

**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:**

Tuesday, 23 March 2010

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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"I Received No Bribe To Testify"

-says Defence Witness

"You have been bribed to testify in defence of Charles Taylor", Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian told the Defence Gambian Witness testifying under anonymity as he resumed his cross-examination on Friday. The Prosecution Lawyer also said the witness and Mr. Taylor gave contradictory statements about the arrest and detention of West African Nationals by the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia, the NPFL in 1990. The cross-examination of this witness was suspended on March 10. John Kollie transcribes reports from The Hague for the BBC World Service Trust...

The Prosecution indicated to the Judges on Friday that the Defence Gambian Witness was bribed to testify for Mr. Taylor.

The witness has received nearly eleven thousand United States Dollars for daily subsistence allowance, DSA, since he arrived in the Netherlands the Prosecution said. Prosecution Lawyer, Nicholas Kumjian also questioned the witness lodging at one of the best hotels in Holland.

But the witness said the DSA and his accommodation at a decent hotel should not be considered as bribery. Following

the witness's response, Defence Lawyer, Courtenay Griffiths objected to the mode of cross-examination by Mr. Kumjian.

"To the best my knowledge all I'm receiving is for my subsistence whiles I'm here in the Netherlands and it's not money that has been given to me as a bribe." The witness argued.

The Prosecution Lawyer also said the witness contradicted Mr. Taylor's testimonies about the arrest of nationals of contributing countries to the West African Peacekeeping Force, ECOMOG in 1990.

Mr. Taylor testified on July 20, 2009 that Nigerian nationals were picked up after Nigerian ECOMOG took side in the Liberian conflict by bombing NPFL territory. But the Defence Gambian Witness said no West African Nationals were arrested by NPFL. "Now if Taylor is lying you can prove him to be lying but what I'm telling you is the truth and I want you to understand that."

Meanwhile the court on Friday granted permission to the Defence Gambian Witness to visit Mr. Taylor at the end of his testimonies. The Prosecution interposed no objection to visit but requested that a representative of the detention facility be present at the meeting of the two men.

Taylor Witness Bribed

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Taylor Witness Bribed

From front page

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Pademba Road security relaxed as... Cocaine convicts transferred to Special Court detention?

Security barriers at both end of the Pademba Road M maximum Prison have now been permanently removed and there is now a 24 hours traffic flow between Jomo Kenyatta Road and

Campbell Street through Pademba Road.

All this, according to report, is because the high profile prisoners for whose reason these security measures were instituted in July 2008 have been transferred to the vacant Special Court detention facility on Jomo Kenyatta road, unconfirmed sources told us last evening

And these are convicts of the infamous cocaine matter, including several foreigners of South American origin.

The special court cells were vacant following the transfer to Mpanga prison in Rwanda of members of the three warring factions in Sierra Leone's civil war; RUF, CDF and AFRC after the Appeals Chamber upheld their sentence and conviction last year.

Shortly afterwards, the court and its detention facility were formally handed over to the Government of

Sierra Leone and the suggestion was the cells should be use to keep female prisoners.

An official of the Special Court told us last evening that he wasn't aware of the transfer of cocaine convicts to the Special Court cells.

According to him, Mongolian peacekeepers from Liberia providing security now temporarily occupy the cells and there is reconstruction work going on.

"We cannot have Mongolians keeping watch over cocaine convicts, which is not part of their mandate and the convicts you are talking about are not in our custody".

We shall try to get conformation today from officials of the prison since we were unable to do so last evening.

Standard Times

Tuesday, 23 March 2010

The 23rd March Nightmare in Sierra Leone...a warning for Youth Marginalisation

VIEWPOINT

BY MUSTAPIHA SESAY

Today, 23rd March, will remind Sierra Leoneans of the nightmare they went through as a result of the brutal attack launched by the Revolutionary United Forces (RUF) on the township of Bomaru in the Kailahun District in 1991.

Though there were a lot of factors that ignited the civil conflict in the country such as the One Party System of government the country was speedily sliding into against the democratic rights of the citizens, the mass protests throughout the country as a result no salaries and huge backlogs, the shortage of basic commodities and the "To Line Operation" for goods that were sky rocketing, the poor standard of living as corruption and bribery was the order of the day, tribalism and several others. But prominent among these was the high unemployment rate and marginalization of the youths by the political class.

Although the issue at Bomaru was down played at first, it later turned out to be the start of a long drawn out war.

In the early hours of that unfaithful days, the residents of Bomaru, Kailahun in the Eastern part of Sierra Leone were rudely awoken by gunshots from Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, Burkinabas and Guinean descendants; less than a hundred men who had crossed over the boarder from Liberia to fulfil their aspirations of their Warlord Late Corporal Foday S. Sankoh who was trained with others in Libya.

Prior to this attack, the plight of the masses was very deplorable as the politicians under the late Joseph Saidu Momoh's government were busy enriching themselves at the detriment of the State to the point that all were hoping for a violent means to remove these alleged corrupt politicians who were only self centred.

As angry as the masses were at that moment, their only hope was a bloody revolution. With this getting into the ears of the Foday Sankoh and his men, the stage was set to move to Libya.

Having been released from the Maximum Pademba Road Prison for crimes against the State, he took up photography in the provincial towns and finally went to Libya.

