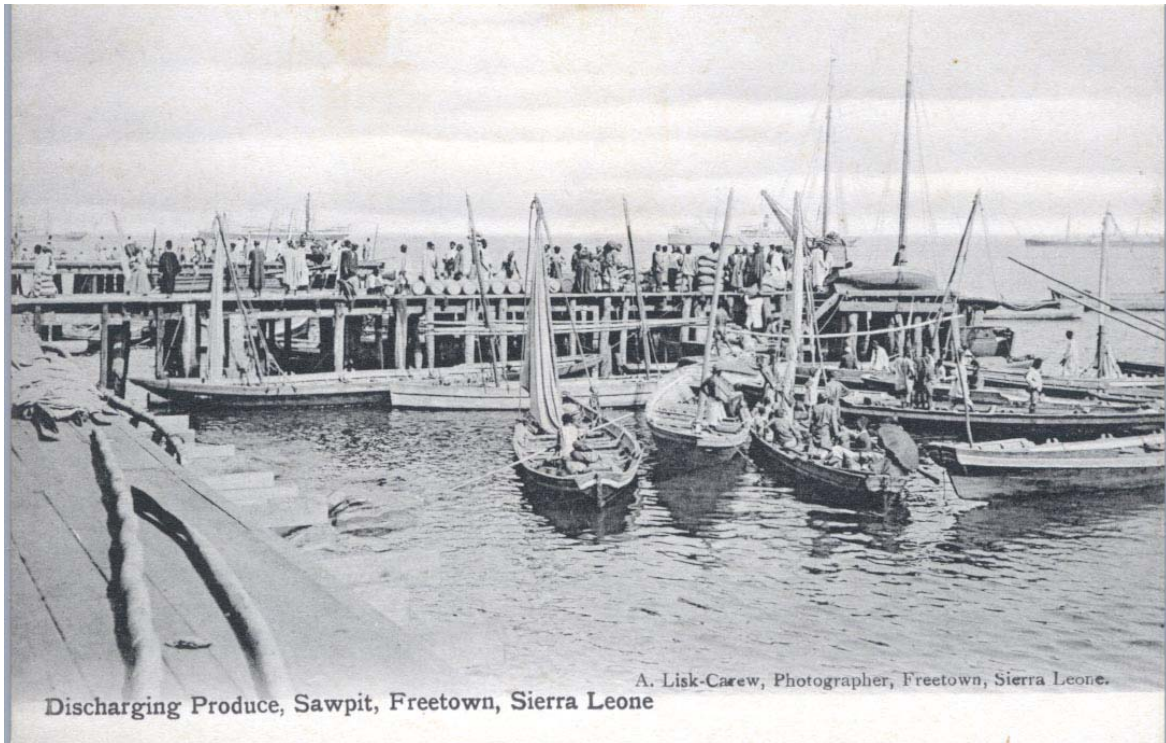


**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Discharging Produce, Sawpit, Freetown, Sierra Leone
A. Lisk-Carew, Photographer, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Historic postcard "Discharging goods at Sawpit"

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Thursday, 2 October 2008

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

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Taylor Ordered me to Execute People – Namayan / *Liberiawebs* Pages 15-16

Liberian Senator Questions Truth, Reconciliation Commission / *African Press Agency* Page 17

Awareness Times
Thursday, 2 October 2008

Guinean Armed Militias Attack Kabala

By Lamin A. Turay

Armed militiamen believed to be from Guinea have reportedly carried out raids into several towns lying at the border with Sierra Leone, several miles away from Kabala, the district headquarters of the Koinadugu District in the Northern Province.

The armed men have been reportedly attacking several villages along the border towns and in the process robbing and killing citizens of the area especially the successful businessmen. A most recent attacked claimed the life of a local businessman named Amadu Bella Jalloh.

Jalloh is said to have left B'indi, his home, on a motorbike on his way to Kabala when he was attacked last Tuesday September 23rd 2008 by an unknown militia group between Falaba and Banpia village who murdered him and took away his belongings.

Local Councilor, Alimamy Mansaray and Ward youths reportedly discovered Jalloh's corpse on Thursday September 25, 2008 abandoned in a nearby bush along the road.

