SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

See photos of Saturday's Security Exercise in today's *'Special Court Supplement'*.

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 June 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local News

US Envoy Lauds Special Court / *Exclusive* Pages 3-4

Special Court Suspected! / *Concord Times* Page 5

Evidence Implicates Taylor's Son, Arabs / *Concord Times* Page 6

Interesting Week in Taylor's Trial / *Awoko* Page 7

International News

Sex Crimes Continue in Peacetime / *IRIN* Pages 8-10

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries / *UNMIL* Pages 11-12

Sudan Opens Fresh Row With ICC / *Afrol News* Page 13

Special Court Supplement

Security Exercise, in Pictures

Exclusive
Monday, 23 June 2008

US Envoy Lauds Special Court

By David A. Jabati

The United States Ambassador At large for War Crime Issues, Jason S. Gorey who is in town to assess the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has said in Freetown that the Court is so far successful.

H.E. Ambassador Jason Gorey made this statement at a press conference held at the American Embassy in Freetown, last Friday, 20th June, 2008.

"In my capacity as Ambassador At Large for War Crime Issues, I focus on the work of tribunals around the world in which the United States effort is to ensure accountability for those who commit such crimes," H.E. Gorey stated, adding that in its quest for accountability, the Special

Continued page 2

US Envoy Lauds Special Court

From front page

Court in Sierra Leone has played and continues to play an important role by bringing to trial those most responsible for the terrible crimes committed during the country's civil war.

"The SCSL has done much to promote healing and to help see Sierra Leone on its path to stability," he maintained.

According to the US envoy, the United States has being, from the onset, a strong supporter of the Special Court politically, diplomatically and financially.

"We have contributed almost fifty million United States Dollars ($50M) to the Court," he revealed, adding that there is an additional twelve million ($12M) funding in the pipeline.

H.E. Gorey said the US has worked closely with the Government of Sierra Leone and other international partners to see it complete its work successfully.

He said during his visit to Freetown, he has had discussions with the Court officials, the Deputy Registrar, the Prosecutor, Steven Rapp and the judges and also with government officials including the Vice President, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and civil society groups who he said also played a very important role in the process. The discussions he said, were focused on ensuring that the court completes its work in a successful fashion.

"This is a critical time for the SCSL as there are important work to be done with the RUF trial nearing completion and the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague ongoing and the appeals that would come out of these two cases. "We will do every thing we can to help the court complete its task and ensure that there is a smooth transition as the court closes," The War Crime Ambassador assured.

Speaking on the controversial issue of one of the Special Court indictees, the former AFRC leader, Johnny Paul Koroma whose whereabouts remains a mystery and whom unconfirmed reports have stated is dead, the War Crime guru said the Court is currently working on what to do should the fugitive surface before or after the court would have fold up.

Ambassador Gorey was earlier introduced by the United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone, June Cartar Perry.

Concord Times
Monday, 23 June 2008

Special Court suspected!

July 21, 2006 (L-R) World Bank Country Director for Sierra Leone, Mats Karlsson, Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, and Registrar of the Special Court, Lovemore Munlo, coming out of the Special Court building

Local News

Special Court suspected!

By Tanu Jalloh

Taylor's lead lawyer Courtney Griffiths said he has always suspected that prosecutors of the United Nations-backed Special Court and those of the US federal prosecution were working together in taking legal actions against Taylor and his son, Chuckie.

Since May 2006 the US Department of Justice has been investigating Charles "Chuckie" Taylor Jr. for alleged torture and war crimes. He was implicated in committing such abuses while he served as the commander of an elite pro-government military unit in Liberia.

Griffiths recently raised concerns at the trial in The Hague questioning witness TF1-590 whether during interviews with US Federal prosecutors he had told them about Taylor 's dealings with Arabs. The witness answered in the affirmative.

He noted that TF1-590 had given an earlier testimony to prosecution investigators on two different occasions in 2007 in which he had made no mention of Arabs being diamond merchants of Charles Taylor as he now suggested.

