

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



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:

Monday, 23 April 2007

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

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The Spark

Monday, 23 April 2007

The RUF Movement in Sierra Leone

Most analysts trace the origin of the R.U.F Movement to the following forces. Disgruntled politicians, marginalization of youths, suppression of student movements and the 'joso' group of the 1982 'Ndorghor yosoi' uprising in Pujehun for the untimely death of Kemokai against the All People's Congress Government of Siaka Stevens.

With the need to clean the system and change the state machinery that was plagued with massive corruption and deteriorative standards of living, various groups of people left Sierra Leone for Libya to undergo military training so as to withstand the Internal Security Unit (ISU) that was placed on standby to protect the APC regime of the late President Siaka Stevens.

As a way of getting routes to transport hired mercenaries' weapons into our once peaceful nation, the RUF joined forces with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to attack the then Samuel K. Doe's Government in Liberia. They were also on the verge of taking over the City when late President Joseph S. Momoh agreed on the demands of ECOWAS Leaders to use Sierra Leone as a base to halt the advances of the NPFL. As a way of revenge, Charles Taylor promised Sierra Leoneans that they would pay the price for meddling into Liberian issues.

With nationwide students demonstration demanding a Multi-party system, Cpl. Foday Sankoh who was heading the RUF group made his first pronouncement to an invasion in 1991. The vision became a reality when a joint team of Burkinabe, Liberian and vagrants of Sierra Leoneans numbering a little over a 100 on the 23rd March 1991 launched their first attack at Bomaru overrunning the police post and town. At first, the government dispelled the claim of an invasion as he referred to it as a mere internal land dispute. Sankoh was an Ex-army officer who had been jailed for over 120 years in the early 70s for being implicated in a coup plot. As the military at that time was not equipped with communication sets, transportation, modern ammunition and a lot of other facilities, they encountered se-



Foday Sankoh: The Methusila of Sierra Leone

ries of flaws to easily suppress the insurgents who had modern weapons with their phase one conventional target warfare

SLPP sympathisers. The following lapses on the part of the APC led government were highlighted during their liberation struggle:

Most analysts trace the origin of the R.U.F Movement to the following forces. Disgruntled politicians, marginalization of youths, suppression of student movements and the 'joso' group of the 1982 'Ndorghor yosoi' uprising in Pujehun for the untimely death of Kemokai against the All People's Congress Government of Siaka Stevens

which made them swiftly capture most towns in the South and East of the country.

The marginalized youths were brainwashed with promises of decent jobs, shelter, improved standards of living and the total involvement of the masses in the law making process. This was a source of inspiration to the youths, the poverty stricken rural people and the depressed teachers who were underpaid and went without salaries for a year. With the establishment of one party state and total neglect in terms of development in these two border Districts, the RUF used the palm frond as a symbol of their revolutionary movement. Craftily, the palm frond has a lot of reliance to the Mende ethnic group.

On the military front, in 1898, it was used by the Mende militia boys during the Hut tax war against the colonial masters to secretly propagate their military messages. On the political scene, it was the emblem of their party symbol. As a very crafty group, the RUF had hoped to have used this ploy to win over a lot of the defunct

poverty, corruption, queuing for basic commodities, black out in most of the towns, poor education, tribalism, joblessness and the likes.

As the war spread from one

ment and judiciary departments alongside their families became a source of target. Looting and burning of properties worth billion of Leones become the order of the day. Towns were constantly looted to enrich the commanders and warlords.

In the mineral rich towns, mining was carried out extensively as a way of getting the mineral smuggled to other States to secure arms and ammunitions to fuel the war. This was the reason why various mercenary groups were always found with the RUF and they moved to sources of the big towns. The civilian population was always used as human shields to disguise their numbers. For example, Koidu Town rich in mineral resources was attacked in 1992. As a way of halting the advances of civilian

and government military operations, the tactics of ambushes along the highways and hit and run attacks were used creating a state of insecurity was adopted.



