

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



A Pied Crow, or "Minister Bird" takes in a football match at the National Stadium from the upper balcony.

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:

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

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

Local News

Stop The Violence Against Children and Women Now! / <i>Standard Times</i>	Pages 3-4
Britain Raises Concerns Over Golley's Detention / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 5
Blood Diamond: Are We Africans Born To Suffer? / <i>PEEP!</i>	Page 6

International News

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 7-9
Guinea Unrest Worries Neighbours Liberia, S. Leone / <i>Reuters</i>	Pages 10-11
Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Leaders Meet / <i>Voice of America</i>	Pages 12-13
A Lurking, Looming and Familiar Danger for Sierra Leone / <i>The Patriotic Vanguard</i>	Pages 14-16
UK Govt and Human Rights Organization Act on the Golley Case / <i>Cocorioko Website</i>	Page 17
Justice - New Investment Opportunity for Microsoft? / <i>International Justice Tribune</i>	Pages 18-19
DRC Troops Jailed for War Crimes / <i>BBC Online</i>	Pages 20-21
Afghan War Crimes Amnesty Passed / <i>BBC Online</i>	Page 22
Koinange: Friend Gunned Down by Child Soldiers / <i>CNN</i>	Pages 23-25

Standard Times

Tuesday, 21 February 2007

Stop The Violence Against Children and Women Now!

As a result of the decade-old civil conflict in the country, women and children suffered immensely from the hands of the various warring factions. Most children were used as child combatants and sex labourers by their captors.

Despite the fact that the people of this country are enjoying some semblance of peace, the gross violation of human rights against women and children cannot go unnoticed.

The principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations clearly spell out the recognition of the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family wherein the foundation of freedom, justice and peace prevail.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaim that children are entitled to special care and assistance since the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for their growth and well-being, should afford them all the necessary protection and assistance so that they can fully assume their responsibilities within the community in which they find themselves.

On the contrary, most children in this country do not know what is love and happiness like their colleagues in other parts of the world, and are exposed to all forms of violence in the streets and even in their homes.

There are street children in this country who lost their entire family members during the decade-old civil conflict. Most of these children are visible in the markets, street corners and even car parks finding their daily bread either through begging, vending, hard labour or various forms of criminality.

There are others especially young girls who are constantly prostituting themselves at the various night clubs for mere pittance. These young girls are normally faced with serious violence and humiliation from people in the streets, whilst street boys who have taken up pocketing as a routine normally suffer at the hands of their captors.

Indeed, it is not their wish to become what they are today, as most of these children would perform well if they are given the chance like any other group of children.

Therefore the children should be given the full chance for a harmonious development of their personalities so that they

can grow up in a friendly and healthy environment with their families in an atmosphere of happiness, love, caring are the guiding principles.

However, most of these unfortunate children cannot have what it takes to develop their minds and emotions in the way other children are provided for, and are left out like any other unfortunates children in the cold and with "no one to control and care for them".

In fact, as a result of the situation in which many of these children find themselves they mostly come in contact with the law, which most human rights activists believe is acting as a barricade against their development, as it is argued that street children are not protected by the law.

In an exclusive interview with this press a couple of weeks ago, Marie S. Kamara, a sixteen-year old girl maintained that the loss of her mother and father during the civil conflict in this country has totally shattered her hopes and aspirations.

fourteen. Now she is a mother of two.

Unlike Marie, there are many other young girls in the rural and urban areas who are also experiencing what Marie has gone through. Their focus was to become any good citizen of this country.

Therefore, it is significant for the so called children's organizations in the country to take the lead and help these unfortunate children.

The need to extend care to children is clearly spelt out in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and also in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on the 20th November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in articles (23 and 24 respectively)

On the other hand, the International Covenant on Economic,

agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children."

Talking about specialized agencies, children and gender affairs in this country are considered by most human rights activists as mere toothless bulldogs that cannot champion the course of women and children. They argue that there is no effort absolutely on the side of the ministry to lobby parliament so that the Child Bill would be enacted even as Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Geneva charter.

Many children in this country are still enduring lots of domestic violence under the guise of discipline by parents/guardians and other people in the communities they find themselves.

The rights of children must be respected as article (4) of the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's Rights clearly states that "human beings are inviolable, and every human being shall be entitled to respect

In most cases if these women failed to yield to their demands normally resulted into something different. At the end of it all, most of these women are left between the deep blue sea and the devil.

Domestic violence is also common as most women are completely condemned to either be in the kitchen or taking care of the children without any form of "French leave." The issue of French leave normally breeds violence between husband and wife even though discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity.

Therefore, we need to take our wives as partners in development instead of creating obstacles to their participation in development programs that would not only develop our societies but the country as a whole.

The act of violence against our women folks should be totally discourage as there are so many women in the streets who can make meaningful developments. It is very common today as young girls and women are forced beyond their wish to join secret societies and those who failed definitely bear the consequences. Investigation carried out by human rights groups indicate that young girls and women have lost their lives as a result of this crude and barbaric culture.

Therefore, it is a violent act against our women folk and it is imperative on the authorities concerned to legislate laws against the forced conscription into these secrete societies.

Another issue which is still in the public domain is that of rape. It is a criminal act and culprits should face the full penalty of the law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that every one is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction based on sex".

Certainly, the government should uphold these protocols that seek to promote the interest of women and children, as they have suffered immensely and are still suffering.

"If we want to progress as a nation, it is imperative on us to stop all forms of violence against women and children," Nelson Mandela of South Africa urged African leaders in 1999.

See you next Monday

Another issue which is still in the public domain is that of rape. It is a criminal act and culprits should face the full penalty of the law

"I decided to go into prostitution as a result of no care, love and worst of it all, financial difficulties," Marie explained bitterly, adding that no family member could encourage her to pursue her education as she had planned to become a nurse.