During those days, Ring Leaders to the student's demonstration at Fourah Bay College were

suppressed to an extent that some had to flee to neighbouring countries before finally joining the group to plan a come back and forcefully remove the Momoh led All Peoples Congress Government. In Libya, the Liberian group led by Charles Taylor left and launched its attacks with determination, the group moved speedily to capture the seat of office.

Realizing the spell over effects this will have on neighbouring countries like Sierra Leone and Guinea, the sub-regional group Economic Committee of West Africa States mobilized support to dispatch troops to halt the mass killing of innocent civilians and protect the government of the late Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe.

Sierra Leone was used as a base from where the troops were being assembled and later moved into Liberia by Mano River Bridge. As most of Liberia was under the control of the rebels, they realized that the po-

sition of allowing ECOMOG troops to move into Liberia will halt their plan to capture the seat of government. It was for this motive that Charles Taylor promised Sierra Leoneans that they will taste the bitterness of war.

To execute the military plans, the Vanguard, a spitted group of the RUF headed by Sankoh left Libya to join forces with Taylor in Liberia so as to recruit some for the operation at hand.

In the wake of this attack, the rebels easily over ran the town and captured the local Police Station in Bomaru town and within a three months period, most towns along the boarder areas in the South-East were under the control of the rebels. At this point the military even though properly trained to defend the state were ill equipped to match with the sound of the au-



automatic guns and explosions at the disposals of the small boys of the RUF as a result, were not in a position to halt the advances of the rebels.

In the midst of this conflict, there were forced migration, killing, looting rape and conscription of youths to fight on either side.

As the mining areas were captured, foreign currency was nothing to boast of this resulting to economic hardship in the country.

The ideology of liberation, egalitarianism development and the urge for democracy and rural development attracted the many unemployed and marginalized youths who were eager to look for a redeemer to their plights.



With this, they joined the ranks of the RUF to fight against the APC government.

But with the advances, the ECOMOC Forces were deployed at strategic locations to fight the RUF in Sierra Leone.

As youths were desperate, they were involved in the vicious ways to enrich themselves and took dangerous drugs.

It was pitiful to witness brothers fighting one another, opening the womb of pregnant women, raping girls in the presence of their parents and a lot of others.

Though the war came to an end in 2002, and we are gradually sustaining the people, the position of the youths must be a priority for the government as they can either build or destroy the peace of the State when the Government continues to marginalize and leave their status in a state of shambles; as they can join gangs who claim to be fighting a battle of liberation so as to promote their ambitions.



Awareness Times
 Tuesday, 23 March 2010

International Criminal Justice Confab Ends Today

By Bampia Bundu

The Sierra Leone Institute of International Law will today Wednesday 23rd March 2010 ends a two-day consultative seminar on International Criminal Justice, and the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC), at the British Council Hall, Tower Hill in Freetown.

In his opening address, Chairman of the Seminar, Mr. Sulaiman Banja Tejan-Sie, noted that the international consultative conference, which is schedule for May 31st to June 10 2010, in Kampala, Uganda, will afford Sierra Leone, as a state party, the opportunity to review and formulate practical recommendations based on its immediate experience as a post conflict

nation that should strengthen and enhance the work of the ICC. He continued by stating that the establishment of an international tribunal to judge political leaders accused of war crimes can be tracked back to the Paris Peace Conference in 1991, by the then Constituted Commission of Responsibilities, adding that the same issue also came up in the Geneva Conference which was held under the auspices of the League of Nations on November 1-16th 1937. He encouraged participant to contribute immensely on the topic, so that they can come up with a firm position which they will present. Speaking also, the Executive Director of Sierra Leone Institute of International Law Ambassador Allieu

Kanu, noted that the consultative seminar is one way his organization hope to bring international law to the people of Sierra Leone and to encourage wider participation and appreciation of international laws in general and International Criminal Justice in particular. He stated further that at the end of the two days conference, they will be able to come up with a standard resolution which they will present to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for his perusal and comment so that they can present a formidable document during the May 31st to June 10 Conference in Kampala Uganda.

Independent Observer
 Tuesday, 23 March 2010

Fambul Tok International urges National Day of Reflection for Sierra Leone on March 23

The village of Bomaru witnessed the first acts of aggression in the eleven-year civil war on March 23, 1991. The survivors of this terrible conflict also bore witness in the very first of the Fambul Tok reconciliation ceremony on March 23, 2008, in a community reconciliation process that has now spread across the country. Today these villages reap the bountiful harvests of a community working together and living in peace. Their voices are strong, and they were the first voices to call for establishing a national Day of Reflection on the day the war began. Fambul Tok International (FTI) joins the people of Sierra Leone in petitioning the government to make March 23 an annual day of national healing.

Fambul Tok (Krio for "family talk") is a face-to-face community-owned program brings together perpetrators and victims of the violence in Sierra Leone through ceremonies rooted in the local traditions of war-torn villages. The program works at the village level to help communities organize ceremonies that include truth-telling bonfires where people have the opportunity to ask for and offer forgiveness, followed by traditional cleansing ceremonies. Each community makes the choice to participate, identifies its own leaders, develops its own reconciliation ceremonies and chooses its own follow-up activities (such as football or community farms) to strengthen the new peace. The success of Fambul Tok in Kailahun has carried the program to the districts of Moyamb, Koinadugu and Kono. We are please to announce the release of Fambul Tok's report on its Second

Year, which provides an in depth look at the peace being harvested in Fambul Tok communities across the country. The report is available in print from FTI's offices, and online at FamhulTok.org.

