

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Friday, September 02, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Salone Times. September 2, 2005. (Friday)

BU-BUAKEI JABBIE. BANJA TEJAN-SIE SAY

SUPREME COURT RULING WAS WRONG

Counsel for Chief Hingu Norman in the just ended Supreme Court case, Bu-Buakei Jabbie has said that the ruling of Chief Justice Ade Renner-Thomas that his client, Hingu Norman, has "no locus standi" was wrong, because of the provisions of the 1991 Constitution.

SEE PAGE 2

Norman's Lawyer Challenges Ruling

In an exclusive interview with SALONE TIMES yesterday in his office on ECOWAS Street, that Section 15 to 27 of Sierra Leone's Constitution gives any person who thinks his "fundamental human rights" have been breached a "locus standi" to take the matter to the Supreme Court.

Lawyer Jabbie said that Section 127 of the 1991 Constitution deals with "general breach of the Constitution" and where "any person who alleges that an enactment, or something in an enactment, or something done under an enactment is inconsistent with, or incompatible with a provision of the Constitution" that person may apply for declaration to the Supreme Court.

Lawyer Jabbie said that the Chief Justice apparently relied

on an old Common Law interpretation of "locus standi" which used to be applied in the United Kingdom. "But we are much more advanced than the British in this area of locus standi, in that we have made specific provisions in our Constitution as regards locus standi".

Lawyer Jabbie said that where any provision, any law, conflicts with what is in the Constitution, it is the Constitutional reading that takes precedence.

In a telephone interview with lawyer Sulamian Banja Tejan-Sie, the Spokesman for one of the SLPP aspirants Charles Margai, he took the same stance taken by Lawyer Jabbie that the Chief Justice's recent decision on the "Hingu Norman political case" was wrong.

Independent Observer. Friday September 2, 2005.

The OSWALD HANCILES I Do Have "Locus

Chief Justice Ade Renner-Thomas ruled that Chief Hinga Norman did not have a "locus standi" for the case he took to the Supreme Court recently against the governing SLPP. **What was Hinga Norman's case?**

At his ECOWAS Street office in Freetown yesterday, I was educated on "locus standi" by Norman's lawyer.

Norman's lawyer, **Bubuakal Jabbie**, said: that **Section 35 (4) of our Constitution** states that a political party should not have as leader a person who is NOT qualified to enter Parliament. **Section 76 (1) (b)** states that a person is not qualified to enter Parliament if that person is President, Vice President, Minister, or Deputy Minister. It was a position that was recently argued in several local newspapers by celebrated human rights lawyer, **Pa Momoh Fofanah**.

Chief Justice Ade Renner-Thomas in his ruling said that Chief Hinga Norman has no right to take such a case to the Supreme Court. **Lawyer Jabbie** said Norman has the right to do so – according to the Constitution.

Lawyer Jabbie quoted **Section 127 of the 1991 Constitution** which he said deals with "general breach of the Constitution" – and where "any person who alleges that an enactment, or something in an enactment, or something done under an enactment is inconsistent with, or, incompatible with a provision of the Constitution" – may take his case to the Supreme Court to be heard.

Lawyer Jabbie said that the **Chief Justice Renner-Thomas** relied on an 'old' English Common Law interpretation of "locus standi". "But we are much more advanced than the British in this area of locus standi, in that we have made specific provisions in our Constitution as regards locus standi", Jabbie said.

Lawyer Jabbie said that where any provision, any law, conflicts with what is in the Constitution, it is the Constitutional reading that takes precedence.

Lawyer Sulaiman Banja Tejan-Sie, the Spokes-

man for one of the **SLPP** Aspirant **Charles Margai**, had also told me in a telephone conversation that Chief Justice Renner-Thomas ruling on the Norman case was "wrong".

Lawyer David B. Quee, who told me his is the "Legal Adviser of the SLPP" bristled when I told him about Lawyer Tejan-Sie's words above. **Quee** said: "I can't comment on a decision made by the highest court in the land". Then, in seconds, he changed his mind, and did make this comments: "The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land... Once a lawyer gets to the Supreme Court, another lawyer should not question the Supreme Court judge's decision. What the Supreme Court has decided on this matter is the law, whether right or wrong. There is no recourse to anywhere...."

Lawyer Jabbie agreed with **Quee** that the Supreme Court is the highest arbiter of law, but, he stressed, "That does not make the Supreme Court infallible... Other people are entitled to criticize decisions of the Supreme Court".

