

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:

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

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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Another Sam Hinga Norman Supporter Arrested

By Kadijatu Sesay

Reports last night say security personnel searched the Freetown residence of Chief Hinga Norman last weekend and another search was conducted at his home town of Mongere following the arrest last Friday outside the Special Court of a man wearing the 'Free Hinga Norman' T-shirt.

According to the report, the man who is said to be currently detained at the Central Police Station, had gone to visit Hinga Norman when he was picked up, briefly detained by the court security before eventually he was turned over to the police.

This is the second time that pro-Hinga Norman supporters are having a brush with the law. Last month at the official opening of the court, with President Kabbah and a few foreign guests in attendance, a handful of them clad in the same T-shirt were arrested outside the court at Jomo Kenyatta

Road where they had converged to show solidarity with the war crime indictee.

Five of them were later charged to court for organising an unlawful demonstration but no charges of putting on the T-shirt were brought against them. It is not

known what charges will be proffered against the suspect now in custody, if there is going to be any at all.

Reacting to the recent arrest last night, a member of the SLPP based in London and a pro-Hinga Norman supporter as well, could not understand

what is government up to. "How can they be going around arresting people for merely putting on a T-shirt showing solidarity for someone who sacrificed his life for democracy and peace in Sierra Leone". He went on to say that to the government,

Hinga Norman is now an enemy but to the people he is still their hero.

Back home, a member of the SLPP argues that in as much as some of them sympathised with Norman's present predicament, at the same time government is very cautious

to avoid a situation that is likely to get out of hand. "What if supporters of the other indictees also decide on putting on their respective T-shirts, how is government going to stop them. This is basically the situation."

... & Norman's Freetown residence and Mongere hometown searched

Independent Observer

Tuesday April 29, 2004



"jsk"
<jsk34@erols.com>
Sent by:
owner-leonenet@listpro
c.umbc.edu

To: "leonenet" <leonenet@listproc.umbc.edu>
CC:
Subject: Special Court with Forked Tongue

19/04/2004 14:37

In a "Meet the Press" interview aired in 1971, Kerry said he had participated in village burnings and search-and-destroy missions "contrary to the laws of warfare" and the Geneva Convention. He said on Sunday, "The words were honest but, on the other hand, they were a little bit over the top."

Special Court prosecutor David Crane should take note of John Kerry's 1971 interview remark and weigh it against these wise sayings:-

"let he that is without sin cast the first stone "

"People who live in glass houses should not throw stones"

Failing to pay heed to these wise sayings makes one either a fool or a hypocrite. If it is possible for reason to penetrate arrogance, pomposity, and oversized ego; I would have suggested that David Crane choose one of these categories for himself. Anyway, let us leave indeterminacy alone. You be the prosecutor, judge, and jury. Choose a category for David Crane. The "yuki yuki or crocogi" that will take place in the court room will not render the final verdict. The verdict has to be rendered by you.

Gorglei.

Kerry Broadens Criticism of Bush on Iraq
49 minutes ago

By MIKE GLOVER, Associated Press Writer

PALM BEACH, Fla. - Broadening his criticism of President Bush ([news - web sites](#))'s Iraq ([news - web sites](#)) policies, presumptive Democratic nominee John Kerry ([news - web sites](#)) says voters deserve to know the truth about the war and what led up to it.

In a broadcast interview and at a noisy rally before thousands of students at the University of Miami on Sunday, Kerry accused Bush of misleading not only the country but "even members of his own administration about what he was planning to do in Iraq."

"The American people, with respect to issues of war and peace, are owed the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," he said.

Kerry continues to bring in campaign money with fund-raisers with a former rival for the presidential nomination, Sen. Joe Lieberman ([news - web sites](#)), D-Conn. He raised \$750,000 at a Sunday night event and scheduled other joint appearances Monday.

Lieberman is likely to play an important role in Kerry's bid to win the state that decided the 2000 election for Bush, largely because he has a strong following in Florida's Jewish community.

