

**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, 23 February 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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**Special Court for Sierra Leone**  
Outreach and Public Affairs Office

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone, 20 February 2009**

### **RUF Trial Judgment is Special Court's Last in Sierra Leone**

Judgment in the trial of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will be handed down by Trial Chamber I in Freetown on 25 February.

The three Accused, former RUF "Interim Leader" Issa Hassan Sesay, former RUF commander Morris Kallon, and RUF Chief of Security Augustine Gbao, each face an 18-count indictment, consisting of eight counts alleging widespread or systematic attacks against Sierra Leone's civilian population (crimes against humanity), eight counts which allege attacks by an armed militia against vulnerable persons (war crimes), and two counts of other serious violations of international humanitarian law – the recruiting and use of child soldiers and attacks against UN peacekeepers.

All three of the accused have pleaded not guilty to all of the charges.

If any of the Accused is found guilty on any of the 18 counts, a sentencing judgment will be handed down within a month. The Special Court does not have the death penalty, and sentences must be a specified term of years.

In January 2002 Sierra Leone's Parliament ratified the Special Court Agreement without a dissenting vote. The Court began its work the following June.

This is the last judgment which will take place in Freetown. Two other trials are complete, including appeals. The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is continuing in The Hague.

The Special Court was set up by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone to address atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's brutal civil war. That war, which began in 1991 and only ended in January 2002, has often been called the world's most brutal conflict in half a century. The widespread killing and mutilation of civilians, the burning of villages, and the abduction and recruiting of children to fight in the war have been chronicled by Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and reflected by such films as "Cry Freetown" and "Blood Diamonds."

#END

Spectator

Monday, 23 February 2009

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Exclusive

Monday, 23 February 2009

## *At The Special Court...*

# Wednesday Is Judgement

Judgment in the trial of three former leaders of Sierra Leone's defunct Revolutionary United

Front (RUF) will be handed down  
*Continued page 2*

## Wednesday Is Judgement

*From front page*

by Trial Chamber I in Freetown on Wednesday, 25th February, 2008.

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Awareness Times  
Monday, 23 February 2009

## Law School Celebrates 19<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day



L-R: Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson, Chief Justice Umu Tejan-Jalloh and Nasiru Tejan-Cole Esq.

By Abdul Karim Kabia

The Council of Legal Education of the Sierra Leone Law School has celebrated its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Foundation Day on Saturday February 21, 2009 at the Conference Hall of the Leone Preparatory School, Brookfields in Freetown. The well attended occasion was graced by lawyers, Judges and dignitaries including Her Lady the Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone whilst the 19<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Lecture was delivered by former Director of Public Prosecution, Nasiru Tejan-Cole Esq. LL.M B.L. Barrister & Solicitor. In his lecture, the learned legal practitioner, Nasiru Tejan-Cole spoke lengthily on the challenges facing the country's legal system. Some of these challenges, according to him range from the non-qualified police prosecutors to lack of sufficient Magistrates and Judges. The Full Text of the Tejan-Cole Lecture will be published in full in a subsequent edition.

Earlier, in his Welcome Statement, the Interim Director of the Sierra Leone Law School, Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson said it is indeed refreshing and gratifying to recall, on occasions like this, with justifiable pride, achievements in the institutional growth of the School as it continues its advance towards the attainment of professional excellence in the Law.

He recalled that the School last year certified for 'Call to the Sierra Leone Bar' 39 law graduates after they had successfully completed their Bar examination. The demographic profile of these newly qualified Barristers was as follows: 30 Sierra Leoneans, 5 Cameroonians and 4 Gambians.

"The current student population of the School reveals a similar diversity. We have 26 from Sierra Leone, 9 from Cameroon, 2 from The Gambia, and 1 from Nigeria. We take justifiable pride in these achievements. They certainly augur well for the future of the School's long-term evolutionary development". Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson revealed as he expressed satisfaction with the fact that those newly qualified Barristers were the first group of law graduates who have acquired a sound knowledge base of well-designed practitioner-oriented law courses forming part of a New Curriculum that came into effect a year ago with the aim of providing instructions in the law from

a practical perspective.

"It is trite knowledge that the bifurcation of the law into the academic and the practical has always been a key feature of its disciplinary existence and continuing application", he noted, adding that "We in the Law School are mandated to provide our students with a sound knowledge base in the practical aspects of the law after obtaining their law degrees. This is the focus of the School's new Curriculum".

The Honourable Chief Justice Umu Tejan-Jalloh who is also the Chair of the Council of Legal Education in Sierra Leone, in her own Statement, expressed her delight to make a statement at the Nineteenth Foundation Celebrations of the School, in her capacity as the substantive Chief Justice of the Republic and Chair of the Council of Legal Education of Sierra Leone.

She noted that "last year when I made a statement of this nature, I did so in the capacity as Acting Chief Justice and therefore the Acting Chairman of the Council of Legal Education of Sierra Leone".

She expressed happiness that some of the perceived negativities by the general public of the legal profession have somehow eroded by the positive strides being made by the Judiciary.