Col. Ghadaffi: the Hitler of Africa

area to the next, various groups aborted their own place of actions, civilians were killed, served as human shields, raped or became sex slaves while others were forcefully recruited into fighting forces. It also became a breeding ground for revenge as most politicians, tribal heads, members of the law enforce-

Early raids on towns and villages were also common forcing most people to wake up very early in the morning hours to prepare for safer areas to hide. The captured civilians formed the bases upon which looted goods were taken to their bases, "Operation Stop Elections" in 1996 was a ploy used to muti-

late the limbs and legs of civilians so as to debar them from exercising their democratic right and thereby undermining the effectiveness of the government to protect her own people. Furthermore, they used military camouflage to deceive the masses that the S.L.A. were rebels thus derailing the trust and confidence of the citizens against the national army. Based upon their advances and the youths viewing this as a quick process of making money and hoping for a brighter future, many young men joined the movement voluntarily. At camp Namme in Liberia, Sankoh was able to win over a lot of youths who teamed up with the Vanguard trainees who were bent to devising all sorts of military engagement to capture the seat of government irrespective of the gross human violation against International Laws.

With the forceful migration of civilians to safer areas in big towns, others voluntarily joined the group. The Northern Base Commander Zina or OC Mohamed boasted of expending his controlling areas in the north by launching all dastardly attacks in strategic areas. By launching operation "False Flag", he was also to deceive the masses that the military were also rebels. Men under his command were always in full military combat uniforms during operations.

Another lawless battle field commander was the notorious Sam Bockarie a.k.a. Mosquito who greatly violated the rules of engagement in a war situation. Most of the commanders at Camp Charlie like Dennis Mingo, Komba Gbondema, Rashid Sandy were very undisciplined as they always violated humanitarian laws. In 1993, ten RUF members were killed in Kailahun District by Sam Bockarie and Sankoh who feared the growing powers of Rashid Mansaray and others.

Gibril Massaquoi also killed 25 members in Pujehun District, most of them in the vanguard group being northerners. With the imprisonment of Sankoh in Nigeria, Sam Bockarie took the leadership of the RUF. With the need for peace in Sierra Leone, Foday Sankoh without being given Ministerial positions in the power sharing government no longer commands the respect of his subjects. As civilians marched to Sankoh's Lodge in May, we finally witnessed his demise. With Issa Sesay signing the Peace Accord, we finally saw a sign of peace in Sierra Leone and the Special Court to try those who bear the greatest responsibility of war crimes.

The Spark

Monday, 23 April 2007

Fourah Bay College Retains IHL Moot Court Competition

BY TALLEYRAND

Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone has again emerged winner of the 3rd International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Moot Court Competition held on Friday 20th April 2007 at the 2nd Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown.

The competition which started on Wednesday 18th April ended on Friday had six universities and colleges in Sierra Leone that participated but only Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) and Fourah Bay

College (FBC) made it to the finals.

The others were International Institute of Islamic Studies, Njala University, Eastern Polytechnic and Northern polytechnic colleges.

At the finals, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology represented the prosecution team in an imaginary role played conflict where IHL was violated by the warring parties that affected the lives and properties of innocent people while the defense was led by FBC.

Comprised of three participants, each group was allowed

to present its case in 60 minute by a trial chamber of five judges and one observer. The judges, all nationals of the country, were drawn from different legal institutions. They were Sulaiman Bah Esq. State Counsel, Cosmotina Jarrett as Legal Advisor for the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, Justice George Gelega, the President of the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and Lt. Col. I.M. Koroma as Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Defense and the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Sierra Leone was (ICRC) Mr. Jurg Montani.

The purpose of the moot court competition was to prepare the students' understanding of IHL law and how they could use the knowledge to argue at the Pan-African Moot Court Competition in Arusha in Tanzania in November this year.

Against this background, the prosecution team led by Lamin Sheriff indicted three members of a warring faction accused of violation of the IHL law and submitted counts and authorities to back their arguments. The accused were Prime Minister Michael Suka and his two commanders, Gordon Bennet and Orishio Gudla.

