

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



Children at a Prosecution Outreach in Moyamba [December 2005]

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as at:**

Monday, 24 April 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
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Awareness Times  
Monday, 24 April 2006

## Norman Wants Doom For SLPP Executive

*By Theophilus S. Gbenda*

The long awaited Supreme Court Ruling in the matter between the detained former National Co-ordinator of the pro-government Kamajor militia and former Minister of Internal Affairs, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, and the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), Alhaji UNS Jah, SLPP National Chairman, and Jacob J. Saffa, SLPP National Secretary General and the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice as 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants respectively is expected to be delivered tomorrow by the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone:

The court matter which was brought forward by Chief Hinga Norman, seriously questioned the legitimacy of the election and subsequent assumption of the leadership position of the SLPP party by Hon. Solomon Ekuma Berewa, while he still holds the position of Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

This, Chief Norman claims, is a **flagrant** breach of the provisions of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Constitution of the SLPP dated 1995, and those of the Political Parties Act. Tomorrow's ruling, according to Observers, will determine whether the SLPP will be allowed to go ahead with its already planned strategies for the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections or be compelled to go into

another round of delegates convention to ascertain the respective holders of the various positions already occupied within the party's national executive. A very close confidante of imprisoned Chief Hinga Norman, who preferred anonymity, told Awareness Times over the weekend that the Chief is determined to pursue this matter to whatever conclusion "that might hinder this current executive and leadership from taking the party into the forthcoming elections," he said. He also noted that Chief Norman has indicated his intention to make a public statement after the final ruling is delivered.

"If at all the ruling goes against the defendants, it will put those people in a difficult situation especially so when it will require the current leader of the party, Vice President Solomon Berewa to resign his position as leader and flagbearer of the party for the upcoming elections," he noted.

The Norman Confidant also stressed, "That is exactly what we want so as to change the very serious anomalies within the party that are gradually proving to be a threat to the party's success in those elections."

He ended by expressing confidence that the judges will interpret the laws as provided for by the rule of law and natural justice. "We are very much confident of winning this motion," he asserted.

The Exclusive  
Monday, 24 April 2006

# Margai, Norman Drag SLPP to Court

*From front page*

one hundred page documents to file to the Supreme Court on 25 April, 2006.

According to him, it is clearly stated in the National Constitution that no member of a ruling government is eligible to use state vehicles, revenue and fuel to fund a political campaign.

He further explained to this press that following the closure of the fourth session of parliament, all ministers including the Vice President's office should declare their respective positions vacant.

"You know that Mr. Margai is the take-no-nonsense man and has strongly insisted that the constitution of this country, must be respected and upheld," he said.

He also expressed concern over the much trumpeted contract-gate which the ruling party accused Mr. Margai of awarding contracts to his wife and relatives, adding that the Anti Corruption Commission never investigated the Mik Bayoh controversial contract involving billions of leones, and another big scandal involving the president's concubine I.J. which was later kept under lock and key.

He concluded that all is not well between the president Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the Vice President following the appointment of Joseph Bandabla Dauda as Adviser to the President. This he said has created strained relations between the two most important gentlemen in the country.

In a related development, The Exclusive has reliably learnt that Constitutional Lawyer, Dr Bu-buakei Jabbie, who is Defense Counsel for the CDF Special Court indictee Chief Sam Hinga Norman, will tomorrow, again drag the SLPP to the Supreme Court to argue that people currently holding executive positions in the SLPP including the Vice President Mr Solomon Berewa, and other Cabinet Ministers, must resign before contesting executive positions in the party as provided by the party's constitution.

According to a legal expert who spoke to this press, "The Supreme Court at that material time decided that Mr Norman, lacked the 'Locus Standi' needed to contest the issue at a court of law. He said Mr. Norman, ought at the time, to have sought the advice of the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) before proceeding to the Supreme Court for their decision. But now that Mr Margai has arm twisted the reluctant hand of government to empower the PPRC to do its job, it now appears as if the Supreme Court is prepared to look into the merits and demerits of Chief Norman's complaints, one political analyst maintained. He described the SLPP's Makeni Convention as illegal because, it was the Executive Council of the SLPP that fixed the date for the convention and not the National Electoral Commission as prescribed by the SLPP constitution, which renders the whole exercise null and void.

The analyst said the whole exercise was manipulated to advance Kabbah's hidden agenda and the repercussions of which, are presently so ghastly to contemplate.

## Reuters

Friday, 21 April 2006

### **Danes divided on whether to offer Liberia's Taylor jail cell**

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) - Danish politicians were divided on Thursday over whether Denmark should offer former Liberian leader Charles Taylor a jail cell if he is convicted of war crimes at a United Nations-backed court.

Foreign Minister Per Stig Moller confirmed that Denmark had been mentioned at the United Nations as a possible host for Taylor, but said it had yet to receive a formal request either to imprison Taylor or to give him asylum after the trial.

