

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



**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

Monday, 22 December 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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The Democrat  
Monday, 22 December 2008

# Charles Taylor May Walk Free

Prosecution Witnesses in the ongoing trial of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, have been strongly criticized by the Defence Counsel, who accused them of being inconsistent in their testimonies in court. Contd. Page 9

## Taylor May Walk Free

### From Front Page

Lead Council for Charles Taylor, Griffith Courtney recently made another outburst, when he said the trial of his client has political undertone. "Taylor's trial is highly political and as a result, one only has to look at the potential consequences of his acquittal, to appreciate the kind of dilemma the judges find themselves in." The legal luminary was responding to questions from this reporter regarding the trial. "Even if the judges acquit Taylor, the prosecution has the right to appeal that acquittal." He cited the AFRC trial as an example noting that when some charges against the AFRC accused were thrown out of court by the trial chamber, they were later reinstated. "I remembered that those charges were later reinstated by the prosecution and the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone." The Lead Defence Counsel expressed concern over the composition of the Appeal's Chamber saying, "Majority of the judges at the Appeals Chamber are Sierra Leoneans while Taylor is a Liberian." Griffith said his client, as a free man will have the chance to

go back to Liberia and contest against President Ellen Johnson Serlif and win a landslide.

"But I don't think the Americans and the British will allow that to happen." He stressed what he referred to as the "Major contradiction between the prosecution and the witnesses." Such contradictions, he said, affects the credibility of the case against Taylor.

"I cannot see why the Prosecutor, Steven Rapp can dismiss that kind of contradiction as immaterial. "One would expect that witnesses should have a similar recollection of dramatic incidences like the massacre of Kamajors in Kono district. For example we have had evidence of Sam Bockarie from former Liberian Vice President, Moses Blah. He said Sam Bockarie was strangled. But the prosecution conducted an autopsy and concluded he was shot dead. So which of the two can we accept?"

The Defence Lawyer said his client would walk a free man, citing quality of the evidence given so far by the prosecution. "Given the quality of the evidence we have had so far, it seems that Taylor will walk free." He said the defence team was mindful of the fact that atrocities were committed during the civil

war in the country. "I wouldn't want the people of Sierra Leone to think that we don't believe the atrocities committed in their country. We are aware of the terrible things that happened in Sierra Leone and those responsible ought to be brought to justice. But sadly, the prosecution is being discriminating enough of whom they want to charge.

"A man like Staff Alhaji must be brought to justice. Many witnesses have come here in Court and testified how he burnt 25 people to death in a house in Kono. And that man when we last located him; he was a member of the existing Sierra Leone Armed Forces. I don't think a man like that should be on the loose in Sierra Leone given the crimes he has committed." All efforts made by this reporter to get the prosecution's comment proved futile.

Meanwhile, the trial has been adjourned for the Christmas recess. Charles Taylor is accused of 11 counts charges for atrocities committed during the civil war in Sierra Leone. The charges among others include war crimes, crimes against humanity and other international humanitarian laws. Meanwhile, he has denied the charges pleading not guilty.

The Democrat  
Monday, 22 December 2008

# Proliferation Of Weapons Raises Concern

*By Jon Z. Foray*

**As concerns over the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa gains momentum, delegates from various states in the sub region convened here in Freetown from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 to address the issue.**

Contd. Page 10

# Proliferation Of Weapons Raises Concern

*From Front Page*

The conference which marked the Second Civil Society Forum to be held on the issue in the sub region had as its theme Civil Society and Crises Prevention in West Africa and was hosted by the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) at the Bintumani Hotel.

Speaking at a pre-conference engagement to enlighten the press on the significance of the confab, Mr. Balfour Amoa the President of the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) the parent body of SLANSA stated that the mission of his organization is to enable the people to live in a just, equitable, democratic, safe and peaceful West Africa free of small arms and light weapons and their misuse.

Mr. Amoa explained that between the late 1980s and 1990s West Africa experienced upheavals which occasioned the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the sub region that were used in the wars in Sierra Leone,

Liberia, and Ivory Coast.

As the trafficking of such arms and weapons threatened the security of other nations in the region, it pricked civil society concern which in turn led to the United Nations putting the issue on its agenda.

The need for advocacy against proliferation thus led to the creation of WAANSA which had since its formation encouraged governments and the people of the sub region to fight against proliferation of these undesirable arms and weapons in order to make the world a peaceful and better place to live.