With the organizational support of Fambul Tok International, our goal is to introduce Fambhul Tok through the rest of Sierra Leone by 2012.

As we work towards this goal we thank the people of Sierra Leone for their patient. "One major difference between Fambul Tok and other reconciliation programmes is that they come, organize an event, and the level." Examples FTI Executive director John Caulker. From Koinadugu Village in Koinadugu. International organization with Global Programme Headquarters in Freetown and Corporate Headquarters in Portland, Maine, USA, we are building the platform for this kind of sharing. "The world much to learn from Sierra Leonean," say FTI President Libby Hoffman, from her base in the United States. "The culture of forgiveness, and the healing power of community these are remarkable things that Sierra Leoneans are showing have real power to transform people and communities after war. Establishing the 23rd as a National Day of Reflection world be a special statement to the world of Sierra Leone's commitment to reconciliation."

FTI supports the creation of a national Day of Reflection to commemorate the events in Kailahun of both March 23, 1991 and March 23, 2008. we believe that the time for peace has come.

By John Kollie

NEWS ITEM-Report from The Hague

Another Sierra Leonean has begun giving testimonies in defence of Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, the man standing criminal trial for allegedly supporting rebels who murdered and raped Sierra Leoneans. The witness said he was captured and trained in guerrilla warfare by Liberian and Sierra Leonean RUF Fighters in 1991. John Kollie has this transcription from the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in the Hague...

Charles Ngebeh, a Former RUF Fighter said the rebels captured him and his parents from their village in Kailahun District in Sierra Leone. Mr. Ngebeh said they were later taken to the Sierra Leonean Town of Pendembu where life became difficult for them.

The Defence witness explained to the court how Former RUF Leader Foday Sankoh convinced the people of Kailahun District to join the RUF rebels. Mr. Ngebeh said Foday Sankoh told Kailahun District that the All People's Congress, the APC political party was exploitative and he wanted to replace it with the Sierra Leone People's Party, the SLPP.

Mr. Ngebeh said an in-fighting broke out between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL and Foday Sankoh's RUF in 1991. The witness said the in-fighting between the NPFL and the RUF terminated the relationship between Mr. Taylor and Mr. Sankoh.

Mr. Ngebeh said Mr. Taylor ended his support to the RUF and ordered the withdrawal of the all NPFL Forces from Sierra Leone. The witness testified to the source of the RUF weapons at the initial stage of the Sierra Leone civil war.

Mr. Charles Ngebeh is the second Sierra Leonean to testify in defence of Mr. Taylor.
Mr. Ngebeh's direct examination continues on Tuesday.

CharleTaylorTrial.org (The Hague)

Tuesday, 23 March 2010

Liberia: Charles Taylor Provided Support To The RUF But Only In 1991, Witness Says

Alpha Sesay

Today, a Sierra Leonean witness commenced his testimony in defense of Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The witness told the judges that the former Liberian president provided support to Sierra Leonean rebel forces but that such support ceased in 1991 when Mr. Taylor withdrew his Liberian fighters from Sierra Leone.

Charles Ngebeh, a Sierra Leonean who was a member of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group, a group that Mr. Taylor is accused of supporting, today testified that at the initial stages of the war in Sierra Leone, Mr. Taylor did provide support to RUF rebels through the supply of manpower and materials, such as food, medicine, arms, and ammunition. The witness said that such support, however, ceased when RUF rebels and Mr. Taylor's Liberian fighters in Sierra Leone clashed in what has been called "Top 20, Top 40 and Top Final."

Prosecution witnesses testified during the presentation of the prosecution case that in 1991, members of Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), who were fighting alongside rebel forces in Sierra Leone, had a conflict with their RUF counterparts that led to the Liberian fighters leaving Sierra Leone and returning to Liberia. In Mr. Taylor's testimony as a witness in his own defense, the former president addressed the same issue, telling the judges that he did have Liberian fighters helping RUF rebels along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border but that such fighters were withdrawn when they had clashes with the RUF. Mr. Taylor also said that within this period, he did help the RUF with arms and ammunition because they were fighting a common enemy in the United Liberian Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), who were attacking the NPFL with support from the Government of Sierra Leone.

In his testimony today, the defense witness, Mr. Ngebeh, told the judges that when he was captured and taken to the training base in 1991, he was trained by RUF and Liberian NPFL fighters.

In response to a question by Mr. Taylor's defense counsel, Terry Munyard, about who conducted his training when he was taken to the training base after his capture by RUF rebels in 1991, the witness said that "it was a combined forces of RUF and NPFL."

The witness affirmed that at the initial stages of the conflict, Mr. Taylor did provide some support to the RUF but added that such support ceased when the RUF had clashes with the NPFL fighters in Sierra Leone.

"At the initial stage of the war in 1991, RUF used to have assistance from Mr. Taylor. After that infighting, Mr. Taylor withdrew all his men and the weapons they had," the witness said.

Asked to tell the court what kind of support the RUF used to receive from Mr. Taylor, the witness explained that "we used to get food from Liberia, they used to send us medicines and some few ammunitions."

The witness explained that the two sources of ammunition for the RUF at that time were supplied from Mr. Taylor and those obtained after attacking enemy forces.

"There are only two sources that we used to get ammunition from: Mr. Taylor and attacking our enemies," he said.