The Councilor and the youths were carrying out community road maintenance when they found the remains of the local businessman.

Detective Sergeant Gendemeh attached to the Sinkunia Police Station confirmed the incident to Awareness Times. He said the corpse was found with a shot on his head supposedly fired from a local rifle and that the deceased was equally found with multiple stab

wounds on his head and abrasions all over his body. He opined that it was indeed a brutal murder.

The Local Unit Commander of the Mongo Police Division, Ahmed Kandehe, who also confirmed the report, acknowledged that there have been frequent reports of attacks by alleged Guinean armed men around the border crossing points.

He says his division is constrained with a lack of vehicles, motorbikes and personnel to adequately handle the policing of the area.

Meanwhile, Residents of the border areas have expressed fears over the spate of armed attacks on their

communities and have called on the Ernest Koroma Government to help.

Koinadugu District Council Chairman, Mr. Bayuku Conteh also revealed to this presshouse that another trader, a woman, was recently shot on her leg by militiamen who catered away twenty million Leones from her. He said a meeting was recently held with stakeholders in the border areas in a bid to find a solution to the grave issue.

"It has been resolved that the border crossing points be closed from 6pm to 7am daily," he explained, adding that all foreigners in the district should adequately be identified with a passport or other reliable documentation.

"We have also warned residents not to accommodate any stranger in their homes without first getting a clearance from the police," he said, adding that anyone failing to abide by this new rule will pay a fine of Le100,000.

On a related note, President Koroma who today October 2nd 2008 is celebrating his 54th birthday, is expected to fly to Guinea today to attend the grand 50th Anniversary observance of Guinea's Independence. There is some belief that he might hold talks on the recent repeat invasions as well as the burning issue of the illegal occupation of Yenga, an Eastern border community, by Guinea soldiers.

BBC World Service Trust

Report from The Hague

Amputation, decapitation, murder, forced labour, rape and burning of villages were well publicized as acts allegedly committed by the RUF Rebels. Little or nothing was known about atrocities committed by the government supported Civil Defence Force, called Kamajors. Mass killing, burning of houses, and the destruction of property by the Kamajors was the focus of the defence cross-examination of the prosecution's 47th witness in The Hague today. As Joseph Cheeseman reports, Taylor's defence team pointed out some prior inconsistencies in the witness' testimonies about Charles Taylor's involvement.

CHEESEMAN: On direct examination Monday, Mr. Abdul Conteh, the prosecution 47th witness quoted a rebel captain named Eagle that the RUF gave Mr. Taylor diamonds and he supplied the rebels with arms and ammunition. Defence Lawyer, Morris Anyah pressed Mr. Conteh on cross-examination about why the witness did not tell the prosecution about Mr. Taylor's involvement with the RUF when he was first interviewed on October 12, 2003.

ANYAH: And they heard you saying about Charles Taylor- the witness did not see any other people visit the mines, he never saw Charles Taylor at the mines. So you had the opportunity then to say Charles Taylor provided arms and support to the Junta forces, but you did not, true?

CONTEH: I did not see Charles Taylor at the mine, and even anyone from Liberia I did not see. But I saw three times helicopter landing at Jungle Field, and they told us that those were visitors from Liberia. And each time that plane was landing no civilians would be around. We were kept off from the area completely, even the work by the miners stopped during those days.

CHEESEMAN: Defence Lawyer, Anyah then turned the witness' attention to atrocities allegedly committed by both Junta and the Kamajors. The defence lawyer took the Mr. Conteh through a list of destruction carried out by the Junta and the Kamajors, beginning with the Junta converting cemetery and highways into diamond mining fields.

ANYAH: ...that the (indistinct) witness, and the Roman Catholic churches at Pedembo had fallen down through the destructive diggings by the Junta at Tongo. Number 8, that Gompe and Mandehun villages had been burnt down by the military Junta at Tongo.

CONTEH: Yes.

ANYAH: These are events as recorded by you.

CONTEH: Yes sir.

ANYAH: And then came back the Kamajors, yes?

CONTEH: Yes sir.

