SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Prosecutor Stephen Rapp is greeted by students during an Outreach at Albert Academy. Photos of his visit to 'Academy' and to the former amputee camp in today's 'Special Court Supplement.'

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Thursday, 20 December 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.

Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact

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Awoko Thursday, 20 December 2007

Magistrate expresses concern over non appearance of prisoners in court

he principal magistrate in Port Loko Joseph Amadu has expressed concern over the non appearance of remand prisoners in court.

He said witnesses as well as litigants had not heard about any progress with their matters for the fourth consecutive month.

Magistrate Amadu was speaking at the Lungi Magistrate Court where he concluded a final session for the year 2007.

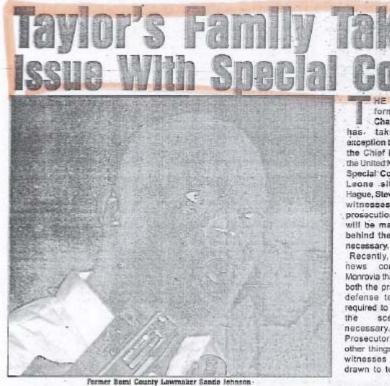
He attributed the prolonged adjournment in the past several months to the negligence of prison authorities in the provision of means of transportation to and from the court.

Magistrate Amadu informed the court that he had personally written to the authorities concerned about the prevailing situation. He noted that such a situation had the potential to defeat the end of justice. He made special reference to 51 remand prisoners currently languishing at the Pademba Road prisons, while they should be at the Port Loko State prisons. He said they were sent to Pademba road to ease the risk involved in transporting prisoners from Port Loko to Lungi.

The magistrate said some of these prisoners were granted bail but had no-one to surety them, while several others still awaited bail. Sources say some prisoners have been dying in custody. The tough-talking magistrate lamented, saying the situation was almost the same in Lunsar and Masiaka

Heritage (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 December 2007



HE FAMILY OF former President Charles G. Taylor taken serious exception to comment by the Chief Prosecutor of the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in the Hague, Steve Rapp, those witnesses of both the prosecution and defense will be made to testify behind the scene when

Recently, Rapp told a news conference in Monrovia that witnesses of both the prosecution and defense teams will be required to testify behind scene necessary. The Chief Prosecutor, who among other things said that 62 witnesses have been drawn to testify against

Taylor's Family

From F Back Page

Taylor, noted that the witnesses will be treated with respect and kept in secured environment in the Hague ahead of the testimony before the

But the Taylor's family has described as dubious and unwarranted for witnesses to testify behind the scene, saying it has the propensity undermine independence of the trial.

Addressing a news conference in Monrovia Tuesday, a spokesman of former Liberian

witnesses in the trial to testify in open court for transparency and fairness.

Mr. Johnson, a former Representative of Bomi County maintained that all witnesses in the trial should be visible to avoid what he refers to as misrepresentation of their thereby testimony trial rendering incredible.

He then called on authorities at the Special Court to see wisdom in the concern raised by the family of Mr. Taylor and address it before the trial resumes in January 7, 2008.

"If this concern is not addressed, Mr. Taylor will not be given free and fair trial, Mr. Taylor will emerge victorious once the proceedings are devoid of manipulation and unfair play*, he stated.

At the same time, Mr. Johnson has alleged that authorities of the Special Court were coercing supporters of Mr. Taylor to testify against detainee, a claim the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Steven Rapp recently rejected when he addressed journalists in Monrovia.

Mr. Johnson informed the news conference that authorities at the Special Court were also giving misleading information to the Liberia people that they have witnesses and evidence to prosecute Mr. Taylor.

According to him, the sensitization campaign being embarked on by the Special Court in Liberia regarding Taylor's trial was intended to put the Liberian people under impression that the court has all incontestable evidence to prosecute the former Liberian leader, stressing 'the Special Court has no concrete evidence to prove Mr. Taylor

But the Special Court has said that it has strong and compelling evidence to convict Mr. Taylor for his alleged involvement in orchestrating mayhem in the sisterly country of Sierra Leone beginning 1996-2002.

He used the occasion to call on the court to ensure that the trial of Mr. Taylor is given maximum media coverage for the benefit of the Liberian people and the world at large.

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Former President Charles Taylor faces 11-count charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in Sierra Leone brutal civil conflict. But the former Liberian leader has denied all charges levied against

The Informer (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 December 2007

FOR TRANSPARENCY AKE TAYLOR'S WITHDOSD

Sandoh Johnson

Former Borni County Lawmaker Sandoh Johnson regresenting the family of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, now standing trial in The Hague, is calling on authorities of the Special Court to make visible the 62 witnesses who they claim are expected to leastly in the trial stated to begin January 7, 2007.