Kerry sat for a one-hour interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," where he repeated his pledge to create 10 million jobs and cut the deficit in half within four years if he wins the White House. He conceded

that soaring deficits might make him scale back some proposals.

In the interview, Kerry was pressed hard about his stance on the Iraq war, and he drove home his argument that Bush "misled America" by rushing to war. He pledged to build an international coalition, but would continue to prosecute the war — increasing troop levels if needed — because stability in Iraq is essential.

The problems in Iraq are only part of a foreign policy by Bush that has left the nation isolated, Kerry argued.

"I think this administration has proven, frankly, stunningly ineffective in diplomacy," he said.

He cited Bush's policy change on Israel last week in which he endorsed a plan by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) to hold on to lands seized in the 1967 Middle East War. "There were Arab leaders that were taken by surprise by this announcement," Kerry said, although he also said he "completely" endorsed the move.

"I will immediately reach out to other nations in a very different way from this administration," he said. "Within weeks of being inaugurated I will return to the U.N. and I will rejoin the community of nations."

Kerry rejected the suggestion that he's been inconsistent on Iraq. He voted to authorize the use of force, but against spending an extra \$87 billion on the war, a topic included in Bush campaign commercials.

Kerry noted that Bush had threatened to veto the \$87 billion bill if it included money to pay for health care for reservists and required Iraq to pay back some of the money set aside for its reconstruction.

"Think of that. The president threatened to veto that bill, and yet he is now accusing me for voting no," he said.

Asked whether he'd vote against another funding bill for U.S. troops in Iraq, Kerry said: "It depends entirely on what the situation is I'm not going to say that."

The Vietnam War veteran said he supports the long-term goal of stability in Iraq, but the American public's patience may wear thin.

"If we are stuck for a long period of time in a quagmire where young Americans are dying without any sense of that (stability) being able to be achieved, I think most Americans will decide that's failure," Kerry said.

He also defended his argument that the fight against terrorism is more than just a military operation.

"You need the best intelligence, the best law enforcement cooperation in the world," he said. "I will not hesitate to use those forces effectively. I think I could fight a far more effective war on terror."

Bush campaign chairman Marc Racicot argued: "This conditional support for the troops that John Kerry voted to send to Iraq in the first place demonstrate a disturbing lack of judgment."

Asked if he stood by statements he made in 1971 about his actions in Vietnam and those by other veterans, Kerry said he now believes that using the word "atrocities" had been inappropriate and excessive. His language at the time reflected his anger, he said.

In a "Meet the Press" interview aired in 1971, Kerry said he had participated in village burnings and search-and-destroy missions "contrary to the laws of warfare" and the Geneva Convention. He said on Sunday, "The words were honest but, on the other hand, they were a little bit over the top."

Steve Schmidt, a spokesman for Bush's re-election campaign, said Kerry's TV appearance "was filled with inaccuracies, attacks and pessimism toward the future of the country."

"His assertion that the war on terror is not primarily a military operation shows a startling lack of judgment about the dangers facing the country," Schmidt said.

But Kerry campaign officials pointed to a comment by White House spokesman Scott McClellan, who said "we are fighting the war on terrorism on many fronts," as evidence the administration takes essentially the same position.

Forced Marriage Pursued As Crime In Sierra Leone Tribunal Cases

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By Angela Stephens, *U.N. Wire*

WASHINGTON — Prosecutors at the [Special Court for Sierra Leone](#) have asked the tribunal's trial chamber to amend all previously issued indictments to include a new crime against humanity — forced marriage, chief prosecutor David Crane said yesterday at [Georgetown University Law Center](#).

With the court's first trials set to begin late next month, Crane said he expects to learn soon whether prosecutors will be able to add the charge to the existing indictments against key players in the 1991-2002 civil war that killed as many as 200,000 people and left thousands more mutilated by the rebel Revolutionary United Front's practice of amputating arms, legs and other body parts from civilians, including children. The court, in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown, is the first international tribunal located where the crimes took place.

