICC, which allowed the Court to be formally established after years of negotiation between countries.

“During the relatively short time of its existence, the Court has already established itself as the centrepiece of a system of international criminal justice,” Mr. Ban said in his statement. “It is both the embodiment of, and the driving force behind, a profound evolution of international culture and law.”

The ICC is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of carrying out the most serious crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It holds trials only when national courts cannot or will not conduct their own proceedings.

The Rome Statute which brought the Court into being now has 104 States Parties, and Mr. Ban urged those nations that have not yet become parties to do so.

He added that “already the activities of the Court and its Prosecutor [Luis Moreno-Ocampo] have a deterring effect on potential perpetrators of international crimes.”

So far the ICC has issued arrest warrants for two suspects accused of war crimes in Sudan’s Darfur region and five leaders of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. Thomas Lubanga, a rebel leader in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was arrested last year. The Court has also opened investigations into allegations of killings and rapes in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Photos from the Security Operation 'Exercise Green Horizon'
Friday, 29 June 2007