During submissions, the trial chamber led by Justice George Gelega asked many questions to determine the members of the prosecution their level of competency of the various citations they made in order to know if they understand IHL law with reference to their roles plays. On the defense, led by Michael Imran kanu, the accused were defended in accordance with citations from both



Fourah Bay College

IHL law and local laws of inter-states treaties. In their submissions, the defense impressed the bench with clear arguments on behalf of their clients with clarity expression and a sense of legal background as they tried to respond to the questions of the jury. They also worked as a team trying to persuade the tribu-

nal in their clients' interests.

Ruling after a marathon debate and recession, the President of the Trial Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and head of the Moot Court Tribunal Justice George Gelega on behalf of the bench, declared Fourah Bay College winners of this year's 3rd IHL Moot Court Competition.

Standard Times
Monday, 23 April 2007

Juvenile rights violation exposes prisons

BY SAIDU KAMARA

Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) has expressed grave concerns over the detention of juveniles and adults at the maximum Pademba Road security prison harbouring both classes of people sleeping in the same cells. The Director of LAWCLA, Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson raised this concern during the official launching of the handbook on "Juvenile Justice in Sierra Leone Law and Practice" at the Miatta Conference Centre in Freetown.

The book referenced about the break down in the criminal justice system in the country with appalling conditions at the prisons affecting inmates sharing the limited facilities against their wishes and contrary to international rules of prisoners. In 2001, LAWCLA created the juvenile justice unit as a child rights division to offer legal advice and make representation for juveniles in conflict with the law and also

advocate for the promotion of child rights in Sierra Leone. With financial support from UNICEF, the unit was able to carry out investigations into the prison sector to determine the conditions of prisoners when it unfortunately discovered that conditions were not really the look of things it has been with the prison inmates.

According to the report, inmates' conditions were very appalling as some of them were sick and frail. This makes the reformation and rebuilding of the criminal justice system in the country crucial to the restoration of a sound and effective judicial system.

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the book states that Sierra Leone has not only failed to domesticate these laws but has also failed in her responsibility in handling prison conditions contrary to international law.

Liberian Observer

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Diamond Dealer to Testify Against Taylor Supporter Says Jungle James Was "Kidnapped"

By **C.Y. Kwanue**

Published: **18 April, 2007**

MONROVIA, April 18,---Daniel James, alias Jungle James, the man who, at the height of the civil war, gained notoriety in diamond business behind the rebel lines of former warlord Charles Taylor, is expected to testify against the indicted former president who is awaiting trial on war crime charges, including diamond smuggling.



Senator Massalay: "Jungle James was kidnapped" *Photo by C. Y. Kwanue*

Cocorioko website

Friday, 20 April 2007

<http://www.cocorioko.net/ThursdayApril192007p4.html>

Special Court Chief of Press Describes Allegations from Liberian Senator as Nonsense

The Chief of Press and Public Affairs of the Special Court, Mr. Peter Andersen, has said that the court considers as "Nonsense" allegations by Liberian Senator, Abel Massally, that the court had kidnapped a man who had consented to testify against war crimes indictee and former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Speaking to COCORIOKO today, Mr. Andersen debunked the allegations and said it was untrue.

Mr. Andersen explained that 'Abducting a person, whether to serve as a witness or for any other reason, is a crime, and the Special Court does not engage in such practices. I have given two interviews to the press in Liberia, and their next question was to ask whether the person was a witness. I told them that the identities of all prosecution witnesses are subject to an Order of Protection by the Court because of the potential for harassment or intimidation of the witnesses or their families'.

Mr. Andersen said that the Prosecutor has stated that he will call 133 witnesses of fact, along with a number of expert witnesses, but their names have not been disclosed to the Court.

Liberian Observer

Friday, 20 April 2007

Taylor's Lawyer Wins Property Case

Published: **20 April, 2007**

MONROVIA, April 19,---One of the defense lawyers representing the legal interest of former Liberian president Charles Ghankay Taylor, yesterday won a case against the Government for the seizure last year of Taylor's personal effects at his Congo Town, White Flower residence.