ANYAH: And when the Kamajors came back they wreaked havoc on the citizens of the Tongo field area, do you agree Mr. Witness?

CONTEH: Quite agree sir.

ANYAH: Mr. Witness let us consider some of the atrocities of the Kamajors also inflicted on the citizens of Tongo field. One of your brothers was killed by the Kamajors, yes?

CONTEH: Yes sir.

ANYAH: They killed him with a cutlass.

CONTEH: Yes sir.

CHEESEMAN: Another sorry-invoking testimonies came from the prosecution 48th witness on Tuesday. Testifying with pseudonym and screen as protective measures, the female Sierra Leone war victim reflected on how she was raped and her children killed by the rebels. She broke down in tears and court was forced to adjourn briefly for the witness to recover.

WITNESS: When we entered the house and they started killing our children... (crying)

CHEESEMAN: Surprisingly after her testimonies on direct examination, defence lead lawyer, Courtney Griffiths who had the responsibility to cross-examine the witness said he had no questions to ask her. Since the resumption of the Charles Taylor trial in August, this is the first witness that did not go through cross-examination.

UN News Service (New York)

Wednesday, 1 October 2008

New UN Peacebuilding Office Opens Up Shop

A new United Nations peacebuilding office opened in Sierra Leone today to assist in the continued recovery following the civil war that wracked the West African country during much of the 1990s.

The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), mandated by the Security Council in August to replace the UN political office known as UNIOSIL, is the latest in a series of UN missions over the past 10 years that have helped the country get back on its feet.

UNIPSIL will provide political support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict, whatever the source and will coordinate the work of all UN funds, agencies and programmes.

It will also monitor and promote human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law, including efforts to counter trans-national organized crime and drug trafficking.

With a staff of about 70, the new office will work on consolidating good governance reforms, with a special focus on anti-corruption instruments such as the Anti-Corruption Commission. It will support decentralization and review the country's 1991 constitution as well as the enactment of relevant legislation.

UNIPSIL will closely coordinate its work with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which is already active in the country.

Sierra Leone is one of the first two countries, along with Burundi, to receive support from the Commission, which was established in 2005 to help post-conflict countries determine the priority areas for rebuilding out of the vast array of challenges they face.

Associated Press

Wednesday, 1 October 2008

Ex Liberia president, son face UN, US charges

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — In separate courts on different continents, former Liberian President Charles Taylor and his American son are standing trial on charges of committing atrocities in neighboring West African nations.

The unprecedented father and son trials — one by a U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal in The Hague and the other by a U.S. federal court in Miami — are revealing the savagery of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In Miami, a witness displays the scars he says came from burning plastic poured onto his skin in Liberia. In The Hague, a mother recounts how rebels in Sierra Leone ordered her to carry a sack containing the heads of her two children who had just been hacked to death.

The cases demonstrate that the days when war crimes suspects could flee and slip into obscurity to avoid prosecution may be drawing to a close.

Stephen Rapp, the U.S. lawyer leading the prosecution of Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, on Wednesday welcomed the trial of Taylor's son, Charles McArthur Emmanuel, as another step along the road to ending impunity for alleged war criminals.

Emmanuel is the first person ever tried under a 1994 U.S. law that makes it a crime for an American citizen to commit torture overseas.

Emmanuel — also known as Chuckie Jr. — was born in Boston and spent most of his life in Orlando, Fla. before moving to Liberia when he was a teenager to be with his father. There, prosecutors say, he led a notorious unit blamed for silencing Taylor's critics.

Taylor meanwhile is charged with orchestrating atrocities by rebels in Sierra Leone from 1996-2002 while he was ruling Liberia.

Father and son have both pleaded not guilty.

National trials such as Emmanuel's send a clear signal that the countries staging them "are not going to be safe havens for war criminals," Rapp told The Associated Press in an interview.

They can also act as a deterrent.

"Many of the people who commit these crimes perceive that if they win they're in the presidential palace for life, if they lose they'll find exile somewhere and live comfortably," Rapp said. "We really want to eliminate that perception that you can get away with these things."

Temporary war crimes tribunals are currently prosecuting cases from the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Cambodia. The world's first permanent tribunal — the International Criminal Court — has launched cases in Sudan, Uganda, Congo and Central African Republic.

