

**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:

Thursday, 22 January 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Standard Times
Thursday, 22 January 2009

UN Secretary General appoints new head of UNIPSIL

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon has appointed Michael von der Schulenburg of Germany as his Executive Representative for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Mr. von der Schulenburg will replace Victor Da Silva Angelo.

The Secretary-General is grateful to Mr. Da Silva Angelo, who currently serves as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), for his committed service in Sierra Leone.

Mr. von der Schulenburg, who is currently Acting Executive Representative for UNIPSIL, is uniquely suited to lead the first fully integrated United Nations peacebuilding mission. He accumulated a wide range of professional experience covering virtually all aspects of United Nations activities, from development assistance to humanitarian aid and managerial reforms, and from combating illicit drug trafficking to conflict resolution and political affairs.

His long and distinguished career with the United Nations includes serving in various

challenging positions and many of the world's trouble spots. In addition to holding various senior positions at Headquarters, he served mostly in field assignments. These include long-term assignments in Haiti, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. He further participated in a number of important short-term United Nations field assignments and missions around the world that included Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. In his most recent assignment, he served as Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI).

Over the years, Mr. von der Schulenburg has also made important contributions to internal strategy discussions of the United Nations and has written a number of analytical and policy papers.

Born on 16 October 1948 in Germany, he holds a master's degree in economics from the Free University in Berlin.

He also studied at the London School of Economics and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris. He is married and has four children.

Concord Times (Freetown)

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Bomaru to Commemorate March 23

Pel Koroma

Kailahun — The people of Bomaru village in the Upper Bambara chiefdom, Kailahun district, who were the first to taste the bitterness of the eleven year rebel war, have intimated Fambul Tok that they will be commemorating March 23 this year in a very special way by extending invitations to President Koroma and the people of Sierra Leone.

"We want to commemorate March 23 as the day peace was disrupted in the country. I wish President Koroma will witness the event. We want our people in the north, south and western area of the country to converge at Bomaru village so that we will all rejoice over the peace and tranquility we are now enjoying in the country," said Bomaru town chief Vandy Gboso Kallon. He expressed gratitude to Fambul Tok for bringing his community together in peace.

"Fambul Tok has encouraged us to reconcile in the interest of peace and development. We have seen the development because of the unity Fambul Tok has facilitated among us. This year, we had bumper agricultural harvest because Fambul Tok encouraged us to ignore our grievances and work together. We now have enough food to feed our people who would be here in March," chief Kallon stressed. He said since the last traditional ceremony to their ancestors for peace to prevail in their community, there is some quietness and understanding in the communities.

Executive director of Forum of Conscience who is also Fambul Tok programme director, John Caulker and a delegation from Catalyst for Peace, a U.S.-based foundation that supports reconciliation processes in post conflict countries, visited Bomaru. The purpose of the visit was to see how the people are doing in terms of consolidating the peace and also to find out the depth of the reconciliation process.

He expressed satisfaction in that the people of Bomaru have thrown over- board their grievances in order to live together in peace.

"As I told you during the last traditional ceremony, peace building is a process. Fambul Tok belongs to the people of the community. We want to show the world that we are able to come together again irrespective of the past. It is in our history that the elders would come together under the big trees to resolve their difference without resorting to violence".

He thanked the people for the community farm, adding that the "the proceeds belong to the community and it shows that the people have accepted themselves in peace and with togetherness, they would achieve more".

President and founder of Catalyst for Peace, Libbi Hoffman said she was happy the people are able to come together again in a very short time.

Relevant Links

"I was impressed last year with your reconciliation process. I told many people in the US about my family in Kailahun district. Good to know that things have worked because of Fambul Tok."

Chairlady of Bomaru village, Miatta Momoh said that the women have embraced Fambul Tok.

"When there is war, we the women suffer the most. Family dialogue, which is what Fambul Tok preaches, is good for us as it is the only means of averting conflict," she said, adding that since the last ceremony for peace, the community has remained calm and has shown understanding for one another in the name of Fambul Tok.

LIBERIA: Life Struggle For Ex-Combatants

Ex-combatants preparing to disarm in 2004 -- govt projects to employ ex-fighters have fallen short.