He explained that after Mr. Taylor withdrew his support from the RUF in 1991, RUF leader Foday Sankoh returned from Liberia and said "he'll never step his foot on Gbarngba [NPFL headquarters at that time] because Taylor had sent an order to arrest him."

"Minus Taylor, plus Taylor, I will fight my war," the witness quoted Mr. Sankoh as having said at that time.

Mr. Ngebeh's testimony continues tomorrow.

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary
22 March 2010**

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

International Clips on Liberia

President Obama Extends DED for Liberians in US

By James Butty

VOA

U.S. President Barack Obama has extended for 18 months the special immigration status for about 4,000 Liberians who fled to the United States during Liberia's civil war. The renewal of the Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) takes effect March 31, 2010. Although the Liberian civil war officially ended in 2003, President George W. Bush in 2007 deferred the enforced departure of those Liberians who originally were granted Temporary Protected Status. In a memorandum to the Secretary of Homeland Security, President Obama cited "compelling foreign policy interest" for extending the DED. Anthony Kesselly, president of the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) said his organization is working with other immigration activists to eventually get permanent resident status for those Liberians on the DED. "All Liberians, both those on DED and those of us who are necessarily on it are very, very happy and we are very grateful to the United States government, particularly President Obama. And we are very thankful to all of our allies who helped us through this process," he said.

International Clips on West Africa

Guinea

RUSAL claims initial win in Guinea court battle

CONAKRY, March 22 (Reuters) - Aluminium producer RUSAL (0486.HK: Quote) has won a stage in an ongoing legal battle with Guinea over ownership of the Friguia alumina refinery in the West African country, the firm said on Monday. The Guinean appeal court overturned a ruling by a lower court last September that said RUSAL bought Friguia illegally in 2006, vastly underpaying for Guinea's largest industrial project. Guinea can in turn appeal against this latest decision. Since the September ruling, the two sides have said they would negotiate, a move seen as paving the way for RUSAL to carry on running the plant, which can produce 640,000 tonnes of aluminium feedstock alumina per year, and is a major employer in the poor country. "RUSAL views this decision as providing a favourable step toward expanding the long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation between RUSAL and the Republic of Guinea," the firm said in a statement on Monday.

Ivory Coast

ANALYSIS-Ivory Coast president could delay vote for months

By Tim Cocks

<http://af.reuters.com/article/ivoryCoastNews/idAFLDE62L1CA20100322?sp=true>

ABIDJAN, March 22 (Reuters) - Weeks of chaos that followed President Laurent Gbagbo's ousting of Ivory Coast's electoral commission boss last month have enabled him to delay a poll he is unsure of winning, and left his opponents looking weaker. The vote has been repeatedly postponed since 2005 and no new timeframe has been announced since it missed a March deadline. Fresh rows over voter registration and rebel disarmament have since resurfaced that may push it back months. Polls, for president and later parliament, are seen as vital to reuniting the world's top cocoa producer, which has been half controlled by rebels since a 2002-3 war split it in two, and ushering in investment needed if it is to retake its place as West Africa's economic hub. "Right now Gbagbo doesn't want to go to elections because the conditions for his victory are not guaranteed," said International Crisis Group Ivory Coast expert Rinaldo Depagne. "His strategy to win over voters in the north and west has only half worked. There are economic and social problems, like water and electricity. If he fears he can't win, he'll wait." Gbagbo denies deliberately slowing the electoral process. He disbanded the government and commission last month, accusing its former chief of adding names to the voter roll. Two weeks of violent protests left at least seven people dead. A compromise between Gbagbo and the opposition coalition representing the parties of presidential candidates Alassane Ouattara and Henri Konan Bedie was struck and the government was reinstated with minor changes.

Sierra Leone

No evidence of mine collapse in Sierra Leone town

[http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/3/21/worldupdates/2010-03-21T075054Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0 - 470858-1&sec=Worldupdates](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/3/21/worldupdates/2010-03-21T075054Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0-470858-1&sec=Worldupdates)

BAOMAHUN (Reuters) - Gold mines around the remote Sierra Leone town of Baomahun showed no evidence of a collapse on Saturday, a Reuters television crew said, corroborating an official denial that a mining disaster had occurred there. A Minerals Ministry spokesman said on Friday at least 200 people had been killed when a mine in the area some 180 miles (300 km) south of the capital Freetown collapsed, a statement that was refuted hours later by his minister. Local shallow pit artisanal mines seen by Reuters were all intact, while a larger mine project run by UK-listed resources company Cluff Gold there showed no signs of damage. "Nothing like that ever happened," Baomahun town chief Joseph Kowa said. "This is bad for the image of the town." Town life appeared as normal, with a bustling market and no public evidence of grieving among locals. The statement by the ministry spokesman was carried widely by local and international media including Reuters. Mineral Resources Minister Alpha Kanu said on Friday the misinformation was based on a rumour but did not elaborate further. Unofficial gold mining is common in Africa where miners usually have no professional training or equipment and often dig by hand. Accidents are frequent at the sites, which do not meet safety standards found at professionally engineered mines.

Local Media – Newspaper

Armed Men Abduct Foreign Workers In Sinoe

(New Democrat)

- About 50 armed men attacked a mining company in Sinoe County last week and abducted a number of foreigners, including British, American and Australians.
- Details are sketchy, but UNMIL spokesperson, contacted over the weekend confirming the incident, said calm has returned. Other reports said UNMIL troops intervened to rescue those abducted after one man escaped and informed them.
- The abduction has raised serious security concerns amidst reports that the area has been inundated by migrants from other West African states in search for gold and diamonds.