Chief Justice Tejan-Jalloh pointed out that the theme for this year's lecture, "The Machinery of Prosecution in Sierra Leone - Professional Reflections", is very apt, as the school has now developed a new curriculum which has a new approach to the lectureship in the school, adding that it is professionally based as distinct from the former

academic type tutorship.

"I must once more publicly register my appreciation to the Hon. Justice Bankole Thompson for his support to Council and the very good work he is doing at the School for developing this new curriculum and also for refusing to accept any remuneration as Interim Director of the School," the C.J. said adding "From the reports I have been receiving, he has also built up a very healthy foreign bank reserve and the School finance, which was rather precarious on his assumption of office has now assumed a very firm footing".

She went on to state that "I am happy to note that the School has been steadily progressing since its inception. The School started with a roll of thirty-seven students and to date the School has enrolled three hundred and thirty-three students."

Notwithstanding this development, the Chief Justice pointed out that the numerical strength is by no means beneficial if there is no corresponding improvement in the behaviour of alumni.

"I have to take judicial notice of the fact that some Graduates of the School have not been comporting themselves in a way that is commensurate with the ethics and dignity required or expected of them", she noted, stressing that "we will not tolerate any behaviour that will compromise the integrity and dignity of the institution".

The Chief Justice also used the forum as an opportunity to advise Barristers who are graduates of the Sierra Leone Law School to comport themselves in a proper manner in and out of the court, adding that they must always pay respect to their senior colleagues at the Bar.

Before ending, Justice Tejan-Jalloh used the occasion to sternly warn students of the Sierra Leone Law School to desist from conducts that are synonymous to compromising the integrity and dignity of the Institution. She said it would appear that pupils of the school have been indulging in un-warranted quarrels and backbiting.

"You must never allow yourselves to be involved in such unseemly behaviour," the Chief Justice stated. She called on the pupils to "copy the examples of good, seasoned lawyers, so that your alma mater will be proud of you".

"Let me warn that as Chairman of Council, I will not hesitate to endorse any resolution that will ensure that only students with proper attitude to their work will continue the course," Chief Justice Umu Tejan-Jalloh warned.

The ceremony, which ended on a high and positive note was ably chaired by Lawyer A.K. Hollowell Esq. Also delivering a luminous statement was the Acting Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Law School Alumni Association, Sally Khartumal Esq.



Students of the Law School pose behind members of the High Table for photo

## Agence France-Presse

Friday, 20 February 2009

### **Verdict in Sierra Leone's RUF trial next week**

FREETOWN (AFP) — Sierra Leone's war crimes tribunal will hand down a verdict next week in the trial of three former rebel leaders accused of ordering atrocities during the 1991-2001 civil war, the court said Thursday.

The leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao, face 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, rape, sexual enslavement, cruel treatment, using child soldiers and attacks on UN soldiers.

They have all pleaded not guilty before the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone.

On Wednesday the judges are expected to rule whether the defendants are guilty. If they are convicted, a special hearing will follow to determine sentencing.

Prosecutors say RUF fighters committed numerous atrocities during Sierra Leone's bloody 1991-2001 civil war.

By the time the conflict ended some 120,000 people were killed and tens of thousands of others had been mutilated, their arms, legs, noses or ears chopped off.

At the opening of the trial in June 2004 prosecutor David Crane called the indictment against the men "a tale of horror" and said the RUF leaders were "dogs of war, hounds of hell".

During the trial prosecutors painted a picture of the RUF rebels involved in a joint criminal enterprise together with former Liberian president Charles Taylor in order to get control over the diamond fields of Sierra Leone to finance their warfare. The so-called blood diamonds harvested by the rebels through violence and intimidation were traded for military and financial support.

"Blood diamonds are the common thread that bound together this criminal enterprise. The rule of the gun reigned supreme," Crane said.

Prosecution witnesses testified at length about the RUF rebels' atrocities. They told horrific tales of murder, rape, men and women taken by the rebels and forced to work in the RUF-controlled diamond fields, while women were used as sex slaves.

They also spoke of the so-called Small Boys Units, boys forcibly recruited by the rebels and issued with small lightweight guns like AK-47's and often given marijuana, cocaine or brown-brown (heroin) to prepare them for battle.

These units of boys aged between ten and fifteen had a reputation of particular cruelty among the civilian population.

The three RUF leaders were initially indicted along with the RUF's founder and close Taylor ally Foday Sankoh but he died in custody before the case ever came to trial.

Charles Taylor is currently on trial in a separate case before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in The Hague for those proceedings. He faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Sesay, Kallon and Gbao have been on trial since June 2004 and closing arguments in the case were heard in August 2008 after judges heard testimony from 170 witnesses.

The defence says the men are not responsible for the atrocities and Sesay's lawyers in particular tried to cast him as a peacemaker because he signed the Lome peace agreement which ended the war.

Witnesses presented by the defence countered the prosecution allegations of widescale atrocities and said that in areas controlled by the RUF leaders there was safety and security. According to one witness, Kallon even shared his food with the hungry villages.