Lawyer Jabbie said that in old English Common law, the concept of "locus standi" called for a person to have "a peculiar interest" – or, a "special interest" for him to have "locus standi" to take a matter to court. **Lawyer Jabbie** said that even in the United Kingdom this understanding of "locus standi" has been altered by a Statute in 1978 which changed "special interest" to "sufficient interest". A English legal expert calls the "locus standi" law "one of the most amorphous provisions in English Common Law". In his presentation in court, **Lawyer Jabbie** said he described the position of the defendant lawyer on the matter as "archaic, outdated, and retrogressive" – yet, apparently, the Chief Justice sided with the "archaic" position.

According to **Lawyer Jabbie**, where there is a Constitution – like we have in Sierra Leone – the Constitutional provision is supreme as regards any law, any infringement of the law. I asked whether it can be said then that the Chief Justice has "violated the Constitution" in his ruling. Law-

Column Standi''

yer Jabbie said he would not put it that way, since the same Constitution itself empowers the Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution as they see fit.

Clearly delighted by the Supreme Court ruling, the Chairman of the SLPP, Dr. Samu Bangura, clad in his usual full British suit, blue and white striped shirt, and matching blue tie, said to me yesterday in his humid office at SLPP Headquarters in downtown Freetown, that SLPP was going on with the Leadership convention on Saturday. Dr. Bangura said that the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the SLPP had empowered the "Credentials Committee" to vet the delegates list. This Committee has as its Chairman, Dr. James Boloma (Minister of Works), and as Members: Dr. A.K. Turay, Hon. Zainab Bangura, Hon. Sam Mollie III, etc.

The issues raised by Lawyers Jabbie and Tejan-Sie are profound. I asked Lawyer Jabbie what is the way forward on the matter. "*We have to obey the law until someone else in the Supreme Court rules against it*", Jabbie said. Would the majority of the people see the ruling as fair? What would it mean for the budding confidence the people had after the ruling of our court on the Harry Yansanneh case? *Before the ruling was heard Wednesday, all of Freetown already KNEW what would be decided (so the ruling itself came as no surprise); and there were wild speculations - some impinging on the integrity of the Supreme Court - as to what the powers-that-be have done to allegedly comprise some of the supreme court judges (one of whom is a foreign judge).*

Because I have absolute "locus standi" in this matter - I know I am created in the image of God; and I bear a Sierra Leonean passport - I loudly cry out: POSTPONE THE UPCOMING SLPP CONVENTION. The civil war in Sierra Leone only flared up in 1991, when Foday Sankoh ignited his war. The civil war in Sierra Leone started back in 1972, when Siaka Stevens introduced 'thuggocracy' into the political system; the APC war on the people escalated in 1977 and 1978, when the One Party system was introduced - and the majority of the elite kept quiet. *Another match to another civil war in Sierra Leone has been lighted....in recent days....*

The Democrate . Friday September 2, 2005.

Judgement clears

EXOD

SLPP Move To

THE historic Supreme Court judgement in the case brought by Special Court against the Sierra Leone People's Party and several of its officials on 31st ruling party to hold its national convention in Makeni this weekend - Saturday 3



matter in

(i) Whether the Supreme Court had original jurisdiction to preside over the plaintiffs suit.

(ii) And if so whether the plaintiff, Chief Sam Norman, had *Locus Standi*, the legal right, to take the Sierra Leone People's Party to Court.

As the five Justices, wigged, gowned and majestic, filed in Wednesday morning to deliver their critically awaited judgement, there was a palpable pulse of history in the hallowed hall of supreme justice in this country. The courtroom, overfilled but subdued, was pregnant with anticipation.

In a 33-page judgement, Chief Justice Dr. Ade Renner Thomas pin-pointed the heart of the court

the way US Makeni

**Indictee Chief Sam Hingha Norman
August, 2005, cleared the way for the
- Sunday 4 September.**

The ruling when it came was resounding as all five justices, in a three and half hour judgement, ruled against Chief Norman's motion to stop the SLPP from holding its biennial national convention and electing a party leader and presidential nominee.

Contd. Back Page

Awoko. Friday September 2, 2005.

US blacklists Salone as human rights violator

The United States has blacklisted seven countries including Sierra Leone as persistent human rights violators that should not sit in judgment at the United Nations on other country's records. In a reform proposal, Sudan, Liberia, Congo, Ivory

Coast, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda would not be eligible to serve on a revised human rights council, which was formed to replace the "discredited" Human Rights Commission. The seven countries including

Sierra Leone are subject to sanctions by the U.N Security Council for human rights abuses and United States wants to keep "some of the worst offenders off" the Assistant Secretary of State for
Contd. Page 2

US blacklists Salone

From Front Page

International Organisations. Kristen Silverberg said on Wednesday. She continued that besides excluding the seven nations, the United States is proposing that appointments to a new

council have the support of at least two-thirds of the members of the U.N. General Assembly. Reform is a key item on the agenda of the U.N. General Assembly session. President George W. Bush is expected

to touch on the problem in the annual presidential speech on September 14 and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will spend more than a week in New York holding talks on Human rights and other issues

UN court is broke

Africa Today

1 July 2005, Martin Luther King

When David Crane, the American prosecutor at Sierra Leone's UN-backed war crimes tribunal, announced last March that he would step down this month (July 2005), not a few eyebrows were raised, not least because the trials currently under way in Freetown are likely to continue into 2006, but even more so because Crane has failed to bring former Liberian President Charles Taylor, to stand trial before the court.