Sierra Leone Watch

April 2007 Edition

Hinga Norman and the Special Court?

One of Sierra Leone's last remaining heroes - Chief Sam Hinga Norman heeded to God's call, following his illness incurred some 4 years ago. He died at the Aristide La Dantec Hospital in Dakar, Senegal on 22 February 2007. The family of Chief Sam Hinga Norman asserts that Chief Norman died under sub-standard clinical conditions and medical neglect, whilst the Special Court offers a contrary argument that the Chief died of "natural causes" as a result of myocardial infarction (heart attack).

The Chief's death has left the nation divided, and tongues wagging, for the circumstance under which he died is what is at play here, as he was a war crime indictee; his crime been 'bearing greatest responsibility of the war'? The question is not about his heroism or not, for he was a hero to many Sierra Leoneans.

Hinga Norman provided leadership and direction when the nation was under assault and its people held siege, following a mayhem, and reign of terror imposed by the RUF and the AFRC on their own. Don't tell me you have forgotten the terrible dark moments that ensued with an RUF/AFRC unholy alliance in 1997-1998. Have you forgotten the rape, the killings, limb hacking, and summary executions that became the hallmark of one of the world's brutal rebellion in modern times? For nearly eight months, ordinary Sierra Leoneans were held hostage, abandoned and left to perish from the hands of men and women who had no iota of respect for human lives and dignity. The Kabbahs, the Berewa's, the Minister's and the aristocrat and well placed in society, ran for cover in some faraway safety nets. Our International allies were nowhere to be seen when needed most. Kudos to the late Nigerian President Abacha, despite his shortcomings, stepped up to the plate, dispatching ECOMOG to take the fight to the RUF/AFRC. We all know that ECOMOG couldn't have done it without the CDF, backed by the peoples resolved.

Let's be clear here: there would have been no Special Court, no Tejan Kabbah, no Solomon Berewa, and no International intervention, had the people not resisted, and fought the RUF/AFRC killing machinery, with all their might. What happened in Sierra Leone was not even about Hinga Norman. It was about the people's will and determination to resist tyranny, humiliation and terror at all cost. Sierra Leoneans fought to live and survive another day. They fought to protect their democracy. Of course innocent people did die, rape was committed, properties were looted and burnt, and other injustices were done, but these things will always happen as long as there is conflict and wars. Nobody is holding grief for the few rotten eggs within the CDF (and every other stakeholder in the conflict) who participated in these acts? It is the bigger picture that needs to be placed in context, against the backdrop of the conflict. Plainly put, Hinga Norman (and the men and women who sacrificed with sweat and blood) are the true heroes of Sierra Leones war. When the dust did settle after the fact, what did we do instead? We turned (cowed by International pressure) to hand over one of our own? America will never hand any of their own illustrious sons and daughters to the ICC for war crimes? Don't tell me that the Bush Administration will be brought before a war crimes tribunal for the many innocent lives lost in the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Kabbah and Berewa had the moral authority to have excluded the CDF from any prosecution, as it was their inalienable right to have asked the Special court to either do it their way or not. President Eileen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia is under no obligation, and she is not even in a hurry to replicate another special court on her turf. She is not bulging to pressure in seeking justice through a special court, as she has other preoccupation; to better the lives of ordinary Liberians.

Can someone really tell me what justice has been accomplished to date, since the setting up of the UN backed Special court in 2002? Nothing absolutely, except hunger for justice, grief and wasted resources that could have been used in other priority areas. Do you know that some US \$ 125 million has been spent in the last three years (and is reported in need of more money) in search of justice, that seems so far away? With all that huge chunks on money spent in post recovery Sierra Leone, we are yet to own up as a nation, and implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which arguably was the best conduit for our healing process?

