

**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:

Tuesday, 2 May 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

Local News

Hinga Norman and the Special Court / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Pages 3-4
Kamajors Blast APC As Liars / <i>The Spectator</i>	Page 5
Death Penalty is Crucial / <i>New Vision</i>	Page 6
Kabbah Threatens Guinea / <i>Awareness Times</i>	Pages 7-8

International News

Judges Postpone First Witnesses in Charles Taylor War Crimes Trial.../ <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 9
Ex-President Could Serve Sentence in UK / <i>Press Association (UK)</i>	Page 10
Speak Out Against Travel Ban / <i>The Inquirer (Liberia)</i>	Pages 11-12
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 13-15

Independent Observer

Wednesday, 2 May 2007

Hinga Norman and the Special Court

ISSUES OF THE DAY

*By Edie Vandy -
ediepauljoseph@yahoo.com*

One of Sierra Leone's last remaining heroes - Chief Sam Hinga Norman heeded to God's call, following his illness incurred some 4 years ago. He died at the Aristide La Dantec Hospital in Dakar, Senegal on 22 February 2007. The family of Chief Sam Hinga Norman asserts that Chief Norman died under sub-standard clinical conditions and medical neglect, whilst the Special court offers a contrary argument that the Chief died of "natural causes" as a result of myocardial infarction (heart attack).

The Chief's death has left the nation divided, and tongues wagging, for the circumstance under which he died is what is at play here, as he was a war crime indictee; his crime been 'bearing greatest responsibility of the war'? The question is not about his heroism or not, for he was a hero to many Sierra Leoneans.

Hinga Norman provided leadership and direction when the nation was under assault and its people held siege, following a mayhem, and reign of terror imposed by the RUF and the AFRC on their own. Don't tell me you have forgotten the terrible dark moments that ensued with an RUF/AFRC unholy alliance in 1997-1998. Have you forgotten the rape, the killings, limb hacking, and summary executions that became the hallmark of one of the world's brutal rebellion in modern times? For nearly eight months, ordinary Sierra Leoneans were held hostage, abandoned and left to perish from the hands of men and women who had no iota of respect for human lives and dignity. The Kabbahs, the Berewa's, the Minister's and the aristocrat and well placed in society, ran for cover in some faraway safety nets. Our International allies were nowhere to be seen when needed most. Kudos to the late Nigerian President Abacha, despite his shortcomings, stepped up to the plate, dispatching ECOMOG to take the fight to the RUF/AFRC. We all know that ECOMOG couldn't have done it without the CDF, backed by the peoples resolved.

Let's be clear here: there would have been no Special Court, no Tejan Kabbah, no Solomon Berewa, and no International intervention, had the people not resisted, and fought the RUF/AFRC killing machinery, with all their might. What happened in Sierra Leone was not even about Hinga Norman. It was about the people's will and determination to resist tyranny, humiliation and terror at all cost. Sierra Leoneans fought to live and survive another day. They fought to protect their democracy. Of course innocent people did die, rape was committed, properties were looted and burnt, and other injustices were done, but these things will always happen as long as there is conflict and wars. Nobody is holding grief for the few rotten eggs within the CDF (and every other stakeholder in the conflict) who participated in these acts? It is the bigger picture that needs to be placed in context, against the backdrop of the conflict. Plainly put, Hinga Norman (and the men and women who sacrificed with sweat and blood) are the true heroes of Sierra Leones war. When the dust did settle after the fact, what did we do instead? We turned (cowed by International pressure) to hand over one of our own? America will never hand any of their own illustrious sons and daughters to the ICC for war crimes? Don't tell me that the Bush Administration will be brought before a war crimes tribunal for the many innocent lives lost in the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan? Kabbah and Berewa had the moral authority to have excluded the CDF from any prosecution,

SIERRA LEONE WAR :

**A critical look at current
political issues: Jan-Apr 2007**

Hinga Norman and the Special Court?

***Hinga Norman provided leadership
and direction when the nation was
under assault and its people held
siege, following a mayhem, and
reign of terror imposed by the
RUF and the AFRC on their own***

as it was their inalienable right to have asked the Special court to either do it their way or not. President Eileen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia is under no obligation, and she is not even in a hurry to replicate another special court on her turf. She is not bulging to pressure in seeking justice through a special court, as she has other preoccupation; to better the lives of ordinary Liberians. Can someone really tell me what justice has been accomplished to date, since the setting up of the UN backed Special court in 2002? Nothing absolutely, except hunger for justice, grief and wasted resources that could have been used in other priority areas. Do you know that some US \$ 125 million has been spent in the last three years (and is reported in need of more money) in search of justice, that seems so far away? With all that huge chunks on money spent in post recovery Sierra Leone, we are yet to own up as a nation, and implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which arguably was the best conduit for our healing process?