ECOWAS Confab Opens Tomorrow

(Public Agenda, The Informer, The News, The Inquirer)

- A five-day ECOWAS conference will get underway in Monrovia tomorrow, intended to commemorate and evaluate West Africa's twenty years of involvement in peace building.

- The conference will also look at the past, with a view of learning lessons and consolidating on achievements with specific focus on accomplishments, shortcomings and lessons learned from crafting and implementing peace agreements in the region, in order to enhance future interventions in conflict.
- The conference will bring together over 150 participants comprising sitting Heads of States, former Heads of State and former Force Commanders from the region.
- Other participants will come from ECOWAS member countries, the AU and UN systems, Civil Society and research institutions.
- A release from the Ministry of Information says President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will deliver the opening address on Tuesday, March 23, 2010 after which it will continue with plenary sessions for general discussions.

Death Sentence For Angel Togba Murderers

(Public Agenda, New Democrat, In Profile Daily, Liberian Express, The New republic, The Informer, National Chronicle, The News, The Inquirer, The Heritage)

- Criminal Court 'B' Friday handed down guilty verdict on Hans William and his fiancée Madia Paykue for sexually abusing and murdering little Angel Togba.
- The two are to be hung on March 26 but an appeal to the Supreme Court by the defense could make it impossible.
- The sentence will also stand if President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf does not exercise her constitutional power of granting Executive Clemency to the convicts.
- Even though Liberia is a signatory to International Law against Death Penalty, the country's membership to the law is yet to be ratified by the National Legislature.
- "Wherefore and in view of the foregoing facts and attending circumstances and the Laws controlling, it is the considered Final Verdict/Judgment of this Honorable Court that the Defendants, Hans C. Williams, Sr. and Mardea P. Williams, are hereby adjudged GUILTY of the Crime of Murder with immediate effect, in keeping with Section 14.1 of the New Penal Code of Liberia.
- The said Defendants are hereby SENTENCED to death on Friday, March 26, 2010 at Centre Street South Beach from Six a.m. to Six p.m. until death" Judge Blamo Dixon said.
- However, international human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, opposed to the death penalty, are expected to repeat their campaign against the death sentence.

In Previous Lofa Killings - No Evidence

(Public Agenda, The News)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has expressed regrets on the previous ritualistic killings in Zorzor District that provoked the recent bloody violence in Voinjama.
- Speaking to citizens from Zorzor when they visited her on Thursday to address the series of ritualistic killings that have rocked the district, President Sirleaf said there is a lack of overwhelming evidence to prosecute accused persons in connection to the alleged killings.
- An Executive Mansion release said the President thanked the group for the peaceful assembly and restraint they exercised.
- She informed the representatives that steps are being taken by Government to bring the perpetrators to justice, but regretted that the lack of tangible evidence for prosecution is delaying the process.
- According to the release, the president said the residents, in their petition, expressed concern that Government's robust response to incidents in Konia town may overshadow concerns of ritualistic killings in the area.
- They spoke of three incidents of ritualistic killings of their children which have remained unresolved.
- "Our people live in constant fear as the culprits of these crimes roam about in our District with impunity," the Zorzor residents said in their statement.
- The Liberian leader encouraged the people of Zorzor to assist in providing clues that could lead to the speedy apprehension of the culprits.
- Vice President Joseph Boakai has been designated as the President's point man on the matter.

Agriculture Ministry, Partners Train Lead Farmers

(The News, The Inquirer)

- A three-day workshop on the Training of Partners, Field Staff and Lead Farmers from Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties in various methods of swamp lands rehabilitation for high yield and productivity ended recently at the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), in Suakoko, Bong County under the theme, Sustainable Food Production in Liberia Through Improved Management of Lowlands.
- A total of fifty participants including lead farmers, partners and Ministry of Agriculture staff were trained.
- The workshop was jointly implemented by the Agriculture Ministry, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and World Food Programme (WFP).
- The workshop funded by the European Union discussed cultivation, tilling and management of swamp lands, lowland structure activities as well as creating and maintaining irrigation structures in productive agriculture assets.
- Delivering the Keynote Address at the opening session, Madam Rosio Godorma, WFP Senior Programme Officer expressed her gratitude and thanked the participants and organizers of the training.
- She said WFP remains a partner of the Government in its food security drive.

Government Rejects US State Department Human Rights Report on Liberia

(New Democrat)

- Government has rejected the US State Department's 2009 Human Rights report which outlined corruption, abuses and impunity in every aspect of the administration.
- Other countries that have rejected the report include Iran and China.
- The Report details several abuses, concluding that corruption is pervasive "at all levels" and with "impunity."
- Information Ministry officials Thursday dismissed the report saying it does not present the true picture of unfolding developments here, adding the report has distorted government's efforts to "combat corruption".
- Mr. Norris Tweah, deputy information minister, said the report is "contradictory" and lacks supporting evidence.
- He excepted that corruption was not widespread and at all levels of government as mentioned in the report but did not say to what degree.