The RUF case is the last of the three special court trials held in Freetown. The only trial still ongoing before the Sierra Leone tribunal is the Taylor trial which has been moved to The Hague for security reasons.



United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries  
20 February 2009**

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

**Newspaper Summary**

**Latvian Journalist Testifies how Taylor and Cronies Smuggled Weapons in Sub-Region**  
(Daily Observer, The News, Heritage, New Democrat, The Analyst)

- An investigative Latvian journalist, Immants Liepins has told the ongoing Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission 'Corruption and Economic Crimes' hearing that the Italian government is currently investigating a retired agent of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Roger D'onofrio Ruggiero, a former business partner of ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor on wealth accrued during their partnership.
- In his testimony on Thursday, Mr. Liepins said Ruggiero reportedly joined the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) leader Charles Taylor and others to organize an enterprise to smuggle weapons into the West African sub-region.
- Liepins who displayed documents to substantiate his claims, further said Ruggiero collaborated with Taylor, a representative of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, Eastern European arms smugglers and the defunct rebel RUF's Ibrahim Bah to organize the International Business Consultant Limited (IBC) to serve as support for large weapons deals.
- The documents Liepins submitted to the TRC disclosed that the company entered into deals with the Bulgarian Company, Kintex, which supplied weapons and ammunition to IBC and sold diamonds in return. The diamonds, he added, were camouflaged as oranges and olives, with the aid of some Bulgarian companies in Zurich, Switzerland, represented by Swiss lawyer Rodulf Meroni.
- Liepins disclosed that the company, IBC accrued an estimated US\$3 million as profit from the deal in 1993 alone.
- "The IBC is a Liberian company de jure that was founded by me, Charles Taylor and Michele Papa who was my representative in all deals with Libya, as he and Massimo PUGLIESE had trade relations with President Qaddafi," the document submitted to the TRC from Ruggiero said.
- Liepins previously worked with Latvia's largest media institutions: Daily Business, Evening News, Independent Morning News, among others, before he founded the Public Investigation Bureau. He is also the author of two books, one on financial crime and corruption (2008). He has been nominated this year by UNESCO as a candidate for the World Press Freedom Prize.

## **Lebanese Union Donates 200 Wooden, Plastic Chairs to Liberia's Medical College**

(Daily Observer)

- The faculty, staff and students of the nation's highest medical institution, A.M. Doglioti College of Medicine at the University of Liberia (UL), were on February 17, 2009 jubilant recipients of 150 wooden and 50 white plastic chairs from the World Lebanese Culture Union (WLCU) as a goodwill gesture intended to enhance the sitting capacity of the college.

## **Radio Summary**

**Local Media – Truth FM** *(News monitored 2:00pm)*

### **English Company Bids US\$24M for Terminal Rehabilitation**

- The final stage of the bidding of the expansion and modernization of the Petroleum Storage Terminal (PST) at the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) ended Thursday, with English firm Zakhem International Construction Limited, forwarding a bid of US\$24,700,809.00.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)*

### **LPMC and Mercy Corps Sign US\$50,000 MOU**

- The management of the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) on Thursday signed a one-year US\$50,000 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mercy Corps-Liberia for the rehabilitation of 78.2 acres of cocoa farm, including LPMC seed garden in Compound #2, Grand Bassa County.

*(Also reported on Star Radio, Radio Veritas, Sky FM, and ELBC)*

### **Workshop on Support for Liberia's Media Ends in USA**

- A workshop on support for the independent media in Liberia's new democracy has ended in Washington DC with appeal for more training and economic empowerment for the sector.
- The workshop was sponsored by the Center for International Media Assistance and the National Endowment for Democracy.
- It was held against the background that the Liberian media is often characterized by the lack of trained manpower, ethical digression and transgression, poverty and female under-representation.

**Radio Veritas** *(News monitored : 1:30pm)*

### **Excellence Awards Await Professionals**

- An entity which would be devoted to monitoring the performances of Liberians at all levels and in all professional fields for possible annual awards has been launched in the country

#### **President Repairs Home Destroyed by Escaping Prisoners**

- A man whose home was recently damaged by fleeing inmates of the Monrovia Central Prison has had it repaired. The repairs, an Executive Mansion release says, were carried out upon directives of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- Commenting on the repairs, Mr. Christopher Sammy, owner of the home, commended President Johnson Sirleaf for the humanitarian assistance rendered him. Mr. Sammy, a Supervisor in the Revenue Department at the Ministry of Finance, expressed happiness over the repairs.
- Christopher Sammy, suffered the property loss in December last year when prisoners using his home as an escape path, damaged the ceiling in the process.

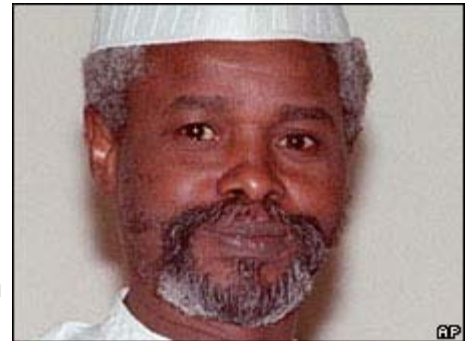
BBC

Friday, 20 February 2009

## Ex-Chad leader faces court move

**Belgium has lodged a case at the International Court of Justice seeking to compel Senegal to prosecute former Chadian President Hissene Habre.**

Mr Habre, who is accused of crimes against humanity, has lived in Senegal since being removed from power in 1990.