A conference on small arms and light weapons was therefore convened in July 2001 and in January 2007 the issue became a subject of deliberations by the General Assembly.

Mr. Mohamed Coulibaly of OXFAM (GB) one of the delegates to the FORUM explained the role played by his institution to sensitize civil society to the harsh realities caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the sub region.

## Cocorioko

Sunday, 21 December 2008

### Taylor's Trial Is Political, Defence Lawyer Says

By Umaru S Jah-Germany

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United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
19 December 2008**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**TRC Awaits Explanation over President Sirleaf's apparent failure to appear before the Commission**

(The Inquirer, Public Agenda)

- In an interview with journalists following the failure of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) thematic hearings yesterday, Chairman Jerome Verdier said the commission awaits an explanation from the office of the President.
- President Sirleaf was expected to have taken the witness stand yesterday to give testimonies on her role and experiences of the Liberian conflict.
- President Sirleaf however told a year end news conference yesterday that she was not aware of her appearance and said the conditions she put forth for her appearance must first be met.
- TRC sources say the office of President Sirleaf was concerned of her security, the venue of her appearance and the number of people that would be in attendance.
- Chairman Verdier said efforts will still continue to have President Sirleaf at the TRC.

**FOHRD Claims Corruption is "Public Friend" #1 in Liberia**

(The Inquirer, Public Agenda, Heritage)

- Speaking at a news conference yesterday, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD), Aloysius Toe says President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has given up on the fight against corruption claiming she has allowed friendship and partisanship to comprise her professed fight against the menace.
- Mr. Toe said the failure of the President to act on the audit report submitted to her by the General Auditing Commission proves her unwillingness to fight corruption.
- According to him, the President is betraying the nation as corruption has become "public friend #1" due to excuses being given by government to prosecute officials indicted for alleged corrupt acts.
- On the contrary, President Sirleaf has persistently declared her support to the work of the Audit Commission and has begun acting on the audit reports.

**Liberia, China Sign Youth Volunteer's Agreement**

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, New Vision, Heritage)

- The Government of Liberia and the Government of the People's Republic of China have Exchange Notes and signed a Youth Voluntary Agreement for China to dispatch twelve (12) youth volunteers to Liberia. The ceremony was held Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia.
- Acting Foreign Minister, Ambassador William V.S. Bull signed on behalf of the Liberian Government while Chinese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Liberia, Mr. Zhou Yuxiao, signed for his government. Under the agreement, the Chinese Youth Volunteers shall provide services in public institutions designated by the Liberian Government in the fields of table tennis, martial art, gymnastics and volleyball and Chinese language teaching. Other fields include computer technology, medical treatment and agriculture respectively.

## **President Sirleaf Launches SES Programme**

(New Vision, The Inquirer)

- The President of the Republic of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, has officially launched the Senior Executive Service (SES) programme in the country with a call on the SES professionals to serve as agents of change in the civil servant system.
- The Liberian leader launched the SES programme yesterday during the induction of SES professionals into the Liberia Civil Service. The SES professionals include both local and international based Liberian professionals. Addressing the opening SES professionals at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Complex, the Director General of the Civil Service Agency (CSA) and chair of the SES programme implementation committee noted that as the result of the war, Liberia has suffered a major brain-drain. There were 71 Liberian professionals inducted into the SES and another batch is expected to join the group shortly.

## **President Sirleaf Meets Media Executives ...Addresses National Issues**

(The Analyst, Plain Truth, New Democrat, The Vision, The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer, Heritage, Public Agenda, Daily Graphics, National Chronicle)

- The media reports that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's fight against corruption featured prominently at a year-end press conference hosted Thursday at the Foreign Ministry in Monrovia. Briefing reporters during the conference attended by executives of media institutions, the President disclosed that several measures are being considered to tackle the issue of corruption in Liberia.
- In addition to several bills now before the National Legislature, the Ministry of Justice is adopting measures which will empower the Executive Branch of Government to freeze the assets of corrupt public officials. The Liberian leader disclosed that in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, additional measures, including the freezing of assets, are being considered. The President said her Government is working with the National Legislature to ensure legislation to fight corruption currently before that body is passed.