Like any other young girl on the streets of Freetown, Marie started her trade at the age of

Social and Cultural Rights is particularly spelt out in articles relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children.

However, the declaration of the Rights of the Child clearly indicates that "a child, by reason of its physical and mental immaturity, needs specialized

for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right".

Women in this country are also prone to all forms of discrimination and violence and most of them are enduring abuses such as sexual harassment in their places of work by either their immediate employers or supervisors.

Domestic violence is also common as most women are completely condemned to either be in the kitchen or taking care of the children without any form of 'French leave'

Concord Times

Tuesday, 21 February 2007

Britain raises concern over Golley's detention

Oury Clark, lawyer for former Spokesman of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Micheal Omrie Golley, has in a press release issued Monday stated that the British Government and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) have raised concern to the

Cont. page 3

Britain raises concern over Golley's detention

From page 1 Commission would how his various Government of Sierra Leone over the continues human rights abuse of his client at the Pademba Road prisons. like to express its concern at the circumstances surrounding the recent hearings, at which the panel of judges convened which consisted of the same judges that had made the ruling on Mr Golley's motions were challenging," Oury quoted the British High Commission in Freetown expressing concern at the continued delay in the Supreme Court motions in the case of Omrie Golley and the consequent postponement of his trial. "Further, the British High Commission would like to express its concern at the circumstances surrounding the recent hearings, at which the panel of judges convened which consisted of the same judges that had made the ruling on Mr Golley's motions were challenging," Oury quoted the British High Commission's Note Verbale. The Note Verbale according to Oury, pointed out that the Sierra Leonean Government had an "undertaking to provide an update on Mr Golley's case which clearly sets out the stage that has been reached and how his various constitutional motions will be taken forward in a manner that is timely and in accordance with international standards". He recalled that in August 2006, Mr Golley's legal team filed a complaint stating that the Sierra Leonean Government had violated Mr Golley's rights under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights. "Mr Golley was arrested in January 2006 and has been refused bail without any reasons being given," Oury concluded

PEEP!

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

Blood Diamond: Are We Africans Born To Suffer?

I take back everything I've said about *Blood Diamond* - the new Hollywood release on the Sierra Leonean rebel war.

I saw it this weekend (in pirated format - where else?). It is a sensitive and intelligent film.

a sensitive film

I didn't realise that it was directed by Edward Zwick. Zwick is not your average Hollywood blockbuster director.

He's a director with an acute political and social conscience. He picks his subjects carefully.

Zwick directed the 1987 hit 'Glory' about a regiment of African - Americans who fought in the U.S Civil War and the prejudices they encountered - and the honour when they participated in the storming of the Charleston Forts in 1863. This was based on a true story.

The Last Samurai, directed by Zwick and starring Tom Cruise, was also loosely based on the real story of how the Japanese warrior class (*Samurai*) was eliminated in

the 1860s, by the new modernist and westernised urban class determined to bring Japan into the modern world.

Although in *Blood Diamond*, Zwick takes some liberties with historical facts, he does attempt to truthfully depict the issues at the heart of the rebel war.

The rebels are presented as demons. But the moral ambiguity of the government and the mercenaries (who switch sides at will - depending where the higher profit lies) is accurately shown.

The real villains of *Blood Dia-*



Di Caprio: brilliant performance

mond are the international diamond dealers who, as *Danny Archer* (Leonardo Di Caprio), the mercenary points out, 'don't actually fund the war.... but keep it boiling over for their profit'.

Although no big diamond dealers were actually caught in red life, as they are in the film, it is clear that their hands were stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of those who died or were mutilated during the conflict.

simple and true story

The story is simple. Solomon Vandy (*Dijimon Hounsou*) is a Mende fisherman. His village is attacked by rebels. His family escapes but his son - Dia - is later captured and forcibly enlisted as an RUF child soldier.

Vandy is forced to work in the Kono diamond pits where he discovers a huge pink gem which he buries.

An RUF commander spots him, but the area is retaken and both

arrested for smuggling gems, and hears the story of the huge pink gem when he and Vandy meet in prison.

From that moment on he will do anything and everything to lay his hands on the gem which he sees as his ticket out of Africa.

true to character

Leonardo Di Caprio is very good in this film. No longer the *Titanic* pretty boy, he gives a convincing performance as Archer, former Rhodesian Mercenary who has spent time killing 'kaffirs'.

Even in his final act of 'heroism', seizing the diamond from his former commander and killing him - it's not that he shows a miraculous change of heart. He is determined to get his hands on what

Archer's determination to find the gem is more than matched by Solomon Vandy's love for his son