"I know that there are discussions at the U.N. about where to place him since he can't remain in The Hague," Moller told Ritzau news agency. "But there has been no official request so I don't have an issue to consider."

Members of the Conservative Party, the junior partner in the centre-right ruling coalition, said Denmark should take Taylor if asked, but the Danish People's Party (DPP), which supports the government in parliament but stays outside the coalition, said housing Taylor would pose an unacceptable security risk.

Taylor's rise to power in 1989 led to a 14-year on-and-off war in Liberia that spilled across regional borders and fuelled a civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone, where he is now imprisoned and guarded by U.N. peacekeepers.

"There is no doubt that a man like Taylor poses a major security risk. Denmark is definitely not equipped to house a criminal of Charles Taylor's calibre," said DPP justice spokesman Kim Christiansen.

Opposition leaders, however, said Denmark had an obligation to imprison Taylor if the United Nations asked it to do so.

A special U.N.-backed court in Sierra Leone has indicted the former warlord on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is accused of arming rebels who killed, raped and mutilated civilians during Sierra Leone's bitter civil war.

Sierra Leone has asked for Taylor's trial to be moved to The Hague for fear it could spur unrest in the region. The International Criminal Court has agreed to try Taylor, providing the U.N. Security Council adopts a resolution first.

The Netherlands has agreed to host the trial but wants assurances that another country will jail the Liberian if he is convicted or accept him as an exile if acquitted. This has prompted the United Nations to search for a potential jailer.

Austria and Sweden have already refused, and the United States, which is leading the search, has focused on Denmark.

Taylor went into exile in Nigeria in August 2003 as part of a deal that helped end Liberia's civil war. He tried to escape when Nigeria agreed to extradite him, but was captured and flown to Sierra Leone last month.

## Associated Press

Friday, 21 April 2006

### **Taylor could be held in Denmark**

By Jan M. Olsen  
Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark -- Denmark confirmed Thursday that it has been asked to imprison former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted of war crimes by a U.N.-backed court.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor makes his first appearance at the Special Court in Freetown, in this April 3, 2006, file photo. Taylor was known for boasting of friends in high places. Now he could well find it useful to denounce them as he defends himself against war crimes charges. - AP Photo/George Osodi, Pool

Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller said Denmark was one of the countries that had been contacted about Taylor, but no decision could be made until a formal request was received from the United Nations.

"I can only confirm this information, but there is no official request so there is nothing I can decide on," Moeller said.

Efforts to begin Taylor's trial on 11 counts for his role in Sierra Leone's vicious civil war have stalled because no country has agreed to hold him.

The Special Court in Sierra Leone has asked that the trial be moved to The Hague, the Netherlands, for fear that a man who once was among the region's most feared warlords could still spark unrest in West Africa. The Special Court would conduct the trial, with the Netherlands supplying the courtroom and jailing Taylor during the proceedings.

The Netherlands has agreed -- but only if the arrangement is endorsed by a U.N. Security Council resolution, the Hague-based International Criminal Court agrees to provide the venue and Taylor leaves immediately after the trial if acquitted.

Several European countries, particularly in Scandinavia, have been considered as possibilities in part because their prison systems are well-funded and secure.

Sweden and Austria refused to take Taylor if he is convicted, several diplomats said.

## ISN Security Watch

Monday, 24 April 2006

### **The effects of the arrest of Liberia's Taylor**

The arrest of former warlord and Liberian president Charles Taylor signalled the end of one of Africa's so-called "big men". But some wonder if the results of his capture will match his grand status.

By Adam Wolfe

At dawn on 29 March, Nigerian security officials arrested Charles Taylor, the warlord-turned-president of Liberia, near the border with Cameroon where he was travelling with a woman and a boy in a jeep with diplomatic plates. He is the first African head of state to be indicted for war crimes, and many commentators have said his arrest signals the end of impunity for the continent's "Big Men". His arrest, however, almost did not occur.

In 2003, after being offered immunity by Nigeria, Taylor resigned from his presidential post as part of a peace deal to end Liberia's civil war. Nigeria had repeatedly refused to turn Taylor over to the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone, saying it would only hand him over to Liberia if a democratically-elected government in Monrovia requested his transfer. On 17 March, while on an official visit to the US, newly-elected Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf asked Nigeria to hand Taylor over to the Special Court.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo consulted with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) before deciding on 25 March, four days before he was scheduled to meet with US President George W. Bush, that Liberia was "free to take President Charles Taylor into its custody". It would not, however, arrest him as requested by the Special Court. Liberia said it did not have the resources to take him into custody.

Two days later, Charles Taylor slipped off from his lightly guarded villa in the southeastern city of Calabar, where commandos were waiting to help take him across the Cameroon border. When news of his disappearance was made public, international pressure came down on Nigeria to locate and arrest Taylor. A little over 24 hours later, he was spotted near the border. Under the pretense that Taylor had violated the terms of his exile by leaving his villa, Nigeria took charge of his repatriation to Liberia. His stay in Liberia was brief, as he was promptly handed over to UN officials who took him to the court in Sierra Leone.