WIPO Unveils Plans To Assist Liberia

(Liberian Express, National Chronicle, The Inquirer, Heritage)

- The Senior Programme Officer of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has unveiled plans to assist Liberia in developing the Intellectual Property Sector of the country.
- Mrs. Neema Nyerere Drago said, already WIPO has both short and long range plans for Liberia.
- Speaking upon arrival in Liberia, Mrs. Drago stated that this entails promoting intellectual property through sensitization, training, the establishment of proper laws and administration in the short term plan.
- She said the aspect of teaching courses on intellectual property as a discipline at the University of Liberia forms the long range plan.
- She however disclosed that WIPO has an ongoing project in Liberia for Intellectual Property Development.
- Mrs. Drago is the daughter of former Tanzanian President, The late Dr. Julius Nyerere.

Today Is World Water Day, US Government Initiates US\$10 Million Programme

(The New Republic, The Informer, The News)

- Today, March 22, is World Water Day aimed at raising awareness around the world about the importance of access to clean and safe water.
- The Day grew out of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- As part of efforts to mitigate access to clean water in Liberia, the US Government, through USAID awarded a water, sanitation and hygiene programme which begins operation from 2010 until 2015.
- A US Embassy release said the value of the programme is US\$10 million.

LEC, Public Works Ministry Launch Demolition Campaign

(The News, The Inquirer)

- A joint technical team of the Ministry of Public Works and Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) has begun demolishing structures along the Joe Bar/ Paynesville Red-Light vicinity.
- The LEC technical team says all structures built in the right-of-way of its 66KV steel tower lines currently under construction will be demolished.
- Public Works National Zoning Coordinator Elijah Karnley said Phase One of the exercise which began Saturday will last for ten days.
- According to the LEC, the Liberian Government has received a grant of US\$18 million from the European Commission (EC) to reconstruct the Monrovia Electricity Grid.
- ELTEL Networks AB of Sweden was hired by the EC to implement the reconstruction of the 66KV steel tower lines.

President Sirleaf Makes New Appointments In Government

(The New Republic, The News, The Inquirer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has announced new appointments in Government, subject to confirmation by the Senate.
- Those appointed include Richelieu Mitchell, Deputy Agriculture Minister for Research and Development; Willie Belleh, Chairperson of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC); Dr. Billy Clinton-Johnson, Chief Medical Officer John F. Kennedy Medical Centre and Ms. Grace Kpaan, Superintendent of Montserrado County.
- Also appointed are Professor Wilson Tarpeh, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Liberia Petroleum Refining Company; Darryl Ambrose Nmah, Director General, Liberia Broadcasting System; and Ledgerhood Rennie, Deputy Director General for Broadcasting, Liberia Broadcasting System.
- The Executive Mansion also named Tepenty Young, Deputy Director General for Operations and Technical Services, Liberia Broadcasting System; David Dahn, Assistant Defense Minister for Public Affairs; and Magdalene Dagoseh, Assistant Gender Minister for Technical Services.
- The President also appointed Comfort Marshall, Assistant Superintendent for Development, Montserrado County; Harris Karneh, Assistant Superintendent for Development, Grand Cape Mount County; and George Barjaye, District Commissioner in River Gee County.

Education Ministry, Plan Liberia Sign MOU

(In Profile Daily)

- The Education Ministry and Plan Liberia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for early childhood education and development in Liberia.
- The MOU enables both institutions to collaborate to develop a national policy and mobilize the needed resources for early childhood education and development.
- The agreement also seeks to put in place the capacities and infrastructure required for early childhood education and development in the country.
- Education Minister, Dr. Joseph Korto signed for the Ministry while Plan Liberia's Country Director, Augustine Allieu signed for his entity.
- Dr. Korto, who described the MOU as strategic said early childhood education and development, remains a priority of government.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 09:00 am)*

Six Suspects Charged In Court In Voinjama

- Reports from Voinjama, Lofa County say people who sustained bullet and cutlass wounds have been discharged from the Tellewonyan hospital.
- According to the reports, the citizens were taken to the hospital following the Voinjama violence which left four persons dead.
- Meanwhile, four people have so far been charged in court for conspiracy and false public alarm while two others were charged with arson.
- Police in Voinjama are continuing a screening exercise of individuals linked to the February 26 violence in the area.

LEC, Public Works Ministry Launch Demolition Campaign

(Also reported Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Makes New Appointments In Government

(Also reported Radio Veritas, Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

NEC Authorizes New Party To Canvass For Membership

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) has authorized the proposed party of Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson to canvass for membership in Liberia.
- In a letter, NEC mandated the proposed National Democratic Union of Progress to seek five hundred members each in six of the fifteen Counties.
- The authorization is part of a requirement to ensure the registration of Senator Johnson's party as a full fledged political institution in Liberia.
- At a mass rally Saturday, Senator Johnson told his followers, the authorization was the beginning of the battle his party will win.

Senate Pro-tempore Gets Vote Of No Confidence

- Montserrado Senator Joyce Freeman Sumo has declared a vote of no confidence in the leadership of Senate Pro-tempore Cletus Wortorson.
- Senator Sumo said her decision is based on what she calls the bad attitude of the President Pro-tempore describing him as an extreme liar who is now using divide and rule method in the Senate.
- Senator Sumo's remark comes amidst claims and counter claims over a controversial statement about the accounts of the Senate.
- The Montserrado lawmaker had quoted Senator Wortorson as saying that the Senate's accounts had been frozen by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
- But the President pro-tempore of the Senate denied ever revealing such information to Senator Sumo, implying that the Montserrado Senator lied to the public.