Lawmaker Johnson maintained that this is necessary in order to determine the transparency of the case.

Mr. Johnson said that some

part of last week the special court offcials met with the press in Monrovia announcing that the prosecution has retained about 62 anonymous witnesses to testify against Taylor but failed to name such witnesses for which he maintained is not up to the standard require for proper redress of the trial.

Speaking to journalists at the Corina Hotel on Tubman Boulevard in have previously coerced Monrovia, Mr. Johnson also refuted allegations by the Special Court that he (Sandoh Johnson) is intimidating witnesses expected to testify against Taylor. Speaking as a family member

most of the inje witnesses of Mr. Taylor are presently under travel ban and are not in the position to testify in the trial as witnesses.

He said that the Special Court's authority purposely came to Monrovia just to gather witnesses that they to testify against Taylor.

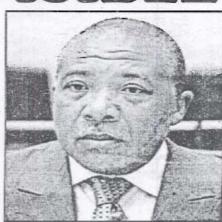
He said the family is taking aback by the action of the special court but insist that the trial of Taylor should be

made public in order to clear doubt over the caption case.

Quizzed as to whether he has ever informed the government about his latest discovery, Mr. Sandoh contends that this present government will not listen to him because according to him, 'this government is responsible for the forceful removal of Taylor from exile to jail."

The former Law maker speaking for the family of Taylor also maintained that on one occasion the prosecution. made motion in the Court at The Hague for the travel ban on Taylor's witnesses to remain enforced.

The said even though the family of the Taylor welcomes the trial of Tayfor for Justice and fair play but it. should be done in an open comidor in order to determine the ments and demerits of the case.



Mr. Charles G. Taylor

The Inquirer (Liberia)

Wednesday, 19 December 2007

Taylor's Family Against

By C. Winnie Saywah

Family members of the former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor say they welcome the initial trial of Mr. Taylor in January 7, 2008 but are cautioning the Special Court in The Hague not to allow witnesses testify in camera in order to ensure transparent justice.

Addressing journalists on Tuesday, the incumbent

head of Mr. Taylor's family Liberia, in Sando Johnson, complained about the misleading statistics that is emerging from within the prosecution team as regard the number of witnesses gathered so

Mr. Johnson said the prosecution team previously announced that some 300 witnesses were already prepared to testify against Mr. Taylor when the trial resumes and now they have reduced that number to 62, out of which 20 are Liberians who would want protection if they should testify next year.

He accused the prosecution team of trying to conduct an awareness

Cont'd on Page 10



Fmr. Pres. Taylor

Taylor's

Cont'd from front page

campaign and to build visible to be cross-examined confidence based on falsehood and calculated figures to encourage other Liberians to testify noting that if someone is sure of saying the truth, then there is nothing

He said even now with the amount of persons wishing to testify against the accused as announced by the prosecution team, it is glaring that the team is still seeking for people to testify and would continue until the trial begins which signals a sign of mischief. Mr. Johnson said this is an

challenge to the prosecution team to convince its hired witnesses to testify before an open court but concurred with the prosecution team calling for the travel restrictions to be lifted without conditions from those wishing to testify for or against

the accused from Liberia. — He warned that witnesses who are willing to testify against Mr. Taylor must be

and bold enough to face the prosecutor or else the process would be void of transparency. He said it is the right of every

Liberian and the citizens of Sierra Leone now to advocate or demand that the trial be made public adding that it is the right of those who are termed as victims to witness the trial through the media and that avery Liberian follow the case because it is not about Taylor alone but about Liberia.
The family members said that

they are only requesting that the government intervene to have Mr. Taylor's rights protected and not to have him released adding that they are convinced that the accused will be experated if there is a

tair-play in the procedure They vowed that until Taylor is given a fair and transparent trial they would not cease to speak out on the protection of his rights because for the trend that the trial has begun taking. they envisage injustice.

The Association for the Legal Defence of Charles G. Taylor

Friday, 14 December 2007 http://www.fortaylor.net/2007-12-14-Charles-Taylor-Liberia-Press-Release-Article54.htm Press Release

Taylor Defense Ready for January Trial Resumption

Press Release Staff Writer

Prosecution and defense lawyers said Tuesday that they will be ready to present evidence when the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor resumes in January at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor's trial began in June, but proceedings were postponed to allow Taylor's new defense team more time to prepare.

At a status conference in The Hague Tuesday, lawyers from both sides told the court they would be ready to proceed when the trial begins again on January 7, 2008.