Hissene Habre has been accused of

He is accused of killing and torturing tens of thousands of opponents during his eight-year rule, charges he denies. widespread murder and torture

The African Union has told N'Djamena to prosecute him, but it has reportedly said the procedure would be too costly.

In August, Senegalese Justice Minister Madicke Niang said 18bn CFA francs (\$35m) were likely to be needed to fund the trial.

### 'Universal jurisdiction'

Mr Habre, sometimes dubbed "Africa's Pinochet", settled in Senegal after he was deposed in 1990 by Chadian President Idriss Deby.

A commission of inquiry has said Mr Habre's government was responsible for some 40,000 politically motivated murders and 200,000 cases of torture. He denies knowledge of the crimes.

Belgium has been pushing to have Mr Habre put on trial since a Belgian national of Chadian origin and several Chadian nationals filed complaints in Belgian courts between November 2000 and December 2001.

Belgium's "universal jurisdiction" law allows prosecutions for crimes against humanity wherever they are committed.

**“ Senegal's failure to prosecute Mr Habre... violates the [UN] Convention against Torture ”**

Belgium submission to  
International Court of Justice

In September 2005, Belgium issued an international arrest warrant for the former Chadian leader relating to the activities of his intelligence service, which is accused of arbitrary arrests, mass murder and systematic torture.

Mr Habre was arrested by the Senegalese authorities two months later, but a court ruled that he could not be tried there and rebuffed Belgium's extradition request.

The African Union ordered Senegal to put Mr Habre on trial in 2006, but since then N'Djamena has said it is having financial difficulties.

"Senegal's failure to prosecute Mr Habre, if he is not extradited to Belgium to answer for the acts of torture that are alleged against him, violates the [UN] Convention against Torture," Belgium said in documents filed on Thursday, according to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The ICJ said Belgium was seeking an order compelling Senegal to put Mr Habre on trial, or else extradite him "so that he can answer for his crimes".

Belgium also wants the court to take to take "all the steps within its power to keep Mr Habre under the control and surveillance of the judicial authorities of Senegal", so that he can not flee Senegal.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Belgium's lawsuit move was an important step towards ensuring Mr Habre did not escape justice.



Mr Habre's forces employed a scorched earth strategy in southern Chad

## Human Rights Watch

Friday, 20 February 2009

Press Release

### **Belgium Asks World Court to Act on Former Chad Dictator**

Senegal Requested to Prosecute or Extradite Hissène Habré

(Brussels, February 20, 2009) – Belgium’s request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to order Senegal to prosecute or extradite the exiled former dictator of Chad, is an important step towards ensuring that Hissène Habré does not escape justice, five African and international human rights groups said today. Belgium made the application to the court late on February 19, 2009.

Habré, accused of massive atrocities during his rule in Chad from 1992 to 2000, has lived in Senegal since his fall. Senegal arrested him on torture charges in 2000 but released him in 2001. Belgium indicted Habré on charges of crimes against humanity and torture in 2005 and sought his extradition. Senegal referred the matter to the African Union, which in July 2006 called on Senegal to prosecute Habré. But more than two years later, Senegal has failed to institute proceedings against Habré, said the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (ATPDH), the Chadian Association of Victims of Political Repression and Crime (AVCRP), the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO), Human Rights Watch, and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH).

Belgium also asked the ICJ immediately to order Senegal not to allow Habré to leave Senegal pending the court’s judgment on the merits. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade has threatened to allow Habré to leave Senegal if international donors do not provide €7 million in trial costs to Senegal.

“Belgium is saying that it’s time finally to provide justice to Hissène Habré’s victims, who have been fighting for 18 years to have their day in court,” said Reed Brody, special counsel at Human Rights Watch. “Senegal’s legal obligation to prosecute or extradite Habré is clear.”

“Belgium has every reason to go to the ICJ because Senegal has been bluffing for too long,” said Alioune Tine, president of the Dakar-based the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO). “Senegal is pretending to move forward on the case but the fact remains that not a single concrete step has been taken.”

Belgium’s application charges that Senegal has violated the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by failing to prosecute or extradite Habré, and breached its obligations to bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity.

In May 2006, the United Nations Committee against Torture already found that Senegal had violated the Convention against Torture and called on Senegal to prosecute or extradite Habré, but Senegal has not complied with that ruling.

The International Court of Justice, which sits in The Hague, is the United Nations’ highest court. The court deals generally with cases between UN member states and it has no jurisdiction to prosecute individuals. Its rulings can be legally binding on states.

The torture convention provides that any dispute between two states parties concerning its application which it has not been possible to settle through negotiation or arbitration may be submitted to the ICJ by one of the states. Negotiations between Belgium and Senegal have been going on since 2005 when Senegal did not respond to Belgium’s extradition request.