VOINJAMA, Liberia, Jan 15 (IPS) - Hajah Kamara's life of violence began when she was not yet a teenager. After rebels butchered her father and pregnant mother in their Voinjama home, they forced her to become a 'wife' and a fighter in their warring faction.

"They raped me and tattooed me," says 22-year-old Kamara, pointing to the dark markings on her arm. "I felt bad fighting, but when I thought of my father and mother not living, I needed to revenge them."

During Liberia's brutal civil war in the 1990s, Kamara switched between rival factions several times. Initially with Sierra Leonean fighters battling Charles Taylor along the border region, she escaped, but later fell in with the notoriously violent "Anti-Terrorism Unit" run by Taylor's son 'Chuckie' -- convicted of war crimes by a Miami court in October 2008. Kamara eventually ended up with the opposing Guinean-backed LURD militia, in the final struggle for the Liberian capital Monrovia in 2003.

"I saw her armed here after the war," says Eric Kolubah, field supervisor with the Voinjama branch of the National Ex-Combatant Peacebuilding Initiative (NEPI), a local NGO working to reintegrate former fighters back into their communities. "She was commanding a special group. She is someone very, very big."

Voinjama is an agricultural market hub in Liberia's rural Lofa County -- a day's drive north from the Monrovia capital on a rutted dirt road through dense tropical jungle -- bordering mineral-rich Guinea and eastern Sierra Leone. For over a decade, fighters backed by Liberian actors and neighbouring states devastated Voinjama.

Now the town is hampered by a lack of long-term development projects, soaring unemployment, and simmering tensions between two dominant ethnic groups, the Loma and Mandingo. Small quantities of rice and vegetables are grown here, and today Liberians easily cross the border into Guinea to scour for

cheaper goods.

The town has the third largest number of ex-combatants in Liberia. Many of the residents and fighters have lost families and friends, and are psychologically traumatized.

Kamara now supports two children -- both named for her deceased parents -- and is pregnant with a third. They scrape by on her earnings as a cook, 30 dollars a month, small pay for Liberian standards.

"I have no problems with the community," she says. "I asked forgiveness from my relative here, she wants to forget the past." These factors, compounded with the threat of regional political instability -- most recently the military coup in Guinea last month -- heightens the vulnerability of Lofa County and the potential recruitment of impoverished ex-combatants.

"Liberian ex-combatants' most commonly cited reasons for considering a return to combat include poverty and economic disadvantage, followed by a lack of jobs, benefits or training," a September 2008 U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) study of ex-fighters in Voinjama.

"A full 68 percent of Lofa respondents would not consider fighting now, or could they imagine circumstances that would lead them to fight in the future... [However] nearly a third responded that they could conceive of something that would lead them to fight again."

Initially after the Liberian war ended in 2003, a poll of fighting factions put the number of combatants at roughly 40,000. However, over 101,000 fighters, including women and children, registered with the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process in the following months, induced by cash payments for guns and ammunition, as well as vocational training, tool kits and the promise of work.

Since then, complaints about DDRR programming include an oversaturation in the market of tailors, carpenters and mechanics, and ex-combatants reselling tool kits for food.

Andrea Tamagnini, the Italian head of the Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Recovery unit with the United Nations Mission in Liberia

(UNMIL), firmly believes short-term emergency employment, paired with a more long-term national development plan, is key to resolving conflict.

In 2006 the Liberian government and UNMIL kicked off an emergency job creation program, enlisting local communities to repair segments of Liberia's roads for salaries and food. The emphasis now in Lofa County is to expand the agricultural industry.

"Proof of the importance [of the road project] was an internal survey we did on illegal recruitment after the crises in Guinea in 2007," Tamagnini says. "The information from Lofa was that commanders who came across from Guinea -- sometimes Liberians, both -- to look for possible recruits, couldn't find anyone because the people were working on the road... So this is proof that if you have a job you don't go fighting."

Amara Kamara is a 37-year-old charismatic former general of the ULIMO militia's Alligator Brigade who trained in Cuba to fight Taylor's forces in the 1990s. He now serves as a de facto leader and counsellor for ex-combatants in Voinjama.

"I wouldn't fight again, but other people would, who are not busy 24 hours doing something," Kamara says. "That's why we are appealing to the Liberian government to facilitate more jobs -- for us to forget about the past. If I'm not busy and I'm a fighter, then the same thing I was doing yesterday I could do today."



BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Report from The Hague

For more than a year the Prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone has given the Judges of the court a barrage of documentary and circumstantial evidence that Former Liberian President Charles Taylor gave financial, material and moral support to the Sierra Leone Rebel Group, the RUF in exchange for diamonds. Well, the team prosecuting Mr. Taylor is about to end its side of the war crimes trial. The Legal Team of Mr. Taylor is now preparing its side of the case. But what is the biggest challenge the Defense Team is likely to face, that was the question Joseph Cheeseman posed to Mr. Courtenay Griffiths, the Lead Lawyer of Mr. Taylor.

News Story

The Defense Team of Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor says fear harboured by many its potential witnesses is the greatest challenge facing the Former Liberian President's legal interest.

Lead Defense Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths told the BBC Service Trust in The Hague that a lot of people are reluctant to come forward to testify for Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Griffiths said many people are afraid of being added to travel ban or assess freeze list of the United Nations.

The Defense Lawyer also attributed the fear of potential witnesses to what he called the adverse media reports against the Former Liberian Leader.

Mr. Griffiths said lot of people didn't want to be seen associating with Mr. Taylor because of the negative publicity against him.

He also said the second challenge the Defense is likely to face is that it has not got enough time to prepare its case.

Mr. Griffith said the prosecution started the preparation of its case in 2003, but according to him the Defense has less than a year to adequately plan its side of the case.

In an interview on Wednesday, the Lead Defense Lawyer spoke of inadequate resources as another challenge facing the Defense.

Mr. Griffiths said his team did not have money to pay witnesses as the prosecution reportedly did to convince witnesses to come forth and testify against Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Griffiths, the Queen Counsel said as a matter of principle, he was opposed to paying people to testify no matter how important the evidence may be.

He accused the prosecution witnesses of testifying to protect themselves or they were being paid to testify.

Meanwhile another Prosecution Insider Witness has taken the stand against Charles Taylor.

For fear of his or her personal security, the witness is testifying in closed session.

There is absolutely no information from a closed session to the public or to Journalists covering the trial. It is not known how long the closed session will last.

The prosecution has four more witnesses to put on the stand and then it would conclude its side of the case against Charles Taylor.

Cocorioko

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Documents implicate Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone war

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

As the Prosecution is drawing close to the end of their own side of the case, the Prosecution has presented a witness who is in charge of all documents of evidence. The legal team representing former Liberian President Charles Taylor has consistently denied any involvement of their client in the decade-long Sierra Leone conflict. Mr. Malik Tuesday testified to documents presented to the Prosecution by the Liberian judiciary.

But the Defense of Charles Taylor objected to the admission of all of the Prosecution documents testified to in court on Tuesday. The BBC WST Mariama Khai Fornah has the details.

FORNAH: According to the Prosecution, the documents testified to on Tuesday were obtained from Mr. Taylor's White Flower residence after a search led by a sheriff from the Liberian Judiciary.

The Prosecution witness, Tariq Malik, said Sheriff Fofie Kamara of the Liberian judiciary led a search at Mr. Taylor's residence on March 5, 2004.

He said the Sheriff seized six sets of documents during their search.

Mr. Malik told the Judges the documents seized from Taylor's residence by Sheriff Fofie Kamara included a letter from former Sierra Leonean President Tejan Kabbah.

The witness said the letter is requesting the then President Taylor to surrender former RUF leader Sam Bockarie to the Sierra Leone Government.

Mr. Malik, who is the Chief of the Evidence and Archive Section of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, also testified to a colour identification card.

The witness told the Judges the card was issued to Mr. Taylor by Burkina Faso in January 1989.

The prosecution witness also testified to a letter head of the Junta-RUF, a document on Mr. Taylor's trip to Libya to sign an agreement on March 2, 2001.

The Prosecution witness also testified to news articles carried in the Inquirer and The News newspapers about Liberian soldiers captured in Sierra Leone, and thousands trapped in Freetown.

Defense lawyer Terry Munyard started his cross-examination by launching into the credibility of the witness.

Mr. Munyard also questioned the witness on the identification of the remains of Sam Bockarie's body when it was turned over to the Sierra Leone Government.