For four years, Hinga Norman languished in cell; denied of his right to have access to a decent health care service, that could have saved his life, but that was not to be as he was ferried to Senegal, where he died afterwards. During his years of incarceration, Kabbah, Berewa, and his colleagues have been out enjoying the very freedom Hinga Norman and ordinary Sierra Leoneans spilled innocent blood. The least Kabbah and Berewa could have done was to play devil's advocacy for a speedy trial, assuming they did care for a fallen colleague. Did I hear that the VP was out on the road campaigning on the very day Hinga Norman was being buried? If that is true, at least, the VP could have lay back, and enjoyed the comfort of his home. The question on the lips of many lingers around justice to Chief Hinga Norman? Was the Chief in fact guilty as charged, now that all charges were dropped since his death? Sierra Leoneans deserve to know that even in death, their hero was not a war criminal.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 20 April 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Re-inventing Telecom Technology in Liberia

Atlanta, Apr 20, 2007 (Georgia Tech University/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, the first woman ever elected head of an African state, will unveil the new National Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Policy for Liberia to leaders from industry, non-profit organizations, and academia at the "E-Liberia Vision 2010" conference on April 23-27 in Monrovia, Liberia. Sponsored by the Government of Liberia, the event will include participation from Microsoft, Cisco Systems, the Soros Foundation's Open Society Initiative for West Africa, the World Bank, the International Financial Corporation, USAID, and the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Liberia, US in security reform aid deal

MONROVIA, April 19, 2007 (AFP) - Liberia and the United States have clinched a military reform deal to boost security in the war-battered West African country, the president's office said Thursday.

International Clips on West Africa

There were no relevant stories on West Africa in the international media today.

Local Media – Newspaper

French Business Delegation Tours Liberia

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

- A 25-man high level French business delegation arrived in the country on Wednesday to access investment opportunities. Briefing journalists, the Chairman of the National Investment Commission (NIC), Dr. Richard Tolbert said the delegation would look into all areas of investment including electricity, transportation, road network and port management among others.

Lawmakers Hold Special Session Today

(The News and Heritage)

- The House of Representative will today convene in an extraordinary session in response to a request from President Johnson-Sirleaf. According to a release, President Sirleaf appealed for the lawmakers to reconvene a special session and said urgent draft legislations in the interest of the state would be high on the agenda.

UNHCR to Halt Voluntary Repatriation

(The News and The Inquirer)

- Speaking at a joint news conference, the Regional Repatriation Officer of the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Mr. Raouf Mazou disclosed that the agency would end the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees by June 30. Mr. Mazou noted that after the deadline, UNHCR will scale down its operation on repatriation.

FAO Donates Seed Rice to Liberia

(Daily Observer, Heritage and The Inquirer)

- Making the disclosure at the official launch of the rice seed distribution at the Freeport of Monrovia, the Food and Agriculture Organization Assistant Representative, Joseph Boiwu said the over 400 metric tons of seed rice is the first consignment of seed rice to be distributed among local farmers to help facilitate rice production in the country.

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

Government Ready to Pension Ex-Soldiers

- Correspondents said that thousands of demobilized soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia are expected to be pensioned and that the names of those to be affected are been processed. But the leadership of the soldiers said that it would reject the Government's pension scheme because it is unconstitutional.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Court Orders Return of Former President Taylor's Properties

- In his ruling yesterday, Monrovia Magisterial Court Judge Milton Taylor has granted a motion to return properties seized from the Congo Town residence of former President Charles Taylor. The items, which include documents, safes, photos and videocassettes, were seized from Mr.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

SRSNG Commissions UNMIL-built Midwife Centers in Rural Liberia

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss yesterday dedicated 5 traditional midwife centers in Fleedin, Garwonpa, Domba, Nyeanyee and Gbanquoi towns in Saclepea District, Nimba County having been constructed under UNMIL's Quick Impact Projects at the cost more than US\$15,000.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Pressure Groups Oppose Moves to Lift Ban on Liberia's Diamonds

- The ECOWAS Civil Society Movement and Trade Unions of Liberia said that they opposed the United States' proposal for the UN Security Council to lift the sanctions on Liberian diamonds. The Movement's President Orifa Dennis said that there was a need for massive awareness among diamond miners in Liberia prior to lifting the sanctions.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 19 April 2007

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International Clips on Liberia

VOA 19 April 2007

Legislators Move to Help Distressed Liberian Immigrants Stay in US

By Howard Lesser, Washington, DC

Three US congressmen plan to introduce immigration legislation today to help more than three thousand Liberians living in the United States on Temporary Protected Status obtain Permanent Residency Status. Freshman Congressman Tim Walberg of Michigan is a Republican sponsor of the bipartisan measure, known as the Liberian Refugee Immigration Protection Act of 2007. He says that Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf supports the measure, and he denies that it would cause a "brain drain" that could deprive Liberians of some of their most talented and best educated citizens.