On 3 April, Charles Taylor stood in a sober, dark suit - in contrast to the flamboyant dress he was known for when in power - in front of the Special Court in Sierra Leone and pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Without strong international pressure, especially from the United States, Charles Taylor most likely would not have seen the inside of a court room. This pressure is lacking in many of the other cases against Africa's "Big Men", and it has yet to be seen if Taylor's arrest will be the first of many. It is clear, however, that Liberia's fragile political peace is threatened by Charles Taylor's arrest.

With 15,000 UN troops in Liberia, the mission has been markedly successful in terms of limiting violence. Yet there is still no water or electricity in the country's capital, and several of Taylor's loyalists are in positions of power in the newly-elected government. While Charles Taylor's arrest

may end the threat of his return to power, it does not end his influence in the country. Without tangible progress from Johnson-Sirleaf's government, Liberia may cycle back into violence.

#### The legacy of Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor studied in the US and returned to Liberia shortly after Samuel Doe's coup. Taylor ran the General Services Agency, which controlled most of Liberia's budget, until he fell out of favour with Doe, was accused of embezzling nearly US\$1 million, and fled back to the US. He was detained under a Liberian extradition warrant in Massachusetts until he escaped custody; some reports indicate that his escape may have had the assistance of US intelligence officials who wished to overthrow Doe's government.

In 1989, Taylor launched his rebellion against Doe. After six months, Taylor's forces had reached the outskirts of Monrovia, but were prevented from entering the city by an ECOWAS intervention. Taylor's rebel movement fractured when Prince Johnson broke away from Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) over policy disagreements. Johnson's forces captured and gruesomely murdered Doe on 9 September 1990.

Children were often kidnapped and pressed into duty by the rebel groups. In 1991, the violence spread to Sierra Leone, where Taylor is accused of selling arms to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) for diamonds. The civil war claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and further displaced a million others into refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

Peace negotiations led by the United States, United Nations, Organization of African Unity (now the African Union), and ECOWAS created a transitional government that absorbed the rebel groups. In 1997, Charles Taylor was elected president of Liberia by a population that feared a return to war if he did not win.

Unemployment stood over 80 per cent, and the illiteracy rate was above 70 per cent. Infrastructure improvements to bring basic services like pipe-borne water and electricity never materialized. More than 15 per cent of Liberia's children died in infancy, and life expectancy stood at 42.5 years. Rather than invest in Liberia, Taylor supported the RUF in Sierra Leone, leading to the 17-count indictment at the Special Court (which was later consolidated to 11 counts).

In 2003, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) - rebel groups led by Taylor's former adversaries - took up arms against the government. Also, on 7 March 2003, the chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone issued a sealed indictment of Taylor for "bearing the greatest responsibility" for atrocities in Sierra Leone since November 1996. A ceasefire agreement was signed between the rebel groups and Taylor's government in June, but fighting continued until Taylor resigned and accepted asylum in Nigeria on 11 August 2003.

A two-year National Transitional Government was formed, encompassing the rebels and other political groups, and a UN peacekeeping force was introduced, which eventually totalled 15,000 troops. The peacekeeping mission has been remarkably successful in limiting the violence between warring parties. There also has been significant progress on the disarmament of the rebels, though the country is still awash with guns.

On 11 October 2005, Liberia held general elections, which were monitored by international observers and seen as generally free and fair. Several of Taylor's colleagues and party members won seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives.



This was a factor in President Johnson-Sirleaf's, who won the 8 November 2005 presidential run-off, reluctance to ask for Taylor's repatriation and explains why Taylor will not stand trial in Liberia.

Liberia's speaker of the house is Edwin Snowe. He is also Taylor's former son-in-law and served in Taylor's government in a role that can best be described as Taylor's "bagman". He is under a travel ban by the United Nations because of his associations with Taylor. Prince Johnson, the warlord who ordered President Doe's torture, execution, and is rumored to have eaten his ear after Doe was forced to eat the other, is now the senior senator from Nimba County. The other senator from Nimba County is Adolphus Dolo, better known as "General Peanut Butter" for paying child soldiers with marijuana and amphetamines to fight during the civil war. Taylor's wife, Jewel Howard Taylor, returned from Nigeria, claiming to be divorced, and successfully ran for a Senate seat. Former police official Saah Gbollie won a seat in the House of Representatives. Human Rights Watch reported that he "was directly implicated in the arrest, beating and torture" of a journalist and a human rights lawyer while serving under Taylor.