Witness TF1-590 said he had spoken with a team of United States Federal prosecutors including assistant US attorney, FBI, immigration and custom agents.

Meanwhile, the Court in Sierra Leone could not make any official comment on the matter but a senior personnel has dismissed the claim of a possible connivance saying there was no motion regarding the complaint.

"The statute of the Special Court forbids any instructions from foreign bodies in its execution and dispensation of justice."

However, some three years ago a similar matter regarding the role of CIAs enhancing the prosecution of Special Court indictees was raised by the defence counsel of the Revolutionary United Front.

The court had dismissed the motion on the grounds that there was nothing relevant.

Concord Times
Monday, 23 June 2008

on two different occasions

Evidence implicates Taylor 's son, Arabs

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams in The Hague

Additional evidence in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague has alleged his connections with Arabs in the diamond trade as well as the role of his son Chuckie in human rights abuses in the region

Prosecution witness TF1-590, a Sierra Leonean exile living in Europe and who is also due to testify later against Chuckie in the United States, said Taylor supplied arms to the RUF and had Arabs buying diamonds from RUF rebels.

He said he had spoken with a team of United States Federal prosecutors including assistant US attorney, FBI, immigration and custom agents.

During questioning, Taylor 's lead lawyer, Courtney Griffiths said he suspected the Special Court prosecutors and United States Federal Prosecutors were working together in prosecuting Taylor and his son.

Griffiths asked TF1-590 whether during interviews with US Federal prosecutors he had told them about Taylor 's dealings with Arabs. The witness answered in the affirmative. Griffiths said that when TF1-590 had given an earlier testimony to prosecution investigators on two different occasions in 2007 in which he had made no mention of Arabs being diamond merchants of Charles Taylor as he suggested Monday.

The witness had testified earlier and said that he had been arrested together with two other Sierra Leoneans accused of being Kamajor civil militia fighters and were taken on the ATU Gbatala Base in Bong County, in central Liberia which was commanded by Chuckie Taylor.

The witness said that Taylor did send a message that he wanted to set eyes on the suspected Kamajor fighters. TF1-590 said they were blind-folded and thrown into the back of a jeep headed for Monrovia , with their hands and feet tied.

At Taylor 's White Flower home, the witness continued, they met the former Liberian president in pyjamas who allegedly asked the witness and his colleagues if they were the Kamajors sent to overthrow his government.

Another witness who took the stand during the week, 34-year-old RUF Radio Operator, Alice Pyne said RUF commander Issa Sesay took diamonds from Sierra Leone to Charles Taylor in Liberia to take back arms in return. "What I learned in Buedu from Major Sellay and Sebatu who were in the Buedu station told me that Issa Sesay went with those diamonds to Charles Taylor so that he would bring arms and ammunition. I leant that when he went to Liberia he was lodged at a hotel according to his explanation. It was at that hotel he lost the diamonds." (sic)

Alice went on that RUF Battle group commander, Sam Bockarie alias Mosquito, also brought weapons from Liberia and distributed them to junior commanders like Superman. She said Taylor 's support to the rebels went beyond arms and ammunition, alleging the former Liberian president also sent seven persons believed to possess magical powers to protect rebel fighters in their attempt to retake the Kono district.

Charles Taylor's lawyers said that Alice was not present when Sam Bockarie returned from Liberia and could not testify to what he might have brought with him. They tried to contradict the witness's evidence that Taylor had supplied arms to the RUF and read out what another Prosecution witness, TF1-516, had told the court in April concerning the source of ammunition for the RUF.

Defence lawyer, Anyah said that despite mounting evidence that Taylor sent NPFL commanders to fight alongside RUF in Sierra Leone, Major Sally Duwai and Col. Daniel Tamba, alias Col. Jungle were ordinary Liberian NPFL fighters who crossed over to Sam Bockarie after they were cut off during fighting between the NPFL and another Liberian rebel group, ULIMO-K, in Lofa County.