Thirteen indictments have been issued, although RUF leader Foday Sankoh and his deputy, Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie, have since died. Sankoh had been very ill since a stroke he suffered in 2002, and Bockarie was killed in neighboring Liberia last May. Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is among the indictees, but is in Nigeria, where he accepted an offer of exile, and Nigeria has so far not been willing to turn him over to the court. Johnny Paul Koroma, who took over the country in a coup in 1997, is also at large, his whereabouts unknown. The nine remaining indictees have been arrested and are being held in the court's detention facilities in Freetown. More indictments may be issued, Crane said.

Prosecutors decided to pursue forced marriage as a crime against humanity, Crane said, because of combatants' widespread practice during the war of abducting women as "wives," forcing them to have sex and bear children. They were threatened with death if they tried to escape, Crane said, and some were scarred with the initials "RUF" cut into their bodies, putting the women further at risk if they were captured by government soldiers or allied militia, who would think they were rebels.

"They were herded like cattle from Freetown in 1999 and made to have children," Crane said. "Even now, an unknown number of women remain with their rebel 'husbands,'" he added. Because the women were held so long under threat of harm or death, Crane said, the crimes differ from rape or other war crimes prosecuted at other courts.

In another precedent-setting legal move, child abduction and recruitment will be prosecuted as a war crime at the Special Court, Crane said. All the indictments include the charge, he said.

A common tactic for the RUF, Crane said, was to surround a town and force all the children to kill their own parents, then take the children away, making them dependent on the rebels and eventually desensitized to killing. According to the United Nations, more than 10,000 children were abducted and forced into conscription during the war.

Child protection experts were concerned when the court was being established that children would be prosecuted. Many committed horrific crimes, but experts say they are victims as well as perpetrators of violence. Under the mandate of the court, prosecutors could indict anyone who was 15 or older at the time a crime was committed. But the mandate also instructs prosecutors to bring

to justice those who bear "greatest responsibility" for war crimes in Sierra Leone.

"I decided no child could bear the greatest responsibility for the crimes that have taken place," Crane said. "While their crimes cannot be condoned, they will not be prosecuted."

The court is now two years into its three-year mandate. Crane said the trials will take about one year, and he expects the court to wrap up its work next April or May. He noted that the indictment against Charles Taylor will remain in place, even if the court is not able to try him before the tribunal ends its operations. "He'll remain an indicted war criminal for life," Crane said.

Crane, a U.S. attorney who previously led investigations for the Department of Defense and was the department's inspector general, said that in his many years of government and international work, "I never witnessed such pure evil" as what took place in Sierra Leone, the results of which he sees by traveling around the country and talking to Sierra Leoneans. "How we respond to the Sierra Leones of this world is telling of the international community's commitment to justice and the rule of law," he said.

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ICGL Against Taylor's Extradition, Says His Stay In Nigeria is Part of Peace process

The Inquirer (Monrovia)

NEWS

April 19, 2004

Posted to the web April 19, 2004

By Patrick K. Wrokpoh
Monrovia

The International Contact Group on Liberia(ICGL), says its official position on the issue surrounding former president Charles Taylor is for him to be out of Liberia and remain in exile in Nigeria, something which the group maintained is part of the agreement in the search for lasting peace in the country.

The head of the ICGL delegation to Liberia, Ghana's Foreign Minister Nana Akufo-Addo addressing a news conference over the weekend at the ECOWAS Executive Secretary Special Representative's office on the Tubman Boulevard, said "Mr. Taylor's stay in Nigeria is part of the understanding that would bring peace to Liberia." And added,"it is necessary in keeping with the understanding for him to be out of Liberia in Nigeria since that is part of the general understanding for peace in Liberia before he left the country."

Responding to a question as to what the official position of the ICGL is when it comes to the issue of extraditing the former Liberian leader, Mr. Addo who was flanked by members of his delegation, said Mr. Taylor's departure from the country to Nigeria in keeping with the peace agreement, has made it possible for the peace process in the country to reach this far.

He said, it is necessary for Mr. Taylor to remain out of Liberia and this will remain the official position of the ICGL.