The former US Defence Department lawyer is, nevertheless, satisfied with the progress achieved so far by the Special Court. "90 percent of the work has been done, the trials are moving forward, justice is to be done and the job will be completed by the end of 2006," Crane said.

The prosecutor, who has been a high-profile figure since the Special Court was set up in July 2002, announced that he was quitting at the end of his current contract for family reasons. "Three years ago, I made a promise to my wife that I would be in the job for three years. The appointment ends in July. There is nothing controversial," he said.

But the UN tribunal's dwindling resources, rather than family commitments, may be the real reason for Crane's departure. In fact, there are indications that the court may be forced to wind up before December. It is believed that Crane, seeing this approaching embarrassment, decided on resignation as his path of honour.

"What is available will only take us to December 2005. If no effort is made by the United Nations to solicit funds, that would be the closure of the court and the indicted may have to be relocated to The Hague, where funds are currently under-utilised," one source close to the Special Court disclosed.

The UN Special Court for Sierra Leone is mandated to try those deemed primarily responsible for war crimes and human rights abuses committed during the latter phases of Sierra Leone's 1991-2001 civil war. It is the first international war crimes tribunal to sit UN-appointed international judges alongside local judges at a court in the country where the atrocities took place. Its three-year mandate ends later this year, but can be extended if proceedings take longer to complete.

The court has so far indicted 13 people, 10 of whom are in custody. Two have died - former rebel leader Foday Sankoh and his military commander Sam Bockarie. Another high profile indictee, ex-Liberian President Taylor, remains beyond the court's reach. While in power, Taylor was the main backer of the Sierra Leonean rebel group, the

Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Forced to quit power in August 2003, he now lives in exile in Nigeria.

The first trial, which started in June last year, involved Sierra Leone's former Defence minister Sam Hinga Norman and other leaders of the Civil Defence Force, a militia group set up to fight for the government of elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The second trial, of RUF leaders, began in July. A third, featuring key members of Koroma's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, began March 7, 2005.

Crane, while serving notice of his resignation, said he did not feel frustrated at his failure to bring Taylor before the court, adding that there was still a good chance of extraditing him to stand trial.

"Legally, we are ready to receive Taylor. Politically, we are working with friends in Nigeria and with the international community into turning him to court for a proper trial," Crane stated.

The prosecutor welcomed a recent resolution by the European parliament calling on the European Union and its members states to do their utmost to persuade Nigeria to hand over the former Liberian leader as a landmark decision.

Reacting to Crane's resignation notice, Mike McGovern, the west Africa director of the International Crisis Group, said the prosecutor has been an asset to the court.

"Crane has been an advocate for a strict and robust application of international law to all parties in the Sierra Leonean conflict and the energy and conviction he's brought to the job have pushed forward the process," McGovern stated.

Crane himself said he had drawn three lessons from the Special Court which is widely eyed as a potential model for war crimes in other conflicts: that the court's mandate to just try those bearing greatest responsibility for war crimes, its location in the country where the tragedy took place and its short timeframe for completing the trial of suspects had been right. He warned that unless such war crimes tribunals were properly conceived they risked becoming "a political liability and potential threat to peace, not sustainer of peace."

McGovern agrees with this analysis. According to him, "the speed with which the court got up and running is unprecedented. The court is already a success in the sense that it is operated more efficiently than the sister courts, largely due to Crane's energy and dedication."

The only other international war crimes tribunal set up so far in Africa was established in Arusha, Tanzania, to try those responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. More than 10 years later, this body, with an 800-strong staff, is still conducting trials at an estimated cost of US\$90 million per year.

The Special Court in Sierra Leone was established with an initial budget of US\$60 million for three years and was designed to deliver justice faster and more cheaply. However, obtaining the necessary funding to keep it going has been difficult.

"Money has always been a great challenge which has not kept us from doing our job," Crane said. "We had great assistance from the UN which gave money till the end of 2004, and it will be necessary to go back to the international community after that."

Stop The Ambiguity

By Emmanuel Abalo

The Perspective

Atlanta, Georgia

September 1, 2005

This writer is stunned and taken aback by the ambiguous positions by some Liberian political operatives, particularly on the Charles Taylor extradition to face the Special Court in Sierra Leone to answer the indictments. According to news reports emanating from a presidential debate held on August 19, 2005 in Monrovia, among the first four presidential candidates, namely Messers Togba-Nah Tipoteh, Roland Massaquoi, Varney Sherman and Ms Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, organizers and the media sought a simple commitment from the contenders: “Who is willing to turn over former President Charles Taylor to the Special Court in Sierra Leone?”