Mr. Malik admitted that he identified the remains of Bockarie's body on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone after the post-mortem.

At the end of the Defense cross-examination of Mr. Malik, the Prosecution identified 45 documents for admission, but the Defense objected to the admission of the documents and said the witness could not testify to the contents of the documents.

Mr. Munyard said that the Defense never had the time to do a thorough cross-examination of the documents because they were presented to them late.

After legal arguments by the Prosecutions and the Defense, Presiding Judge Richard Lussick announced the court's decision.

JUSTICE LUSSICK: Now Mr. Rapp, we fully appreciate the motive behind bringing this witness and the documents before the Court. We realise you're trying to save some time. But we've given the matter some thought and we think that we would rather rule on the formal arguments presented by the motions. So the order we're going to make is that we will defer your present application for admission of these documents pending our rulings on the motions that are presently before us.

FORNAH: According to the Prosecutor, there are five more witnesses to be put on the stand then the Prosecution will end its case.

For the BBC World Service Trust, this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from The Hague.

Cocorioko

Thursday, 22 January 2009

Charles Taylor's Defence team faces challenges

Written by Joseph Cheeseman in the Hague

For more than a year, the Prosecution of the Special Court for Sierra Leone has given the Judges of the Court a barrage of documentary and circumstantial evidence that former Liberian President Charles Taylor gave financial, material and moral support to the Sierra Leone rebel group RUF in exchange for diamonds. Well, the team prosecuting Mr. Taylor is about to end its side of the war crimes trial. The legal team of Mr. Taylor is now preparing its side of the case. But what is the biggest challenge the Defense team is likely to face? That was the question Joseph Cheeseman posed to Mr. Courtenay Griffiths, the lead lawyer for Mr. Taylor.

GRIFFITHS: I think the biggest challenge is fear. Because of the adverse press which Mr. Taylor has received over the years, and because of the consequences which have been suffered by anyone who appears to the West to be supporting Mr. Taylor – that is, the fear that they might be added to asset freeze and travel ban list – a lot of people are very reluctant to come forward and give evidence on Mr. Taylor's behalf. A lot of people, for whatever reason, do not want to be seen associated with Mr. Taylor, and that is a major problem which we are [indistinct] to overcome.

CHEESEMAN: The Prosecution faced a similar challenge. Mr. Rapp, the Prosecutor, said that most witnesses were threatened or discouraged by some group of people in Liberia and other places. I mean, it's not unique to the Defence.

GRIFFITHS: Well I think it is unique to the Defence because in the first place there's a vast disparity in the resources available to the Prosecution. They were giving large sums of money to witnesses to come and give evidence. We don't have that kind of money to persuade people to attend.

CHEESEMAN: I spoke with the Registrar some time ago, before the Court closed for the holidays, and he said he will be giving you US \$10,000 per month to augment your financial strength for your case.

GRIFFITHS: We have been given additional resources, but those resources are not for the payment of witnesses. And in any event, I am totally opposed to paying someone to give evidence. I don't think the truth is enhanced by payment. People should be willing to come to court and give evidence because they are convinced of the need to tell the truth because that's what justice requires. And I am totally against, on a matter of principle, paying people to attend court to give evidence, however important that evidence might potentially be.

CHEESEMAN: So you think that fear is the only challenge you might face?

GRIFFITHS: Fear is the biggest challenge we face. The second challenge we face is that, necessarily, we have not had as long as the Prosecution to prepare. The Prosecution have been preparing their case against Mr. Taylor since 2003, so they've had some six years in which to get their case together. We came on board last July. Consequently, we've had less than a year so far to get our case together. So again, that is a difficulty we face which demonstrates the inequality between our position and that of

CHEESEMAN: How are you planning your side of the case?

GRIFFITHS: Our side of the case will revolve primarily around the testimony of the former President, Charles Taylor. He is the main actor so far as the allegations are concerned. He was in many ways,

according to the Prosecution, at the centre of this maelstrom which engulfed that part of West Africa. And so consequently it is for him, in the main, to provide an explanation for the case which the Prosecution have brought, flimsy as we say that case is.

CHEESEMAN: Why do you describe it that way?