For his part, the Special Representative of the European Union presidency to the Mano River Union, Hans Dahlgren said, there can be no peace and stability in any country of the region when there was no peace in each of the individual countries, stressing that if this was not done, there will continue to be renewed transfer of arms, mercenaries among others in the region. He said although there are difficulties on all sides of Liberia, the

situation in Sierra Leone is now improving while the situation in the Ivory Coast has now claimed the attention of the UN Security Council.

He said the situation in Guinea needs the attention of the global community and that all Liberia's neighbors need to respect the basic principals of the Accra peace accord, which include that they should inform their friends inside Liberia to respect the regulation of the accord in Liberia.

For his part, European Union Resident Representative to Liberia, Geoffrey Ross said the EU has made available 20 million Euros to for the humanitarian needs of the country since the crisis, and that more funds were on its way for Liberia.

In a related development, the ICGL says it is satisfied over the level of progress in the peace process thus far and that the country is on the course to achieving lasting peace.

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Posted: 04.19.04 @ 1 p.m.

Liberia Wants Taylor To Remain In Exile

SACOBSEVER.COM WIRE SERVICES

(NNPA) - Liberia's transitional leader, Gyude Bryant, said that his government wants former Liberian president Charles Taylor to remain in exile in Nigeria until Liberia's government gives control to a new elected administration in October 2005.



Former Liberian president Charles Taylor has been living in exile in Nigeria since August 2003 and Liberia's transitional leader says he should stay there until at least October 2005.

"This transitional government will not request that Taylor be removed from Nigeria. His presence there is part of the peace process", Bryant said during a news conference at the Executive Mansion in Monrovia.

However, Bryant warned that if Taylor derails the peace process in any way then "it is a different matter."

Bryant said the reason Nigeria agreed to grant Taylor asylum was that his continued presence in Liberia was seen as an obstacle to peace.

Taylor has been living in Calabar in southeastern Nigeria since Aug. 11, 2003, when rebel attacks on Monrovia and mounting international pressure forced him to step down

and leave the country.

A week later, Liberia's three warring factions signed a peace agreement that ended 14 years of near-constant civil war.

Bryant, a former businessman, became chairman of a broad-based transitional government charged with leading Liberia back to constitutional rule in October.

The Nigerian government has so far refused to turn the former Liberian president over for proceedings on war crimes by a U.N.-backed special court in Sierra Leone. Taylor is wanted there for his role in supporting a brutal rebel movement in Sierra Leone during the 1990s.

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo has said that he would be prepared to send Taylor back home for trial in Liberia, should the Liberian government press charges against him and demand his return.

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Terms: **silent agony of women in war** ([Edit Search](#))

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The Mercury (Australia) April 20, 2004 Tuesday

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The Mercury (Australia)

April 20, 2004 Tuesday

SECTION: LEARNING; Pg. 26

LENGTH: 790 words

HEADLINE: Silent agony of women in war

BYLINE: CHRISTOPHER BANTICK

BODY:

THE traditional emphasis on Anzac Day is understandably on the men and **women** who went away to **war**.

In one sense it is very much their one day of the year, yet there is another side to Anzac Day that is little discussed and sadly little recognised. This is the experience of those who were left behind.

Anzac Day has great symbolic and emotional significance, so much so that 50 years ago in Hobart, in April 1954, **War** Widows Guild members were not invited to lay a wreath during the Anzac Day service. A year later, a member of the Tasmanian branch did lay a wreath but there was no official recognition of her as the representative of the guild.

Tasmania has moved on from the days when officialdom barred broad-spectrum participation in Anzac Day. Still, what endures after all **wars** is the residual pain of the families, and predominantly the **women**, who dutifully waited.

The **women** left behind did more than keep the home fires burning. Their letters, particularly from World **War** I, but not exclusively so, tell a story of **silent** pain -- a pain that has not been greatly acknowledged in Australia's veneration of the Diggers.

In Joy Damousi's important book *Living With the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post **War** Australia*, published in 2001, she noted that: "**Women** internalised the sacrifices of their husbands".