The answers of the contenders ranged from ...”lets not personalize this matter ...” to “Charles Taylor will come to this country if the Liberian people decide so and the leadership will have no option but do accept that.”

According to the a media release issued by INTERPOL on December 04, 2003, in Lyon France, “At the request of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Interpol has issued a Red Notice for former Liberian President Charles Taylor. This is in accordance with a cooperation agreement between Interpol and that court, finalized in November 2003. Charles Taylor resigned as President of Liberia on 11 August 2003 and was granted asylum in Nigeria. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established as a result of UN Security Council Resolution 1315 of 14 August 2000. It has indicted Charles Taylor on charges of crimes against humanity, violations of the Geneva Convention and other serious violations of international law.”

The position of the international community is unified and crystal clear. There is a 17-count indictment issued on March 7, 2003 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone against Mr. Taylor. For the record, Mr. Taylor made an application to the Special Court in which he sought to have the indictment and arrest warrant quashed citing the benefits of immunity as a Head of State and jurisdiction of the Court. His application was adjudicated and subsequently dismissed. Liberia is not before the court. Taylor is and rightly so. Considering international law, its is quite clear that states’ sovereignty does not inhibit the prosecution of Heads of State before an international tribunal

The argument is made by ECOWAS, the Nigerian government and the African Union that they have no credible information that Mr. Taylor is “meddling” in the political affairs of Liberian, which is a violation of the terms of his asylum deal. Thus, they are resisting pressure and calls to

turn Mr. Taylor over to the Special Court but have hinted they may consider releasing Mr. Taylor to a duly elected Liberian government after the October election. This is beside the point. If Liberians, through their government, demand that Mr. Taylor accounts for his alleged crimes, then so be it!

It is quite understandable that some politicians and lay people are terrified of the possibility that Taylor's return to Liberia may regenerate another murderous chapter. Remember his parting words just before Mr. Taylor flew into exile, 'God's willing, I shall return.....' . Additionally, Liberians have been brutalized and humiliated and killed over and over and over by prior governments.

The only comfort here is the fact that failed leaders like Idi Amin of Uganda, Jean Bedel-Bokassa, of the Central African Republic, Mengistu Haile Meriam of Ethiopia, Slobadan Milosevic of Yugoslavia, among others, have yet to return to power!

The bold, honest and right answer by any of the presidential aspirants should be a clear, unequivocal and unambiguous commitment to the rule of law; in this instance requesting for and turning over Mr. Taylor to the Special Court so that justice can be served. There is no room for legal and political acrobatics for any future leader in this matter!

The dignity of Liberians and their nation must be restored by our leaders who should be prepared to honor and respect human rights and international law. Liberians have a right to demand a straightforward commitment for justice from their leaders and hold them to it.

Reconciliation is identifying the wrong, accountability and restitution.

About the author: Emmanuel Abalo is an exiled Liberian journalist , media and human rights activist. He served as a former News Director of the erstwhile Catholic owned ELCM Community Radio and later with the Liberian Broadcasting System (ELBC). He is the former Acting President of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) . Mr. Abalo presently resides in Pennsylvania, USA and works as an analyst with CITIGROUP, North America.

The American Lawyer

September 2005

Out of Africa;

A Defense Department veteran-turned-war-crimes prosecutor talks about his years in Sierra Leone.

Mike Saccone

In spring 2002 David Crane and his wife were sitting down to dinner in Alexandria, Virginia, when the phone rang. The caller had some unexpected news: The White House wanted Crane to prosecute war crimes in Sierra Leone. How could he say no?

When Crane arrived in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone and a hub of the West African diamond trade, the city was choked with refugees and had "the faint odor of death and rot and smoke," he recalls. Water was so unreliable that he often had to shower in the rain.

But he stuck it out for three years as the first American war crimes prosecutor since the Nuremberg trials. Crane, now 55, had the right credentials for the job. In addition to having worked as a U.S. Department of Defense deputy inspector general, he holds a master's in African Studies from Ohio University.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was launched by a coalition of United Nations members at the close of a decade-long civil war. After arriving, Crane and his office swiftly indicted 13 militia leaders, including former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who was accused of forced conscription of child soldiers, unlawful killings, and sexual violence, among other things.

Crane also unearthed Taylor's links to terrorism. "As soon as we arrived there," he recalls, "we ran into evidence that Al Qaeda had been operating in Liberia since 1998." But Taylor proved elusive. He fled to Nigeria in 2003, where he continues to enjoy political asylum and interfere in regional politics.