But Rapp said prosecutions by individual countries are just as important.

"These international courts will only handle in the future a relative handful of cases," he said. "One of the most important things countries can do is develop their own ability to prosecute war crimes, particularly of individuals they find in their midst."

Early witness testimony in Emmanuel's trial, which started Monday, has already exposed U.S. jurors to the kind of horrific claims regularly dealt with in the international tribunals.

Prosecutors say Emmanuel headed the "Demon Forces," an elite paramilitary anti-terrorist unit in his father's Liberian government from 1999-2002. The unit trained soldiers and tortured prisoners, prosecutors said.

Former prisoner Rufus Kpadeh testified Tuesday that detainees were forced to sodomize each other as Emmanuel laughed.

"I want the world to know what happened to me so it will not happen again in the future," said Kpadeh, who rolled up his tunic sleeves to show jurors scars from where he was burned with flaming-hot plastic.

Defense attorneys argue Emmanuel's accusers are fabricating the stories for financial gain and political asylum.

Only two witnesses were expected to testify at both trials, Rapp said. One has already testified under a pseudonym at the Taylor trial and the other, Liberian journalist Hassan Bility, is expected to testify at both trials about being tortured in Liberian prisons.

At the Taylor trial, prosecutors are trying to establish a pattern of brutality by rebels who they say were led by Taylor. They are calling victims and former officers under his command to tell tales of executions, cannibalism, torture and disfigurement.

On Wednesday, Osman Jalloh told judges that rebels hacked off his right hand — such amputations were a hallmark in the Sierra Leone conflict.

And in some of the most harrowing testimony since Taylor's trial started in January, a woman identified as witness TF1-064 said Tuesday she was forced into a house and had to listen as her two children and other members of her family were hacked to death outside.

Rebels then ordered her and another man to carry a bag containing the victims' heads to another village where they were dumped in a pit of water.


United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
1 October 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Police Close-in On Nigerian Drug Ring

(New Democrat)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested two Nigerians in connection to torturing one of their compatriots for allegedly refusing to swallow what appears to be a drug destined for exportation to Italy. The victim, identified as Steve Brabo Theddeus, was said to have been sent by his business partner based in Spain to carry out the transaction with now prime suspect, Charles Nwabuikwu, 33, and his accomplice Maduka Mozie.
- Police investigators say upon arrival at the airport, Brabo was met by the suspects who took him to a hotel in Monrovia. Police said upon arrival at the hotel, Steve was shown a substance wrapped up in a plastic and told to swallow it and take it to his partner in Spain.
- Speaking from his hospital bed at the JFK Hospital, Brabo told the police that in an attempt to force him to swallow the substance the suspects beat him "unmercifully" and locked him up in their room.
- The suspects have told the police that they are working with two other Nigerians to export the drugs.

Security Council Extends UN Presence in Liberia for another Year

(Public Agenda, New Democrat)

- The Security Council on has extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) through September 2009, and authorized Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to proceed with the planned reduction of the operation's personnel.
- In his recent report on UNMIL, Mr. Ban stated that, despite its economy showing significant improvement, the struggle with the rule of law and competition over natural resources threatens Liberia's fragile stability. He recommended repatriating almost 1,500 personnel – including troops, officers, observers, and engineering and administrative units – leaving troop strength of just over 10,000 by September 2009. In a unanimously adopted resolution, the Council endorsed that recommendation, as well as the proposal to increase the number of UNMIL police officers from 605 to 845 "to provide strategic advice and expertise in specialized fields, provide operational support to regular policing activities and react to urgent security incidents."

Clinton Initiative Announces Partnership for Adolescent Girls in Liberia

(The Analyst, The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- The Clinton Global Initiative has announced a new partnership for adolescent girls in Liberia. The innovative public-private partnership involving the World Bank, Liberia and the Nike Foundation was announced last week by former United States President Bill Clinton at the opening plenary of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) in New York. The initiative, an Executive Mansion release says, aims to increase economic opportunities for adolescent girls as part of the efforts to reconstruct Liberia following 14-years of civil war.
- The collaboration which represents a major partnership, also being supported by Denmark, will be launched on October 10 at the World Bank annual meeting in Washington, DC. "We are thrilled to have the support of the World Bank, Denmark and the Nike Foundation and expect this collaboration to serve as a model for Africa and the world," President Ellen Johnson

Sirleaf said of the initiative following Wednesday's announcement in New York. As powerful economic actors, the Liberian leader said, girls represent the country's future. She described the partnership as essential to Liberia's post-conflict recovery.