UN to lift diamond embargo on Liberia soon -- diplomats

UNITED NATIONS, April 18, 2007 (AFP) - The UN Security Council is likely to lift its embargo on Liberia's diamond exports soon in light of progress made by the west African country in certifying the origin of its rough diamonds, diplomats said Wednesday.

President Sirleaf Bid Farewell to Colonel Osinski

Apr 18, 2007 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has expressed profound regrets over a shooting incident at the Virginia College in the United States, which led to the death of more than thirty students. An Executive Mansion release says the President spoke on Tuesday at the Foreign Ministry when she bided farewell to Colonel David Osinski, outgoing United States Defense Advisor to Defense Minister Brownie Samukai. Col. Osinski has completed six months tour of duty to Liberia.

AP 04/18/2007 15:08:06

Witness IDs in Taylor Trial to Be Secret

MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands The identity of most witnesses who testify against Charles Taylor at his war crimes trial will be kept secret and some may have to move to new homes to escape retribution from the former Liberian president's supporters, the lead prosecutor said Wednesday.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast cotton trucks herald peacetime revival

By Ange Aboa and Loucoumane Coulibaly

ABIDJAN, April 19 (Reuters) - A convoy of trucks laden with cotton from Burkina Faso drew up in Ivory Coast's capital Yamoussoukro on Thursday in a sign of a yearned-for economic revival days after the nation started reuniting after civil war. President Laurent Gbagbo declared the war over on Monday when he and his new prime minister, rebel Chief Guillaume Soro, watched the razing of a checkpoint in a U.N. buffer zone between the rebel north and loyalist south after a new peace deal.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberia and U.S. Strengthen Military Ties

(The News, Daily Observer, New Democrat, The Inquirer, The Informer)

- The Liberian Government and the United States on Wednesday signed a mutual support agreement [*Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement - ACSA*] that allows the exchange of logistical support, supplies, and services between Liberia and US military forces.
- The *New Democrat* views the document as a “renewed pledge” from the Americans to support Liberia’s Security Sector Reform.
- The United States has already earmarked US\$200 million for reforming the security sector of Liberia and to create a new army, trained to international standards and composed of 2,000 soldiers who are carefully recruited, vetted and trained to be subordinate to the rule of law.

State Prosecutors Want Ex-Speaker Snowe Jailed

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

- State prosecutors on Wednesday rejected a criminal appearance bond filed by lawyers representing the legal interest of former Speaker Edwin Snowe.
- Mr. Snowe’s legal team last week secured a US\$1.8 million bail bond through the African Insurance Company of Liberia (AICL), a move that apparently prevented the former speaker from going to common jail.
- But State prosecutors rejected the bond on the basis that the insurance company does not have the capacity to secure the payment of the US\$1.8 million. They argued that the company’s entire assets are less than US\$500,000 far below the bail bond it attempted to underwrite.
- Hence, they want Mr. Snowe imprisoned until he files a valid bond.
- The former speaker is being tried for supposedly stealing more than US\$1 million during his tenure as Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Company (LPRRC) in the transitional government.

NCDDRR Makes US\$18 Million Donor Appeal to Train Ex-Combatants

(The Informer, New Democrat, The Analyst and The News)

- The Executive Director of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), Jervis Witherspoon told a news briefing in Monrovia Wednesday that his commission needs US\$18 million to complete the training of the remaining caseload of 23,000 ex-combatants.
- According to Mr. Witherspoon, Liberia’s security faces serious threat because some 23,000 ex-combatants were yet to go through the processes of Rehabilitation and Reintegration.