In its application, Belgium asks the ICJ to rule that Senegal is obliged to bring criminal proceedings against Habré or, failing his prosecution, to extradite him to Belgium.

Speaking for the victims, Souleymane Guengueng, founder of the Chadian Association of Victims of Political Repression and Crime (AVCRP), said: “Long live Belgium! So many survivors have already died. Unless Senegal can be made to bring Hissène Habré to justice soon, there won’t be any victims left at his trial.”

Guengueng almost died of dengue fever during almost three years of mistreatment in Chadian prisons.

“It’s not the money that is lacking for Hissène Habré’s trial, but Senegal’s political will,” said Dobian Assingar, a Chadian activist with the FIDH.

## **Background**

Hissène Habré ruled Chad from 1982 until he was deposed in 1990 by President Idriss Déby Itno and fled to Senegal. His one-party regime was marked by widespread atrocities, including waves of ethnic campaigns. Files of Habré’s political police, the DDS (Direction de la Documentation et de la Sécurité), which were discovered by Human Rights Watch in 2001, reveal the names of 1,208 persons who were killed or died in detention. A total of 12,321 victims of human rights violations were mentioned in the files.

Habré was first indicted in Senegal in 2000 before courts ruled that he could not be tried there. His victims then turned to Belgium and, after a four-year investigation, a Belgian judge in September 2005 charged Habré with crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture.

Following a Belgian extradition request, Senegalese authorities arrested Habré in November 2005. The Senegalese government then asked the African Union to propose how to try Habré. On July 2, 2006, the African Union, following the recommendation of a Committee of Eminent African Jurists, called on Senegal to prosecute Habré “in the name of Africa,” and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade declared that Dakar would do so.

In 2007-2008, Senegal amended its constitution and laws to permit the prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture no matter when and where the acts occurred.

On September 16, 14 victims filed complaints with a Senegalese prosecutor accusing Habré of crimes against humanity and torture. Since then, Senegal has said that it will not process the complaints or move forward with the procedure until it receives full international funding for all the costs of the trial. Wade said in October that if Senegal did not receive full international funding he would make Habré “leave Senegal.” The European Commission has already offered €2 million for the first stages of the investigation, but is waiting for Senegal to present a budget. Chad has offered €3 million. Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have also agreed to help finance the trial.

## The Patriotic Vanguard

Saturday, 14 February 2009

### Patrick Bockarie responds to his critics

For the benefit of those ...that did not know... I will summarize but if you have any more questions, please ask me and I will respond. I have nothing to hide about the trip I made to Sierra Leone after the Lome Peace Agreement. I will do it all over again if I have the opportunity to do the same. My trip to accept the nomination to be executive director of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD), created under Section VII of the Lome Peace Agreement, ratified by a parliamentary act, is one of the greatest sacrifices I have made for the love of Sierra Leone. It was then Chairman Sankoh who asked President Kabbah to nominate me for that position. Initially, he (Sankoh) nominated me upon his return to Freetown. But the parliamentary act that established the CMRRD and ratified the Lome agreement said the president, not the chairman, will nominate the executive director. There was a back and forth on it until those around the president took to liking me while in Freetown.

Text of the Lome Peace Agreement can be found at:

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lom%C3%A9\\_Peace\\_Accord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lom%C3%A9_Peace_Accord)

#### WHY ME:

I was probably the most vocal Sierra Leonean in the United States or internationally calling for international intervention to end in the war by overwhelming military force. My mother had just returned from California to our village, Mendekeima, near Kailahun in December 1990 when the war broke out in February or March 1991. She and my siblings were captured and taken to Liberia by the rebels. I traveled to Sierra Leone in 1992, determined to go to Kailahun and bring out my mother if it meant my death. But relatives in Kenema and Segbwema did not allow me to go any further than Daru when refugees were camped. I returned to the US without finding any of my immediate relatives and then embarked on a mission to draw international attention to the war. I wrote to United Nations Security Council and accused Libya's current AU Chairman Col. Gaddafi of supporting the rebels and provided written testimonies I gathered from escaping relatives in the war zone. I organized close friends (Cillaty Dabo's brother, Kortor Kamara and his wife Mbalu, and brother Mustapha were part of the group that met at my house in San Bernardino every weekend for almost 3 years) to support refugees from the war, and for the next three years, every Monday, we sent \$250 Wells Fargo Bank cashiers check to the Sierra Leone Red Cross (Mr. During) to help the war refugees. We sent a copy of the check to the NPRC government. My mother and siblings escaped the war and came to the Daru UN camp in January 1994. I won't go into the horrible killings of my relatives, the destruction of our homes, and the rape and infections that have killed my most beautiful younger sister, Monjama). I later brought them to Freetown.