Most of Taylor's associates ran as independents in the election, but it is feared that their loyalty still lies with Taylor. Taylor may have as many as eight loyalists in the 30-seat Senate, and, with Snowe in the speaker-ship position, control of the House. Johnson-Sirleaf is focused on reconstruction for pragmatic reasons - any attempt to prosecute crimes committed during the civil war or under Taylor's government will be defeated by Congress. In a demonstration of the government's wariness of Taylor's continued influence in Liberia, security forces arrested about a dozen Taylor associates and former bodyguards on the day before Nigeria announced it would allow Liberia to take control of Taylor. It is reconstruction on which Johnson-Sirleaf will be judged by the population, of which it is estimated one-third still supports Charles Taylor's return.

### Rebuilding Liberia

Johnson-Sirleaf's government released a five-month agenda to get reconstruction underway. The plan focuses on the economy, restructuring the security agencies, rebuilding infrastructure and strengthening the rule of law. It also commits the government to restoring water and electricity services, but does not specify which areas will be restored. The overarching theme of the five-month agenda is combating corruption. Her government will find help in this from the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program, which was endorsed by the transitional government. However, one of the transitional government's last acts was to vote to let members keep their official vehicles - brand-new Grand Cherokees. Contradictions like this will complicate Johnson-Sirleaf's fight against corruption.

Liberia is also making progress in meeting the regulatory targets in the diamond and timber trade, which could lead to the lifting of UN sanctions on these sectors. The sanctions were imposed in 2001 and 2003 respectively, after the UN declared the resources were being used to fuel war in the region. The government is working to demonstrate that it has full control over the sanctioned sectors, but there is still much work to do.

### Conclusion

Charles Taylor left Liberia for Nigeria because of intense international pressure. Nigeria arrested him because of similar pressure from Washington. His prosecution may well prove to be the first of many for Africa's notorious "Big Men". However, without similar pressure from donor governments, this is unlikely. The first test will come in June when the African Union must decide whether to extradite Chad's former president Hissene Habre from exile in Senegal to Belgium, where he is to stand charges of mass murder and torture during his 1982-1990 rule.

For Liberia, Taylor's arrest may prove destabilizing. The UN-backed court in Sierra Leone is looking into holding the trial at The Hague, at enormous costs, out of fear that Taylor may be able to mobilize his network of supporters to either free him or cause significant harm to the peace in the region. There are complications, however, in finding a country willing to host Taylor after he is convicted at The Hague, and his trial will not be moved until this is resolved.

Taylor's supporters in Liberia have not yet mobilized themselves against Johnson-Sirleaf, nor caused any great disruptions over Taylor's arrest. In many ways, Johnson-Sirleaf is enjoying a honeymoon period in office, with support from most political parties and independents. However, without significant progress on reconstruction projects, Taylor's allies may make themselves heard again in Liberia.

*This article originally appeared in Power and Interest News Report, PINR, at ([www.pinr.com](http://www.pinr.com)). All comments should be directed to [content@pinr.com](mailto:content@pinr.com).*

## African News Dimension

Monday, 24 April 2006

### **FG Orders Taylor's Aides to Quit Nigeria**

Abuja has ordered the aides and dependants of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, to leave Nigeria no later than April 30.

The directive came barely one month after the man himself was handed over to the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone for trial over alleged war crimes and human rights violations.

At least 70 aides and dependants of Taylor would be affected by the order to leave Calabar where they had taken asylum with him since August 2003.

But Taylor's immediate family members are excluded.

Some of those affected confirmed that the order was communicated to them through verbally by one of the aides of Cross River State Governor, Donald Duke, who liaises between the government and the contingent which came to Nigeria with Taylor.

The sources said the emissary had visited them at least twice by last Wednesday to press home the point.

The directive would truncate the activities of most of the affected people, including students in secondary and tertiary schools.

Some of the schools they attend are Hope Waddel Training Institute, Zenith High School, Access Group of Schools and Holy Child Secondary School, all in Calabar.

One of Taylor's aides said they are surprised at the order and that they are not keen on returning to Liberia now, for fear of persecution.

His words: "Those close to Taylor are not disposed to returning home immediately because the current government in Liberia has been hostile to those perceived as close to him.

"Before of the twist of events, the government had arrested several of the aides who went back. They were detained for several days without questioning. It is not done anywhere in the world. It is not normal for states.

"Under the International Humanitarian Law people seeking asylum cannot be forcefully repatriated to a country where peace is fragile".

But he promised that the people affected would comply with the directive, saying: "We are in no position to defy the order from the government".

He recalled that shortly after the arrest of Taylor, Duke had informed his staff and family members that those who have nothing doing should consider leaving Nigeria.

Duke's Chief Press Secretary, Joseph Ushingiale, stated that although he is not aware of the order, "it is simply logical that once Taylor who was accommodated by the Federal Government is no longer in Nigeria, they should not even wait for the federal or state government to tell them to go. It is just logical that they have to leave".

A book on Taylor, titled "Neo-colonialism in Africa Liberia: The last Target", is circulating in Nigeria.

