

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



Boats at River No. 2

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, 21 February 2008

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

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Concord Times
Thursday, 21 February 2008

President Koroma at Special Court

By Ibrahim Turawalle
President Ernest Bai Koroma was at the Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday to open a two-day conference on residual issues organized by expert group in one of the courtrooms.

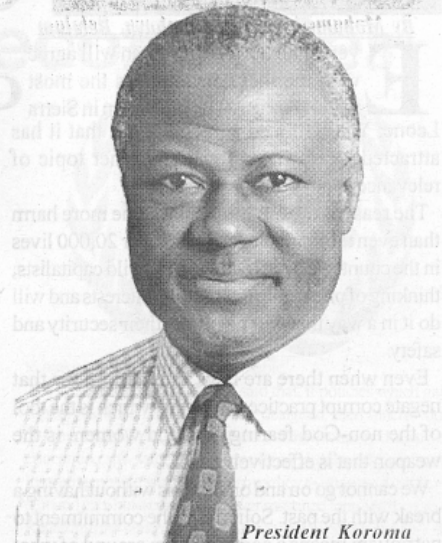
The aim of the conference was to discuss issues that would be raised after the closure of the Special Court and to identify solutions to these issues. The President said the legacy and residual

issues of the court are the top priorities for his government. "My government will do everything to look into the issues that will emerge after the conference and find ways to solve them," he

said. President of Special Court Justice George Gelaga King said the court has justified its status in the country since inception. "The issues that will be discussed in the conference are top priorities to the court."

He said his team wants to leave behind a great legacy after the life of the court would have come to an end in 2010.

Special Court Registrar Hermann Von Hebel said the outcome of the meeting would go a long way in achieving national reconciliation in the Sierra Leone.



President Koroma

Awoko

Thursday, 21 February 2008

After 9 years...

What will happen to the Special Court?

By Betty Milton

As it nears the end of its mandate in May 2010, the Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL) yesterday opened a two day Residual Issues Conference which is geared towards planning activities for its winding down.

During the programme which was held at the court room President Ernest Bai Koroma commended the work of the Court for their dedication and commitment to end impunity in the country.

The President said that the role of judges, government, civil society and management is important and crucial and this he said cannot be over emphasized.

Speaking about the agreement between the court and the government of Sierra Leone, President Koroma maintained that the agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the court was signed and passed by parliament in 2002.

"This 11.5 acre which houses the court, was donated by the government of Sierra Leone and it was a virgin land which was over five years old. This \$ 400,000 worth of building is an outstanding tribute and dedication to the handwork of those concerns."

He went on "this court will be leaving behind a magnificent legacy for children unborn."

Declaring the conference open the President said that such conference with members of the different international tribunals was held in Washington DC and the Special Court residual conference is very important for the government of Sierra Leone, urging that the original archives to the Special Court be kept here.

As the court was established to end impunity and punish those who caused atrocities on people and part of his agenda is to eliminate impunity, the President called on "other organizations such as the Bar Association, the Law Officers Department, the Police and Prison Force, the judiciary to play a part in achieving

government's aim."

In his remarks, the President of the Special Court, Justice George Gelaga-King said that the conference is vital as it is in anticipation of what will happen to the court after its closure.

Speaking about the origin of the court, Justice Gelaga-King explained that it started operations in 2002 and has indicted nine people for offences committed against international criminal law.

Justice Gelaga-King added that the court exists to ensure that those who perpetrate impunity do not go unpunished.

So far he went on, the Appeals Chamber of the court has rendered some hard decisions including an indictment against a sitting head of state under international criminal law, and also the recruitment of child soldiers below the age

of 15 in hostility.

"When the court closes down its work will not go in vain but will have a legacy to leave behind."

Sierra Leone's representative in the Management Committee of the Special Court, Mr. Allieu Kanu in his statement said that during the inaugural speech of President Koroma he had stressed that "the culture of impunity that took root in the country will be eliminated so it is incumbent for us all to tackle it in all areas."

The goal of the Special Court, he went on, is to bring justice and redress for all those who suffered impunity during the war.

What will happen to the court after it closes down? The Ambassador asked "this is now the right time to start discussion about what will happen to the court after its mandate ends."

Awoko

Thursday, 21 February 2008

Sierra Leone prisons are hell

By Saidu Bah

The Sierra Leone Prisons Watch yesterday officially launched their 2006-2007 report on prisons conditions and facilities across the country at the Grass root empowerment office at John Street in Freetown. Speaking at the launching, the programme manager of the Sierra Leone prisons watch Mambu Fekai said his organization is committed to ensuring that people held in detention are treated with respect and their rights as human beings are duly recognized and protected as provided for by international and other acceptable standards.