In April 1994, after the rebels came close to entering Waterloo, I raised the alarm that it will be a catastrophe if the rebels were allowed to enter Freetown and create an urban war. I quickly lead a group of Sierra Leoneans to a meeting with the British consul general in Los Angeles where we submitted a 21-page appeal to the British government of Prime Minister John Major and copied the Queen. We made a strong case that Britain owed Sierra Leone both moral and political obligations to enter the war on behalf of the government with overwhelming military force to compel the RUF to a negotiated settlement or surrender. We cataloged the history of Sierra Leone's gallant fighting for Britain in its colonial wars around the world including Congo, Burma, and Korea. The meeting was serious and video taped by the



consulate. Since I had circulated the appeal booklet and invited hundreds of Sierra Leoneans to come to support the appeal, over 300 Sierra Leoneans came. But instead of supporting, most demonstrated outside the Los Angeles British consulate accusing me of calling for Britain to re-colonize Sierra Leone by military force. Cillaty, your brother, Kortor wrote a vehement opposition to my call for British military intervention yet we remain best of friends. The consul general asked me, "Mr. Bockari, if you think British intervention will end the war and help your country, why are so many Sierra Leoneans opposed to this appeal?" They held signs outside that read, "NO TO BRITISH INTERVENTION!!"

We sent copies of the appeal booklets to over 100 heads of governments and the UN Security Council. We received encouraging response of the usual from the Queen of England AND from Sir Douglas Hurd, British Foreign Secretary at that time. But the UN response was worse. UN wrote that it had a Sierra Leonean, Dr. James Jonah, as Assistant Secretary and UN envoy to the Israeli - Palestinian conflict who had never said there was a war of the magnitude and seriousness we described in our appeal. The then Los Angeles Times UN Bureau Chief, Sam Misner came across our appeal and wrote a similar letter to me saying he went to lunch with Dr. Jonah and that Dr. Jonah had never mentioned that there was war in Sierra Leone.

#### THE RESPONSE THAT STARTED MY JOURNEY TO FODAY SANKOH:

The response that dragged me into my eventual contact with Foday Sankoh was from the Norwegian government. In June 1995, I was invited to an international peace conference on Sierra Leone in Oslo with a prelude that Norway supports peaceful resolution of all conflicts and will encourage the government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG to do the same. I first rejected the invitation, but I then received a call from Norwegian Foreign ministry spokesman, Darlene Kjell AND a Sierra Leonean there associated with the conference by the name of Banda-Kulu Fransis Davies. They convinced me to go to Oslo. In July 1995, I went to Norway to attend the conference and the rest is history. I spent four days in Oslo where over 200 Sierra Leoneans from around the world gathered. At the conclusion of that conference, I was voted near unanimous to head a peaceful war resolution effort with support of the Norwegian government. Dr. John Karefa-Smart, Mayor Dr. Colomba Blango, London attorney Boeku-betts, and others were all in that conference. While we were in Oslo, the consultative conference to hold elections before peace was called in Freetown. Those in the Diaspora were told NOT to attend. I told the conference we will reject that position as citizens of Sierra Leone. We sent a letter asking Mr. Minah, the electoral officer who made that decision to reconsider and said we were sending three delegates to the consultative conference. He reversed himself and we contributed enough money to send three delegates to Freetown to participate in the conference that eventually led to the election of president Kabbah. But I opposed President Kabbah because I said he had never fought for our people even as a top UN officer. I predicted that Pres. Kabbah will not be a good president. In early 1996, we created the "Worldwide Coalition for Peace and Development in Sierra Leone and drafted the "Sierra Leone End of War Declaration Agreement" that later appeared to be the source of most of the provisions of the Abidjan Peace Accord and later, the Lome Peace Agreement. It was over 75 pages, addressed to President Kabbah, .Cpl. Foday Sankoh (C/o President Henry Konan Beddie of Ivory Coast), Salone parliament, ECOWAS heads, Late Pres. Sani Abacha..

The first time I ever saw Cpl. Foday Sankoh was on television when he and Pres. Kabbah embraced during the Abidjan peace Accord signing. After calling the international peace conference in California and sent the list of delegates to the US State Department for visas, I was notified in a two-and-a-half-page letter by the State Department that visas will not be granted to the participants purely for the conference unless the applicants met the visitor visa requirements. They said that the US was supporting the peace process already underway in Abidjan and the ECOWAS efforts as well. President Kabbah refused to attend or send a delegate accusing me of supporting and advocating power sharing with the rebels. I say President Kabbah because his presidential affairs minister or someone in the state house said so to me in a

phone conversation. I was so disappointed that I dropped the Sierra Leone peace process efforts and kept away from political issues.