What Damousi hit upon is that for many **women**, supporting their husbands, sons and brothers in **war** was effectively the beginning of a home battle. Men who had been awash with the carnage of **war** were largely healed at home in the loving arms of wives and family.

It is a point expressed by Tanja Luckins in a new and possibly controversial book, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great **War***. Luckins summarises the heavy burden on **women** who were expected to meet the soldiers' need for solace and yet were not permitted to mourn publicly by being part of official commemorative services. For Luckins, **women** were the carriers of personal and collective loss.

"It was mothers who were expected to not only express loss over their sons but to maintain the memory of those sons," she writes.

It is in the correspondence from **women** to soldiers that the resonances of their pain are heard. **Women**, like their husbands, sons and brothers, sacrificed much. They also gave great comfort where none was to be found elsewhere.

Tom Guard was 20 when he was killed by German shellfire while marching to the front near Paschendaele, Belgium, on August 6, 1916. He carried in his wallet a letter from Edna Wood, his sweetheart. The chatty, newsy, domestic letter, written in Kalgoorlie on June 1, reads: "My darling Tom -- did you get all my letters when you arrived in Egypt? I hope you did love. I am always waiting for the Egyptian mail to see if I could get a letter from you."

Women, and in particular mothers, were the recipients of mail from sons who had no other means of unburdening themselves. The result was often heartache at home and a sense of ineffectiveness to meet the needs of those on the battlefields.

In a letter from Bovington Camp, Dorset, Dene Fry poured out to his mother in Sydney his feelings over the news of the death of his brother Alan.

"My dear Mother, I am far too upset and sick at heart to say much mother dear, for I have just had a telegram from Tommy which tells me Alan died of wounds in France on August 14th. I can find no one who knew him intimately round about and so I have to just think of him and turn my sad thoughts over and over in my mind."

A year later Dene too was dead.

If **women** were asked to carry the loss of others, then another burden was the expectation that they would maintain the memory of the fallen, a difficult task when they were not allowed to do this at an official level.

In a letter, distinctive for its arrogance, from John Monash to his wife Hannah on the eve of the Gallipoli landings, he wrote: "Dearest Wife, I have tried to act in your best interests -- I know also that you have loved me dearly and will honour my memory".

If there is a letter that demonstrates unambiguously the long-term suffering of **war** borne by mothers, then it is encapsulated in a brief note written in 1921 from Mary Drummond to the officer in charge of base records, Victorian Barracks, Melbourne.

"I only wish you could tell me if you knew he was buried, my sorrow would no be so great but no one can tell me if he was wounded and missing from the day of the Gallipoli landing later reported killed on that day."

Time may heal but for the **women** who lovingly wrote letters to the front and waited for news, their **war** may have lasted a lifetime. They too deserve remembrance on Anzac Day.

LOAD-DATE: April 19, 2004

Source: [News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days \(English, Full Text\)](#) [i]

Terms: **silent agony of women in war** ([Edit Search](#))

Mandatory Terms: **date from 04/14/2004**

View: Full

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 - 6:20 AM EDT

Source: [News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days \(English, Full Text\)](#) [1]

Terms: **west africa urgently needs security reforms** ([Edit Search](#))

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XINHUA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE April 20, 2004, Tuesday

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April 20, 2004, Tuesday

SECTION: WORLD NEWS; POLITICAL

LENGTH: 366 words

HEADLINE: **West Africa urgently** needs **security reforms:** official

DATELINE: ABUJA, April 19

BODY:

Nigerian Defense Minister Rabiú Kwankwaso declared Monday that **security reforms** is "a very urgent need" in **West Africa**, an area where development is hindered by all sorts of violence and conflicts.

Speaking at a conference on "The Challenges of **Security** Sector Governance in Africa," Kwankwaso said the **reforms** had become necessary because the functional scope of **security** had continued to change and expand. **Security** is comprised of both the classical concepts of state **security** as well as social and human **security**, he said.

According to Kwankwaso, the intrinsic relationship between **security** and development had made it imperative for **reforms** to stabilize the sub-region.