Courtesy: Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust

Awoko
Monday, 23 June 2008

Interesting week in Taylor's trial

By Alphonsus Zeon and Adolphus Williams in The Hague

The trial of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor this week heard additional evidence of his alleged support to the RUF rebels, his connections with Arabs in the diamond trade as well as the role of his son, Chuckie in human rights abuses in the region.

Prosecution witness, TF1-590, a Sierra Leonean exile living in Europe, who is also due to later testify against Chuckie in the United States, said Taylor supplied arms to the RUF and had Arabs buying diamonds from RUF rebels.

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Courtesy: Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust

Integrated Regional Information Network
Friday, 20 June 2008

Sex Crimes Continue in Peacetime

Freetown

Eight years after a civil war in Sierra Leone that became notorious for the extent of rape and violence committed against civilians, social workers fear that rape is more of a problem in post-conflict, democratic society than it was during the war.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), which runs four "Rainbo Centres" - counseling and treatment clinics for raped and battered women in Sierra Leone - recorded 1,176 attacks on women around the country last year. Its staff say these numbers are just the tip of the iceberg.

"When we started work just after the war it was to provide medical and psychological counseling to women who had been abused during the war, but the new cases have just not stopped coming," said Hannah Kargbo, a nurse who treats abused women.

"Some of the perpetrators were children during the war and were exposed to rape and sexual violence then and just carried on doing it," she said. The highest numbers of cases come from areas where large numbers of ex-combatants are gathered.

Stigmatisation

"The ministry of health just cannot give it the attention it deserves with [other priorities, including] such high levels of child and maternal mortality," explained Alan Glasgow, the head of the IRC in Sierra Leone. "They want to, but the resources just aren't there."

Even when facilities do exist - like the IRC-run Rainbo Centres - people are very reluctant to come forward and talk about what has happened to them.

"Being raped is stigmatised by society in Sierra Leone," said Eunice Whenzle, head of the Rainbo Centre in the capital Freetown, who says that even the question of what constitutes a sexual assault is a very complex issue in Sierra Leonean society.

Marital rape is still not considered a crime. It is also still normal for society to blame the victims for what has happened to them, usually for how they dress or comport themselves, social workers say.

Protection of women

Getting a clear statistical picture of the problem is hindered by the country's still devastated health infrastructure, fractured local government and other humanitarian priorities.

While the number of rapes is unclear, the extent of the problem is acknowledged by officials at all levels as alarming. "Rape is endemic and pervasive," said one senior UN official, who requested anonymity.

Police officials said most police stations and police sub-offices receive at least one complaint of rape every day.

According to the human rights group Amnesty International (USA), increased rape and domestic violence in post-conflict situations has also been recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo, former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland.

"Studies suggest that domestic violence continues to intensify after conflict and is worse than it was during the conflict," Amnesty says, urging added attention on protection of women and girls in post-conflict states.

"When states fail to take the basic steps necessary to protect women from domestic violence or allow these crimes to be committed with impunity, they are failing in their obligation to protect women's rights," it said in a report on post-conflict violence.

Rapists go free

But in Sierra Leone impunity for rapists is still the norm. Of 896 Rainbo Centre clients that sought legal action against their attackers in 2007, just 13 perpetrators received a conviction.

Partly to blame is society's pressure for silence from the attacked. "The victims think that if other people get to hear about the attack they will be mocked and blamed," Whenzle said.

Fear of stigmatisation is especially acute among the young girls and teenagers who make up the bulk of rape victims. According to the IRC, between January and December 2007 some 65 percent of the victims it treated were under 15 years old. The youngest client was 2 months old.

"The young ones refuse to go back to school after the attack because they think other children will tease them about it," explained Whenzle. "Some of the girls completely retract from society, refusing to eat or engage with anyone."