GRIFFITHS: The reason why I describe it that way is for these reasons: firstly, when the Prosecution served upon us their pre-trial brief, that brief anticipated calling a number of important witnesses who, twelve months after the Prosecution case has begun, have not been called by the Prosecution to give evidence. That's point number one. And one wonders why they chose to say they would be relying on such evidence and then in due course didn't call it. Now as far as that evidence which they have called is concerned, we believe that the credibility of the vast majority of their linkage witnesses have been called into serious question, for a number of reasons. One, because many of those witnesses, it's quite clear, have patently lied and lied again. Not just before this tribunal, but before previous tribunals in the RUF trial and the AFRC trial in particular.

CHEESEMAN: How did you make the determination that they lied?

GRIFFITHS: Well if you take for example Hassan Bility, the most recent witness, it's quite clear that his account is contradictory internally. Given what he said in the RUF trial, given what he said trial of Gus Kouwenhoven, and given what he's asking these Judges here to believe. There were blatant inconsistencies and downright lies in his testimony. Hanging behind much of this evidence is a [cloud] that many of these witnesses gave evidence either to protect themselves or because they were being paid by the Prosecution and consequently they felt that they had to give the Prosecution what they wanted. And much of that account, when one contrasts it with the historically known facts, is totally contradictory.

News Story The Defense team of former Liberian President Charles Taylor says fear harboured by many its potential witnesses is the greatest challenge facing the former Liberian President's legal interest. Lead Defense lawyer Courtenay Griffiths told the BBC World Service Trust in The Hague that a lot of people are reluctant to come forward to testify for Mr. Taylor. Mr. Griffiths said many people are afraid of being added to the travel ban or assess freeze list of the United Nations. The Defense lawyer also attributed the fear of potential witnesses to what he called the adverse media reports against the former Liberian leader. Mr. Griffiths said lot of people didn't want to be seen associating with Mr. Taylor because of the negative publicity against him.

He also said the second challenge the Defense is likely to face is that it has not got enough time to prepare its case. Mr. Griffiths said the Prosecution started the preparation of its case in 2003, but according to him, the Defense has had less than a year to adequately plan its side of the case. In an interview on Wednesday, the lead Defense lawyer spoke of inadequate resources as another challenge facing the Defense.

Mr. Griffiths said his team did not have money to pay witnesses as the Prosecution reportedly did to convince witnesses to come forth and testify against Mr. Taylor. Mr. Griffiths, the Queen's Counsel, said as a matter of principle he was opposed to paying people to testify no matter how important the evidence may be. He accused the Prosecution witnesses of testifying to protect themselves or they were being paid to testify. Meanwhile another Prosecution insider witness has taken the stand against Charles Taylor. For fear of his or her personal security, the witness is testifying in closed session. There is absolutely no information from a closed session to the public or to journalists covering the trial. It is not known how long the closed session will last. The Prosecution has four more witnesses to put on the stand and then it will conclude its side of the case against Charles Taylor.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Liberia's Truth Commission Releases Preliminary Report, Calls for Setting up a Criminal Court

By James Butty
Washington, DC

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she wants to meet with members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to discuss what the president's spokesman called issues within the commission.

The announcement came as the TRC released Volume I of its final report.

The Commission was set up to investigate the root causes of the Liberian civil war and the subsequent human rights violations and corruption and economic crimes that might have been committed between 1979 and 2003.

In the first volume of its preliminary report, the TRC recommended the setting up of a criminal court to try individuals and armed groups that the TRC would determine were responsible for the 'egregious' domestic crimes and 'gross' human rights violations.

Massa Washington, a member of the TRC, told VOA the commission is concerned the President's intention to meet with its members was announced in the media, contrary to previous meetings.

"We have met with the president in the past on several occasions. As a matter of fact she being president of the country, we do meet with her every now and then to update her on the process. What we are concerned about is that our meetings with the president have never been a matter of public announcement before we even receive the invitation or the information that the president is available and would like to meet with us. So why is a presidential press secretary now announcing our meeting with the president, especially at a time that we are facing some challenges," she said.

In the first volume of its preliminary report, the TRC recommends the setting up of a criminal court to try individuals and armed groups that the TRC would determine were responsible for the 'egregious' domestic crimes and 'gross' human rights violations.

Washington said the purpose of the court would be to ensure justice and address impunity.