For four years, Hinga Norman languished in cell; denied of his right to have access to a decent health care serve, that could have saved his life, but that was not to be as he was ferried to Senegal, where he died afterwards. During his years of incarceration, Kabbah, Berewa, and his colleagues have being out enjoying the very freedom Hinga Norman and ordinary Sierra Leoneans spilled innocent blood. The least Kabbah and Berewa could have done was to play devil's advocacy for a speedy trial, assuming they did care for a fallen colleague. Did I hear that the VP was out on the road campaigning on the very day Hinga Norman was being buried? If that is true, at least, the VP could have lay back, and enjoyed the comfort of his home.

The question on the lips of many lingers around justice to Chief Hinga Norman? Was the Chief in fact guilty as charged, now that all charges were dropped since his death? Sierra Leoneans deserve to know that even in death, their hero was not a war criminal.

The Spectator
Wednesday, 2 May 2007

Kamajors blast APC as liars

A senior Kamajor militia member presently in Freetown Mohamed Kabba Massaquo has in a furious mood stormed The Spectator informing them that the story published in one of the local tabloid that "Kamajors vow to support APC" is not only untrue but packed full with lies. Mr. Massaquo said people want to use the death of Chief Norman to campaign. He further disclosed that in as much as Chief Hinga Norman was indicted by the Special Court of Sierra Leone,

he bravely served and defended his mother land diligently.

The senior kamajor member noted that "it will be stupid on their part to support a party that created all the opening which led to the ten years civil war. It is truly a make-up story.

"Chief Hinga Norman is dead all I will say is people and political parties should live him alone to rest". Mr. Massaquo added that "if they ever loved Chief Norman why did they not come out as opposition to demonstrate against the government".

"We fought a genue war to liberate and reinstate the SLPP government, so to sharpen a knife that will slit our throat is the most stupid thing to do on earth". Mr. Massaquo is the young generation leader of SLPP Central II, as such he has a stake in the kamajor leadership for now, nothing is discussed without asking his consent for advice, perhaps a small group is doing such but the kamajor militia has one central command and nobody speaks such without agreeing as one body.

New Vision
Wednesday, 2 May 2007

Death Penalty is Cruel -AI Boss

By Mohamed Koroma

The Section Director Amnesty International Sierra Leone, Mr. Brima A. Sheriff told journalists on Monday that death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading

punishment, adding that it is arbitrary and has proven in effective in reducing crime.

Mr. Sheriff also emphasized that death penalty perpetuates a crime violence in which he

said justice can never be truly achieved.

In his press statement the Amnesty Director noted that figures of executions world
Contd. Page 10

Death Penalty is Cruel

wide fell from 2, 184 in 2005 to 1,591 in 2006.

The Director maintained that in Africa only six countries carried out executions in 2006 and that Belarus is the only country that continues to use death penalty in Europe.

Mr. Sheriff stated that about 20,000 people are estimated to be currently on death row across the world, waiting to be killed by the state.

The Director of LAWCLA Melon Nicol-Wilson in statement said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission clearly submitted that the death penalty should be abolished. He said the government spent its resources to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC in order to investigate and make necessary recommendations to the government of Sierra Leone for on-wards consideration.

The LAWCLA Director maintained that the government has a moral obligation to abolish the death penalty from the statutory books.

He said Liberia which suffered the same fate as Sierra Leone has now abolished the death penalty.

Commenting on the UN backed Special Court, the LAWCLA boss maintained that the Special Court did not recommend a death penalty but that government is still bent on applying death penalty, as a form of punishment.

He concluded that there is no legal system that is perfect in its jurisdiction.

Mr. Alfred Carew from the National Forum for Human Rights said death penalty is completely wrong, adding that most of the political killings are instruments aimed at suppressing the opposition. He said life is very important and precious and therefore do not believe in destroying some one's life for political gains.

Mrs. Violet Kawa, Chairperson of AISL chaired the conference. She appealed to the press to launch a campaign on the death penalty abolition.

This is no issue of Friendship; I am responsible to my people!