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 18 December 2007

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

Newspaper Summary

Journalists Trouped Court to hear Libel Case

(National Chronicle, The Informer, The Independent and The Parrot)

- Correspondents said that Liberian journalists, in their numbers trouped the Civil Law Court yesterday to witness the hearing of a case of libel and defamation which TRUTH FM Director Ambrose Nmah brought against the Public Agenda newspaper and seven other journalists.
- The journalists' presence at the court was prompted by a call from the Press Union of Liberia requesting all media practitioners in the Country to rally behind the defendants after Mr. Nmah reportedly rejected moves on the part of the Union to mediate in a case where he claimed the defendants defamed his character in their publications.
- However, the media reported that the case was not heard because it had not been assigned for hearing during the opening sessions of the Court following its recess.

Sweden Donates to Civil Service Reform Programme

(Daily Observer, National Chronicle, The Informer and The Monitor)

• Speaking at a ceremony to present US\$1 million to enhance the Government's civil service reform programme, the Swedish government representative who also attended the ceremony, Mr. Anders Ostman said that his Country was supporting the Government's Senior Executive Service initiative to recruit and repatriate trained Liberians abroad, because the Country was making progress and needed support to accelerate development.

Radio Summary

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

New Army Activates First Three Companies Tomorrow

- In an interview, Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) will tomorrow, Wednesday activate the first three companies at a ceremony to be attended by a high power U. S. military delegation headed by Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, the Deputy Commander of AFRICOM military operations.
- Minister Samukai said the activation of the Alpha, Bravo and Charlie companies of the new AFL is very significant to the formation of the new Liberia armed forces and said three officers will be designated as platoon commanders of the 9 platoons.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth and ELBS)

Circuit Court Judge Frowns at "Lateness" by Lawyers

- The Civil Law Court at the Temple of Justice has opened for the December 2007 term. Speaking at the ceremony the assigned Judge Yusuf Kabah complained of the constant lateness of lawyers and said they sometimes refused to go to court.
- The Judge said more than five cases were decided by default judgment because of their attitude even though notices of assignment were served and vowed not to condone such during this term of court.
- In response, the Bar Association promised to work with the court to correct the situation.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth and ELBS)

Former Presidential Aspirant Says Corruption Still Rife in Liberia

- A former Presidential candidate says corruption remains "widespread" in Liberia saying it has become one of the most troubling communicable diseases.
- Dr. Joseph Woah-Tee said corrupt practices are continuing without a true national fight against it and said past and present leaders failed to stamp-out the growing wave of corruption in the Liberian society. In a statement he identified corruption as a signatory to the declaration of Liberia's independence in 1847.
- The statement was read during the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the sale of his book titled "Liberia and America: A mother stepchild relationship betrayed.

 (Also reported on Star Radio, Truth and ELBS)



United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 19 December 2007

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Newspaper Summary

Liberia Army Activates First Infantry Companies

(Daily Observer, Heritage, National Chronicle, The Informer, The Analyst, The News, Public Agenda and The Inquirer)

- The media reports that the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) is expected to today, Wednesday activate its first infantry companies at a ceremony to be attended by a high power U. S. military delegation headed by Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, the Deputy Commander of AFRICOM military operations.
- A release issued in Monrovia says the exercise marks a new and historic step in the development of Liberia's new military. The Heritage reports that with current force strength of just 645 the new army will activate the Alpha, Bravo and Charlie companies of the future 1st battalion of the 23rd Brigade.
- The company activation ceremony comes less than a week after 17 AFL cadets graduated from the most recent officer Candidate School at the Barclay Training Centre.
- The cadets are due to commissioned as school Lieutenants in the AFL on Armed Forces Day, February 11, 2008. Meanwhile, three ECOWAS countries, Nigeria, Ghana and Benin have agreed to provide active duty military officers for mentoring in support of the activation of the first three AFL companies.

Government Launches Awareness for National Census

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

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has officially launched the Advocacy and Public Awareness Campaign of the 2008 National Population and Housing Census. Speaking Tuesday in Monrovia at the launch of the campaign, the President said the census will not be used to impose taxes neither will it be used for political manipulations or marginalization.
- According to President Sirleaf, the census is a formidable tool for development and will be
 used by government and the country's development partners alike to formulate policies which
 could be used to improve the conditions of the people. "It will be used as a baseline data to
 track progress made towards the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the
 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," she said.
- The Director-General of Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS), Dr. Edward Liberty said his Institute has put in place the necessary measures to ensure the successful implementation of the census. Dr. Liberty said up to 85-percent of the country has been mapped out while the remaining 15-percent will be completed by May this year. The census which kicks off next year will run from March 21 27. It will be the first to be held in Liberia in 23-years.