400 Liberians Denied DV Visa - US Embassy Cites Limited Education, Others

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Analyst)

- The media reports that approximately 400 Liberian citizens who participated in this year's Diversity Visa Lottery have been disqualified after they failed to meet the minimum requirements for Immigrant Visa for the United States.
- The Chief of the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy, Alma Gurski said most of the disqualified persons did not meet the minimum education or training requirements. She said besides those who did not meet the minimum education and training requirements, there were those who also failed medical and security examinations.
- The Chief of the Consular Section of the U. S. Embassy made the disclosure Tuesday during a news conference held at the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Office. Expounding further, Madam Gurski said during the period under review, there were cases of forgery in which some candidates who did not meet the minimum education requirement secured high school diplomas and other credentials with the hope to beat the system.

Suspended President Pro-Temp Reinstated But Differences Persist

(Daily Observer, Heritage, National Chronicle, The News)

- The News newspaper reports that information emanating from the Liberian Senate says suspended Senate Pro-Tempore Isaac Nyenabo has been re-instated by a major bloc of the Senate in compliance with the mandate of the Supreme Court of Liberia. However, differences over his re-instatement appear to persist despite a move by some senators to restore Nyenabo's authority.
- Accordingly, the decision to reinstate the suspended Pro-Tempore followed a special Senate meeting conveyed Tuesday at the Capitol. Grand Kru County Senator, Cletus S. Wotorson said the decision was taken to restore the dignity and pride of the Senate, and also to respect the rule of law. Meanwhile, Grand Kru County Senator Blamo Nelson has described the leadership of acting Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate as "illegal". He argued that following the issuance of the Writ of Prohibition against them by suspended Pro-Tempore Isaac Nyenabo, the Lahai Lassana leadership should have halted all proceedings at the Senate.

CEMESP, Partners to Launch Media Research Report Today

(The News, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- A Liberia media development organization, the Centre for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP) in collaboration with the Institute of Applied Media Studies at Zurich University in Switzerland will today launch the results of two media based research carried out in Liberia.
- According to a release the studies were conducted so as to fill the void of empirical information on the media's quality and role in public communication in developing countries. The study noted the significance of a free and diverse media as a pillar for democracy, and one of various intermediaries within the public arena, where debates are launched and informed choices made. The studies considered listeners' perception of radio work on Liberia and quality assessment of radio news in Liberia and were carried out separately in February and November 2007.

NPA Imposes Curfew on Container Trucks

(New Democrat)

- Authorities at the National Port Authority (NPA) have imposed a curfew on container trucks, banning them from leaving the port except at 9 P.M, or after. The move Tuesday has sparked angry protests from some custom brokers and truck owners. The new measure, which was announced following a stakeholder meeting involving port authorities, Public Works Ministry, and the traffic division of the Liberian National Police Monday, came into effect Tuesday morning.

- The measure is aimed at addressing frequent container trucks accidents in the city resulting into several deaths recently. Many of the trucks are dilapidated and unfit to carry such containers. The New Democrat reports that it remains to be seen how the truck curfew will reduce or prevent such accidents. There are also security concerns amongst business people over ferrying goods from the port at night.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 1:45pm)*

Leadership Crisis deepens in Liberian Senate

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Taylor ordered me to execute people - former commander tells TRC

- A top commander of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia has admitted that on two occasions Charles Taylor personally ordered him to execute people.
- John P. Namayan served as Special Bodyguard to Mr. Taylor who was leader of the now NPFL, that started Liberia's 14-year old bloody civil war.
- Namayan recalled Mr. Taylor ordered him to first execute a man accused of killing his wife and then another NPFL commander in Ganta, Nimba County.
- He said the commander allegedly violated Mr. Taylor's orders to close Liberia's frontier with Guinea during the heydays of the civil conflict.
- Namayan conceded that NPFL forces did not treat civilians with dignity, saying that they committed wide spread human rights violations including rapes and forced labour.
- The former rebel expressed regrets for atrocities committed during the war and apologized to the people of Liberia.