Kabbah Threatens Guinea

*By Sayoh Kamara
just from Conakry,
Guinea*

President Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah has at the Summit of Heads of State of the Mano River Union (MRU) held in Conakry, Guinea, on Monday 30th April 2007, told his Guinean counterpart, President

Lansana Conte, in a direct and uncompromising mood that he was determined to get Yenga back as a Sierra Leone territory before he leaves office. Speaking at a meeting presided over by Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and closely observed by the

Contd
Page
2

**Sierra Leone will
Complain to The
Hague over Yenga**

Kabbah Threatens Legal Action Against Guinea

Contd from Front Page

President of Cote d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, President Kabbah told his Guinean counterpart that he inherited Sierra Leone as President with no strip of land detached and would therefore do everything within his power to return Sierra Leone to his successor as an entity with no conditions attached.

He made it categorically clear that if Yenga is not returned to Sierra Leone, as part of its territory within the shortest possible timeframe, he will make a formal complaint to the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

Even though President Kabbah did not specifically give any timeframe for Guinea to take appropriate action, he however insisted that Guinea make a declaration of Sierra Leone's "absolute sovereignty over Yenga and the strip of land that flows on to the Moa/Makona River from the Sierra Leone side before the elections are due in July."

"This is no issue of friendship. This is a matter of sovereignty. As President, I am responsible to my people and my state. I will not allow an inch of territory to be usurped by any other nation. I inherited Sierra Leone as an entity and I will return it to my successor as an entity before I leave office," President Kabbah emphatically told President Conte.

Yenga, it would be recalled, had been declared a Sierra Leonean territory by Guinea's President Conte and had agreed to withdraw the Guinean occupying Force from the land.

During the discussions however, the former Guinean Minister of Interior, Solano, explained that the present area of Guinean troop withdrawal is

at Yelima, a piece of land that is 200 meters, west of the Moa/Makona River.

It would also be recalled that a meeting of both Sierra Leonean and Guinean experts had earlier agreed for the complete demilitarization of the entire area in and around Yenga; meaning that Guinean forces should completely withdraw from the entire area.

It was on account of this submission by the former Minister that President Conte insisted that Yelima was of course a Guinean territory. President Conte, it must be noted, has never visited this disputed area since discussions began some three years ago.

No formal agreement was reached on Monday; however, it was agreed that a high powered delegation comprising the Vice President of Sierra Leone, the Prime Minister of Guinea and the Prime Minister of Cote d'Ivoire would visit the area in the not too distant future and report their findings to the Mano River Union.

Welcoming the Heads of State during the opening session of the summit, Guinean Prime Minister, Lansana Kouyate noted that Guinea will at all times maintain good neighborliness with her sister states and ensure regional and sub-regional peace and unity.

In her opening statement, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf assured her contemporaries that the Conakry Summit was "a recommitment" of the MRU, to ensure peaceful co-existence and to harness the resources of member states for the benefit of their people.

A statement read out by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on behalf of her colleagues, stated that the issue of Yenga will continue to be discussed "to find a correct and lasting solution."

Associated Press

Monday, 1 May 2007

Judges postpone first witnesses in Charles Taylor war crimes trial due to open June 4

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) - Judges have postponed testimony from witnesses at the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, due to start next month, to give defense attorneys more time to prepare.

An April 25 ruling that was posted on the Special Court for Sierra Leone's Web site this week said Taylor's trial will begin as planned on June 4 but will be adjourned until June 25 after prosecutors deliver their opening statement.

Taylor is accused of orchestrating war crimes in Sierra Leone while he was leader of neighboring West African state Liberia.

Lead defense lawyer Karim Khan had asked for the trial to be postponed because consultations with his client were interrupted. Khan stopped meeting Taylor after authorities at the detention block installed video surveillance cameras in the room where the lawyers and Taylor discussed the case.

"Mr. Taylor, through no fault of his own, has lost preparation time owing to the suspension of client-attorney consultations from 5-22 March 2007," said the ruling by the three-judge panel. "It would be in the interests of a fair trial for him to be compensated for preparation time lost during that period."

Defense attorneys are considering appealing, arguing that they still do not have enough time to prepare their case.

Taylor has pleaded innocent to 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to allegations that he armed and trained rebels responsible for a campaign of terror, murder, mutilation, rape and enslavement in Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war. If convicted he faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Taylor was flown to the Netherlands in June last year amid fears that staging the trial in Sierra Leone, where the Special Court usually sits, could trigger fresh unrest.

The case, being heard in a courtroom rented from the International Criminal Court, is expected to last about 18 months.

Press Association (UK)

Monday, 1 May 2007

Ex-President Could Serve Sentence in UK

Amanda Brown, PA Lords Staff

A Bill which would allow ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor to serve his sentence in the UK if he is convicted by a special war crimes tribunal, was backed by peers today.