Written by Taylor's Chief Press Secretary, Sylvester Vaanii Paasewe, it chronicles events around him before and after his rebellion in Liberia to his arrest and extradition from Nigeria on March 29.

## Associated Press

Saturday, 22 April 2006

### **International courts find home in Dutch city**

The Hague may soon get the U.N. tribunal trying Liberia's ex-president

By ARTHUR MAX

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS - In the century since The Hague hosted the world's first peace conference, this city of palaces and canals has become home to an array of international courts, law enforcement agencies and weapons watchdogs.

Among the best known are the U.N. tribunal that heard the case of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic; the new International Criminal Court set up to try future war crimes; and the International Court of Justice, better known as the World Court.

One more may soon join the list: The U.N.-backed special court for Sierra Leone has asked to make use of facilities at the ICC to try Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia.

Taylor is accused of directing rebels in Sierra Leone to rape and murder, recruit children and traffic in guns and diamonds during a decade-long civil war. Judges at the Sierra Leone court deemed it too risky to hold his trial in Sierra Leone, where Taylor's supporters could cause trouble.

The choice of The Hague was natural. Dutch police are experts in guarding the world's most infamous war crimes suspects and shuttling them between jail and courthouse.

The government has "host country" agreements with the courts for providing visas and facilities for jurists, witnesses and journalists.

The Hague has been a center of international diplomacy since 1899, when Russia's Czar Nicholas called a conference in neutral Holland with the goal of a 10-year freeze on Europe's madcap arms race.

"The Hague proved an inspired choice," wrote the U.S. historian Barbara W. Tuchman. With its smiling citizens, flowering summer countryside, windmills and canals, "the once quiet town, a 'gracious anachronism' of brick houses and cobblestone streets, bustled with welcome."

Parts of the city of 700,000 retain a 19th-century veneer, despite its sprawling glass city hall and tall, imaginative office blocks.

Still small and manageable, it nonetheless is home to some 150 international organizations and 12,000 expatriates, many of them with healthy U.N. salaries and expense accounts, who contribute 5 percent of the city's economy.

Jurists from the various courts mingle often for drinks and gossip.

"It's a small community here," said Rosalyn Higgins, the British president of the World Court.

## Nigeria Daily Independent

Friday, 21 April 2006

### Charles Taylor is History

By Sam Kargbo

I have been off this column for a while. I apologize for the break in transmission. I sincerely do. There are times when one is forced to abandon hallowed hobbies for the critical tasks of survival. I know that many followers of this column have waited anxiously for my contribution to the Taylor saga. Many must have justifiably anticipated an early contribution from me having been on the forefront in the call for Taylor's trial. I took the cautious path for obvious reasons. Having been predictive and emotionally judgmental about Taylor over the years, it was advisable for me to step aside and watch events from a safe and firm rostrum. I did not allow myself to be provoked by the uninformed commentaries that were unleashed on the public by overnight international relations experts. Instead, I headed straight for Freetown the moment Taylor was spewed by President Olusegun Obasanjo. I have now returned with the irrefutable conclusion that Taylor is history. It is just a matter of time before we hear of the number of years he would serve for his satanic role in Sierra Leone's eleven year war. And that is, if he is not bumped in the course of his trial. Already, Sweden and Austria have been requested by the UN to start looking for places to keep the 58 year old civil war monger who the Prosecutor for the UN Special Court in Sierra Leone considers to be one of the three worst war criminals alive (the other two being the Serbian fugitives: Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic).

Thankfully, I have in a month earlier commented elaborately in another forum on Baba's third term project, so I could not be accused of missing out entirely on the major issues of the months of March and April, 2006. I therefore feel safe to dedicate this piece entirely on Taylor. When I boarded the Bellview aircraft at about 1:00 clock in the afternoon of March 5, 2006 for the two hours forty minutes flight to Freetown, I had the wish of sitting alongside someone I could share my excitements about Taylor's arrest and arraignment before the Special Court in Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, the gentlemen I shared a row with were businessmen who did not avail me the slightest opportunity for a chat. Disappointed, I slept off only to be woken by the air hostess' announcement that we (meaning the pilot) had commenced the final descent to the Lungi International airport. Yes! Although not much of a sight, the Lungi airport answers the name of an international airport. The immigration officials were polite and helpful. Having paid the naira equivalent about \$550 for the less than three hours trip, one was not prepared for the \$55 cost of the fifteen minutes helicopter flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Freetown is a peninsula and it is practically cut off from the Lungi airport. The hovercraft that would have provided an alternative did not function that day. A sizeable number of my fellow passengers on the helicopter were by their colour expatriates. Not one of us trusted the helicopter and if my inner feelings were a standard, I would say the fifteen minute flight seemed longer than the one from Lagos to Lungi. Not one of us utter a word until the helicopter landed safely at a heliport near the premises of the former United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone that folded up in December 2005.