## **Radio Summary**

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

### **Human Rights Activist Criticizes President Sirleaf over Corruption Policy**

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

### **TRC wants President Sirleaf Explains her failure to appear to testify as planned**

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

### **Supreme Court Orders Pro-Temp Nyenabo Re-instated**

- The Supreme Court has ordered the immediate reinstatement of Senator Isaac Nyenabo as President Pro-Temp of the Liberian Senate.
- In its ruling Thursday, the court said the process leading to the suspension of Senator Nyenabo as Pro-Tempore was "illegal".
- The senator was suspended for what his colleagues termed as administrative ineptitude.
- Lawyers who represented the Lahai Lassanah camp were fined for writing a brief which challenged an earlier order of the chamber Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie.
- The two withdrew their representation saying the case was more political than legal.
- In an interview, the acting President Pro-tempore Lahai Lasanah said despite the court's ruling he was still the leader of the senate saying only the Upper House plenary can remove him.

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

### **President Sirleaf Lauds Departing Chinese Peace Keepers**

- Speaking at the a farewell reception for over 500 departing Chinese peacekeepers of UNMIL, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the troops went beyond their call of duty by offering technical skills in the areas of engineering, health and education.
- The President said Liberia and China has a long and growing relationship which has been further cemented by the peacekeeping efforts of the Chinese contingent of the UN Mission.



- Earlier, Chinese Ambassador to Liberia, Zhou Yuxiao the departing soldiers will be replaced in ten days with qualified professional.

### **Star Radio** *(News culled from website today at 8:30 am)*

#### **Aggrieve Education Ministry Employees Protest Over Unpaid Wages**

- Over thirty employees of the Education Ministry's central office have reported that their names have been deleted from the ministry's payroll.
- The spokesman of the affected employees, Mr. Charles Dennis said their names were inadvertently deleted from the payroll during a vetting process and they have not been able to receive salaries for over four months now.
- According to him, attempts to have their names put back on the payroll have not been successful.
- When contacted, the Chief Spokesman of the Ministry, Mr. Maxime Blatan admitted that some employees' names were deleted from the ministry's payroll but assured that the ministry would ensure their names are put back on the payroll.

#### **President Sirleaf Wants a Rethink of the County Development Funds**

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf says there is a need to rethink the management of the County Development Funds. The President said the current management is causing serious problems and is undermining the essence for which the funds were budgeted.
- The County Development Funds are being managed by county officials in collaboration with the Legislature.
- Of late, there have been claims and counter-claims of corruption from across the country over how the County Development Funds are expended.
- Meanwhile, President Sirleaf has announced a pending reshuffle of her cabinet but said it was not about corruption or dishonesty by those to be affected.

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## Cocorioko

Monday, 22 December 2008

### **Liberia advocacy group sticks to its guns about War Crimes Tribunal in the country**

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited



Even though these unpatriotic and barbaric human characters successfully dragged the entire country into the whims and concoctions of an unscrupulous military campaign disguised as "freedom wars", the process failed to observe the rule of law, respect for international humanitarian law, adherence to the principles enshrined in various international protocols governing arms aggression, etc.

Notwithstanding, the period 1989 to 2003 was just the climax of the diabolism that engulfed Liberia and its people; horrific and terrifying experiences of human rights abuses dating from 1979 to 1989 compete with the egregious data emanating from the 90s.

READ THE FULL RELEASE :

PHOTO: Liberia's ex-rebel Chieftain, Charles Taylor

#### **THE ANTI-WAR ADVOCACY WING OF THE PROGRESSIVE ACTION FOR CHANGE**

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20th December 2008  
**Press Statement**

(For immediate Release)

List Of Personalities Allegedly Bearing The Greatest Responsibility For Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, And Violation Of International Humanitarian Law In Liberia, 1979—2003

With just a few more days to Christmas, we are freshly reminded about the woeful events and circumstances that stole the traditional glamour expected of the December, 1989 Christmas' Season. And so on December 24th, 1989, towering above the whispering echoes of the Christmas lyrics was the BBC's broadcast of the voice of Charles G. Taylor, whose determination to disrupt the civil liberty, peace and democracy of the Liberian state knew no bound.

Nevertheless, though Mr. Taylor distinguished himself through the alleged systematic commission of heinous crimes against his own people, the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was birthed and operated by the collective and collaborative efforts of two wings; political and military. Hence,

elements of these interwoven hierarchies, from all facts at hand, one way or the other, enjoyed the spoils of war at the demise of a state; and now that the nation needs to leapfrog into a pluralistic democratic order, the key actors (be it civilian or military) are required to be held accountable.