One of Crane's accomplishments was to redefine forced marriage as a war crime: "When you herd women into the bush and treat them like beasts of burden and cattle, breed them, trade them, and also rape them with impunity, it's a greater crime than sexual slavery. It's a greater crime than just rape."

Although the trials will likely extend through 2007, Crane says he chose not to renew his three-year contract because he had accomplished his goals and wanted to return to his family. This fall he will launch an international criminal law institute at New York's Syracuse University College of Law, where he hopes to inspire students with his experiences in Sierra Leone.

"To see a witness in the witness stand looking at those individuals, who just three years ago thought they were above the law, humbled as [the victim looks] them in the eye and points [his] finger and goes, 'You did this to my family and my country,' " he says. "That is what the law is all about."

From Awareness Times Newspaper in Freetown

POLITICS

SLPP Convention to hold this weekend as the Supreme Court in Sierra Leone unanimously throws Hinga Norman's case out

By David A. Jabati Jr.

Sep 1, 2005, 13:31

The Supreme Court of Sierra Leone yesterday, August 31st 2005, unanimously passed judgment over an injunction earlier brought before it by Special Court detainee and former Deputy Minister of Defence and Head of the Civil Defence Force, Chief Sam Hinga Norman. This has now paved the way for the SLPP Convention to be held this weekend up in Makeni.

The five Judges who presided over the matter; Chief Justice Ade Renner Thomas, Justices Tholla Thompson, John Kamanda, Sahr John and Virginia Wright gave a unanimous verdict dismissing the injunction motion.



The Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone; Dr Ade Renner Thomas taking his oath of office.

Two issues were at stake on which the ruling was based. The issue of whether the Supreme Court has the original jurisdiction to hear and determine the application made by the Plaintiff, and whether the Plaintiff, Sam Hinga Norman has the locus standi to make such an application.

Giving the final verdict, the Chief Justice, His Lordship Dr. Ade Renner Thomas told the court that though the plaintiff, through his lawyer, Dr. Bu-buake Jabbie strenuously tried to argue out that his client has the locus standi, his argument did not have much weight.

According to the Chief Justice, there is a provision in the Political Party Act for the formation of a Political Party Commission. This commission though yet to be constituted, he said, has the right to bring up the issue in question to the Supreme Court and not an individual and therefore, the plaintiff has no right.

On the issue of jurisdiction, the Chief Justice stated that jurisdiction can be relative, based on the substance of the matter but that in a case like this, the Supreme Court has no original jurisdiction.

The Chief Justice at the end of his final verdict ruled that the SLPP has no case to answer and that the Party should carry on with its National Delegates Convention.

He thanked Lawyer Bu-buake Jabbie for the efforts he made in arguing out his points. He congratulated

Lawyer Eke Hallaway on the other hand, for representing the defendants successfully.

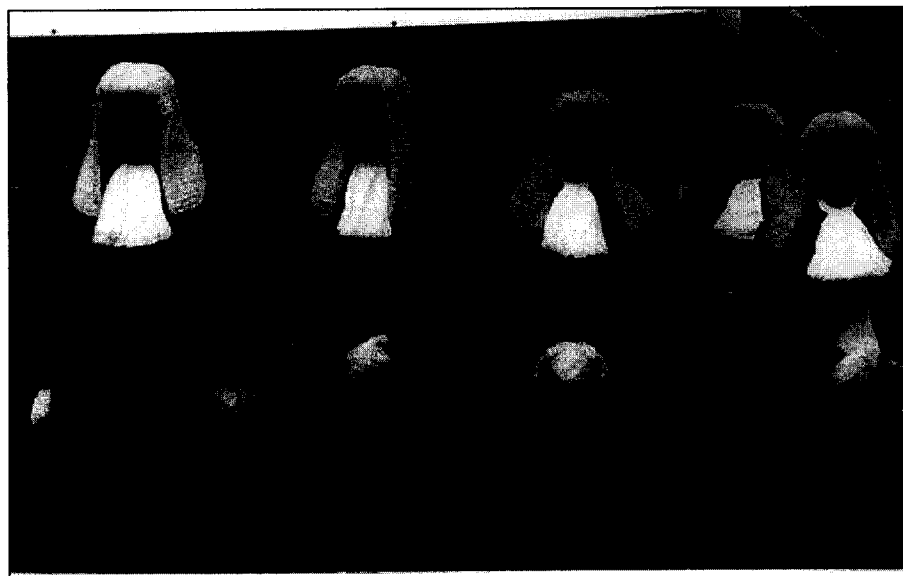
Speaking to Awareness Times shortly after the court ruling, the first accused Dr. Sama S. Banya who happens to be the National Chairman of the SLPP, said "We are happy that the judgment has been made today. We are particularly happy because of the victory. It is the will of the people".