Even when girls and women do come forward and try to get a legal conviction against their attacker, they face large financial and administrative obstacles to getting the necessary medical exams and certificates, and then an interminable wait for justice.

"The court system is incredibly slow," said Whenzle at the Rainbo Centre in Freetown. "We try to explain to people that it is nonetheless better to let the justice system run its course, otherwise these crimes will go on and on, but mostly people settle out of court."

"As a result, rapists go free, and sometimes the same girl is even raped again by the same man."

Failure

Even when victims overcome the social and financial barriers to getting their case heard, the criminal justice system has largely failed to successfully prosecute sex crimes.

"There is no stigma attached to being a rapist in Sierra Leonean society, only to being raped," Whenzle said.

There is no stigma attached to being a rapist... only to being raped

In some cases, girls are even obliged by their families to marry the man who raped them. "These are mostly uneducated people and their family's think just giving the girl away is the best thing to do."

More commonly however, the rapist will offer to give money to the victim's family as a form of punishment. "Ultimately money becomes more important than the child's welfare," Whenzle said.

Amie Kandeh, a gender-based violence expert at the IRC in Freetown, agreed. "There is a total lack of support in society for holding perpetrators accountable," she said.

"We saw rape and sexual violence used as a tool during the war, and now it is morphing into this culture's society as something that is understood and even accepted," said Glasgow, the IRC head.

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
20 June 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Security Council Seeks Renewal of UN Panel's Mandate on Liberia
(The Parrot, The Informer, The New Liberia, The News)

- The Security Council has asked Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to renew the mandate of the United Nations panel looking into the issues of diamonds, timber, sanctions, arms and security in Liberia for another six months. In a unanimously adopted resolution, the Council also requested Mr. Ban to reappoint the Panel of Experts and to make the necessary financial and security arrangements to support its work. The 15-member body also called on all States and the Government of Liberia to "cooperate fully with the Panel of Experts in all the aspects of its mandate."

Liberia Reinforces Ban on use of Single Barrel Shot Guns
(The Inquirer, Heritage, The New Liberia, The News)

- The Liberian Government has reinforced the ban on the use of single barrel shot guns in the country. The government encourage those using single barrel shot guns as a means of livelihood to register them with the superintendent of the county they reside in. The pronouncement follows survivors' account that most of the 19 people killed in the recent bloody land dispute died from gunshots wounds.

Police Search for 21 More Suspects in violent land dispute
(The Inquirer, Public Agenda, Daily Observer)

- Police are searching for 21 more people suspected of being linked to the killing of several people in a dispute over farmland along the border with Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. Fourteen persons including a senator have already been charged with murder and are being prosecuted in connection with the killing.
- In another twist, the Kakata City Magistrate, Joseph Freeman, according to the Public Agenda newspaper, said he has no knowledge of how the defendants in the case were transferred from Kakata to the Monrovia Central Prison. The Daily Observer newspaper reported Thursday that the suspects were transferred for security reason.

Liberia's main Opposition Political Parties Suggest Land Tenure Review – Decry 'Insecurity'
(The News, The Inquirer)

- Recent reports of clashes arising from land disputes across Liberia have triggered calls from the two main opposition political parties for government to review the land tenure system in the country.
- In a joint statement issued Thursday, the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) and the Liberty Party (LP) also expressed concerns over the increasing wave of killings in the country, blaming the situation on what they claimed as the government's inability to handle the security situation.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

UN Says Sexual Violence Constitutes War Crimes

- The UN Security Council on Thursday's affirmed that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, calling for measures to combat such attacks. Liberia's Foreign Minister Olubanke King-Akerele who attended the special session said her country has experienced widespread sexual violence and has adopted strict measures to fight them. The UN Mission in Liberia is currently engaged with a nationwide anti-rape campaign in support of the Liberian government.
- While addressing the special session, the UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon said an increasing and alarming number of women and girls are falling victim to sexual violence in conflict, adding, "we can and must push back."
- "Let us ensure that all future mandates have clear provisions on protecting women and children in conflicts," he said.