Hounsou: full of passion

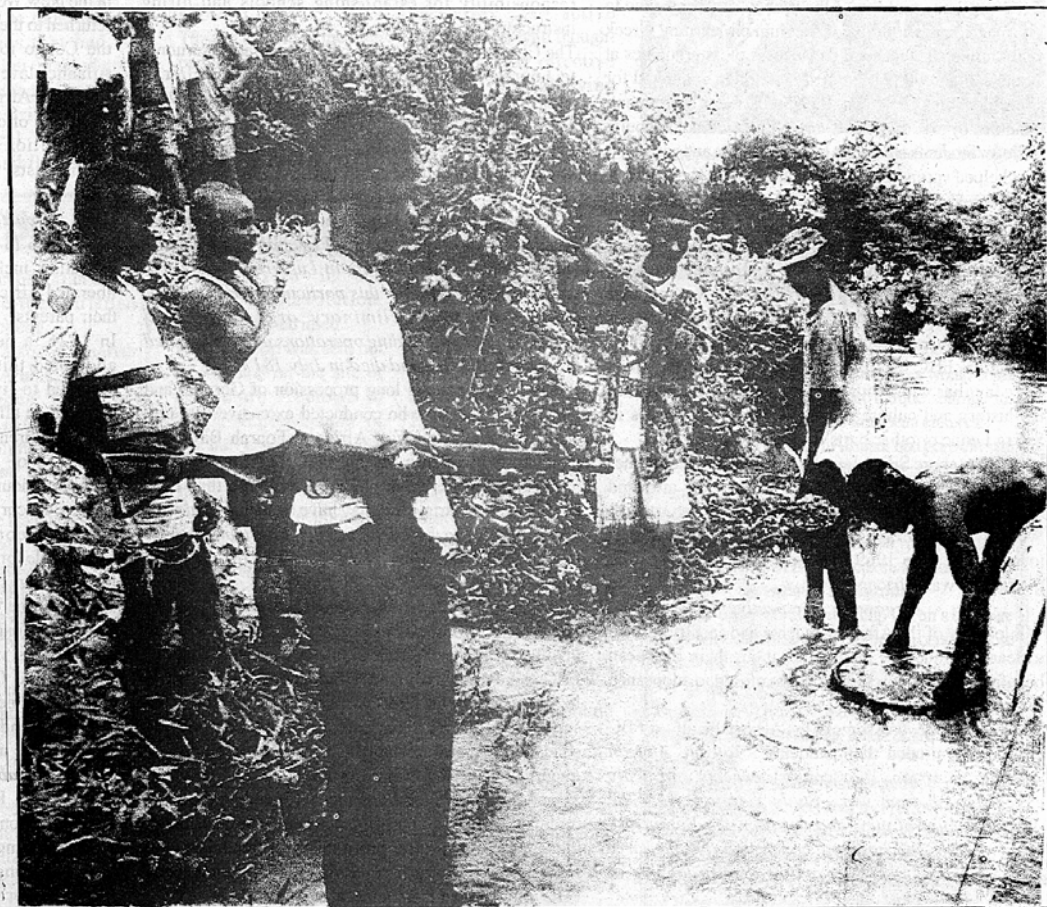
and his often fruitless efforts to save him (*Dia denounces his father as a 'traitor' and actually calls his RUF child combatant*

eternal misery

The villains are exposed and the eternal misery of the African people; caught between greedy factions (black and white) determined to enrich themselves is accurately portrayed.

Try and get yourself a copy of *Blood Diamond*. Don't worry about the World Trade Organisation. They won't sue you for watching a pirated copy!

I even forgive the producers for filming most of *Blood Diamond* in Mozambique. That country too has gone through a brutal rebel war and parts of it bear a haunting resemblance to Sierra



no exaggeration in the way *Blood Diamond* portrays semi-slavery in RUF controlled mines in Kono...

Vandy and the RUF warlord are imprisoned.

Danny Archer, a mercenary dealing guns with the rebels in exchange for the diamonds the RUF forces people to dig for, is also

he sees as a ticket to prosperity and a good life.

Hounsou, who played *Sengbe Pieh* in *Amistad*, must be used to playing a Sierra Leonean of Mende extraction by now.

mates to arrest him).

The diamond is found Solomon Vandy rescues his beloved son. Archer dies in the process; though he admits that the idea of stealing the gem 'had occurred to him'.

Leone.

As is said in the film, *Dis Is Africa* (D.I.A) and our history and our lives differ little.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 20 February 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian leader to address women lawmakers in Rwanda

MONROVIA, Feb 20, 2007 (AFP) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been invited to Rwanda as the star guest to address a parliament that annually gathers women politicians from across Africa, her office announced Tuesday. "The president has been invited by the Rwandan parliament to serve as keynote speaker during the ... parliamentary conference of that country," her assistant press secretary Charles Nelson said on state radio.

Guinea's Fragile Neighbours seek to thrash Out Crisis

CONAKRY, Feb 20, 2007 (AFP) - Leaders of Guinea's neighbors, Sierra Leone and Liberia, flew into Conakry on Tuesday in a bid to resolve the political crisis threatening regional stability, national radio said. Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone were received at Conakry airport by Guinea's newly appointed but strongly contested Prime Minister Eugene Camara. They were driven off to the "presidential palace where they must meet President (Lansana) Conte," said the radio.

International Clips on West Africa

AP 02/19/2007 06:00:56

Ivory Coast orders autopsy on French diplomat shot dead

PARFAIT KOUASSI

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast - An Ivory Coast coroner will conduct an autopsy on Monday on the body of a French diplomat shot dead in his Abidjan home. Michel Niaucel was shot with his own gun and died in the home he shared with his wife and children in Ivory Coast's southern commercial capital on the night of Feb. 6. He was in charge of West Africa security operations for the European Union. His wife, Karine Niaucel, was charged with his murder last week, officials said. The autopsy is scheduled for Monday and will take place in the presence of French medical experts, who flew to Abidjan following the diplomat's death.

Local Media – Newspaper

Minister Apologizes to President over Sex Scandal

(The Analyst, New Democrat, Heritage, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The News, New Vision, The Independent and The Liberian Diaspora)

- The Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Willis Knuckles on Monday apologized to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, his family, friends and associates after the publication of a photograph of him and two ladies having sexual intercourse.
- Monday's apology by Mr. Knuckles, according to some analysts in the New Democrat is an "indirect admission" of guilt.

- In violation of media law and ethics, *The Independent* published an obscene photograph portraying a male claimed to be Mr. Knuckles in an orgy with two ladies. But Liberia's Solicitor General Counsellor Tiawon Gongloe said the publication of the obscene photo was against public morality and that the police would investigate the publisher of *The Independent* newspaper.
- The Minister accused Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Snowe and an unnamed female legislator of being the sponsors of the publication.

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

Minister Apologizes to President over Sex Scandal

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Information Minister-designate Faces Senate Confirmation Today

- A release from the House of Senate's Committee on Information and Broadcasting, said that Information Minister-designate Dr. Laurence Bropleh will today, Tuesday, face the Senate confirmation hearing and that the Committee has invited journalists and the public to attend the hearing.
- Dr. Bropleh was nominated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf following the resignation of former Information Minister Johnnie McClain.