Noting that **reforms** would improve the performance of **security** apparatuses generally, Kwankwaso remarked that a secured political, social and economic space would facilitate faster and greater economic progress and development.

On factors that had compounded the complex **security** problems of the region, the minister lamented the proliferation of small arms, and described as alarming recent reports that 550 million arms were in circulation globally.

Other factors, he added, were the daily increase in the number of child soldiers and armed gangs, the increasing rates of deaths resulting from crimes and violence, as well as political assassinations.

He said that such developments were major challenges that African leaders must face through the **security reforms**.

Kwankwaso observed that factors like poverty, limited economic opportunities, ethnic animosities and a history of political abuse and corruption had also fueled avoidable conflicts.

The minister lamented that 32 out of 37 successful coups in Africa had occurred in **West**

Africa, saying that the sub-region had also witnessed the most absurd and brutal conflicts. Labeling Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Senegal to be the worst affected states, the minister lamented that state **security** apparatuses had been variously converted into instruments of suppression.

Kwankwaso emphasized the need for a re-orientation that would make professional **security** men appreciate being subservient to political leaders.

LOAD-DATE: April 20, 2004

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Date/Time: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 - 6:19 AM EDT

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Concord Times

Tuesday April 20, 2004

Ukrainian troops may pull out of UNAMSIL

Abdul Karim Koroma

Professor Nikolai Polishuk, head of the Education Committee of Maternity and Childhood in the Ukrainian parliament has moved a motion calling on the President of that country to withdraw Ukrainian troops serving in peacekeeping duties in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

According to a news story aired over



Daudi N. Mwakawago UNAMSIL Boss

FM 98.1 last Sunday, Prof. Polishuk told the President that diseases like malaria, yellow fever and Cholera are very prevalent in those countries noting meningitis is ravaging Sierra Leone and Liberia more than any where else in Africa.

The report stated that a random test which was carried on some Ukrainian soldiers after their tour of mission 33% were tested to have Malaria, 66% were sick as they are not responding to Malaria treatment while 60% are said to behave abnormally and impotent.

Speaking to Concord Times yesterday UNAMSIL military spokesman Major Nwachukwu Onyena said about 120 personnel of the Ukrainian Aviation unit are pulling out, as they would be replaced by other Ukrainian troops.

Major Onyena said he is not aware that the government of Ukraine is planning to withdraw their troops from UNAMSIL.



Liberia: Bitter Lurd Fighters Say Their Leaders Betrayed Them

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

NEWS

April 19, 2004

Posted to the web April 19, 2004

Gbarnga

Former fighters of Liberia's LURD rebel movement say they are happy enough to hand over their guns to UN peacekeeping troops, but many grumble that they have been forgotten and abandoned by their own political leaders.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) launched a programme to disarm, demobilise and rehabilitate an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 former combatants throughout Liberia in the northern town of Gbarnga last week.

But many of the LURD fighters queuing up to surrender their weapons there were bitter that 14 years of civil war had left them empty handed.

In particular, they complained that Sekou Damate Conneh, the chairman of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel movement, had broken his promise that he would provide them all with education and skills training once former president Charles Taylor had been driven from power.

Colonel Mohammed Jabateh, surrounded by a group of nearly 100 LURD fighters, did not mince his words.

"All we are saying is that Conneh and other officials fooled us to hold arms and promised that he would send all of us to school and vocational centres. Now, Taylor has left. We have won the war, he does not want to care for us," Jabateh told IRIN.

"They have forgotten about us," said Jabateh, referring to LURD's political leaders, many of whom now occupy top jobs in Liberia's broad-based transitional government. "They are all enjoying good life in Monrovia. We hardly see them around, never mind visit us frequently".

"We do not want to see them around us no more, they fooled us before and we will not succumb to their orders", he continued.

Conneh himself keeps a low profile these days and is always surrounded by a strong squad of bodyguards. He has been to Gbarnga only once since the signing of a peace agreement in August last year that ended the civil war.

In early February Conneh drove to the town 150 km northeast of Monrovia, protected by a strong bodyguard of UN peacekeepers, for a three-hour meeting with LURD fighters in the town.