(Also reported Truth FM, Sky FM, and ELBC)

Civil Servants Want Senate Uphold TRC Recommendations

- The Civil Servants Association of Liberia has called on the Senate to uphold the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- The President of the association, Jefferson Elliott blamed the delay in implementation of the recommendations on manipulation.
- According to Mr Elliott, the TRC recommendations are inspired against the idea of bringing into being what he called a fully functional democratic republic.
- He said it was time for authorities to strive for a republic where all Liberians will enjoy human rights without discrimination.
- He observed Liberia is part of the global community and as such laws, decrees and recommendations should fall in line with international standards.

Education Ministry, Plan Liberia Sign MOU

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 09:45 am)*

Lofa Fact-finding Committee releases Official Report

- Lofa County fact-finding committee has released its official report on the recent incident in the county.
- The report called on government to commit to a genuine and lasting peace building efforts between the Lormas and Mandingoes in the county.

New Democrat (Monrovia)

Monday, 22 March 2010

Liberia: Indictment Sparks Fear Amongst the Like-Minded

The pending trial of Charles Taylor for his alleged crimes against humanity and others is sending fear and paranoia amongst many tyrants of his type, particularly fellow Africans. It is a signal that the days of impunity, covered with the impunity-laden non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states clause, is a thing of the past. "Today it's Mr. Taylor"; cries Malawi's President Bakali Muluzi. "Who will be next?"

Indeed who's next? The question implies that there are many guilty of the crimes now facing Charles Taylor and therefore fear that once a fellow criminal is tried, the Pandora's Box is opened for a litany of trials, now that the bloody cover of the His Excellency the President is no defense. Its like a club of killers accustomed to killing without punishment. But once member is grabbed and thrown before the law, insecurity spreads amongst the rest.

Who's next is an interesting question, for it shows that Taylor's indictment has trumpeted a worrisome message across a continent that has come to terms with injustice in the name of politics and a crude definition of democracy. Despite the nonsense from a Ghanaian opposition member that because Taylor is an African leader he cannot stand trial no matter the crimes he may have committed, the days of impunity are ending, and may Charles Taylors must fear the new global political landscape on which tyrants anywhere are everybody's business, for the horrors they spread reach others in forms of endless flows of refugees, and begging for money to feed victims. That democracy is being used to defend crimes is a ludicrous example of how concepts are disfigured in the promotion of crime.

"What's the difference to military coup?" Malawi's Maluzi asked of the rebellion that has swallowed Liberia to send Taylor packing, but without acknowledging that it was Mr. Taylor who joined the bandwagon of toppling democratic governments not to erect the cornerstone of democracy, but to implant the pillars of a debased tyranny far worst than anything imagined in the country and beyond its borders.

Muluzi told journalists at the recent African Union circus that since Liberians elected Taylor, it would be unjust to force him out, whatever his spreading crimes, crimes that are leading some to seek the evacuation of Liberians from their to Nigeria. But what the ropes around Mr. Taylor's neck are signalling is there are no more untouchables. Indeed today it is Taylor. Who's next? The simple answer is that anyone that is a Taylor in mind and acts. Hiding behind democracy, as strange as this is, is a useless defence. Where democracy applies, wicked and crooked leaders, even far lesser crimes compared to those so common with Africa's tyrants, are brought down in shame, such as Richard Nixon and many other western leaders. The Dutch Government resigned because its troops failed to protect civilians during the war in the former Yugoslavia. Former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milisevic is on trial for the crimes linked to him.

Such frame of mind amongst the continent's rulers is not surprising. Muluzi is the common species of "democrats" on the continent, men who climbed on the frail backs of their people singing songs of democracy but soon disfigure it in pursuit of wealth and vanity by prolonging their reign even if they are no longer wanted. He succeeded the country's father of independence, the mercurial Dr. (medical doctor) Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who ruled for 30 years, in 1994. As Banda's cabinet minister, Muluzi sough to emulate his boss by attempting to disfigure the constitution to suit his tastes, sparking parliamentary and street protests. He has failed once, but with opposition members now receiving gifts from the president, he could be life president, just as Banda.

Thus democracy may be a mesmerising word that signals hope and plenty, security and equal rights before the law regardless of status, but African rulers, most at least, see it as licence to kill and steal. Many have waged wars, killed, and looted, all in the name of Democracy. But in Africa, if you are a democratically elected leader, the licence to kill and steal is valid for eternity. And if you tied the bible around your neck while butchering, as Taylor recently "erased" two cabinet without trial for an alleged coup, there are many Christian knights to rise to your defence.

If it is not the elusive democracy, it is the in invocation Christianity, that concept that has been used to cover-up some of the horrible crimes. It is being used to shield one who has invaded neighbours, sent societies and

orchestrated a limbs-amputation spree, established death camps, all in the name of diamonds and money blessed by Christ.

With national borders no longer barriers against holding tyrants accountable, and pathetic elections as no justifications of crimes against humanity, it is becoming clearer that the old days are gone. The African Union charter is clear on this. It states that the non-interference in the internal affairs of member states clause is in applicable where human rights are violated. Such declaration is nevertheless not worth the paper is written on when men like Muluzi march to defend one of the continent's most ruthless killers in the name of upholding democracy.

Despite horrendous crimes that Charles Taylor has committed within West African and beyond, and all the sorrows that he has ensured for his people and others, not a single African ruler has (with the glaring exception of Guinea's Lansana Conte since his country is a direct victim of the terror from Monrovia) is on record for questioning nor condemning the barbarism.