AIDS Carriers Say Family Members Discriminate against them

- The LIGHT Association, a group of people living with HIV/AIDS said that most of the discrimination against HIV/AIDS positive people was orchestrated by family members.
- Appearing on a radio talk show yesterday, the Association's Media Officer, Ms. Kpannah Jallah called for an end to discrimination and stigmatization in the family and at the workplace and urged Liberians to undergo voluntary testing in order to know their status because knowing and accepting one's status was key in the prevention against the disease.

UNMIL Dismisses Reports of Recruitment of Liberian Mercenaries

- The Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Liberia Lt.-Gen. Isaac Chikadibia Obiakor dismissed reports that recruitment of mercenaries was taking place inside Liberia to participate in the Guinean conflict, and described as "bogus and baseless" the assertion that Guinean President Lansana Conteh was recruiting Liberians in Lofa and Nimba Counties.
- Lt.-Gen. Obiakor told a news conference that it could not be true that President Conteh would recruit fighters from Liberia with the backing he enjoys from the Guinean Army.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UNDP Launches Arms for Development in Butuo, Nimba County

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said that it was launching its arms for development programme in Butuo, Nimba County. Under the programme, the UN agency has set aside US\$25,000 for any project identified by the community in exchange for hidden arms.
- The Communication Officer of the UNDP Small Arms Program, Ms Elma Shaw said that the people of Butuo were happy for the programme but complained of the lack of UNMIL soldiers in the area.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

President Johnson-Sirleaf Addresses Rwandan Parliament

- According to a statement issued by the Executive Mansion yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf would today, Tuesday travel to Rwanda to address the 10th Anniversary of the Rwandan Women Parliamentary Network.

- The Liberian leader would be accompanied by Senators Gloria Scott, Joyce Sumo, Hannah Brent and Representatives Alominza Ennos and Victoria Lynch with financial support from former United States Ambassador Sewanee Hunt.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberian Leader Expresses Concern about Guinean Crisis

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that she was concerned about the Guinean crisis and was in consultation with President Tejan Kabah of Sierra Leone how the Mano River Union could intervene to restore peace and reconciliation to Guinea, Assistant Press Secretary Charles Nelson told reporters yesterday. President Johnson-Sirleaf called on Liberians to stay away from the conflict.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Nimba County District Votes in By-Election Run Off

- Voters in Electoral District #6, in Nimba County, will today, Tuesday, go to the poll in a run-off Legislative by-election in which Liberia Action Party candidate Paul Tuazama and Unity Party candidate Evans Koah are contesting.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

Reuters

Tuesday, 21 February 2007

Guinea Unrest Worries Neighbours Liberia, S. Leone

By Saliou Samb

CONAKRY, Feb 20 (Reuters) - The presidents of Liberia and Sierra Leone met their Guinean counterpart Lansana Conte on Tuesday to try to prevent violent political unrest in his country from destabilising theirs.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Sierra Leonean head of state Ahmad Tejan Kabbah met the Guinean leader eight days after he declared martial law to quell a popular insurrection against his 23-year-rule.

The talks covered border cooperation and regional security concerns, including reports that Liberian ex-rebels were being recruited to fight in Guinea if the crisis in the West African state descended into all-out civil war.

More than 120 people, mostly unarmed civilians, have been killed since the beginning of the year in Guinea in clashes between security forces and protesters led by unions demanding that the reclusive Conte, who is in his 70s, cede power.

Although draconian martial law measures have restored calm to the world's leading bauxite exporter, analysts have warned the Guinean unrest could suck in and destabilise neighbouring states in one of Africa's most volatile regions.

"President (Johnson-Sirleaf) is very much concerned about the situation in Guinea and wants to see how she, along with Kabbah, can help bring peace and reconciliation to that sister country," a spokesman for the Liberian president said.

The latest bout of protests came after Conte named an old ally, Eugene Camara, as prime minister despite having earlier agreed to choose a consensus figure.

Union leaders met senior state officials to try to resolve the crisis on Tuesday but the talks ended in failure after strike leaders refused to endorse Camara's nomination.

"They asked us to approve an unpopular decision ... with all these deaths and all this damage we could not take the risk. The prime minister absolutely has to be changed," union negotiator Boubacar Biro Barry said.

RECRUITMENT RUMOURS

Liberia and Sierra Leone are trying to recover from brutal civil wars that involved some rebel groups backed by Conte.

Guinean officials said a delegation from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS, which held talks with Conte at the weekend, had warned of possible attacks by former Liberian rebels on Guinea's southeast border with Liberia.

Several thousand ex-rebels from Liberia and Sierra Leone still live in Guinea, especially in the hilly, thickly wooded southeast Forestiere region which borders these countries.

As Guinean soldiers have struggled to contain the violent anti-Conte protests at home, rumours have surfaced that former fighters of the Liberian ex-rebel group LURD were being recruited to help the Guinean president maintain control.

Guinea's military have categorically denied that.

Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf called for any such recruitment to cease, her spokesman said. "No Liberian should allow himself to be recruited," Charles Nelson said in Monrovia.

Conte's Guinea had sheltered and armed the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) rebels who fought against former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor.

Northwestern neighbour Guinea-Bissau, whose President Joao Bernardo Vieira is a personal friend of Conte, has denied sending troops to help him stay in power. *(Additional reporting by Alphonso Toweh in Monrovia)*

Voice of America

Tuesday, 20 February 2007

Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Leaders Meet



Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attends opening session of ECOWAS summit, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 19 Jan 2007

The leaders of Liberia and Sierra Leone met in Guinea with embattled President Lansana Conte, amid concerns his forces have been trying to recruit former rebels in Liberia. The West African regional group ECOWAS is also trying to help defuse tensions in Guinea. VOA's Nico Colombant reports from our regional bureau in Dakar that Guinea union leaders are continuing a crippling and sometimes deadly strike action.