This necessity, consistent with international law and precept, equally applies to all other belligerent groupings that surfaced between 1989 and 2003. Subsequently, whether it is the leadership of little known defunct "Mandingos for the Redemption of Liberian Muslims (MRLM), or its brutal allied "United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia, K & J"; or the nihilistic rebel groups "LURD" and "MODEL", or their cruel predecessors, "LPC", "LDF", INPFL" "The Coalition of Armed Factions", et cetera, the nation cannot move forward until accountability for past abuses is ensured.

Even though these unpatriotic and barbaric human characters successfully dragged the entire country into the whims and concoctions of an unscrupulous military campaign disguised as "freedom wars", the process failed to observe the rule of law, respect for international humanitarian law, adherence to the principles enshrined in various international protocols governing arms aggression, etc.

Notwithstanding, the period 1989 to 2003 was just the climax of the diabolism that engulfed Liberia and its people; horrific and terrifying experiences of human rights abuses dating from 1979 to 1989 compete with the egregious data emanating from the 90s. Some of these revelations occurring during this era constitute violations of international humanitarian law, and the personalities bearing the greatest responsibility for the nightmare must face justice. And there can be no better time than now! This ignominious and diabolic aftermath of Liberia in the hands of rebels is a scene too horrifying to capture. Evil geniuses and scalawags seized upon the time to launch Liberia into a "lake of fire". There has been no time like it before in Africa's oldest independent state.

There were unscrupulous surpluses everywhere; rape, mass murder, economic pillage, depravity, heinousness, unpropitiousness, extreme criminality, and accompanying vices crossbred at astronomical speed. Children were conscripted and taught the killing game to mastery, and for some, their own fathers suffered prey when their (fathers') skulls were battered with brains dished out for refreshment. Whole villages and towns crumbled under the weight of bandits and thugs running around in wigs and makeshift wears. The personality of evil grew so tall that some thought Liberia was a selected state for the unleashing of demoniac torturers. This is how Charles Taylor's, Kromah's, Boley's, and the likes "freedom fight" turned out to be, the entire country laid waste, and blood spilled everywhere.

Churches and mosques were desecrated and despoiled as the remains of butchered bodies were common scenes: A dead woman's body hung from a Lutheran Church window with brains scattered while her baby cried tied to her back after a massacre of over 600 innocent people; A two years old boy's stomach was ripped open during a butcher practice in Duport Road; hundred other bodies were discovered burned, or badly mutilated; The Tellewoyan hospital, in Voinjama, diametrically served as the roasting room for almost two hundred innocent people, mostly women and children accused of loyalty to a warring party; they were taken hostage, jailed in the hospital and the building set ablaze.

The anguish and distress of those innocent women and children, their cries of indescribable pains from the furnace of consuming fire is what that must awaken a new consciousness for justice in Liberia. And, indeed, a mechanism to address impunity is crucially required considering that atrocities are committed by men, not by abstract entities; and only by punishing such actions can the provisions of international law be advanced.

### **Our Summary of the TRC Hearing Processes**

Liberians continue to be baffled by the ‘cat and mouse’ comedy unraveling at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the statutory body created to deal with human rights abuses occurring from 1979 to 2003 in Liberia. So far, the TRC, which evolves around a tripartite mandate in which truth-telling is fulcrum, has only succeeded in gathering a mountain of falsehoods from key war actors.

Similarly, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who launched the Commission on June 22, 2006, is exerting tireless and frantic efforts to ensure that the TRC ends its mandate looking more like ‘Disneyland’, instead of the credible institution it was meant to be. During her launching of the entity, she had promised her unconditional compliance with the commission’s mandate, and even assured the country of her full cooperation.

The fact that she has now set standards and conditions for appearance indicates the pretense she brings at the reconciliation roundtable. Besides, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, the body with prosecutorial powers to ensure prosecution for unpardonable abuses, may never assume that status due to the President’s attempts to disarm the group of its prosecution powers as contained in the original act passed into law.

However, despite the vast disadvantages that weigh against justice at the TRC, we have been closely following the activities, statement-taking processes, and hearings conducted by the commission. At most of these hearings, our staffs assigned at the venues have been collecting, analyzing, and creating a database of atrocities that are not pardonable under international humanitarian law, consistent with 26g of the TRC act. We have also been comparing these acquired data with statements gathered in several counties from war victims, outside the TRC mechanism.