85 ex-fighters get training in Ghana

- About eighty-five ex-combatants who missed out on the disarmament program would arrive in the country in October.
- The eighty-five former fighters are currently undergoing Psycho-social and other vocational skills training programs at the Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana.
- The local NGO, National Ex-combatants and Peace Initiative (NEPA) is implementing the project with support from Mediators Beyond Borders.
- The National Program Coordinator of NEPA, Johnson Borh said the exercise would afford the ex-combatants the opportunity to contribute more meaningfully to society.
- A board member of Mediators Beyond Borders, Probha Sankaranarayan said her team intends to help bridge the training gap left behind by the disarmament program.
- She said the eighty-five ex-combatants would be reintegrated in Margibi, Grand Bassa and Grand Gedeh Counties.
- The four-man American delegation, which also included David Joseph, a founding member of Mediators Beyond Borders has since returned to the U.S.

Taylor absent from court as Chuckie's trial commences

- Report from The Hague says detained former President Charles Taylor is absent from his war crimes trial Tuesday, not for security measures this time.
- Taylor's lawyer, Morris Anyah told the court the detained former Liberian President is absent from court for religious reason.
- According to Anyah, Mr. Taylor is a member of the Jewish Faith and is observing the Jewish Religious Holiday called Rosh Hashanah.
- Mr. Anyah however, said Mr. Taylor gave his consent for the trial to continue in his absence. The Rosh Hashanah is the most important of the Jewish Holy Days, which calls for prayers, mediation, soul-searching and acts of repentance in the Synagogue and homes.
- Taylor's observance of the Jewish Faith comes as a surprise to many Liberians because the

former President was a Baptist and a Deacon in the Church.

- His critics say Mr. Taylor is seeking sympathy from the Jews to help soften the ground for him with the Americans.
- Meanwhile, the trial of Chuckie Taylor, son of the former President, has formally started in the American State of Florida.
- During the opening of the trial, both prosecution and defense briefly put forward their views of the case.
- The prosecution indicated they will present victims who will testify that Chuckie Taylor committed torture in Liberia when his father was in power.
- Prosecution said Chuckie committed torture including beheading and sodomizing of individuals, the shocking of victims with an electrical device and the cutting of individuals' genitals.
- For his part, Chuckie's lawyer argued that the prosecution's case rests on witnesses who are not credible because they have an incentive to testify.
- The defense said there will be Liberians who want to testify against Chuckie, simply to justify their asylum request in the United States.
- Chuckie's lawyer showed video of Liberia that conditions in the country are so difficult for which witnesses would fabricate allegations if it might result in assistance.
- Report says jury hearing the case will need to decide the credibility of the testimony and whether the prosecution's charges have been proven beyond reasonable doubt.
- The New York-based Human Rights Watch has described the trial of Chuckie Taylor as an important moment for the United States and Liberia.

Flood renders several homeless in Tappita

- Over two thousand people have been made homeless as a result of flood in Tappita, Nimba County.
- The flood also swept away forty houses and left some one hundred and seventy homes partially damaged.
- According to Tappita District Representative Edwin Gaye the flood is a result of the overflowing of the Gwein River.
- Representative Gaye said so far no one has been reported dead in the flood disaster but feared a possible outbreak of cholera.
- The Nimba District # 7 Representative called for the intervention of the Liberia National Red Cross Society, Tear-Fund, the UN and LRRRC.
- He said the displaced flood victims are in need of food and other assorted items.
- Representative Gaye said the latest flood incident is the second in less than thirty-one years since flood hit Tappita.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Press Union Gets US\$100,000 for Headquarters' project