It is painful to note that the individuals who rule the continent refuse to accept that democracy is no cover for crimes. To the contrary, it should be a wall against crime. Were democracy applied in all its forms, Charles Taylor would have been impeached by the Liberian Legislature for the national and regional disasters he is causing. But this cannot be because what is existing in many African states is a mirage of democracy-president, constitution, legislature, all instruments of oppression. The stupefying belief that because a man was elected he is above the law tells the twisted minds in charge of the fate of so many people needing redemption. Taylor's record in West Africa, the sorrows he has caused, the children he sent to death en masse as child soldiers in his militias, the economies he has destroyed, the traditional societies he has deprived of their resilience, are factors that would question the sanity of anyone who applies democracy to him.

But then Muluzi is not Taylor's only fan. The American evangelist Pat Robinson, who, by his pronouncement and activities in Liberia, easily passes as today's head of the Christian Inquisition and is not ashamed to say so, believes Taylor is a Christian who must be defended against avenging Muslims at the citadel of this great "Christian nation". He has demanded that President retract his call for Taylor to leave the country not for any other reason but because Taylor, in his eyes, is a Christian. Former President Jimmy Carter once felt that way, until time allowed him to study and know Taylor in order to accept the truth.

Thus the longer Taylor holds in Monrovia and refuses to honour his pledge to leave, the more voices of support amongst strange African minds. All devils have their cheerleaders.

Burdens of Abused Sovereignty

The concept of a government to replace Charles Taylor remains shaky as the rebels launch a new offensive on an already destroyed capital swamped with refugees. The new offensive seems geared at forestalling a negotiated settlement, since proposals are emerging in which a rebel regime is ruled out. But even if the rebels take the capital, this cannot translate into taking the country. What will follow is a protracted bus war with many rebel groups. It is landscape for for more terror.

This suggests greater international involvement in charting a political agenda with stronger UN role. Midway between a trusteeship and self rule, however this might affect the so-called nationalistic sentiments, seems a workable idea in paving the path for stability through which another attempt at elections is possible. The calamity at hand means sovereignty is no longer an argument. The survival of the people is now more paramount than songs of sovereignty.

Emerging from talks with President Bush on the need for swift US intervention in Liberia, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan noted that some countries have used sovereignty to perpetuate evils. It was an indirect reference to Liberia, Africa's oldest republic.

Charles Taylor, on his latest circus in Monrovia mopping out strategies to remain in his sovereign nation, says he will oppose any UN "trusteeship" for Liberia. As he plummets in dishonour, Taylor is convinced he still speaks for Liberia while justice, no matter how long, awaits him Sierra Leone for his crimes.

Yet Liberia over the years is a case of a child who, upon reaching adulthood, cannot afford to live on his/her own. Remaining under the parents' roof, the child insists on living by his or her own rules but at the parents' largess.

From 1997 when Taylor ruthlessly fulfilled his dream of being presidency at all costs, his eyes have been on others' money. Immediately after the elections, he demanded US\$3b from the international community. When it became clear there were others in the world far smarter than he, he accused the world of a conspiracy to ensure his failure. While dancing to the doom sung of sovereignty, he was begging for money to squander.

Reality and the ongoing destruction, require compromises to give the UN a pivotal role in arresting the disintegration by considering a number of steps, amongst many others:

Greater political role for the UN Representative: Already named, the Representative would be directly involved in political matters, having a leading role.

The transition to elections could be accompanied by greater financial management, again under UN supervision. Funds from logs, the maritime, ext., could go into special account. Some of the money could go into resettling the hundreds of thousands of refugees and provision of basic services, such water and electricity.

The UN could spearhead a study of resurrecting the economy. At the moment, statistics for Liberia are unavailable in the current UNDP Human Development report. If they were, Liberia would certainly replace Sierra Leone as the poorest country on earth. An initial Development Plan, with the UN import, could be drafted. Money saved from resources could go to reputable companies for roads, in very deplorable conditions, and rural infrastructure, etc. The UN would be a key organ in awarding the contract to ensure that the work is done.

The UN would supervise the next elections, participate in the recruitment and training of a small but effective, well-paid security force. In short, a formula midway between what is now prevailing in Sierra Leone and a de facto trusteeship could save the people and country.

Sufficient evidence has since emerged of the total futility of sovereignty. Taylor and the rebels are spreading their hands begging for US intervention. The politicians have nothing except lengthy proposals. The hype of Taylor as the defender of Liberian sovereignty, which many bought in the 1990s, has now been replaced with the awakening that he is the worst abuser of sovereignty, begging the very country he campaigned against in 1997 to intervene and take over.

Let there be no pretense of nationalism, nationalists are today non-existent. The least opportunity would lead to the scramble over resources, with politicians lining-up to lobby for Lebanese in looting whatever is there. Successive interim administrations have been crippled by that difficult-to-defeat disease-patronage, rewarding ethnic allies and fellow warlords, and service to the exploitative Lebanese merchant class. No many Liberian politicians can resist the "charm" of the Lebanese, the Indians, etc. Let the UN establish the basis for a new beginning. It was another Charles-Charles D. B.King, who sparked the debate of Liberia as a UN Trusteeship. Another Charles-Charles Taylor-has in almost unavoidable if the poor are to be given another chance, if Liberians are to be freed from displaced and refugee camps, and if the culture of crass violence in politics of self-aggrandisement is to be tackled.

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