Also talking to Awareness Times outside the Law Court house, was the Second Defendant, Dr. Prince Alex Harding, who in a very happy mood said, "We knew we were going to win and we are happy that we won. Our accusers were shot by their own bullets. It is going to be victory all the way".

Both Dr. Prince Harding and Dr. Sama Banya went on to declare to Awareness Times that the national delegates convention will now be held on the 3rd and 4th of this month. Dr. Harding ended by quoting the words of William Shakespeare, "All is well that ends well".

The Third Defendant, the SLPP party, represented by the Administrative Secretary, Brima Koroma, told Awareness Times that he is glad that democracy is at work within the party, pointing out further, "I think it is good for the party. I am also glad that the court educated lots of people about a lot of issues. It is a big victory for the party", he noted.

Lawyer Bu-buake Jabbie who called a Press Conference at the Victoria Park shortly after the verdict, told pressmen that he was happy that the application his client made activated a lot of issues within the party.



A cross section of Sierra Leonean Judges

On the issue of whether or not his client will be represented at the party's national delegates convention he said, "I am just a lawyer representing my client in his political struggle, I am not his campaign manager. I don't think I will be in position to state whether he is going to be represented or not. But I'm sure he has handled that well", he said.

It could be recalled that the Plaintiff, Sam Hinga Norman through his lawyer Bu-buake Jabbie, filed in a motion in the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone seeking for a temporary injunction on the holding of the SLPP Party Delegates Convention which was slated for August 19 and 20 2005. His argument was that the proposed convention and particularly the election of a party leader, contravenes the party constitution.

This application filed on the 27th of July, 2005, prevented the party convention from proceeding as scheduled, as the matter was before the Supreme Court for a ruling.

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Friday, September 2, 2005

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WORLD

Group warns Taylor over Liberian elections

Posted to the Web: Friday, September 02, 2005

As Campaigns for Liberia's Presidential and Parliamentary elections kick off, African and International Organisations have called on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and African Union Chairperson President Obasanjo of Nigeria to ensure Charles Taylor does not interfere in Liberia's democratic process. In a statement issued yesterday, Mr Shina Loremikan of the Coalition Against Impunity campaigning for the trial of the former Liberian leader before the UN- supported Special Court for Sierra Leone stated "ECOWAS and President Obasanjo must ensure that Charles Taylor does not, cannot and is unable to distort Liberia's electoral process and results."

He continued, "It is bad enough that Taylor who is wanted by Interpol for crimes against Sierra Leonean, Liberian and other West African citizens is being sheltered from justice by the government of President Obasanjo. All indications are that he has the freedom to influence affairs in Liberia from Nigeria. President Obasanjo must guarantee that Taylor does not have any opportunity to affect the outcome of the Liberian elections".

"Liberia is the epicentre of instability in West Africa and Taylor is the Chief Architect of this instability," added Chima Ubani of the Civil Liberties Organisation. "The elections in Liberia are a crucial opportunity for Liberians to stabilise their country and by extension neighbouring West African countries".

"ECOWAS cannot afford further conflict. Charles Taylor is

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responsible for launching 15 years of conflict which has affected four countries: Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote D' Ivoire and Liberia, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions" emphasised Zainab Bangura founder of Campaign for Good Governance and currently Director of National Accountability Group in Sierra Leone. She noted further that "the Presidents of Guinea and Sierra Leone and the interim President of Liberia have also publicly expressed concern over the capacity of Charles Taylor to destabilise the sub-region from Nigeria and issued a communiqué in July asking President Obasanjo to review the terms of Taylor's asylum."

"Justice is a necessary condition for peace," stressed Tajudeen Abdulraheem, Director of Justice Africa. "President Obasanjo cannot shelter Taylor indefinitely. A newly elected government in Liberia needs to be free of the influence of Charles Taylor. The best foundation for reconstruction of Liberia is for Taylor to be transferred to the Special Court for trial. This will ensure that whatever government emerges in Liberia will not live under his violent shadow"

"The people of Nigeria, having lived under military dictatorship, are committed to justice and democracy in Liberia." Added Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, Executive Director of Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre in Nigeria. "This is why we are shocked that President Obasanjo's government is now persecuting members of the Coalition Against Impunity campaigning for the transfer of Charles Taylor to the Special Court. In early August Nigeria's State Security Service arrested several persons in connection with distribution of Interpol red notices issued for Charles Taylor. Members of the Coalition have been declared wanted by Nigerian security services, campaign posters of the Coalition have been confiscated and offices of the Coalitions printers have been shut down."