I bought all the leaflets that were presented to me as newspapers to gauge the mood of Sierra Leoneans concerning their unwilling guest. I got a moderate guest house that cost me only about \$40 a night somewhere at Wilberforce. I slept off immediately after checking in and woke up to realize that unlike Lagos, the television is not much a cherish accompaniment of governance and social engineering. To make matters worse for me, my hosts at the guest house were Middle

easterners and therefore provided with only CNN and Arab channels. In less than an hour, I had flipped through the papers and got a sense of the issue concerning Taylor that bother Sierra Leoneans. The vaunted threat of Taylor's celebrated invincibility in the region did not bother them. The Mongolians guiding the UN Special Court give them a sense of security. I could sense that when friends that I had called up took me to some of the pubs in the evenings. Not too many of them volunteered opinions on Taylor. The general belief is that the Special Court that had nabbed people like Samuel Hinga Norman was quite capable of handling Taylor. The country's broadcasting house (SLBS) and the campus of the Njala University College by its side that are directly opposite the Special Court where Taylor is kept, do not wear any iota of fear. They have no security men and I was delighted to notice that the students did not care a hoot about the guest across the road. Besides, unless a first visitor is educated otherwise about the activities of the Special Court the surrounding environment is not different from that of a cathedral or mosque. Right on the fence of a part of the Special court are small kiosks and small time beer selling venues. Not a single one of the owners complained of their business being affected by the arrival of Taylor.

Of course, there is the call for the moving of the trial venue to the chambers of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. My sense is that the true reason for that expensive joke may not be known by ordinary men like us that soon. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) are gearing up for the general elections next year. There are clear indices to show that the party has a formidable opposition from the breakaway faction of Charles Margai, one of the offspring of the Margai political dynasty, as well as, the old foe, the All People's Congress (APC) led by the charismatic Alex Koroma. My thinking is that the old man who has staked the fate of the party in the person of his equally old vice President Solomon Berewa, would feel better without the distractions of the trial of Taylor. Already, his detractors are hoping that Taylor would have something to say that would smear his illustrious record as the bringer of peace to Sierra Leone. Another angle that catches my fancy is the fact that the old cowboy in the White House in Washington DC would prefer a venue that falls within his surveillance radar. Sierra Leone is too remote and difficult to monitor. The facilities of the ICC are obviously better and lend better grandstanding opportunities than the Special Court in Sierra Leone. The fact that the UN has already sanctioned it gives a hint about who is behind the call.

Taylor who had earlier preferred to be tried by the International Criminal Court and opposed the jurisdiction of the Special Court way back on July 23, 2003 has understandably had a change of mind. He now prefers to be tried in Freetown even though he still insists that his trial is an effort by America to divide and destabilize the West African region. His motion against the change of venue is pending in the court and would not be heard until the resumption of the court on April 24, 2005 or thereafter. The Special Court went on recess soon after it took the plea of Taylor. To my mind, the idea of the change of venue is distracting and violates a fundamental principle of criminal justice. The alleged victims of Taylor's alleged atrocities must not be denied the fundamental right of seeing and witnessing justice being done in respect of their case. Justice as the saying goes, must not only be done but must be seen to be done. The hardship of the change or shift of venue is exacerbated by the fact that the Special Court that has obviously been starved of funds is to fund the cost of the proposed theatrical trial in The Hague. The Netherlands and the International Criminal Court have made it absolutely clear that they do not want to bear any of the cost of the proposed shift of venue. Out of the \$25 million needed by the Court for its regular business this year, it has only received \$6 million cash and another \$9 million in pledges.

Sierra Leoneans are satisfied that their number one enemy has been arrested and like all those they consider to be the major actors behind the war and its barbarism he would be tried and if found guilty, he would be punished. One issue that agitated most of the elite that I interacted with

is the fear that Nigeria would feel hurt by the eleventh hour drama surrounding Taylor's eventual arrest. They considered as evil America's sudden pressure on President Obasanjo for the handing over of Taylor to the Special Court. Sierra Leoneans are obviously still very grateful to Nigeria and did not take kindly the overzealousness of an outsider to hurt the long beneficial relationship between the two countries. I tried my best to explain that the average Nigerians know their friends and would always stand by them.

Specifically, the Special Court believes that Taylor had a common cause with Foday Sankoh and that he financed Foday Sankoh's RUF with weapons and personnel. The indictment gave the time and places of the actions that are ascribed to Taylor and if the history of such Courts or tribunals is anything to go by, Taylor is history.



## Cocorioko website

Friday, 21 April 2006

### **'WICKED VENTURE' COULD PLUNGE LIBERIA INTO CHAOS ONCE AGAIN -Says Charles Taylor's party**

The National Patriotic Party ( NPP) has warned that "The wicked venture" , as it called it, to freeze the assets of the founder of the party, incarcerated war crimes accused , Charles Taylor and some of his proteges, could plunge Liberia into chaos once again. The NPP Assistant Chief for Press and Propaganda, Mr. Eric Kennedy, wants the Liberian government to concentrate instead on "The Herculean task of reconciliation and rebuilding the nation

The Liberian government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was last week said to have been considering freezing the assets of Taylor and people who did business with him in compliance with the United Nations Security Council's precondition for lifting the sanctions on Liberia. The government was expected to submit the proposal for freezing Taylor's assets to the Legislature for action before the June meeting of the Security Council to determine whether Liberia had complied with other preconditions for the lifting of the sanctions.