Based on these accounts, after a prolonged period of scientific data collection across the country, we hereby publish the names of personalities, who, as per our evidence, bear the greatest responsibility for the murder of over 250,000 Liberians and members of the international community. With the high evidence on these alleged perpetrators, we expect that the TRC will include them in any recommendation to be submitted soon.

Though we have some evidence on these alleged war criminals, we are also creating an information hotline, and call on the public to submit any available evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by these alleged war criminals listed below.

Therefore, based on available evidence, below is a list of former war actors bearing the greatest responsibility for the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and violation of international humanitarian law in Liberia; we also seek additional evidence from the public and war victims:

No.	Alleged Perpetrator	Indictment	Institution
1.	Charles G. Taylor	War crimes, crimes against humanity, recruitment of child soldiers, violation of international law	NPFL
2.	Amos C. Sawyer	Violation of International Law, crimes against humanity	ACDL, ULAA, NPFL
3.	Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf	War crimes, crimes against humanity	NPFL, ACDL, ULAA

4.	Alhaji G.V Kromah	War crimes, crimes against humanity, recruitment of child soldiers, violation of international law	ULIMO, ULIMO-K
5.	Prince Y. Johnson	Rape, War crimes, crimes against humanity, recruitment of child soldiers, violation of international law	NPFL, INPFL
6.	George E. Boley	War crimes, crimes against humanity, recruitment of child soldiers, violation of international law	LPC
7.	Laveli Supuwood	War crimes	NPFL, LDF, LPC-Coalition, LURD
8.	Sekou D. Konneh	War crimes, crimes against humanity, violation of international law	LURD
9.	Aisha Konneh	War crimes	LURD
10.	Sheikh Kafumba Konneh	War crimes, crimes against humanity	MRLM, ULIMO
11.	Charles Taylor, Jr.	War crimes, crimes against humanity	NPFL, GOL
12.	Brownie Samukai	Crimes against humanity	IGNU
13.	H. Boima Fahnbulleh	Crimes against humanity	PF(Patriotic Forces), PRC
14.	Harry Greaves	Crimes against humanity, war crimes	PF, NPFL
15.	Benjamin Nyetan	Crimes against humanity	NPFL, GOL
16.	Saa Gborie	Crimes against humanity	NPFL, GOL
17.	Tom worwoiyu	War crimes, crimes against humanity, violation of international law	NPFL
18.	Daniel Chea	War crimes, crimes against humanity	NPFL, GOL
19.	Joshua M. Blayee	War crimes, crimes against humanity	ULIMO-J, LPC

Note: as we seek evidence from the public, and other international sources, this list shall be updated to include other key actors as soon as we can gather the evidence. Hence, the magnitude of the evidence dictates that any recommendation from the TRC for prosecution will include these names.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Mulbah K. Morlu, Jr  
**National Chairman**

## China View

Friday, 19 December 2008

[www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)

### **UNSC calls for enforced assets freeze on former Liberian president**

The UN Security Council on Friday voiced its concern at the lack of progress in freezing the financial assets available to former Liberian President Charles Taylor, now on trial at the UN-backed court for Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and called for an enforced assets freeze on Taylor and his associates.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the 15-member Council extended for another year the Panel of Experts looking into issues of diamonds, timber, sanctions, arms and security in Liberia as it recovers from 14 years of devastating civil war, and called on the Liberian government to continue to make all necessary efforts to enforce the assets freeze, which also extends to Taylor's family members, including his present wife and two of his former wives.

The Security Council renewed an embargo on arms supplies, except in certain cases for the Liberian police, security and armed forces, as well as a travel ban by all states on Taylor's associates and family members, except for humanitarian situations, the resolution said.

"Despite significant progress having been made in Liberia, the situation there continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region," the resolution said.

The Security Council called on the panel to identify and make recommendations on areas where the capacity of states in the region can be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of the measures imposed, the resolution said.

The Security Council, in a resolution unanimously adopted in 2004, has ordered the freezing of assets belonging to Taylor and his associates, and the resolution is binding to all United Nations member states.

The former warlord, Taylor, went on trial in The Hague in June this year, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone's civil war. Taylor also has been indicted for fuelling a civil war in the West African country through arms-for-diamond deals with Sierra Leonean rebels.

The people of Sierra Leone suffered terribly in the 1991-2002 civil war, and the court had been established to ensure the trial of those who are believed to be largely responsible for the crimes and atrocities committed.