He disclosed that their activities include training of human rights detention monitors, lobbying, advocacy, documentation and reporting to ensure that people who are held behind the walls of the prison are treated humanely. Mr. Fekai disclosed that funds were received from the Democracy and Human Rights fund (DHRF) of the United States Embassy in Freetown Sierra Leone, to facilitate the visit to all prisons centers and also organize sensitization programmes on the human rights of detainees held in prisons. He disclosed that some of the findings and observations made at the various prisons they visited was that the youth population in prisons have increased drastically, over crowding in cells resulting in inadequate and poor makeshift accommodations, poor medical facilities and feeding, and that

there is serious shortage of prison staff at prisons. Ahmed A Turay Prisons staff officer also spoke about their efforts in improving conditions of service for prison officers and facilities for prisoners. He said they are presently working with aid agencies to facilitate skills training for prisoners and literacy education for Pademba and Moyamba prisons, to

enable them reintegrate back to their various communities and participate in the sustainable development of the country, after they have learnt their lessons. Other speakers at the launching programme include Commissioner Stanley of the Human Right Commission, Brima Jah of the Sierra Leone Police while Joachim Van Brandt projects coordinator of the US Embassy officially launched the report.

Awareness Times

Thursday, 21 February 2008

Justice Sector is underfunded says ACC Boss

BY: Vidal Boltman

His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma formally launched the Justice Sector Reform and Investment Plan for 2008-2010 yesterday Tuesday 19th February 2008 at the Miatta Conference Hall, Youyi Building in Freetown.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the occasion who is also the Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Hon. Abdul Tejan-Cole said the justice sector in the country is under funded, in addition to many other impediments thus making that sector's job difficult to execute. He went on to say that most of our laws are outdated as they date far back to colonial era, and therefore require amendments. He also stated that the justice sector needs attention for proper functioning as it seems it is working in isolation.

The legal luminary challenged that come 2010, a clear benchmark to judge the sector must be set.

In his own submission, the Attorney General and Minister of

Justice, Hon. Abdul Serry Kamal said since he took office in that capacity, one of his assignments was to see that the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan comes to fruition. He however expressed his dissatisfaction over the manner justice is being dispensed to the poor in our courts. He said for the past years, much has not been achieved to boost the sector. He disclosed that the project is at the moment being funded by DFID but with time, it will be the responsibility of the government of Sierra Leone to squarely fund it.

Also to deliver a speech was the Acting Chief Justice, Her Lady the Hon. Umu Hawa Tejan Jalloh. She praised DFID and the British Council for their immense contribution to the justice sector through the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP). She said for the sector to succeed, there must be a vision and focus, hence her elation with such an important document. She disclosed to the gathering that the Judiciary has been fully in-



Hon. Commissioner Abdul Tejan Cole speaking yesterday

volved in the process in a very holistic manner. Hon. Justice Tejan Jalloh expressed her desire to closely work with JSDP, the Police and other stakeholders in the judiciary in order to promote justice in the country. On behalf of JSDP, Lyn Keogh

expressed thanks and appreciation to the participants as she said the day marked a milestone in the working of the sector. She said the document is a culmination of a process that started since December 2005 involving various stakeholders

including donor agencies and Civil Society Movements. Lyn Keogh maintained that without the intervention of DFID, the document would not have been ready in such a record time. If they were there to proudly make the presentation she stated, much of the praise goes to UK's Government.

Before officially launching the plan, the President noted that poor delivery of justice has kept many in bondage and poverty. He said he is particularly proud to understand that all stakeholders were involved in the process as access to justice is very important for any country. The President however observed that more than 70% of Sierra Leoneans do not have access to justice and most depend on local courts which need to be formalised. Vote of thanks was by JSDP Coordinator Madam Lewis.

Cocorioko website

Thursday, 21 February 2008

PICTORIAL : President Koroma opens Special Court International Conference on residual issues



Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

Thursday, 21 February 2008



President Koroma yesterday opened the Special Court international conference to consider “residual issues” that will need to be addressed after the Court ends its judicial activities and physically closes down. (Here is a pictorial display of the opening session. President Koroma is seen giving his opening statement).



Special Court officials and members of the Special Court’s Management Committee have been joined in Freetown by UN Security Council representatives, Sierra Leone government officials, diplomats, legal experts, human rights workers, and members of civil society from Sierra Leone and around the world.

The conference was opened by the President of Sierra Leone, H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma and Delegates were welcomed by Hon. Justice George Gelaga King, the President of the Special Court. It will be co-chaired by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, and was made possible by a financial contribution from the Government of Canada.

Questions the conference will consider include identifying a specific mechanism to prosecute indictee Johnny Paul Koroma should he surface after the lifespan of the Court. Mr. Koroma’s whereabouts are unknown, and it is not known whether he is still



alive

The conference will also consider issues arising from the enforcement of sentences, how requests for a review of a judgement would be handled, and how witnesses who testified before the Special Court will be protected after the Court closes. Delegates will discuss matters relating to Special Court's archives.