But yesterday, the NPP Spokesman Kennedy made a public release to condemn the move. .The NPP statement described the asset freezing exercise as an international bondage and cautioned the government to exercise its moral obligations to its citizens to ensure that they were free from it. The statement further called on the government to prosecute the targeted individuals in a court of competent jurisdiction instead of continuously harassing and intimidating them without justification.

The Charles Taylor issue will always remain stormy and this recent misunderstanding confirms fears that trying Taylor at the Special Court in Freetown, in close proximity to Liberia, was not promotive of peace in the war-ravaged country.

United Nations



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United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 22 April**

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **Natural Resources and Conflict under the Legal Spotlight, War Crimes Trial of Gus Kouwenhoven to Commence in The Hague**

Apr 21, 2006 (Global Witness/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The critical role of the timber industry in helping to finance the brutal wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone will be under the international spotlight for the next three weeks. On 24th April 2006, Dutch timber baron Gus Kouwenhoven will go on trial in The Hague on charges of committing war crimes against Liberians and violating a United Nations (UN) arms embargo.

Kouwenhoven, a Dutch national, was General Manager of the Oriental Timber Company (OTC), Liberia's biggest logging company during the regime of former president Charles Taylor. Taylor is himself in the dock charged by the Special Court for Sierra Leone with crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Despite years of denials, in April 2003 President Taylor's spokesperson Vaani Paasewe admitted in an interview that 'it was true that, as Global Witness said in its report, revenues from Liberia's logging industry had been used to import weapons recently despite the UN arms embargo...' (1) Taylor referred to OTC as his 'peppercorn' - a Liberian expression implying a personal interest, and a warning to people to leave the company alone.

### **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

#### **Senate Expects to Release of Jailed Cabinet Ministers**

- Senate President Pro Tempore Isaac Nyenabo told a news conference yesterday following a special session that the Senate was not aware of the Supreme Court's decision to release the two government ministers imprisoned by the Senate for contempt and had mandated its judiciary committee to investigate circumstances surrounding the release.
- He said that the action was a constitutional breach and an affront to the Senate.
- According to Star Radio, Bong County Senator Franklin Siakor urged his colleagues to remain dignified and not engage in confusion over allowances and benefits.

*(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

### **STAR RADIO** *(News culled from website at 09:00 am)*

#### **Taylor Requests Change of Prison Cell**

- Authorities of the Special Court for Sierra Leone have changed the prison cell of former President Charles Taylor upon his request.
- Star Radio quoted its Freetown correspondent as saying that Mr. Taylor's request was prompted by fright due to the noise from a generator located near his cell.
- Meanwhile, immigration authorities in Freetown say that there is an increase in the number of Liberians, Ivorians and Burkinabe arriving in the country since Taylor's transfer.

- According to the correspondent a Nigerian fiancée of Mr. Taylor has arrived in Freetown and shares the same hotel with relatives of Mr. Taylor.

**Police Launch Second Recruitment Exercise**

- The Liberia national Police (LNP) yesterday launched a second campaign across Liberia to recruit more than 1,800 personnel to reach its full strength of 3,500.
- LNP Inspector-General Beatrice Munah Sieh called on individuals from diverse professional backgrounds to apply.
- Colonel Sieh encouraged females to take advantage of the opportunity to serve in the country's police force.

*Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at [armahj@un.org](mailto:armahj@un.org).*

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### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **PM says Denmark would carefully consider request to accept Liberia's Taylor**

Source: English General News Date: April 21, 2006

COPENHAGEN, Denmark - Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Friday his government would carefully consider any formal United Nations request to imprison Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted by a U.N.-backed war crimes court. "I do not have any formal request. But it is, of course, a case that will be subject to very thorough considerations in the government before we take a decision," Fogh Rasmussen told reporters.

#### **Aid programme for internally displaced persons end in Liberia**

Source: Dpa English Date: April 21, 2006

Monrovia\_(dpa) \_ The United Nations Mission in Liberia celebrated the end of an aid programme for internally displaced persons (IDP) with the symbolic demolition of huts in Salala camp in Bong county, about 200 kilometers northwest of Monrovia, press reports said Friday. The huts, once used as temporary dwellings, were demolished Thursday by Liberian Vice President Joseph Boakai and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Deputy Special Representative for Recovery and Governance Jordan Ryan. UNMIL, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and the Liberian refugee agency declared the process in Salala complete.