#### FODAY SNAKOH GOT ARRESTED IN NIGERIA AFTER ABIJAN PEACE ACCORD:

As soon as news of the arrest of Cpl. Foday Sankoh broke out in Nigeria, I came out and condemned the arrest in a detailed appeal to Sani Abacha to release him in the interest of peace. I argued that the arrest will disrupt the Abidjan Peace Accord and probably return our country to war. Based on information we were receiving, it was evident that the Nigerian government was benefiting from the war by excessively budgeting for ECOMOG support, selling arms to the rebels for diamonds, bombed the rebels everywhere except in Kono, and that this arrest was their chance to perpetuate the conflict. I argued that the arrest will not end the conflict as seen from other rebel conflicts in Angola, Congo, and Liberia. Everyone started condemning me as supporting the rebels and advocating for the release of Cpl. Sankoh. Some took advantage of the last name coincidence with Sam Mosquito Bockarie and insinuated that he was my brother. [FOR THE RECORD AGAIN; I am not related to Mosquito Bockarie in any way whatsoever and we don't even come from the same town. I never met him in my life. I spoke to him twice on the phone when I went to Sankoh in Freetown. Some people went as far as threaten to kill me. I dared then on. Even after Johnny Paul overthrew Pres. Kabbah, I continued to call for a peaceful resolution and said sitting and talking to all Sierra Leoneans and have the key players in the conflict share in a transition government was the best way to end the war. I was cried down for that and said I was supporting Johnny Paul. In late 1997, I was the only Sierra Leonean the American Peace Corps Association invited to speak in their annual conference in San Diego. There I explained my power sharing theory and I was praised for the bravery to speak out for a peaceful resolution when everyone was on the "kill all the rebels, wipe out the Temnes because they started the war in Mendeland, etc.)" So on December 31, 1997, I decided again to wash my hands off Sierra Leone politics as long as the war was on.

#### THE TELEPHONE CALL FROM CPL. (CHAIRMAN) FODAY SANKOH:

After the horrible rebel invasion of Freetown on January 6, 1999, we all know what followed so I won't duel on that. Sankoh and Pres. Kabbah went to Lome for another peace agreement. At that time, most people had agreed with my positions that a peaceful resolution was the best way to end the war; and that Britain should intervene militarily to overwhelm the rebels and compel them to negotiate. In Lome, Cpl. Sankoh insisted on position of vice president and president Kabbah refused on constitutional grounds. We were all glued to BBC for news from Lome, so we all knew the hotel Sankoh and the Sierra Leone delegation were staying. One afternoon, they announced that Sankoh has rejected the final offer for him to be the chairman of the CMRRD mentioned earlier and that he will be returned to his jail and the war will likely continue. That was when I decided to try once more, for the sake of our people, to convince him to agree to be the chairman. I prepared what looks like the SLID proposal but more detailed with beautiful superimposed photographic displays of transformed sections of Freetown. I sent the 40-page proposal via DHL together with some colognes, shirts, and pants which I later found were too small for him. According to Mr. Sankoh, Dr. Alimamy Pallo Bangura was the one who read the proposal to him. He said my document was so impressive that he agreed it was better to head the strategic resources commission than being the vice president. At one point in the document, I provided pages of pictorial comparisons of the position of a VP and that of the chairman of the most powerful commission ever created in our country's history - A commission that will control all the minerals, control the budget of every ministry, and may even control how much money the president could spend on his office - I concluded. Mr. Sankoh confessed to me that my document was the most beautiful piece of art he has ever seen and he told Dr. Pallo Bangura to call Solomon Berewa (then attorney general) and the Sierra Leone delegation to announce that he will accept the chairmanship of the CMRRD.

#### THE INTRIGUE BEGINS:

On the fifth day after DHL picked the proposal to Lome, Mr. Sankoh and Pres. Kabbah announced the Lome agreement. Mr. Sankoh called me in my Barstow office as I was about to walk out at about 5:00

PM. I was the Bridge engineer in charge of a 450 million, 25 new bridge, etc highway project on I-15 to Las Vegas. It must have been July 2 or 3rd - I am not too sure about the exact date. He said Mr. Bockari, this is chairman Sankoh and I asked who? Then another person came on the phone and explained that it was Pa Sankoh that wants to talk to me. I had to sit down, and I did. We had a quick chat and he said he would like me to be his chief deputy commander on the commission. I held my urge to correct him about the use of "commanders" on non-military commissions. So I said Ok sir, but I need to think about it. The rest is too intriguing to explain all here. **THE ISSUE HERE WAS NOT WHETHER I LIKED OR HATED SANKOH. I did not tell Sankoh to start the war or to kill anyone. BUT I LOVE SIERRA LEONE SO MUCH THAT I CAN WORK WITH ANYONE TO PLAY A ROLE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT.** For those who will think i was looking for job opportunity, I was not. I am a senior engineer (civil servant of over 24 years) earning over \$9,800 per month. Prior to accepting his offer, I made trips to Abidjan where I drove in Ivory Coast President Henry Kona Biddie's top cars; went to Freetown and met with ECOMOG's garrison commander Buhari Musa; met with UN envoy there, met with rebel commanders who had returned to Freetown for the power sharing, held meetings at State House, and in Abidjan, met with regional leaders who came to see meet Mr. Sankoh. In all, my message was the same: I will only work for Mr. Sankoh if they all assured me that they were serious about ending the war, disarm, and not just playing games. To the government and ECOWAS leaders, I gave them the whole truth about my relationship with Mr. Sankoh. To the UN, I gave them my personal information (SSN, ID, Passport, etc) for them to look into my background to assure themselves that I have never been involved with Mr. Sankoh except for what I have told them. I wrote to the US State department and asked for a determination of my US citizenship if I went to Sierra Leone and took an oath of office - will that invalidate my US citizenship? I was told no.