PICTURE NO.2 : The participants listening to President Koroma

PICTURE NO 3 : President Koroma receives a bouquet of flowers from a primary school student.

“This is the first time such a conference has been convened by international court to find solutions to these problems,” said Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel. “It is taking place here in Sierra Leone because the Special Court is closer to completing its mandate than are the other tribunals,”

The Analyst (Liberia)
Wednesday, 20 February 2008

Special Court Convenes Int' Confab

-To Consider Residual Issues

The Special Court is convening an international conference this week to consider residual issues that will need to be addressed after the Court ends its judicial activities and physically closes down.

A statement issued said on February 20 and 21, Special Court officials and members of the Special Court Management Committee will be joined in Freetown by UN Security Council representatives, Sierra Leone government officials, diplomats, legal experts, human rights workers, and members of civil society from Sierra Leone and around the world.

The conference will be opened by the President of Sierra Leone, H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma. Delegates will be welcomed by Hon. Justice George Gelaga King, the President of the Special Court.

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Cont'd on page 10

American Bishop Speaks



Bishop Mark Vaughan

-Says There Are

Bishop Dr. Mark D. Presiding Prelate of Pastoral Fellowship United States of America is here around is poised to do what talked with the press yesterday mission and what he thinks development, peace, security

Special Court Convenes

how witnesses who testified before the Special Court will be protected after the Court closes. Delegates will discuss matters relating to Special Court archives.

This is the first time such a conference has been convened by international court to find solutions to these problems, said Special Court Registrar Herman von Hebel. It is taking place here in Sierra Leone because the Special Court is closer to completing its mandate than are the other

tribunals,

He noted that among the experts attending this week conference are officials from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The issues we deal with here will eventually confront every international court as it ends its work, Mr. von Hebel said. This conference therefore marks a significant milestone in international justice.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
20 February 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

Rousing Welcome Awaits President Bush

(The Inquirer, The Informer, The Analyst)

- The Inquirer reports that thousands of Liberians are expected to line the streets to give U.S. President George Bush a rousing welcome as he arrives in the country on Thursday.
- The Informer reports that a Ministry of Public Works team has been monitoring ongoing decoration works in several parts of Monrovia including the Barclay Training Centre, the Foreign Ministry and the Executive Mansion among others.
- The Analyst quotes President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as saying that she expects that before President Bush leaves office in January 2009 he will help the country to consolidate gains made by her government and ensure that there is sufficient U.S. support for Liberia to achieve its development goal.

Senate Split over Veterans' Bill as Several Members Reject Ex-Combatants as Veterans

(New Democrat)

- Senators are split on the "Veterans" Bill before them for concurrence with several of them rejecting the notion that rebels who fought in the civil war and are accused of atrocities can qualify as veterans. The lower House has already passed the Bill but the Senate must give it final approval for it to become law. Some senators expressed serious opposition to the current version of the draft bill, which incorporates socially integrated ex-combatants as veterans.
- They also registered concerns over the inclusion of the war-time members of the Armed Forces of Liberia. But other senators said it was important for the veterans' bill to be passed to address the needs of former soldiers and socially integrated ex-fighters.
- Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson said the enactment of the bill is necessary because it will help to maintain security. Meanwhile, another hearing on the fate of the veterans' bureau bill has been set for next Tuesday.

Senate Clamps Down on "Corruption" in Upper House...Suspends Rules & Order Committee

(New Democrat, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage)

- The Plenary of the House of Senate has suspended for three months the entire membership of the Committee on Rules, Order and Administration for their alleged failure to account for over US\$70,000 intended for the procurement of a 24-seated bus for staffers of the Senate.
- The Senate's Plenary said it took the decision because the report released by the Clarice Jah committee on the status of gasoline for the House of Senate and the procurement of the bus was flawed with discrepancies and misinformation.
- The Daily Observer, Heritage and Inquirer newspapers report that prior to the suspension of the members of the rules and order committee, a war of words that almost resulted into a fist fight ensued between Senators Prince Johnson of Nimba County and Clarice Jah of Margibi County with the two trading claims and counterclaims of corruption and other vices. Meanwhile, an audit committee has been set up to probe the Jah report while an Ad-hoc committee headed by Bong County Senator Jewel Howard Taylor will replace the suspended members.