"We have decided that prosecution in a court of competent jurisdiction and other forms of public sanctions are desirable to promote justice, peace and security, foster genuine national reconciliation and combat impunity, specifically, we are recommending a prosecution mechanism. For example, we might determine that a criminal court with competent jurisdiction to adjudicate criminal responsibility for individuals, armed groups and other entities that the TRC determines were responsible for egregious domestic crimes, gross violations of human rights were appropriate," Washington said.

She dismissed criticism by some that recommending criminal prosecution for perpetrators may go against the call for national reconciliation.

"There's no way you will have reconciliation without addressing the issue of justice, without addressing what victims feel. And everywhere we went engaging the people of Liberia in the 15 counties and also in the Diaspora, people want a form of accountability. People want to be ensured that what happened here will not happen again. And the TRC Act says we should look into the issue of impunity. Impunity has

played a very important role in the level and kinds of violations that were perpetrated against innocent people," she said.

The TRC's preliminary report Volume I also called for the establishment of a National Palava Hut Forum as a useful tool for peace-building and national reconciliation.

Washington said the TRC wanted to incorporate in its work the traditional method of resolving conflicts.

"We kind of realized that we have our own traditional method and means of resolving conflicts, and we wanted to make sure that we are sensitive to our own culture. We know very well also that it is not possible recommend prosecution in that standardized form of jurisprudence for everybody. So we want to incorporate our own traditional means of resolving conflicts into our work so that way we cover all of our people," Washington said.

She also said the TRC will recommend that reparations be made to individuals, groups, entities or communities.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
21 January 2009**

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

Newspaper Summary

President Obama Promises to work with Poor Nations

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

- Barrack Obama on Tuesday took the oath of office and sworn in as America's 44th President - and the country's first African American leader.
- Various dailies spotlighted developments following the flurry of excitement accompanying the inaugural ceremonies in the US, where President Barack Obama pledged his administration's willingness to work alongside the people of poor nations, warning "those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."
- Public sentiments in suggest that most Liberians hailed the US for being the paragon of democracy worldwide, nothing that the only challenge facing the country is the fight against terrorism.

U.S. Ambassador Extols Her Country's Democracy

(The News, Public Agenda)

- U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield says the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States is more than a single individual. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said the occasion is for every American and all peace-loving people of the world. The U.S. Ambassador spoke shortly before President Obama took the oath of office as the first African-American to lead the United States.
- As an African-American, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said she is a member of a generation who witnessed racial segregation. She described the occasion as a joyful movement and also urged Liberians to be committed to democracy and peaceful transfer of power.
- Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said democracy is not first election but the second conduct of a peaceful process. The United States Ambassador said this will shift world's attention to Liberia in 2012.

Richard Tolbert on US-Liberia Historical Ties – Says America Must Make Liberia Shine

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] National Investment Commission (NIC) Chairman, Dr. Richard V. Tolbert, has challenged the United States of America to make Liberia a showcase in Africa by ensuring that the war ravaged country shines on the continent. According to Dr. Tolbert, if Liberia does not shine, it would be difficult for anyone to believe that America has been good to Africa.

Liberia National Police Graduate Record Number of Women in Revamped Force

(The News, Public Agenda, Heritage)

- The United Nations Deputy Envoy to Liberia has hailed Class 33's record number of 104 women police officers as a demonstration of the progress made since March 2005 when the first batch of the new Liberia National Police (LNP) completed training. Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu was speaking at a graduation ceremony for 150 recruits which saw the LNP increase its current strength to 3,800, exceeding the UN initial target of 3,500.

- LNP female representation has grown exponentially and stands at 449 officers. “LNP now has 3,800 officers trained in modern policing methods and techniques,” said the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.
- She noted that more than 2,887 officers have been trained in women and children protection, criminal investigations, traffic investigations, media relations and firearms instruction, in a bid to create a force able to meet the policing needs of all communities.

Government Orders another Arrest of Benjamin Yeaten

(Public Agenda, Heritage, National Chronicle, New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- The Government of Liberia has indicted Benjamin Yeaten, a one-time Director of the Special Security Service (SSS) and an exiled confidant of former President Charles Taylor, for murder.
- A Justice Ministry statement said Yeaten participated in the murder of Samuel Dokie, John Yormie and Isacc Vaye all eminent citizens of Nimba County.
- The statement has mandated relevant security agencies to contact their counterpart abroad to effect the arrest.
- The Ministry said the government mandate to indict the former General follows presentation evidence to the Special Grand Jury for Montserrado County at its November term of court.
- It can be recalled that the Government in October 2006 declared Benjamin Yeaten a wanted man on the grounds that Yeaten was plotting to assassinate key government officials.