Radio Summary

Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

New Army Activates Companies Today

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

President Encourages Liberians to Celebrate Holidays with Inspiration

- Speaking at a ceremony to lite the National Christmas Tree to officially start this year's Christmas celebration, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf called on Liberians to observe the Christmas and New Year holidays with a sense of inspiration and motivation by sharing with each other.
- President Sirleaf said that Liberians should share in the joy and spirit of Christmas by reaching out to share whatever they have with their compatriots.
- President Sirleaf regretted that the Christmas celebration will not be joyful as desired due to the lack of electricity in all the parts of Monrovia because Government's limited resources could not enable its citizens to have an elaborate celebration. He called on her compatriots to remain hopeful and redouble their efforts to make progress in the years ahead.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Taylor's Family Abhors Witnesses Suspect Taylor

- Addressing a news conference yesterday, a family member of former President Charles
 Taylor, Sando Johnson said that the family is abhorred by the statement from the Special
 Court for Sierra Leone prosecution team that it has at least 20 Liberian witnesses to testify
 against defendant Taylor.
- The former Bomi County Representative thought the statement was untrue, asserting that the utterance was to create the impression that Liberians are equally walking to prosecute their own former leader.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Key African Bank Approves Liberia's Proposal

• A Ministry of Finance statement said that the African Development Bank (ADB) approved a proposal from Liberia to clear the Country's arrears with the Bank, granting the Country US\$24 million to support labour-based public work projects. This brings to two the multilateral institutions that have cleared Liberia's arrears following months of vigorous campaign led by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Finance Minister Antoinette Seyah. (Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

Treason Trial failed to Hold Yesterday

• Correspondents said that the treason trial of former Armed Forces of Liberia Col. Andrew Dorbor failed to resume yesterday at the Criminal Court "A" because the medical doctor from UNMIL who was expected to produce a medical report from a required examination on Col. Dorbor was unable to perform the examination. The prosecution had requested a medical examination of Col. Dorbor after he alleged that the security forces tortured him while in the cell, causing him to experience impotency.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth FM, SKY FM and ELBS)

The Patriotic Vanguard

Tuesday, 18 December 2007

Boy Soldier: Salifu in Search of Peace

By Roland Bankole Marke.

Salifu was born in Sierra Leone, a tiny West African nation about the size of Maine. He was only 9 when rebels abducted him at the Wesleyan primary school at Bafodia, Kabala in northern Sierra Leone.

In a vicious whirlwind of death, he lost his family: parents, Fatu and Hamidu Kamara and six siblings. Rebels raped his sister Kadiatu before his eyes and the bandits daringly took her



away to become a wife. She's presumed dead as nothing has been heard about her since the fateful day she was taken away.

Speaking with his dimmed eyes and a subdued voice, Salifu said: "I hope and pray that day will never come again."

Whenever he remembers the plethora of injustice and agony endured, he's paralyzed with despair. "I wish I had the might to challenge the rebels," his human nature cried out. But a voice inside him said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." His Christian values had not yet evaporated into thin air. The civil war that ravaged Sierra Leone razed it to a mere rubble.

Today, the Atlantic sea breeze is blowing with refreshing vitality under a newly elected president Ernest Bai Koroma. But it would take time for the pendulum of transformation to teeter towards a dramatic rehabilitation while the impoverished nation is incessantly chocked with overwhelming basic needs.

A miracle herb was slipped into Salifu's tea, similar to the drug ECSTASY that transformed him beyond recognition. He became bold, fearless and eager to venture into daring adventures. And he was forced to play the role of a boy soldier, with a mandate to protect the rebel commandos, armed with his AK47 on a 24-hour shift.

David M. Crane, a former prosecutor of the Special Court in Sierra Leone said that during one of his hearings around the country for people to talk about the war, a child-soldier said, "I killed people, I am sorry, I did not mean it." I went over to him, tears in my eyes, hugged him and said, "Of course you didn't mean it. I forgive you."

Several boy-soldiers who resisted or tried to escape were pinned down screaming, while the rebel trademark AFRC-RUF, was carved on their chest with a sharp object. Luckily, Salifu was able to escape and brave it out along a

protracted arduous trek from Kabala to Freetown, in order to earn his freedom. However, United Nations Forces found him after the termination of the civil war, but not without physical and emotional scars.