The Lords gave an unopposed second reading to the International Tribunals (Sierra Leone) Bill.

It allows the United Kingdom to sign a sentence enforcement agreement with the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

Mr Taylor faces charges arising from the Sierra Leone civil war. He is being tried in the Netherlands, although the Special Court is in Sierra Leone, because of fears of unrest there. The Dutch agreed to host his trial on condition he serve any sentence in another country.

Foreign Office Minister Lord Triesman said: "The Bill supports two of our foreign policy priorities to ensure that those accused of serious crimes of international concern, face justice and to prevent and resolve conflicts through strong international systems."

Conservative spokesman Lord Howell of Guildford said his party backed the move adding: "This seems a necessary if not very warming piece of legislation about an ugly, unpleasant and dark situation, indeed a nightmare from the recent past.

"If we want to look for hope, we can now draw it from what has happened in Sierra Leone where it seems a better pattern for the future is coming along.

"But we can never forget those hideous scenes and hideous reports from the 1990s of atrocities and cruelties to men, women and children."

The Inquirer (Liberia)

Monday, 1 May 2007

Speak Out Against Travel Ban

A Former Information Minister the Rev. J. Emmanuel Bowier says Liberians, their government and Human Rights Groups should speak out against the continuous imposition of a United Nations (UN) travel ban on a number of Liberians.

Rev. Bowier said if the Sierra Leone Special Court recent statement that no Liberian besides former President Charles Taylor will be prosecuted is true, then those current on the UN Travel Ban for past association with the former Liberian leader should be set free.

"If that statement by the Special Court is true, then the UN Travel ban and the freezing of certain individuals assets should be revisited or reconsider," Rev. Bowier stressed.

He said it is unjust for certain Liberians to perpetually be placed on the UN travel ban while their fellow citizens and their government remain silent on the issue. "Certain individuals are being denied access to their properties, their right to free movement restricted only because of what their friend did," Rev. Bowier said.

Former Minister Bowier speaking on the ELBC Public Affairs Program "Meet the Press," said the ban was imposed because it was believed that those on the travel ban list could use their assets and freedom to travel to do something else when former President Taylor was not behind bars.

He argued that now the former President is now in the custody of the Special Court in the Hague, it is only good to lift the ban or justifications be given for its continuous imposition.

"The UN is not junta that imposes rules. It is a professional organization that believes in the rule of law and the removal of all forms suppression. If these individuals have done something, they must be trail and if found guilty, be punished. However, it is unjust to keep someone's fate in limbo with people looking at them in a funny way," Rev. Bowier said.

He said it is only good to trail someone who had done wrong and not punish them perpetually without trial. "If you trial them and they are guilty deal with them. If not set them free" he stressed.

On whether the travel ban and the freezing of assets is a blow to Liberia, Rev. Bowier said first it is a personal blow to the those affected because your friend can not do something and you held responsible for it.

"It is disheartening that they can not cultivate contacts and move about freely. It is more than torture and Liberians must begin to speak about this," he said in a serious mood.

Rev. Bowier said, "the issue has now been reduced to one person, the former President. If they have a case against these individuals let them take the case to court. You cannot hold these Liberians down forever. They deserve trail or lift the ban."

He said to hold them in limbo forever is not justice that the UN preaches. He urged the UN to lift the ban if there is no case so that they can have the liberty to life.

Quizzed if government champions the cause of those on the travel ban, it would be a bad precedent, Rev. Bowier said "it would be no mistake because those affected are citizens who deserve the protection and the advocacy of their government.

He said the UN should by now tell their government what law they violated be it international or local and set-up a speedy trial.

Rev. Bowier said Liberians should speak out and let the UN know that it is unjust. "We should speak out and don't be silent because it is not us. It could extend to a great level if we continue to be quiet about this.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 1 May 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian Senate ratifies steelmaker mining deal

MONROVIA, April 30, 2007 (AFP) - The Liberian Senate has ratified an iron ore mining contract sealed last year between the government and the world's largest steelmaker, Arcelor Mittal. Senate spokesman Varney Gbessay told AFP Monday that a majority of the members last Friday approved the deal which had been passed the previous week by the lower house.