Post-war Census Results put Liberia's Population at 3.4 million

- Announcing the provisional results of the 2008 National Housing and Population Census in a live radio broadcast Friday, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf put the country's population at a little over 3.4 million people. According to the results, Montserrado County has the highest number of population while Grand Kru is the county with the lowest population. The 2008 census, conducted in March this year, is the first post-war census after 24 years. Results from the last census in 1984 put the country's population at 2.5 million. Prior to the conduct of the new census, rough estimates had indicated that there were approximately three million or more people in Liberia. Star Radio says the current results show a 2.1 growth rate over the period of 24 years. Now that the preliminary census results are public knowledge, the government can easily devise ways to foster the development and transformation of the country.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, Love FM, ELBC)

Aid worker resists 'witch-doctor'

- A witchdoctor up-rooting charms and talisman in Vincint Town, Bomi County has been resisted by a worker of the Norwegian Refugee Council.
- Sayon Dukuly said he challenged the witchdoctor when he attempted entering his house to find juju.
- Mr. Dukuly alleged the witchdoctor identified as Boima Quaye collected over 27,000 Liberian dollars from the people of the town.
- Other residents told Star Radio they accepted the exercise because they believe it would help cleanse Vincint Town of years of bad luck.
- The office of the Commissioner of Dowein District said it was not aware of the witchdoctor's cleansing process.
- The Clerk to the Commissioner, Varney Burphy said the exercise was illegal and promised to launch a full-scale investigation.

Ban on use of Single Barrel Shot Guns Reinforced in Liberia

(Also reported on Truth FM, Sky FM, Love FM, ELBC)

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Afrol News
Friday, 20 June 2008

Sudan opens fresh row with ICC

afrol News, 20 June - The government of Sudan has opened fresh row with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, with the Minister of Justice, Salah al-Dee Ubu-Zeid, suing the ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, on terrorism charges.

The minister who was acting in response to Mr Ocampo's last month's interview with 'Sudan Tribune,' said his action was taken to protect "Sudan's security and interests."

In the said interview, Ocampo disclosed failed plans to divert the plan carrying Sudan's Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun, from going to South Arabia in December.

Mr Haroun, who has been on the wanted list of the ICC for his alleged role in war crimes in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, was on his way to perform the pilgrimage in December when the plan was hatched. Had the plan succeeded, he would have fallen into the hands of the ICC for prosecution.

Sudanese government has been quarrelling with the ICC for its refusal to honour its obligation to extradite Mr Haroun and Commander of the government-backed Janjaweed militia, Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman aka Ali Kushayb. Kushayb has been indicted on 51 charges including murder, rape and forced expulsions in 2003 and 2004. Sudanese officials have no regards for the ICC and would not therefore comply with its requests.

Angered by the ICC prosecutor's disclosed plans, the Sudanese government linked the plot to "terrorism", insisting that Ocampo should be removed from office.

As he is covered by a diplomatic immunity, the ICC prosecutor is immune to prosecution. He is covered by a lifetime immunity on all the actions he has taken while in office.

This month, Ocampo angered Sudanese authorities for submitting a damning report on the country to the UN Security Council, claiming to have gathered enough evidence of a "criminal plan based on the mobilization of the whole state apparatus, including the armed forces, the intelligence services, the diplomatic and public information bureaucracies, and the justice system."

Mr Ocampo said his office wants to know who is "maintaining and instructing" Haroun and others to "commit crimes."

Meanwhile, European Union leaders are on the brink of imposing new sanctions on Khartoum unless its authorities comply with the ICC prosecutor's demands.

Apart from placing an arms embargo on Sudan, the EU also imposed visa bans on a number of Sudanese officials. But sanctions on Sudan have failed to produced the desired results, which was why EU leaders are contemplating on freezing assets of Sudanese officials.

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