Prior to the meeting in Conakry, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf released a statement saying she would not tolerate Liberians being recruited as mercenaries.

One of her spokesmen said she made the trip with Sierra Leone President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to help bring peace and

reconciliation to Guinea.

The three countries are part of what is known as the Mano River Union.

In nearby Burkina Faso, a mediator for the West African group ECOWAS, Ibrahima Babanguida, met with the group's current head, Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, and said he was pressing on with his own efforts.

"I think as long as we engage ourselves in dialogue, there will always be a solution to the problem," he said. "We should be able to bring in the experiences of these countries to bear on our sister country so that things do not get out of hand."

A West Africa analyst with the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, Gilles Yabi, warns Mr. Conte will be difficult to deal with.

"It is difficult to have leverage especially with President Conte because he is a very eccentric [president], who is used to staying in his country, who has few diplomatic connections and who really does not care about external pressure," said Yabi.

Another analyst, who recently spent time in Guinea, Dustin Sharp, from U.S.-based Human Rights Watch, agrees, but applauds the outside effort.

"I think the stakes are too high. I think all of Guinea's neighbors and the international community in general need to take a strong interest and keep pressing," said Sharp.

Sharp says he believes Guinea, in his words, is on the brink of a precipice.

"It would not be the first time that legitimate grievances have given birth to rebel movements or other types of insurgencies," he said. "No one wants to see that happen. And it is for that very reason that we are in a very dangerous situation."

Sharp says Human Rights Watch has also been closely monitoring reports that Mr. Conte's forces are recruiting former Liberian rebels.

"According to interviews that we have done with long standing contacts in Liberia, numerous people have been approached in Liberia to be recruited in missions in Guinea. So we do not have concrete information about troop deployments or numbers, but we do believe recruitment has taken place," he said.

During Liberia's recent civil war, Mr. Conte backed the main rebel group.

Guinea is under martial law, following a round of looting by angry protesters calling for Mr. Conte to resign. He has been in power since a coup in 1984.

Patriotic Vanguard

Monday, 19 February 2007

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=1021

A Lurking, Looming and Familiar Danger for Sierra Leone

"In failing to uncover the primary cause of SL's vicious civil war, the TRC made it more — rather than less — likely that future governments of SL would unwittingly stumble into actions that would replicate those that actually led to the last civil war in SL. Accordingly, probably unbeknown to the government of SL, the current violent civil unrest in neighboring Guinea poses precisely such danger."

By Mohamed A. Jalloh, Maryland, USA.

The recent declaration of martial law in neighboring Guinea amidst the escalating murderous confrontation between the Guinean government and a large number of ordinary Guineans constitutes the latest potential tinderbox in the Mano Union countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Ominously, it poses a hidden, mortal danger to millions of Sierra Leoneans that should be all too familiar to those who remember how SL's own "civil war" started in 1991.

Ironically, the lurking lethal danger to Sierra Leoneans from Guinea's escalating crisis has been unwittingly masked by the action of an unlikely culprit — SL's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC had been actually set up by the government at the end of SL's decade-long civil war in order to uncover the lessons from the war. The hope thereby was to help prevent another civil war. However, the TRC missed an opportunity to accurately identify the root cause of the so-called civil war in SL — by concluding in its final report that the war resulted from Sierra Leoneans' increasing conviction that "the structures of governance could only be changed through violence."

In failing to uncover the primary cause of SL's vicious civil war, the TRC made it more — rather than less — likely that future governments of SL would unwittingly stumble into actions that would replicate those that actually led to the last civil war in SL. Accordingly, probably unbeknown to the government of SL, the current violent civil unrest in neighboring Guinea poses precisely such danger.

In order to assess that danger, in particular, and that posed to SL, in general, as a result of uninformed action by the SL government in the wake of civil conflict in a neighboring country, it is necessary to examine how such action by the APC government of President Joseph Momoh unwittingly facilitated the Revolutionary United Front's invasion of SL from neighboring Liberia in 1991. It was that invasion that started SL's own civil war in 1991.

Back then, it was Sierra Leone's neighbor to the south, Liberia, which was embroiled in its own escalating, vicious civil confrontation involving several armed Liberian groups opposed to the government of Liberian President Samuel Doe. Among those groups was one led by an escaped fugitive from an American jail. His name was Charles Taylor, a Liberian who had been detained by authorities in the state of Massachusetts on allegations of embezzlement made by the Liberian government in which he had been a procurement official.

The fugitive, Taylor, eventually surfaced in Liberia in 1989 to launch a vengeful invasion of his own country from neighboring Ivory Coast. His stated goal was to overthrow the government of

President Doe. The latter had facilitated Taylor's involuntary residence in an American jail by requesting Taylor's extradition from the U.S. to Liberia to face charges for alleged embezzlement of nearly a million dollars of Liberian government money. Taylor's invasion of Liberia in 1989 from a conspiring neighboring Ivory Coast started a civil war in Liberia that would last for fourteen years, despite Taylor's election as president of Liberia in 1997.

It was the same, similarly vengeful Taylor who, in the early days of the Liberian civil war, provided crucial territorial, logistics and other support to his fellow Libyan terrorist training camp alumnus, Foday Sankoh, that enabled the latter's RUF armed thugs to invade SL in 1991. As was the case with Taylor's invasion of his own country two years earlier, Sankoh's stated goal was to overthrow his own country's government, then headed by Sankoh's own nemesis, President Joseph Momoh of the APC. Significantly, both Sankoh and Taylor were implacably united in an identical goal — revenging themselves on the APC government of President Momoh.

Therefore, the primary motivation for the RUF invasion in 1991 — and the resulting "civil war" that lasted until 2002 — was the concerted quest of its key leaders, Taylor and Sankoh, for revenge against SL's President Momoh. Their quest benefited from the similar quest for revenge by their common benefactor, Libya's leader, Muammar Ghadaffi.