"The fact that President Obasanjo is turning on his own citizens rather than turning over a war crime indictee to have his day in court raises questions about his commitment to upholding standards of the African Union of which he is the current Chairperson" underlined David Mafabi, Director of Political Affairs of the Global Pan African Movement. "African leaders and institutions must ensure justice is done for countless victims of rape, child soldiers, journalist's, amputees, refugees and others whose lives have been wasted in the Liberian, Sierra Leonean and other conflicts."

"We the undersigned Liberian, Nigerian, Sierra Leonean, other African, and international organisations are therefore calling on President Obasanjo to immediately end his governments persecution of human rights campaigners, reassure Liberians and all Africans that Charles Taylor will not, shall not and cannot be allowed to subvert the collective will of the ECOWAS, African Union and the World Community, and hand him over to the Special Court for trial."

SIERRA LEONE: UN approves assistance team to move in after peacekeeper exit

01 Sep 2005 18:26:29 GMT

Source: IRIN

Background

- ▶ FACTBOX: Guinea
- ▶ FACTBOX: Guinea-Bissau
- ▶ FACTBOX: Liberia
- ▶ CRISIS PROFILE: W. Africa teeters between war and peace
- ▶ CRISIS PROFILE-Is Ivory Coast heading for all-out war?

DAKAR, 1 September (IRIN) - Human rights and government accountability will top the list of priorities for a new UN assistance team, set to step into Sierra Leone after the last peacekeepers leave at the end of the year.

MORE →

The UN Security Council unanimously approved the establishment of the UN Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSL) in a resolution late Wednesday, saying it was crucial that international support continued to help the West African country rebound from a decade of civil war.

The last of the blue-hatted peacekeepers in Sierra Leone are due to leave this December, just over six years after the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) first went in.

At its height, UNAMSIL comprised 17,000 troops. It has been gradually drawn down, with around 3,200 still in the country.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a report earlier this year that while Sierra Leone had made impressive progress toward peace since the official end of the war in early 2002, the country remains fragile and needed "concrete steps aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict and nurturing a culture of human rights."

The new assistance mission was given an initial mandate of one year beginning on 1 January, 2006.

UNIOSL will help the government reinforce human rights, fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, enhance transparency and conduct free and fair elections in 2007, according to the Security Council resolution.

The new team will also coordinate UN efforts to deal with arms trafficking, human trafficking and illegal trade in the volatile sub-region, as well as provide security for the UN-backed Special

Court of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leonean human rights and civil society groups say they hope the new UN team will also help guarantee the implementation of the country's truth and reconciliation report - the only means, they say, to ensure the country avoids sliding back into conflict.

The 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone shocked the world with its images of drugged up youngsters hacking off the arms, legs, ears and lips of innocent civilians.

While those deemed to bear the greater responsibility for the atrocities are currently on trial at the Special Court, human rights activists say tensions still exist in the wider community and the government must help the victims.

"It's a good thing to have this UN integrated office but it must look to channel its energies to implementing the truth and reconciliation recommendations," said Oluniyi Robbin-Coker, a Sierra Leonean living in New York who is chair of the Civil Coalition for Truth and Reconciliation.

Civil society and human rights groups earlier this year expressed dismay at a government strategy for implementing the TRC recommendations, calling it vague and noncommittal.

"The UN must help to establish and fund the [government] TRC follow-up committee and work with it hand-in-hand... to tackle the root causes of the war - poverty, lack of accountability and a culture of impunity," Robbin-Coker said.

He said his group has already spoken with UN Development Programme representatives and the Sierra Leonean ambassador to the UN to raise its concerns.

Even though the UN is not pulling out of Sierra Leone, some residents are starting to get worried about UNAMSIL's exit, according to John Caulker, head of the human rights group Forum of Conscience.

"Lately people are starting to get concerned, not only in terms of security but also governance," he told IRIN by phone from the capital, Freetown.

"With the presence of UNAMSIL there is an eye on the government," he said. "People fear that the government could go back to old ways, of making decisions with no regard for the population or civil society, with no checks and balances."

Residents in Freetown said one of the greatest impacts of UNAMSIL's draw down has been and will be economic.

Sierra Leone is ranked the world's poorest country by the UN

Human Development Index. About 70 percent of its six million people still live on less than a dollar a day.

Fewer foreign soldiers mean fewer wealthier clients pumping their dollars into the local economy.

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 1 Sept 2005**

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International Clips on West Africa**BBC**

Thursday, 1 September 2005

UN pursues Ivory Coast sanctions

The United Nations mission in Ivory Coast says it will push for targeted sanctions against anyone found hindering the troubled peace process. UN mission head Pierre Schori told the BBC he would recommend the move after a New Forces rebel group announcement rejecting South African mediation.

Ivory Coast president says elections can be delayed

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) _ **Ivory Coast** President Laurent Gbagbo said planned October elections could be delayed if this war-divided West African nation was not ready to hold them by then, according to an interview published in Ivorian newspapers Thursday.