Radio Summary

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

Government Orders Arrest of Former SSS Director

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

Liberian Senate Makes New Adjustments Following Pro-Temp Reinstatement

- The Liberian Senate has with immediate effect removed the seat of its Senate President Pro-tempore from the front view of its chambers.
- The removal was confirmed yesterday and authorities at the Senate said it is part of ongoing changes at the upper house of the Legislature.
- Correspondents say the adjustment of the seating arrangement immediately following the reinstatement of Pro-Temp Isaac Nyenabo has raised eyebrows.
- Last August, Senator Nyenabo was suspended by his colleagues for what they called “administrative ineptitude” but he was later ordered reinstated by the Supreme Court.

LNP Concludes Verification Process of Officers

- The Liberian National Police (LNP) has ended the final verification process of its officers.
- In an interview, Police Inspector General Beatrice Sieh-Browne said the duty of officers is a challenge to the service of the people
- Inspector Sieh- Browne said the verification process considered reports that some people were still posing as police officers.

Ministry of Health Finalizing National Welfare Policy Plan

- The Ministry of Health said it is concluding the formulation of the National Welfare Policy plan of action to address the needs of vulnerable people and people with disabilities.
- In an interview, Deputy Minister for Health, Joseph Geebro said when completed, this will also help donors and other countries identify the needs and design ways on how their resources will be used.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

Benjamin Yeaten ordered arrested

Written by Matthias Daffah

Government through the Justice Ministry has authorized state security agencies to search for and arrest former SSS Director Benjamin Yeaten wherever he's found.

The order comes after the Special Grand Jury of Montserrado indicted former General Yeaten for murder.

According to a Justice Ministry release, Mr. Yeaten is accused of murdering Samuel Dokie and family, John Yormie, and Isaac Vaye.

Mr. Yeaten is also accused of gruesomely murdering several other people during the war years.

The Justice Ministry said its action is based on a request by families of the deceased for alleged killers of their relatives to be brought to justice.

Although Yeaten's whereabouts are officially unknown, government has instructed security institutions to contact their counterparts in the sub-region and beyond for Yeaten's arrest.

Interpol is also being contacted to help effect Yeaten's arrest and return him to Liberia for trial.

BBC Online

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Uganda court keeps death penalty

Uganda's Supreme Court has ruled in a case involving more than 400 death row inmates that the death penalty is constitutional.

However, it said that hanging was cruel and recommended that parliament consider another means of execution.

The judges also said it was unreasonable to keep convicts on death row for more than three years.

It means most of the prisoners involved in the case will have their sentences commuted to life in prison.

Although the death penalty has not been used since 1999, the court said it acted as a deterrent to murder.

But the judges also ruled that a mandatory death sentence - a legal term meaning that the penalty for murder is automatically death - was unconstitutional.

Parliament was asked to consider a means of execution other than hanging.

"I would agree with the respondents that hanging as a method of execution as it is carried out in Uganda is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment," Justice Egonda-Ntende said.

Weeping

The BBC's Joshua Mmali in the capital, Kampala, says four prisoners were in court for the ruling.

Susan Kigula, the woman who led the other prisoners in filing the original petition, wept painfully as the actual implications of the ruling dawned on her.

Our reporter says whereas fellow petitioners on death row may escape the death penalty following the ruling, her plight is still unclear.

Her death sentence was only confirmed by an appeal court about a year ago.

It means she could still be hanged within the next two years, unless the president pardons her under the presidential prerogative of mercy.

The prisoners' appeal was supported by Ugandan human rights groups.

The Supreme Court's decisions reaffirmed the verdict of the Constitutional Court in 2005.

The attorney general had sought to overturn the 2005 ruling on the mandatory death penalty.



Some of the death row inmates have formed a choir to sing for freedom

“ Hanging as a method of execution as it is carried out in Uganda is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment ”

Justice Egonda-Ntende