I made one more trip to talk to Mr. Sankoh about my management style and how we will operate. I am an Aries, a type A manager. I tested his temperament and found that he genuinely liked me to the extent that his top commanders became jealous of me. When Mr. Sankoh would get angry with president Kabbah or Parliament, I was the one they will call to calm him down. I tentatively accepted his offer and came back to the US in September 1999 to inform my wife and seek opinions of friends and relatives. That was when I met Maurice Foday. **There is a top officer of the UN Special court trying Charles Taylor that knew me years before I went to work with Sankoh and I also consulted him for advice.** Very few people told me not to go. My elder brother was one of them but I told him I would rather die trying to help Sierra Leone than live long and not leave a better and more prosperous Sierra Leone for my children and grand children. The majority of those who know me well told me to go - that the war was over, and I will be in position to do what I had always wanted to do in my life more than anything else - contribute significantly to Sierra Leone's development. I traveled around the state and explained my decision to many who did not even know me. That was when I met Maurice Foday. Despite the APC "bella talk" Maurice knew he was coming to a dinner sendoff party for me upon my invitation to go and work with Foday Sankoh. I arrived in Freetown to a warm welcome by everyone I knew. To me, it was about my country, NOT Foday Sankoh.

#### **THE PROCESS BROKE DOWN AND I RETURNED TO AMERICA;**

I spent only 78 days in Freetown - not one year as Maurice put it. I decided to return to California after I clearly saw that the government was not sincere about the commission they created, and Mr. Sankoh was more interested in becoming president than working to run the CMRRD and boldly develop our country. He also continued the same corrupt practices the government was engaged in like making stupid and senseless deals with people around the world that wanted our minerals. They came and give him \$20,000 or so and he will make promises to them that will only result in exploiting our country. He asked me to go to South Africa with him in violation of the agreements and the way I wanted us to manage our mineral resources. So I declined and he went with Gibril Massaquoi and other. He started leaving me out of some private meetings. He meet with top Nigerian army commanders in secrete which appeared strange. Kabbah's government ministers came late at night and took off their hats, bowed in respect for Sankoh

and I found their actions very shocking. I saw somethings happening late at night that scared the hell out of me.

I started getting nightmares and fearing everybody including Sankoh himself, his wives, and the government. I did not know who was on what side. His many beautiful "lady friends in every government office" tried to seduce me and others told me to be very careful. Sankoh himself started telling me that he had dreams of me trying to take over his position, or he saw me in his dream talking to his young beautiful wife just after the lady cooked and sent food for me without telling anyone. Then the last straw that caused me to leave was his decision to disarm the UN peace keepers and (maybe) overthrow the government. I say maybe because he told me that unless he was president, my plans will ne be implemented and he refused to disarm. When he ordered his men not to disarm to UN troops, I tried to stop the radio operator from sending the instructions. But they stopped me. So the next day, on April 26, 2000, I went to state house and told the government that I was leaving to return to the US. Present Kabbah sent Ambassador Patrick Foyah to ask me not to return to the US and to meet with him on Monday, May 1. That he wanted to offer me a position. I promised I will be at his Hill Station residence at 10:00 AM on Monday, just to allow me time to leave Freetown.

I was terrified of the prospects.... Then I told Sankoh that I was going to take my mom to see our relatives in Kailahun for the weekend and will return in time on Monday for our meetings. This was after an ugly incident in which Sankoh accused me of going to State House on Wednesday April 26 without my escort and his permission. He said I may have betrayed him. I said I went there to try to get the commission to start. I had proposed reforms in a 13-day mining exercise at the US embassy with Solo B, current Foreign Minister, Zainab, US ambassador Joseph Melrose, etc, that I estimated will quickly generate, thru identified leverage financing, the first annually budget of \$6.5 billion under the CMRRD. I argued that he had to let me move freely and get the actions needed to move the country quickly or I will resign and leave. What followed will give anyone who knew Sankoh, a heart attack - I will skip it here. Surfice to say I was not going to leave long had I stayed there. Someone close to him than anyone else liked me a lot. He/she advised me to leave Freetown... "even if you have to walk on foot to America, please go." Between Saturday, April 29 and Monday, May 1, 2000, I managed to arrive in Abidjan under the most intriguing circumstances. I got to Paris and called my supervisor in California to ask for my job back. He was so excited he screamed.

I arrived in California on Tuesday, May 2, 2000. I left behind in Freetown all my personal properties but with my dream of a modern and prosperous Sierra Leone - alive and in me. On the following Monday, May 8, 2000, the tragedy that collapsed the peace process and caused Sankoh to be arrested happened at his residence on Spur Road when 19 demonstrators were shot and killed according to reports. On Wednesday May 10, I called State house and they told me that president Kabbah was looking for me to protect me and that I should tell them where I was so they can come and take me to the president's house. I gave the guy my address near Los Angeles. He said "Mr. Bockari this nor to joke business." He asked me for the phone number of where I was and I gave him my home phone number in Victorville, CA. He immediately called me and I answered. I told him that I have warned them but they did not listen to me. So there you go.