For Sankoh, it was revenge for the APC government's imprisonment of himself during the 1970s for his alleged role in a coup d'état against Momoh's predecessor, President Siaka Stevens of the APC. In the case of Taylor, he was bent on revenging himself on Momoh's APC government for providing a base for the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, that had thwarted his initial bid to violently take over Liberia's capital in 1990, and thereby overthrow the government of his nemesis, President Doe. For his part, the Libyan leader, Ghadaffi, sought revenge against his former protege, then Liberian President Samuel Doe. He had been betrayed by Doe at the insistence of America, despite the fact that Libya was initially the first — and for some time, the sole — country to recognize then-Sgt. Doe's regime following his overthrow and execution of Liberian President William Tolbert.

The result of Taylor's and Sankoh's concerted quest for revenge against the APC government, with the varied support of assorted foreign governments (Libya, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso), was SL's ten year long civil war that unleashed unprecedented barbarity against millions of innocent Sierra Leoneans at the hands of mostly Sankoh's RUF bandits.

Significantly, the opportunity to easily seize and exploit SL's diamond fields for their personal aggrandizement, including the financing of the RUF's atrocities and those of Taylor's own rebel gang, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was a bonus for both marauders after the launch of their invasion of SL. However, it was not likely to have been the overriding factor in their vengeance-driven attack against the APC government of their common enemy, President Momoh. Sierra Leoneans have only recently emerged from that most bestial period in our country's history, which ended in 2002.

If, sadly, the current spiraling violence in Guinea does end up in a civil war, as some commentators predict, then it would be eminently accurate to place the cause of any such civil war as rooted in the Guinean people's increasing conviction that "the structures of governance could only be changed through violence." This is because the preeminent demand of the trade unions leading the nationwide protests that sparked the current violent crisis in Guinea has been the replacement of President Lansana Conte as head of state of Guinea.

A careful comparison of the Guinean situation with that in SL just prior to the start of the "civil war" in 1991 shows a stark contrast between the two in one key aspect. Unlike any civil war that may unfortunately result from Guinea's current unrest, the "civil war" in SL that started with the invasion of SL's eastern province by so-called RUF rebels was not initiated by a frustrated, explicit national demand by the people of SL for the replacement of then President Joseph Momoh.

On the contrary, the RUF incursion into SL in 1991 was solely the result of purely selfish designs by Foday Sankoh and a relatively few others, as noted above. Their bloody invasion of their own homeland and campaign of terror against their own people were sponsored by a veritable cabal of international pariahs. (For details about the identities of the members of the cabal, please see my 2005 article, "The Truth that the TRC Failed to Uncover in Sierra Leone." http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_2005782.shtml)

As noted earlier, a key member of the foreign sponsors of the more than ten-year long atrocities in SL was the then Liberian fugitive from U.S. justice (and current indicted war criminal), Charles Taylor. It bears reiterating that neither Sankoh nor the foreigner, Taylor, was acting on behalf of the people of SL when they initiated their decade-long criminal assault on innocent Sierra Leoneans in 1991. Therefore, it is patently false to state, as the SL Truth and Reconciliation Commission surprisingly stated in its final report, that the decade-long atrocities that resulted from the foreign-sponsored RUF criminal assault on the people of SL was the result of their increasing conviction that "the structures of governance could only be changed through violence."

In 2005, that key misjudgment by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was identified as a fatal flaw in its otherwise excellent findings contained in its final report. Cf. "The Truth that the TRC Failed to Uncover in Sierra Leone." http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_2005782.shtml

As the current explosive situation in neighboring Guinea shows, that published disagreement with the crucial conclusion of the TRC is not merely academic. Particularly significant are reports that the SLPP government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah is providing material support, using SL's resources, to the embattled government of Guinean President Lansana Conteh in its murderous repression of popular protests against his continued tenure. If those reports are true, then President Kabbah would have replicated a situation similar to that which had been created by his predecessor, President Momoh, less than one year before the "civil war" in SL started in 1991. For, it was in 1990 that President Momoh provided SL's Lungi airport as a staging ground for the West African force named ECOMOG. It used it in its successful push back against Taylor's own push to violently overthrow then President Samuel Doe.

Clearly, Liberia's demonstrably vengeful Charles Taylor's revenge against SL's President Momoh was entirely predictable. Slightly less predictable (on account of a lack of a prior history) was the unprecedented barbaric RUF invasion which Taylor used as the means of exacting his revenge against Momoh. Taylor's revenge did not merely bring the RUF marauding into SL in 1991. It also brought, through the widespread atrocities indiscriminately committed by the RUF for more than a decade, untold grief to millions of Sierra Leoneans in the form of murder, mutilation, torture, rape, arson, and mass displacement.

It is a lesson that President Momoh's successor in the current SL government, President Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP, ignores at the grave peril of the recently traumatized people of SL, who have already paid an untenably high price for another, earlier mistake by another SL president.

Cocorioko Website

Monday, 19 February 2007

UK GOVT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION ACT ON THE GOLLEY CASE

UK Government and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights act on Golley case

The British Government and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) have voiced their increasing concerns to the Government of Sierra Leone over human rights issues relating to Omrie Golley, the former Chairman of the Peace Council of the Revolutionary United Front, who is facing treason charges in Freetown.

In a Note Verbale handed to the Foreign Ministry in Freetown on February 13, the British High Commission expressed "concern at the continued delays in the Supreme Court motions in the case of Omrie Golley and the consequent postponement of his trial".

It went on: "Further, the British High Commission would like to express its concern at the circumstances surrounding the recent hearings, at which the panel of judges convened consisted of the same judges that had made the ex parte ruling Mr Golley's motions were challenging."

Mr Golley was arrested in January 2006 and has been refused bail without any reasons being given.