Conneh, who worked as a tax official and second hand car dealer before joining LURD five years ago, was conspicuously absent as his men started handing in their weapons to UNMIL at a special disarmament camp in Gbarnga on 15 April.

However, the LURD leader told IRIN in Monrovia the following day that he had not abandoned his fighters. He claimed that General Phillip Kamara, one of his senior commanders, had represented him at the ceremony in Gbarnga to mark the resumption of disarmament following a four-month delay.

A second disarmament centre is due to open in the port city of Buchanan for fighters of the MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) rebel movement on Tuesday. And two more are due to open near Monrovia and the LURD stronghold of Tubmanburg, by the end of April.

Conneh declined to give reasons for his absence from the high profile start of disarmament. But he said: "We have been working behind the scenes just for the disarmament to go on smoothly in Gbarnga."

"The leadership have done so well for the fighters, we sent delegations all of the time which distributed food and clothes to our fighters. I have been there once and my wife, Aisha was there few days ago", he added.

What Conneh omitted to say is that his estranged wife is now more popular than he is among many grass roots LURD fighters and their military commanders.

In fact, many of them have signed a petition demanding that Aisha take over from her husband as the official leader of LURD.

She has always played a key role in the organisation as a result of her close personal links with Guinean President Lansana Conteh, LURD's main backer.

It is an open secret that Aisha is Conteh's soothsayer and enjoys considerable influence with him

Diplomats and LURD insiders say privately that Conneh was only invited to become the nominal leader of the rebel movement when it was formed in 1999 because of his wife's close connections with the Guinean head of state. ... Conneh's control over LURD has weakened since he became estranged from Aisha in October. The couple quarrelled after

he appointed a close relative of his first wife as finance minister in the transitional government, which is due to guide Liberia to fresh elections in October 2005.

Several LURD fighters in Gbarnga complained that the LURD leadership had ignored their request for transport to bring former combatants to the cantonment site.

Conneh said it was up to UNMIL to bring in fighters for disarmament at the rate of 250 men per day.

"Under the disarmament arrangement, the UN is responsible for transporting fighters from all areas to the disarmament centre," he told IRIN. "We are not responsible for that".

Jachnik Clive, a disarmament and demobilisation officer with UNMIL, said "there are more arms in the remote villages, we are working it out with the factions to have fighters in those areas transported to the disarmament and cantonment sites".

Although the LURD fighters queuing up to hand in their weapons at Gbarnga had little good to say about their own leaders, they were positive about the UN intervention in Liberia.

"Our only hope and concern right now is for UNMIL to help us go back to school and be educated after we disarm. We are tired of holding guns, while our leaders are working in government in Monrovia and enjoying from our sweat", Colonel Jabateh said.

"With money for guns or not, all we want now is to acquired knowledge" he added

Ahmadu Sessay, a 25-year-old fighter sporting long dreadlocks who claimed to be the artillery commander of LURD's Iron Lady Battalion ,said the fighters would not hinder the disarmament exercise.

"Disarmament is our only hope for better lives. The war is over and we will not fire a single bullet," he told IRIN.

The mood of the disarmed fighters definitely picked up as the UN peacekeepers handed them bedding, new clothes and food at the cantonment centre about 8 kilometres away from the disarmament facility where they handed in their guns.

All of them will undergo a week's screening before the UN peacekeepers send them home with \$150 in cash, the first instalment of a \$300 resettlement allowance.

The disarmament facility in has been installed on a farm belonging to former president Taylor, just to the south of Gbarnga. But like the town itself, the farm has been stripped bare by looters.

Gbarnga, a once bustling market town on the main road from Monrovia to the Guinean border lies in ruins.

Local officials say 100,000 people used to live there, but now it is a ghost town with fewer than 5,000 residents.

Gbarnga was once a stronghold of Taylor's army. But LURD seized the town in July last year after heavy fighting, just before Taylor resigned as president and flew to exile in Nigeria.