UN Envoy Welcomes Security Council Lifting of Diamond Embargo

Apr 30, 2007 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The senior United Nations envoy to Liberia today welcomed the Security Council's decision to lift its six-year-old ban on the export of diamonds from the country that was introduced to stop proceeds from the sale of these so-called "blood diamonds" from fuelling wars across West Africa. Alan Doss, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia, issued a statement in which he congratulated the country's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her Government for "working hard to meet the conditions required for the termination of the diamond sanctions and for compliance with the Kimberley Process."

International Clips on West Africa

AP 05/01/2007 04:02:07

Judges postpone first witnesses in Charles Taylor war crimes trial due to open June 4

THE HAGUE, Netherlands Judges have postponed testimony from witnesses at the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, due to start next month, to give defense attorneys more time to prepare.

VOA 01 May 2007

Ghanaian Doctors Fired Over Strike Action

By Peter Clotty, Washington, D.C.

In Ghana, doctors of the Korle-Bu teaching hospital in the capital, Accra who declared an indefinite strike action Monday to press home their demand for better pay have been sacked by the chief executive officer of the hospital. The doctors went on strike despite threats from government that it would dismiss or withhold salaries for those who would join in the industrial action.

Local Media – Newspaper

Firestone Says Workers' Strike Action is causing "Economic Loss"

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

- A press statement issued by the management of the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company said that the Company was experiencing economic loss resulting from the continuing "wildcat" strike action which the Company said heightened insecurity and fear within its concession area.
- The strike action which entered its second week today has taken violent turns, with the Firestone management calling on the Liberian Government and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to intervene in order to restore security in the concession area.
- What is obvious in the standoff, according to the *Daily Observer*, is there are no winners in the confrontation – the company is losing thousands of dollars in lost earnings daily; the workers are losing their desperately needed wages, and the government is also losing tens of thousands in taxes from both the company and its employees.

World Bank Clears Liberia for Global Investment

(New Democrat)

- In a press release issued recently, the Ministry of Finance said that the World Bank has cleared Liberia for global investment, a necessary condition for most investors. This declaration, according to the *New Democrat*, indicates improved political and economic conditions in the country and suggested that Liberia was safe for investment.

Sirleaf and Boss Welcome Lifting of Sanction on Export of Liberian Diamonds

(The Informer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, have both expressed happiness in addition to the largely positive comments regarding the United Nations Security Council's lifting of the ban on the export of diamonds from Liberia.
- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio told journalists yesterday that the Liberian Head of State views the lifting on the ban as a further manifestation of the confidence the international community continues to impose in the leadership of the country.
- At the same time, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Alan Doss, according to a statement, welcomed the decision of the United Nations Security Council to lift the sanctions on the export of rough diamonds from Liberia.

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

President Sirleaf Chairs Talks over Land Dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone

- According to the Presidential Press Secretary, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf chaired a meeting of Mano River Union Countries in Conakry, Guinea to resolve a dispute between Sierra Leone and Guinea over a stretch of land at a Sierra Leonean town of Yangayar which Guinean soldiers refuse to vacate after they repelled rebels from the town. Mr Cyrus Badio also said that during the meeting, a Special Committee's report on the dispute between the two countries would be reviewed.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmakers Step in to Resolve Industrial Unrest at Rubber Farm

- Correspondents have said that a delegation from the House of Representatives commenced negotiations with the leadership of the Firestone Workers Union in order to end the ongoing industrial strike action which has turned violent to the point that the protestors damaged a vehicle belonging to one of the department heads of Firestone.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

West African Examiners Apologize for Starting Papers Late

- The head of the Monrovia Office of the West African Examination Council, Mr. Eli Lumei yesterday apologized for the late start of this year's exams at some centers, assuring that his Office has taken steps to ensure the smooth conduct of the test.
- Meanwhile, students writing the papers at several centers complained that they took the exams under very poor lighting conditions and that test supervisors and proctors asked them to purchase candles to light up the halls.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Deactivated Soldiers End Agitation over Salary Arrears

- The leadership of some 8,000 deactivated soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia announced that they have resolved the crisis for the payment of their salary arrears following a meeting with Deputy Finance Minister Roderick Smith yesterday.
- Retired Colonel Anthony Jerlue who led a delegation of the soldiers at the meeting stated that the contentious issues were resolved allowing the entire leadership of the soldiers to identify their colleagues without proper identification cards.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Deny Brutality Claims

- During a news conference yesterday, Police Inspector-General Munnah Sieh described as "unrealistic" allegations that officers of the Liberia National Police brutalized peaceful demonstrators at the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company. She thought that the allegation by the Foundation for International Dignity and Green Advocates that the Police beat up the protestors was only meant to gain them popularity and more donor funding

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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.