The Note Verbale pointed out that the Sierra Leonean Government had an "undertaking to provide an update on Mr Golley's case which clearly sets out the stage that has been reached and how his various constitutional motions will be taken forward in a manner that is timely and in accordance with international standards".

On February 6, the Banjul-based African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights informed Mr Golley's British lawyers, Oury Clark Solicitors, that the ACHPR would examine their complaints of human right violations against the Government of Sierra Leone later this year. In August 2006, Mr Golley's legal team had filed a complaint stating that the Sierra Leonean Government had violated Mr Golley's rights under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights.

The letter notes: "The African Commission wishes to inform you that at its 40th Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia from 15th – 29th November 2006, it considered [the Golley communication] and decided to be seized thereof."

International Justice Tribune

Monday, 19 February 2007

Justice - New Investment Opportunity for Microsoft?

Adele Waugaman, with Anne Laure Porée

Recent gifts by Microsoft to the UN-backed Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Cambodia and a project reintegrating former paramilitaries in Colombia may signal a new era of private sector philanthropy. The burgeoning field of international justice is certainly in need of additional sources of funding, but would corporate contributions come at a hidden cost?

In mid-January the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), that will try Khmer Rouge leaders, announced that it had received a \$100,000 gift from Microsoft. That news followed reports in October of a Microsoft pledge worth over \$300,000 to fund a training program designed by the Organization of American States' Trust for the Americas to help reintegrate Colombian former paramilitaries into mainstream society.

Microsoft declined a request to discuss the policy behind these specific projects, referring instead to the mission driving its broader corporate social responsibility work. "Governments tell us they need help to look for ways to help their citizens, local industries, and communities to accelerate social and economic development," a Microsoft statement said.

Microsoft's funding of these projects may be an incidental consequence of the corporation's broader human rights push, rather than the product of a specific plan or policy to support criminal justice processes. But to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, which is suffering a budget shortfall, the gift is anything but incidental. "This is the first and, so far, only corporate donation to the court," said Peter Foster, a spokesperson for the ECCC.

In fact, the Microsoft contribution may well be the first corporate gift to any international tribunal. Officials at other courts - including the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the UN tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia - confirmed that they had no record of financial gifts made directly by major multinational corporations. Guidelines for accepting voluntary gifts vary between tribunals. While the ECCC has none, the ICC may use voluntary contributions only as additional funds outside of the core budget paid by member states. The Sierra Leone Court, on the other hand, is financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

Corporate foundations and individual philanthropists whose success has been made in the business world have long been a crucial source of funding for international justice work. Traditionally this funding has been directed toward university research centers and non-governmental organizations, but foundations have also funded ancillary projects of tribunals themselves. For instance, the Ford Foundation is currently paying for an independent consultant to help with fund-raising for the Sierra Leone Court.

"Separate the donor and budget"

"The recent reluctance of the international community to guarantee funding for international and hybrid tribunals [makes it] inevitable that these institutions have to look at creative ways to

fundraise," creating the need for new policies governing the acceptance of such funds, says Caitlin Reiger, senior associate at the International Center for Transitional Justice.

Alison Kamhi of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, a Phnom Penh-based NGO, thinks private funding of the ECCC should remain under constant scrutiny. In her organization's newsletter, *Searching for the Truth*, Kamhi proposes the creation of an internal oversight group to "process all private donations, ensuring that large corporations do not gain too much influence in internal tribunal proceedings [and] individual donations [do not become] personal bribes."

While he agrees that direct funding for courts' main activities and expenses - such as judges' salaries - raises ethical problems, Cesare Romano, a professor at Loyola Law School Los Angeles, believes that this should not hinder private sector contributions to the field of international justice. "If you want to open the doors to private funding, just put a few degrees of separation between the donor and budget," he said.

BBC

Tuesday, 20 February 2007

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6380095.stm>

DRC Troops Jailed for War Crimes

Thirteen soldiers have been jailed for life after the discovery of mass graves in the north-eastern Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A military court found them guilty of killing about 30 civilians found buried in the graves in November last year.

This is one of the few times armed men have been punished for atrocities since the DR Congo conflict began in 1997.



The mass graves were found in November last year

Renewed fighting between government and rebels in the north-east is reported to have left more than 20 people dead.

The operational commander for North Kivu, Colonel Delphin Kayimbe, said 20 rebels and three government soldiers were killed in a remote part of the Virunga national park, near the border with Uganda.

The UN says more than 8,000 people were displaced by the fighting, which broke out when the army moved into an area previously occupied by rebels from the Mai Mai and Rwandan Hutu FDLR movements.

Abducted

Of the 13 men sentenced over war crimes at the village of Bavi, four were tried in their absence. A captain was given a suspended sentence and a lieutenant was acquitted.

Those found guilty were also ordered to pay large fines to the victims' families.

They have five days to appeal.

The victims were believed to have disappeared in army operations against local militias early in 2006.

The three mass graves at Bavi - about 40kms (25 miles) from Bunia - were found in November last year after a tip-off from a soldier.



[DRC army blamed for killings](#)

Witnesses said the military men "abducted the civilians and then forced them to work in local gold mines, to harvest food products and to transport goods", according to the AFP news agency.

The head of a local NGO Justice Plus told AFP the civilians were probably killed to cover up any traces of the abduction.

The soldiers who were tried came from the army's First Brigade - one of several made up of fighters from factions who fought in DR Congo's 1998-2003 war.

In a separate trial in Bunia, four members of the same unit were jailed for life for the murder of two UN military observers in 2003.

Two others were given jail terms of 10 and 20 years.

The murders took place in the mining community of Mongwalu, 70 kilometres north of Bunia on 12 May 2003 when the soldiers - then fighting with an Ituri militia - surrounded and "savagely killed" the two men, the UN said.

Following last year's landmark elections, DR Congo is supposed to be returning to normality after decades of conflict and mismanagement.