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has announced a US\$100,000 assistance to the construction project of the Press Union of Liberia.
- The Press Union has been grappling with the construction of its own headquarters building on 16th Street in Sinkor for nearly ten years.
- Deputy Information Minister Cletus Sieh said President Sirleaf raised the money to assist the PUL undertake the construction.
- Deputy Minister Sieh made the disclosure Tuesday at programs marking the 44th Anniversary of the Press Union of Liberia.
- The Deputy Information Minister recounted the role of the media strengthening Liberia's fledging democracy.
- He pledged government's support in what he described as forever marriage between the media and government.
- Also speaking at the program, veteran Journalist Stanton Peabody says the formation of the Press Union of Liberia came about to promote the liberty of journalists as they practice in the country.
- Mr. Peabody said at the formation of the PUL in 1964, journalists in the country at that time

were practicing their duties under threats.

- The media umbrella organization was formed in 1964 following the arrest and detention Mr. Peabody for calling Legislators radicals.
- The veteran Journalist said he did call the Legislators radical but did not mean any derogatory harm. Mr. Peabody said politicians at that time poisoned the mind of the presidency to ensure that the voices of the voiceless were not heard.
- He described the celebration of the PUL 44th anniversary as a tremendous steps to press freedom on the country.

(Also reported on ELBC and Truth FM)

Customs Brokers on go-slow at Freeport

- Members of the National Custom Brokers Association of Liberia have embarked on a go-slow action at the Freeport of Monrovia.
- The president of the group said the action is in protest of a unilateral and abrupt regulation put in place by the management of the National Port Authority.
- Mr. Weagba Seeboe said the regulation is demanding that a single broker be allowed to clear for particular containers and not in group.
- Mr. Seeboe said processes involved in the clearing of containers are tedious and extremely impossible for one person to undergo such processes.
- He believes the regulation is a calculated attempt by the NPA to endanger their work and put them out of jobs.
- Mr. Seeboe said the association unanimously agreed not to comply with the regulation and called of its members at various entities of government to follow suit.
- The Custom Brokers Association President said the go-slow would continue until NPA's management reverses its decision.
- When contacted, the Deputy NPA Manager for Administration, Mary Broh told Star Radio the management would issue its position statement at a later date.

U.S. Embassy explains DV Program

- The US Embassy in Liberia has clarified what it considers misconceptions in the public concerning its DV Program.
- The Chief of Consular Section at the embassy said a number of issues were sighted in the DV 2008 process that needs to be corrected.
- Madam Alma Gurski told Star Radio winning a DV is not an assurance that a person will receive a US Immigrant Visa.
- She also dispelled the impression that a person playing as a singular player has a better chance of winning than those playing as a family.
- According to Madam Gurski, under the DV regulations, an interested person must play with his entire family including all children under the age of 21.
- The person must also meet the medical, security and educational requirement of a high school graduate or two years of work experience.
- She cautioned people against being talked into playing DV as the process is expensive with no refunds.
- The clarification comes ahead of the start of DV 2009 and amidst concerns of refunds by 2008 DV winners who failed to get visas.

Senator Nelson Raps on reconciliation

- A Grand Kru Senator says the Truth and Reconciliation Commission cannot heal the divide that existed in the country.
- Senator Blamo Nelson said instead, reconciliation can be achieved through the equitable distribution of the state resources and strengthening the rule of law.
- He observed the TRC is a waste of resources while the bulk of the people continue to languish in abject poverty.

- Senator Nelson also noticed the TRC has not been able to bring victims and the perpetrators face to face since its establishment.
- He said most of the perpetrators that appeared before the TRC have lied under oath while others rained insults on the commission.
- The Grand Kru Senator spoke when he addressing the Press Union of Liberia's Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum Tuesday.
- However, the other panelist at the Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum differed with the Senator on grounds that the TRC was a waste of resources.
- Journalist Ekena Wesley said the TRC has the potential to heal the past, provided politicians in the country see it as a true medium of change.
- Mr. Wesley said the TRC's concept has been misconstrued by politicians who believed that it would not make any difference.
- He said the media can still play a crucial role in reconciling the country.

Liberian named VP in Professional Body in U.S.