SIERRA LEONE: UN approves assistance team to move in after peacekeeper exit

DAKAR, 1 September (IRIN) - Human rights and government accountability will top the list of priorities for a new UN assistance team, set to step into Sierra Leone after the last peacekeepers leave at the end of the year.

The UN Security Council unanimously approved the establishment of the UN Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSL) in a resolution late Wednesday, saying it was crucial that international support continued to help the West African country rebound from a decade of civil war.

U.S. will try to keep seven nations off U.N. human rights group

By BARRY SCHWEID

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The United States is focusing on seven nations as persistent human rights violators that should not sit in judgment at the United Nations of other countries' records.

In a reform proposal, Sudan, Liberia, Congo, Ivory Coast, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda would not be eligible to serve on a revised human rights council.

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 and would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Ms. Kadiatu Konteh at kontehk@un.org.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
31 August 2005

Resolution 1620 (2005)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 5254th meeting, on
31 August 2005**

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and the statements of its President concerning the situation in Sierra Leone,

Commending the valuable contribution the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has made to the recovery of Sierra Leone from conflict and to the country's peace, security and development,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 26 April 2005 (S/2005/273), and its addendum of 28 July 2005 (S/2005/273/Add.2), and welcoming his recommendation that a United Nations integrated office be established in Sierra Leone, after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL at the end of 2005, in order to continue to assist the Government of Sierra Leone to consolidate peace by enhancing political and economic governance, building the national capacity for conflict prevention, and preparing for elections in 2007,

Noting the letter of 21 June 2005 from the President of Sierra Leone to the Secretary-General (S/2005/419), that likewise emphasizes the need for an integrated United Nations office to support the above objectives,

Emphasizing the importance of a smooth transition between UNAMSIL and the new United Nations integrated office, and of the effective and efficient operation of the office,

Emphasizing the importance of the continued support of the United Nations and the international community for the long-term security and development of Sierra Leone, particularly in building the capacity of the Government of Sierra Leone,

Reiterating its appreciation for the essential work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and its vital contribution to the establishment of rule of law in Sierra Leone and the subregion, underlining its expectation that the Court will finish its work in accordance with its Completion Strategy, and in this regard encouraging all States to cooperate fully with the Court and to provide it with the necessary financial resources,

Welcoming the publication of the report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission and encouraging the Government of Sierra Leone to take further steps to implement its recommendations,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), as recommended in the addendum to his report (S/2005/273/Add.2), for an initial period of 12 months beginning on 1 January 2006, with the following key tasks:

- (a) to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in:
 - (i) building the capacity of State institutions to address further the root causes of the conflict, provide basic services and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals through poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth, including through the creation of an enabling framework for private investment and systematic efforts to address HIV/AIDS;
 - (ii) developing a national action plan for human rights and establishing the national human rights commission;
 - (iii) building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission to conduct a free, fair and credible electoral process in 2007;
 - (iv) enhancing good governance, transparency and accountability of public institutions, including through anti-corruption measures and improved fiscal management;
 - (v) strengthening the rule of law, including by developing the independence and capacity of the justice system and the capacity of the police and corrections system;
 - (vi) strengthening the Sierra Leonean security sector, in cooperation with the International Military Advisory and Training Team and other partners;
 - (vii) promoting a culture of peace, dialogue, and participation in critical national issues through a strategic approach to public information and communication, including through building an independent and capable public radio capacity;
 - (viii) developing initiatives for the protection and well-being of youth, women and children;
- (b) to liaise with the Sierra Leonean security sector and other partners, to report on the security situation and make recommendations concerning external and internal security threats;
- (c) to coordinate with United Nations missions and offices and regional organizations in West Africa in dealing with cross-border challenges such as the illicit movement of small arms, human trafficking and smuggling and illegal trade in natural resources;
- (d) to coordinate with the Special Court for Sierra Leone;

2. *Emphasizes* the primary responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone for the consolidation of peace and security in the country, and urges continued support from international donors for the Government's efforts in this regard;

3. *Underlines* the importance of establishing a fully integrated office with effective coordination of strategy and programmes between the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Sierra Leone, between the United Nations and other international donors, and between the integrated office, the Economic Community of West African States and other United Nations missions in the region;

4. *Welcomes* the Secretary-General's recommendation in the addendum to his report (S/2005/273/Add.2) that the integrated office should be headed by an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and his intention that he/she should also serve as the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Resident Coordinator;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue planning for security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone on the basis outlined in paragraphs 15 to 24 of the addendum to his report (S/2005/273/Add.2), and *looks forward* to further details on the proposed arrangements;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Council regularly informed of progress with establishing the United Nations integrated office in Sierra Leone, and thereafter with the implementation of this resolution;

7. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.