At 21, he's disabled and walks with a crutch, but his mental prowess like his vision for the future is as clear as his glaring, youthful eyes. He's the pioneer of the Global Network for Disabled Youths in his homeland that caters for the needs of young disabled and traumatized war victims. He arrived in the United States on March 15, 2007 through donations from philanthropists. Like most immigrants, he deals with culture shock daily. When he first arrived at his US home, he stared at the well lit house and asked: "When will the lights go off?". His friends chuckled, "The lights in America stay on 24 hours-a-day," one of them, Francis, told him.

But in Sierra Leone, electricity is sporadic, where most people in the capital Freetown, have gone without electricity for a long period. The next day, Salifu was invited to breakfast. Breakfast! Surprised he said, "What are you talking about?" "Here we eat breakfast in the morning, please come join us," Junior, another friend, said. He eyed the generous and delicious food, "You guys are blessed here in America," he said.

He contacted me through my website: www.RolandMarke.com by posting a long message. I responded promptly, as he was eager to tell me his story. We bonded almost immediately. His search for a trust-worthy Sierra Leonean writer, mysteriously led him to me. But because of his horrible experiences, it's hard for him to trust people in a hurry. After being robbed of his childhood and family, he still struggles to come to terms with reality. But his predicament did not paralyze his life, or his vision to chart out his own destiny. After several conversations with him, I believe that his mindset does not represent a normal 21 year-old, having bagged a second class division in the General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) the equivalent of a High School Diploma. Despite all the emotional turmoil he has weathered, he's currently taking preparatory classes to equip him for college, through the help of UN officials and sponsors in United States.

His transition has shifted into overdrive, to emerge a roving peace seeker: who tours US cities on request, to speak about the dangers and plight of child soldiers around the world. He pleads: "Children should not be used as puns in wars that adults choose to fight."

Stressing that the enormous resources expended in futile wars could be diverted into education, poverty reduction and job training for youths around the world. The demand for his services is increasing in a community infected with violence.

Speaking recently at the United Nations(photo), his appeal fell on fertile ground, with the smoothened innocence of a child, as he addressed the world body to alleviate the appalling conditions around the world that fuel wars. He's a testament to the assaults of wars on children in Sierra Leone's civil war. It is illuminating witnessing a child-victim of war narrate a heart-piercing message with universal appeal. His conviction, like his intelligence, is rooted in passion. Evidently, he has lived a life of trauma, violence and destitution. He's the poster child of others still caught up between a rock and a hard place, who are incessantly plagued with hopelessness and emotional nightmares.

While at Birghampton University in Pennsylvania and New Paltz University in Upstate New York, his message was well received. At question time students asked him about ways they could help victims of the war. They offered to help Salifu first to get him settled down in United States because he personifies the malaise of child soldiers, and brings reality to the American stage.

Images showing victims of war and the violation of their human rights feature daily on our TV screens, but these images are perceived as routine news. Child-soldiers who have been abused portray the same syndrome as other children, who desire love, affection and protection from their parents and the global community.

At the Quaker George High School, he spoke to about 700 students at a special devotion, followed by focus group discussions. The discussions were lively and focused on Sierra Leone and the factors that led to the war.

A student asked, "How were you able to survive the war?" His explanation was passionate as the students' eyes were glued on him, as he carefully narrated his ordeal. Only those with a heart of stone would not have been touched by his exposition.

Soon tears dripped down some emotional faces. In unison, the teachers and students so deeply touched decided to raise funds for the child-victims of Sierra Leone, by printing T-shirts and raising awareness throughout their community, and various fund raising drives. Some students expressed their desire to visit Sierra Leone to get a first hand account of the impacts of war on children.

Like Saul in the Bible who was converted and became Saint Paul, our hope for redemption is possible as it's necessary: not only for war-victims, but for a mind-change of those who start wars. It's wrong and unethical to punish children who are used as puns to fight adult wars.

15-year-old Canadian Omar Khadr could have been one of those boy-soldiers in Sierra Leone, but he was captured in Afghanistan. David M. Crane a renowned professor, articulates this sobering reality in his article 'The Child as War Criminal' published in the International Herald Tribune -November 9, 2007 last Para:

"No child found in combat should be held liable for his or her acts. That is the legal standard of the world community and of this country. What will take place in Guantánamo in the coming weeks is wrong."

*Roland B. Marke is a Sierra Leonean writer based in Florida, USA. He is the author of three books and his most recent is "Harvest of Hate" a collection of stories and essays dealing with Sierra Leone's civil war. Visit his website www.RolandMarke.com, or contact him at bankole@mindspring.com or 904-645-5738.

Special Court Supplement Prosecution Outreach at Albert Academy and Former Amputee Camp Tuesday, 18 December 2007