- A Liberian Accountant has become the Vice President of a professional institute in the United States of America.
- Mr. John Sainworla, a Certified Fraud Examiner, is the Vice President of the Triad North Carolina Chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors.
- Mr. Sainworla was recently confirmed as Vice President by the Board of Governors of the Triad North Carolina Chapter of the Internal Auditors.
- The Liberian serves as Professional Services Representative within the Corporate Services, Department of Market America, Inc.
- The Triad Chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors has existed for thirty-five years and has over two hundred and eighty-five members.

Liberiawebs

Tuesday, 30 September 2008

<http://www.liberiawebs.com/index>.

Taylor ordered me to execute people - Namayan

A top commander of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia admitted that on two occasions then rebel leader Charles Taylor personally ordered him to execute people.

John P. Namayan, then special bodyguard to Mr. Taylor told commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that Mr. Taylor ordered him to first execute a man accused of killing his wife and then another NPFL commander in Ganta, Nimba County who violated the front's leaders orders to close Liberia's frontier with Guinea during the heydays of the civil conflict.

Namayan conceded that NPFL forces did not treat civilians with dignity, saying that they committed wide spread human rights violations including rapes and forced labor.

Mr. Namayan, former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) was testifying Tuesday at the TRC's ongoing "Contemporary History of the Conflict" Institutional and Thematic Inquiry Public Hearing at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion.

"Civilians were not actually treated with dignity. We did not have time to treat civilians with dignity," the former chief of staff of the NPFL "Executive Mansion" guards said.

Alluding to widespread rapes by NPFL forces, Gen. Namayan confessed that women including underage girls were forced into sexual relationships.

"If we captured a place and then the commander told the people to come out and then he say he want to choose his own of women first and then he choose the women he wanted and left and then we choose ours and forced them to sleep with us, that's human rights abuse," he said.

He admitted that women having sexual relationships with fighters did not do them out of their own willingness, saying, "I don't know how to classify it, whether it was rape or coercion."

Mr. Namayan acknowledged that NPFL combatants extorted food and money from civilians and forced them to carry arms and ammunition on their heads.

"We were not properly guided by the conduct of our commanders, the older people. Whatever we saw our commanders doing, we taught they were right and we followed their examples. We committed lots of human rights violations."

He expressed penitence for acts directly or indirectly committed during his participation in the civil crisis but denied knowledge of massacres allegedly perpetrated by the NPFL.

"War is not good. During war so many things can happen and that's what we continue to say that we were sorry for what we did and what we did not do that led to the suffering of our people."

Under the theme: "Understanding the Conflict Through its Principal Events and Actors," the ongoing hearings are addressing the root causes of the conflict, including its military and political dimensions.

The hearings are focused on events between 1979 and 2003 and the national and external actors that helped to shape those events.

The TRC was agreed upon in the August 2003 peace agreement and created by the TRC Act of 2005. The TRC was established to “promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation,” and at the same time make it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and October 2003.

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Liberian senator questions Truth, Reconciliation Commission

APA-Monrovia (Liberia)- A member of the upper house of Liberia's bicameral parliament says he sees no need for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-war Liberia because he doubts whether it can fulfil its mandate as envisioned by crafters of the 2003 Accra Peace Accord.

Senator Blamo Nelson of southeastern Grand Kru County says instead of healing wounds inflicted by the country's civil conflict, the TRC has provided a platform where war actors justify their actions.

Speaking at a forum marking the 44th anniversary of Liberia's media advocacy group Press Union of Liberia Tuesday, Senator Nelson observed that most former warlords who have appeared before the commission have lied, bluffed and refused to admit any wrongdoing.

He said none of the war actors showed any regret for the suffering they inflicted on the Liberian people.

He cited the testimony of former defunct LURD leader Sekou Damate who told the nation during his testimony that his rebel faction never killed anyone and never shelled Monrovia during its onslaught on the capital in 2003.

He also cited the former chairman of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Party (NPP), Mr. Cyril Allen who went to the extent of insulting TRC commissioners.

He said Liberia does not need the TRC because it cannot reconcile perpetrators and victims of the civil war and heal the wounds of the war.

He said the only good thing the commission is doing, for which he would advocate that it continue its work, is that it is compiling a record of the conflict.