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

NCDDRR Needs US\$18 Million to Train Remaining Ex-Combatants

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Former Speaker Snowe Fails to Appear in Court Yesterday

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberia Vies for US Military Africa Command

- Meeting with a visiting United States Military General yesterday, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf stated that a lot was being done to accelerate the Security Sector Reform in Liberia under which a relatively small but trained, professional and equipped army was being formed.
- President Johnson Sirleaf also said that Liberia was interested in being the base for the United States Military Africa Command and called on the newly appointed United States Head of Africa Command, General William Ward to consider Liberia as one of the Countries vying for the Command propounding that the cultural and other ties with the United States put Liberia in an advantageous position.
- Meanwhile, the Liberian and United States Governments yesterday signed an agreement to exchange logistical support, military supplies and services between Liberia and US military forces.
- Defence Minister Brownie Samukai who signed for Liberia thanked the US for the continue assistance to the Security Sector Reform efforts while General Ward who signed for the US stated that the agreement was a foundation for future assistance.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

US Petitions UN to Lift Sanction on Liberia's Diamond

- The United States has introduced a draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council calling for the lifting of the sanction on Liberia's diamond export. According to the BBC, the United States praised the Government of Liberia for putting in place control measures on rough diamonds, one of the lapses for which the Security Council repeatedly extended the sanction on the gem during the Charles Taylor-regime.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

US Congressmen Seek Permanent Status for Liberians in America

- According to a dispatch from the Liberian Embassy in the United States, three influential American Congressmen will today, Thursday, re-introduce a bi-partisan Bill to the US House of Representatives to allow Liberians and their relatives who are currently on the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) opportunity to get permanent resident status. If passed into Law, the Legislation will relief Liberians who's TPS is expected to expire on 30 September this year.
- The dispatch said that Congressmen, Patrick Kennedy, Keith Edison and Tim Walberg also introduced the US version of the Liberian Refugee Immigration Protection Act of 2007 which Congressman Kennedy has since 1998 authored and sponsored yearly and vigorously advocated for its passage. The Congress reportedly invited Liberian Ambassador Charles Minor to present the Liberian Government's policy paper in support of the immigration Bill and would restate the Government's inability to absorb Liberians from America in mass and to provide them housing, health, education, jobs and other facilities commensurate with their American dream.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberian Women Acquire Midwifery Training

- In a release, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that more than 100 midwives have been trained in the Country to improve primary healthcare provided to child-bearing women and new-born babies, drawing participants from Lofa and Grand Kru Counties.
- The training would help midwives to detect and monitor pregnant women and provide practical advice on matters related to nutrition, malaria and vaccination. The ICRC provided each of the midwives a delivery kit to perform safe and clean deliveries in rural areas.

Government Probes Advert on Liberian Minerals on Stock Exchange in Canada

- Speaking to Radio Veritas yesterday, Land, Mines and Energy Minister Eugene Shannon said that the Government of Liberia never licensed the Mano River Resources to advertise Liberia's mineral deposit on the World Stock Exchange as his

Ministry has just got information that the group was currently advertising Liberia's mineral stock exchange in Canada and raising billions of dollars.

- Minister Shannon added that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was concerned about the report and ordered an immediate investigation into all concession and mining companies to know their status in the Country.

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

BBC Online

Friday, 20 April 2007

Belgian peacekeeper trial starts

An ex-Rwandan army officer has appeared in a Belgium court charged with the deaths of 10 Belgian peacekeepers and the Rwandan prime minister in 1994.

Bernard Ntuyahaga and Rwandan army officers allegedly watched as the peacekeepers guarding Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana were killed.

She was later murdered by soldiers and militiamen for being a moderate.



Belgium withdrew its peacekeepers after the murders

The murders triggered the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers and the genocide of some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Mr Ntuyahaga faces 16 counts of murder and three attempted murders alleged to have taken place at the start of Rwanda's mass genocide.