Most private homes have had their roofs stripped by looters, while rockets and explosives have burned many buildings, including the City Hall, to the ground.

At the once bustling market in the heart of the town, a small group of 15 traders huddle over their paltry wares.

"We are afraid to bring in more goods in the market, because those fighters are not reliable. They can harass you and take your goods at will", Mamie Sebah, one petty trader said.

Until the fighters who control the town and the surrounding countryside relinquish all their weapons, few are willing to come back.

"Because the fighters are not fully disarmed, the original residents of this city are afraid of returning. Others do not want to return because their homes were either looted or burned during the war", said Alfred Kollie, one of the few who stayed on.



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A Posse of Guns for Hire

Discharged and jobless, Africa's former combatants find dubious work as mercenaries

THE foiled coup attempt in Equatorial Guinea in March 2004 provided an urgent reminder of the destabilising consequences when two of Africa's most troubling unsolved problems intersect: poor governance and the platoons of former soldiers and guerrilla fighters left scattered and idling across the continent's former battlefields. The one creates a job market for the opportunistic other.

'I used to command these guys,' said Johann Smith, a former South African Defense Force commander, referring to the 80 suspected mercenaries now awaiting trial in Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe, where many were arrested allegedly en route to topple the government of President Obiang Nguema. 'There are 2,500 to 3,000 of them in South Africa. This will definitely happen again, given their current economic realities. One former soldier lamented that he had missed the Equatorial Guinea "recruitment drive" by 30 minutes.'

Just how many ex-combatants are at loose ends in Africa is probably impossible to know. Certainly tens of thousands, given the number of conflicts raging or waning across the continent. At the height of the recent war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, some 21 formal and rebel armies were entangled in just that one splintered conflict. Few jobs awaited those soldiers when the peace accords were signed. Few know how to do anything else.

But with conflicts drawing to a close in several African countries, a new recruitment base for mercenaries is emerging. The World Bank has allocated \$500 million for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes in Africa's Great Lakes region. Millions of dollars had been spent on demobilising armies, but several studies have nonetheless shown that making

contented civilians out of unskilled former soldiers in plodding economies is frustrating work.

Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa, all stable after prolonged conflicts, have successfully built new national armies out of former warring factions. But their societies fester with former cadres who lack the skills to build meaningful lives beyond the bush and barracks. A 2001 report by the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, South Africa, indicated that 37% of ex-combatants — from both sides of the apartheid divide — were unemployed.

Some turn to crime, many analysts suspect. Others find new ways to practice the old profession.

When Zimbabwean security forces surrounded an unmarked aircraft at Harare airport in March 2004 and arrested its passengers for allegedly plotting mercenary activities, many observers quickly concluded that they were remnants of southern Africa's erstwhile racist security forces up to their old tricks again. They were right — up to a point.

As the facts unfolded, it turned out that most of those detained were black former soldiers in the apartheid South African Defense Force. Many served in the 32 Battalion, an infamous former South African unit known for its shadowy brutality in the latter years of Pretoria's wars of regional destabilisation. Although many of them were Namibia, Angolan and Congolese, they were given South African citizenship after being demobilised.

The Equatorial Guinea affair highlights weaknesses in national and continental legal provisions for curbing mercenary activity in Africa. The African Union, for example, has not reviewed the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa — a document produced by its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity, in 1977. Six years ago, South Africa hastily drafted the 1998 Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act. The legislation resulted in shutting down Executive Outcomes, a private company offering military services in far-flung African countries. But critics charge it failed to sufficiently tighten the legal environment in which mercenaries operate.

As the nature of conflict changes dramatically and rapidly in the post-Cold War global arena, private military activity is on the rise. The challenge, argued Michael Grunberg of Sandline International, a Bahamas-based security company, is to create a legal framework that enables private armies to function constructively while preventing mercenary activity.

'In Iraq, there are currently 10,000 expatriate private military personnel,' Grunberg said. 'As the level of foreign investments in Africa is growing, so is the need for security. Similarly, an increased level of security is conducive to investment and growth.' — **Michael van Winden and Steven Gruz**