BBC

Tuesday, 20 February 2007

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6379587.stm

Afghan War Crimes Amnesty Passed

The upper house of the Afghan parliament has passed a controversial bill giving amnesty to people accused of war crimes over the past 30 years.

Both houses have now backed the bill. It has yet to be signed by President Hamid Karzai, who could veto it.



President Karzai is known to oppose the amnesty

Many atrocities were committed under Soviet rule, as well as by mujahideen leaders who fought a civil war and finally by the Taliban.

Many victims have reacted angrily to the idea of an amnesty.

Some MPs in the lower house, which passed the bill last month, now say they did not understand its implications when they voted for it.

Supporters of the amnesty say it is a move towards reconciliation. They say if it does not happen there will be more war.

President Karzai is known to be opposed to the bill.

In the warlord period some 80,000 civilians died in Kabul alone. Large numbers of others were kidnapped, mutilated or raped.

The United Nations and Afghan's leading rights groups say only victims of war crimes can forgive the perpetrators.

CNN

Monday, 12 February 2007

<http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/africa/02/12/btsc.koinange.childsoldiers/index.html>

Koinange: Friend gunned down by child soldiers

Editor's note: In our Behind the Scenes series, CNN correspondents share their experiences in covering news and analyze the stories behind the events. Here, CNN Africa correspondent Jeff Koinange describes his first encounter with child soldiers.

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (CNN) -- I still get chills when I think about my first encounter with child soldiers. It came only minutes before my cameraman burst into my room -- blood splattered on his shirt and tears in his eyes.

"Myles is dead! Myles is dead!" he shouted, wailing uncontrollably.

Myles Tierney was a journalist and friend who had been covering the brutal and intense fighting in Sierra Leone in 1999. He was killed when child soldiers opened fire on the vehicle he was traveling in. I had been in the same convoy. But about five minutes before that fateful moment I had gone back to my hotel room to transmit pictures to Reuters Television headquarters in London. (Audio Slide Show: My first deadly encounter with child soldiers)

I'm haunted by questions I've never been able to answer: What if I'd been there? What would I have done? Would I be alive today?

That day, January 10, 1999, had started off as a gorgeous day in the capital of Freetown. I had been there for four days covering some of the most brutal and intensive fighting I had ever seen. But on this day, the sun was beaming, the sky was an unusual blue, not a cloud was in sight. It provided an eerie, tranquil contrast to what I had witnessed in the days before.

"It's the kind of day one would wish to die in," a colleague had said, not knowing how ominous that statement would be in hindsight.

Death firsthand

Rebels had stormed Freetown in the days before and, in a scorched earth policy, set the capital on fire. Many of the buildings were ablaze: churches, mosques, schools, even the U.N. regional headquarters downtown.

For four days all we could do was film the billowing, dark smoke from our hotel rooms, which were in a part of town the rebels had not yet reached. That day would be our first in the streets since the violence began. We were a little scared but eager to go.

We'd convinced the West African peacekeepers to take us -- ourselves and our competition, Associated Press Television, for which Myles was working -- to see the death of a city firsthand.

We set out sandwiched in the middle of a huge convoy of military vehicles carrying two dozen soldiers.

Bodies of men, women and even children littered street after street. Vultures, and stray dogs and cats preyed on the rotting corpses. One dog picking at a trash can came away with a human arm, from elbow to fingers.

Once in a while we'd pass a checkpoint "manned" by very young soldiers. I remember remarking how young they were.

"Child soldiers," said one of the peacekeepers. "The rebels use them as their first line of fire."

"Aren't you afraid they'll shoot at you?" I replied.

"We're the men; they're merely children. Even in war, they have to respect that," the peacekeeper said.

Children opened fire

Eventually, I decided I needed to head back to transmit what I thought were some pretty amazing pictures. I told my cameraman to continue with the convoy.

The next thing I remember was that moment when my cameraman burst into the room telling me of the horrible ambush. They were driving down one of the streets soon after I'd left them and came upon a checkpoint manned by child soldiers.

Most of the peacekeepers had passed without incident, but the child soldiers opened fire on Myles and his television crew. My cameraman was in the car behind the other crew and saw it all unfold. When it happened, my cameraman's driver braked, threw the car into reverse and got out of there as fast as he could.

After some time had passed, they stopped. No one spoke. Then, a peacekeeper vehicle appeared. They asked about the other crew and were told one of them had been killed, another had a bullet in his head and had been driven to the military hospital, and the third had come through unscathed.

All of the child soldiers were killed by the peacekeepers.

My cameraman asked to be taken back to the checkpoint, where he filmed the scene. There, still sitting in the back seat, was Myles. Half his head was blown away. My cameraman couldn't film anymore. He insisted on pulling out his dead colleague and getting him to a morgue to avoid the swarming vultures.

They put Myles into one of the military vehicles, and my cameraman raced back to the hotel to tell me the news.

That day taught each of us what a child soldier is capable of.

They're victims too

I was in the early days of my journalism career back then. Since that time, I've seen the same images from the Small Boys Unit in Liberia, Les Petits in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, the Kadogos in Congo and in Somalia. Different countries, similar scenes. It's as if all the child soldiers went to the same kindergarten. (Where children are forced to fight)

Each time I was around them I felt one step away from death. One wrong move and they can turn from innocent-looking children to killers.

I've seen some as young as 8 years old, calling themselves "General Cool Runnings" or "Colonel Rambo" or "Brigadier Chop Them Up." The saddest part is we adults had to address them as such. Otherwise, you just never knew what would happen.

At the end of the day, these children are victims of older soldiers, forced into war out of personal circumstances or peer pressure. Some are seeking revenge after seeing their families slaughtered. Once they're given an AK-47 and drugs, their innocence is lost, replaced by a killer instinct.

Killing becomes second nature and doesn't stop until the killer is stopped. And that's how many child soldiers end up -- dead and mostly forgotten.