#### **LIBERIA: Driving now possible in "Walking County"**

MONROVIA, 19 Apr 2006 (IRIN) - After two attempts and 30 years of waiting vehicles can now drive over a new steel road bridge across the muddy banks of the Nu River in Liberia's south east Grand Kru County, giving aid workers their first access to one of the most underdeveloped and least known parts of the country.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

Los Angeles Times 21 April 2006

THE WORLD; A Radical Blueprint for Stabilizing Sierra Leone; Experts propose a long-term trusteeship for the troubled West African nation, which is in danger of descending back into chaos.

Robyn Dixon

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone. This West African nation, where child soldiers once roamed the countryside in a grotesque civil war and militants chopped off limbs to terrorize the

population, sometimes seems like a rare success in international efforts to rebuild failed states.

Peacekeepers disarmed 70,000 combatants and pulled out last year with the country at peace. The rebel leader is dead. The former president of a neighboring country, who is accused of having fomented much of the violence, is in jail awaiting trial by an international court.

But the streets of Freetown, the capital, pump with protest songs that capture the mood of a deeply unhappy population. Hip-hop stars taunt government officials with lyrics poking fun at bellies grown fat through corruption.

Not long ago, songs comparing the country's leaders to squirrels, mice and rats that gobble up everything on a farm might have landed musicians in jail -- or much worse. Now, they tap into a mood of anger and frustration that calls into question whether the international effort has accomplished enough to keep Sierra Leone from sliding back into chaos.

The stakes are high. Even before war-ravaged Afghanistan served as a training ground for the Sept. 11 hijackers, experts argued that states with ineffective or deeply corrupt governments could be magnets for terrorists and organized criminal gangs.

Many experts argue that peacekeeping missions, elections and massive short-term international aid, the methods development agencies most often use, are not enough in such extreme cases. They have called for more radical solutions, including a form of long-term trusteeship that involves well focused intervention for decades.

## **Local Media – Newspapers**

### **High Court Releases Jailed Cabinet Ministers**

*(Daily Observer, The Inquirer, New Democrat, The Telegraph and The Informer)*

- The Supreme Court of Liberia yesterday ordered the release of the two Cabinet Ministers who had been imprisoned by the Senate on contempt charges for taxing the lawmakers' transportation allowances and failing to pay other allowances on time. Justice in Chambers Emmanuel Wureh ordered Acting Finance Minister Francis Karpeh and Minister of State Morris Saytumah released from detention after the Justice Ministry filed a Writ of Prohibition with the argument that the Senate's action was without due process, as the law requires.

### **Liberia Officially Closes Return Exercise for Displaced People**

*(Daily Observer and The Informer)*

- The UN refugee agency UNHCR, UNMIL and the Liberian Government yesterday jointly held a ceremony at the Salala Displaced Camp in Bong County to officially mark the end of the return process for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Liberia.

### **Survey Shows 94 Percent of Liberians Feel Safer with UNMIL's Presence**

*(New Democrat)*

- An overwhelming 94 percent of Liberians said that the UNMIL made them more secure in the aftermath of the decade-long civil war. The also gave high marks to UNMIL for its quick-impact projects and information outreach, a poll released Wednesday said.

### **Denmark Asked to Imprison Taylor after Trial**

*(New Democrat and Heritage)*

- According to an *Associated Press* report, Denmark is the latest country to be asked to imprison former President Charles Taylor if he is convicted at a war crimes trial.

### **UN Envoy Accused of Having a Role in Drafting Taylor's Indictment**

*(The Liberian Diaspora)*

- *The Liberian Diaspora*, quoting "a highly placed source in Freetown with connections to the Special Court for Sierra Leone," reported that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss was a major contributor to the drafting of the indictment against former President Charles Taylor. The source said that between September 2002 and February 2003, Mr. Doss—who was then Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Sierra Leone—worked in close collaboration with American Prosecutor David Crane to draw up Mr. Taylor's indictment.

### **Four Armed Robbery Suspects Arrested**

*(The Inquirer and The Analyst)*

- Four of five Nigerian armed robbery suspects have been sent to court after they allegedly attacked a Nigerian-born Liberian, Victor Ahononue, on the Monrovia-RIA highway and took from him US\$11,000 plus an unspecified amount of Liberian dollars and other valuables. Police authorities said a fifth suspect was at large.

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### **STAR RADIO** *(News culled from website at 09:00 am)*

#### **House Has No Plans to Impeach President**

- House Speaker Edwin Snowe said the House had no plans to impeach President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, adding that nurturing the country's new democracy was more important. He clarified that what the media reported as an impeachment debate in the House was a presentation made on the floor by Margibi County Representative Emmanuel Nuquay, who, the Speaker said, was entitled to his opinion.

#### **Swiss Delegation Meets with President Johnson-Sirleaf**

- In a meeting with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday, the head of the visiting Swiss delegation, Mr. Walter Fust, said that he looked forward to an improved bilateral corporation between Liberia and Switzerland.

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