Former Transitional Chairman Recalls Lawyers in Corruption Case

(Heritage)

- Former Transitional Chairman, Gyude Bryant has recalled his lawyers, Counsellors Theophilus Gould and Samuel Clarke who he dismissed several months ago. The Former Chairman had sacked the lawyers on grounds that they were threatened with suspension by the Supreme Court.
- Bryant was indicted last year for allegedly embezzling over US\$1 million during his tenure as Transitional Chairman but he has persistently rejected the allegations. On Tuesday, Mr. Bryant sent a communication to the court informing it that he had recalled his lawyers who previously defended his legal interest in the economic sabotage case. He said he recalled the lawyers because they can ably represent his legal interest in the case.

Radio Summary

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

Government Bars Street Protest during President Bush’s Visit

- The Government of Liberia says there will be no demonstration and statement presentation during the visit of U.S. President George Bush to Liberia.
- Speaking at a news conference, Police Inspector Munah Sieh said the Ministry of Justice has not issued permit to any group to demonstrate or present statement, urging citizens not to violate the laws of the country during the visit.
- The Forum for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court had threatened to demonstrate and present a statement during President’s Bush visit, saying the aim of the protest is to press for the establishment of the court in the country.

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

Former Transitional Chairman Recalls Lawyers in Corruption Case

- Former Transitional Chairman, Gyude Bryant has recalled his dismissed lawyers to represent his legal interest in the economic sabotage case against him.
- Counsellors Theophilus Gould and Samuel Clarke appeared in court yesterday during the resumption of the trial in the corruption case involving the former Chairman.
- Mr. Bryant had sacked the lawyers on grounds that they were threatened with suspension by the Supreme Court.
- Bryant was indicted last year for allegedly embezzling over US\$1 million during his tenure as Transitional Chairman.

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

Government Committed to Women’s Empowerment, Says President Sirleaf

- Speaking when she proxied for President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Tuesday, Foreign Minister Olubanke King Akerele said government remains committed to the empowerment of women to participate in decision-making at all levels in the country.
- Minister Akerele called on women who have achieved political power to help other women, saying they would be successful if they work together as one force.
- The Country Representative of the International Republican Institute (IRI), Mr. Monte MacMurchy said the forum provides an opportunity for promotion of gender and human rights.
- The two day forum under the theme: “Enhancing political participation and electoral representation of Liberian Women”, is being organized by the IRI with funding from USAID.

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

Bishop Kulah Resigns as TRC Commissioner

- One of the nine Commissioners at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), former United Methodist Bishop, Dr. Arthur F. Kulah has resigned to serve in Nigeria as the interim Bishop of the Church until the substantive bishop for that country is elected.
- Bishop Kulah thanked the Commission and others at the TRC for their understanding and cooperation during his tenure of service there.

- Meanwhile, the Executive Mansion says it regrets the departure of Bishop Kulah from the commission given the wisdom and vast experience he has brought to the Truth and Reconciliation Process.

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Veteran Bill Faces Uphill Battle at Senate

Voice of America

Wednesday, 20 February 2008


Amnesty International: Ugandan Government Should Hand Over Suspected War Criminals

By Tendai Maphosa

London

20 February 2008

[Maphosa report - Download \(MP3\)](#) 

[Maphosa report - Listen \(MP3\)](#) 

Human rights group Amnesty International is calling for suspected war criminals in Uganda to be handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The group's statement is in response to reports of a deal between the Ugandan government and the rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army, that calls for rebel leaders to be tried in Ugandan courts versus the ICC. For VOA, Tendai Maphosa has this report from London.



Members of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (file photo)

Amnesty says that a special court to deal with alleged war crimes agreed to by the Ugandan government and LRA rebels is "not acceptable" and circumvents international law.

Amnesty International legal advisor, Christopher Keith Hall, tells VOA that under the terms of an agreement, known as the Rome Statute, the Ugandan government has agreed to cooperate with the ICC.

"It's very disturbing because it suggests that the government will not honor its obligations under the Rome Statute to arrest and surrender the LRA members who are still alive who are subject to International Criminal Court arrest warrants, but instead seek to try them before a special division of the High Court in Uganda," he explained.

Hall said Amnesty is concerned that all of the accused should be assured a fair trial and yet not allowed to circumvent justice.

"The appropriate procedure is for them to arrest and surrender them and then either they or the arrested persons can argue that Uganda is able and willing to try them in a fair trial which is not designed to shield them from criminal responsibility," he added.

Hall also expressed concern over the absence of provisions to investigate and prosecute members of then government forces or their civilian superiors for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

During approximately 20 years of fighting between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government, soldiers on both sides have been accused of killing tens of thousands of people and forcibly displacing about two million more.

Arrest warrants for rebel leader Joseph Kony and four others were issued in 2005. Hall said that two of those named in the warrants are now known to have died.

The arrest warrants have been a major sticking point in peace negotiations between the government and the rebels. However, Amnesty insists that Uganda is obliged under international law to arrest and surrender those still alive regardless of any agreement reached in the peace process.



Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony (file photo)