It has taken 13 years for the case to be brought to court.

Mr Ntuyahaga flew to Belgium voluntarily in 2004, after a lengthy extradition tug of war between Belgium and Rwanda, which also believed he was a chief protagonist in the genocide.

More than 150 witnesses are due to appear during the case, including the assassinated prime minister's children.

Relatives of the murdered soldiers may also be in court.

Voice of America

Friday, 20 April 2007

Study: Child Soldiers Suffer from Emotional Stress for Years

By David McAlary
Washington

An international human rights group says child soldiers as young as 13 are serving in the army of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Human Rights Watch is urging the Congolese government to release the estimated 300 to 500 youngsters, whom they inherited when they absorbed the armies of former rebel warlords under terms of a peace plan. The Congolese situation is not unique. The United Nations estimates that 300,000 children serve as indentured soldiers in rebel and government armies around the world. VOA's David McAlary reports from Washington that if the youngsters survive their ordeal, they are usually left with severe psychological wounds.



Child soldiers stand talking near the small village of Boga near Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo (2004 file photo)

Human Rights Watch says the average child soldier is aged 13-17, but some have been as young as eight or nine. Most are unwilling militants, abducted from their villages to serve as soldiers, guerrilla fighters, or supporting roles in armed conflicts in more than 50 countries. They wield weapons in battle, serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, and act as spies, messengers, or lookouts.

"Children by the thousands have been literally kidnapped from their homes and their communities, and subjected to the most horrific forms of violence," said the children's rights advocate for Human Rights Watch, Jo Becker.

She says children typically make obedient soldiers because they are vulnerable and easily intimidated.

"They are forced to commit atrocities against members of their own community, sometimes members of their own family," she said. "The girls are often used as wives by the commanders and subjected to what is essentially sexual slavery."

"They are terrorized into compliance by being threatened with death, if they try to run away, and even being forced to kill other children who try to escape," she added.

Studies show that these youths are left with severe psychological scars.

In Belgium, Ghent University researcher Ilse Derluyn and colleagues interviewed more than 300 former child soldiers who had been abducted by the northern Ugandan rebel movement, Lord's Resistance Army.

Ninety seven percent suffered post-traumatic stress disorder after an average of two years in servitude. Derluyn says their problems were typical of this syndrome -- persistent nightmares and trouble sleeping and concentrating that lingered long after their ordeal ended.

"These do not get better with time," said Derluyn. "Even the children who returned a long time ago from their abduction still suffer from post-traumatic stress reaction."

The researchers found that children suffered less stress if their parents were still alive, especially their mother. Derluyn says reuniting them with their families and previous social networks would help restore their psychological health. But many of the children are not so fortunate.

"A lot of children do not have parents anymore, or one of the parents has died," she said. "Also, they committed a lot of atrocities against their own neighborhoods sometimes, so it is quite difficult to reintegrate them into the neighborhood and the living situation."

The international community has focused on the child soldier problem in recent years. The 2002 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Labor Organization, and the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child ban the use of children as soldiers. The International Criminal Court defines child military recruitment as a war crime.

The U.N. Security Council has condemned the practice and passed six resolutions against it since 1999. The most recent, in 2005, outlines a system of reporting and monitoring.

The United Nations Children's Fund has worked with governments and private organizations to demobilize and rehabilitate thousands of children in Sierra Leone, southern Sudan, Afghanistan and other countries.

But Jo Becker of Human Rights Watch says that the Security Council has applied sanctions only twice. Last year it imposed travel bans on and froze assets of recruiters in Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast. She says sanctions must be more common.

"What we need are concrete actions that show that the legal framework is not just words on paper," said Ms. Becker. "We do need active prosecution by national courts, as well as ad hoc tribunals and the International Criminal Court. Another thing we need is strong action by the U.N. Security Council that will impose targeted measures against the parties that are responsible."

Ms. Becker says individual nations should also impose their own sanctions against those who traffic in child soldiers.

Special Court Supplement

ICRC Moot Court at the Special Court, in Pictures

Friday, 20 April 2007

