

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Thursday, 24 April 2008

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

Wednesday, 23 April 2008

With us this week is the Defence team of Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia who is now on trial at The Hague for crimes against humanity. The team of lawyers is here to do Outreach on their client's behalf. Lawyer Terry Munyard is the counsel of Charles Taylor and is in the studio with us. Welcome sir.

MUNYARD: Good morning, Zainab, thank you for inviting me today.

So why the need to do an Outreach in Sierra Leone?

MUNYARD: Well Sierra Leone is the country, of course, in which the allegations against Mr. Taylor are based. It's said that he was orchestrating the civil war here. The indictment against him covers the period from the end of 1996 to the very beginning of 2002, so it's very important that people understand in this country what the position of the Defence of Mr. Taylor is, because I know that you hear a great deal from the Prosecution. It's only right in a court of justice that you should also hear from the Defence.

So we are told now that you have had Outreach events in Monrovia. Can you give us an idea of how it went?

MUNYARD: The Outreach event in Monrovia – the principal one was yesterday, and a very large group of people gathered from all elements of civil society. They braved the enormous traffic jams that were caused by the visit of Ban Ki Moon to that city and turned out in force to listen to what we had to say and also to ask us some very pertinent questions. It was a very successful meeting. They were very keen that we should come back and that we should tour the country, not limit ourselves just to the capital city.

So what Outreach events did you take part in?

MUNYARD: In Monrovia I took part in several television interviews including an interactive television interview where people were able to telephone in their questions to me, as well as television and radio. I also attended that big meeting in the city centre in Monrovia.

How did you think people perceive your client here?

MUNYARD: It's difficult for me to say how people perceive Mr. Taylor here in Sierra Leone, because I haven't yet done a major Outreach event. I'm doing one later this morning in fact. Clearly, if the reaction in this country is the same as the reaction in other countries around the world, the Prosecution have been going around giving a great deal of propaganda against Mr. Taylor, and no doubt that many people here are hostile to him. It's our job to explain why the Special Court is trying him, how it is doing its job, and why we think that this is a political trial. Despite it being a political trial, it is obviously a criminal trial in an international court of justice. Once the government of this country and the United Nations decided to set up such a court, a court of justice, the eyes of the world are upon the Special Court, and it must adhere to the highest possible standards of justice in every case it tries. Otherwise it will not be worthy of the name of a court of justice, and it will therefore damage the reputation of both the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone if it does not carry out its work fairly and properly and justly.

Thank you very much. Continue to stay with us.

[This was the first segment of the interview only.]

Standard Times
Thursday, 24 April 2008

TODAY APRIL 24...

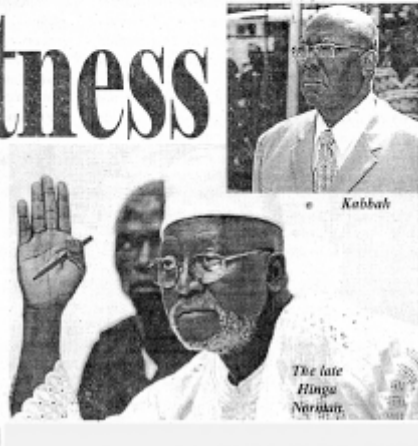
Special court compels ex-President Kabbah to testify as witness for Issa Sesay

Unless he decides to treat the Special Court with levity as he did to the Ecomas Court in Abuja to respond to Human Right abuse charges proffered against him by Mohammed Wansa a former busi-

ness in Sierra Leone whose right was trampled upon by the office of the presidency, while ex-president Kabbah was at the helm of political affairs. For several months now, even prior to the death of Sam Hinga Norman, ex-president Ahmad Tejan

Kabbah had been dodging the Special Court using the immunity cover and available political and the United Nations connections.

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Kabbah

The late Hinga Norman

Special court compels ex-President Kabbah to testify as witness for Issa Sesay

FROM PAGE 1

This time round, there are indications that both the immunity and presidential covers would not save him from appearing at the court to testify either in favour or against of one of the RUF indictee, who has already been convicted by the court; and has filed an appeal against both the offence under which he was charged and the sentence.

Mr. Issa Sesay, former RUF Leader has subpoenaed, Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, ex-president of the Republic of Sierra Leone as witness to testify today at the Special Court.

The Special Court it would be recalled, was one of the creations of ex-president Kabbah to try those that bear the greatest responsibility....application on behalf of Issa Sesay was filed on

the 29th February, 08 demanding the appearance and testimony of the ex-president. Response to Sesay's application in the issuance of a subpoena was filed on the 4th, March 08 and opposition to his request was done on the 5th March, 08

The Special Court in its conclusion has now ordered that H.E. Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Kabbah shall be compelled to appear as witness in the RUF trial on behalf of the first accused, if called upon to do so. It is not known whether or not the testimony of the ex-president Kabbah would cushion the sentence of the first accused, who at the time of the negotiation for peace to return to Sierra Leone was a major stakeholder in the entire process.

Concord Times
Thursday, 24 April 2008

"Taylor's trial is political"

By Ibrahim Tarawallie

Defense counsel for former Liberian President Charles Taylor Wednesday said the trial of his client was political.

Speaking at an outreach session organized by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown Terry Muniyand said other nationals have committed the same crime Taylor was accused to have

committed but they have not been prosecuted in any international criminal court.

"International criminal courts should be made for anyone that is found wanting," he said.

He said the defense team of Taylor was very small and that they were open to lots of restrictions from the prosecution adding, "We have very little resources to carry on with the trials."

"The prosecution is making their case on two evidences which are linkage witnesses and crime based witnesses," he explained noting, however, that the defense team does not intend to challenge the prosecution's crime based witnesses.

Muniyand said they would be submitting to the prosecution that some of the linkage witnesses were bags of lies,

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Charles Taylor

"Taylor's trial is political"

From page 1

adding that "Taylor is in good health to go ahead with the trial."

Legal assistant Logan Hambrick said they were experiencing problems of witness inducement by the

prosecution, a development he said would undermine the credibility of those testifying in the court.

Ugandan Dele Ends Visit to Sierra Leone

By Alpha Amadu Bah

Sierra Leone has played host to a delegation from the UNDP in Ugandan which was here to examine the post war situation of the country.

The visit, according to Richard Todwong, Special Presidential Advisor for Northern Uganda, met with the war victims groups, organizations, United Nations in Sierra Leone and government officials respectively who are working on issues related to war victims and resettlement in order to learn from Sierra Leone and advise the government of Uganda on a way forward on how to deal with similar situation in Northern Uganda.

In her statement, Ms. Christine Oryema Lalobo said Sierra Leone was chosen for them to emulate examples as a post war country where a similar war was fought in Uganda. Copying examples from Sierra Leone, she admitted, will earn them a great deal of knowledge on how to go about ending their war in Uganda.

She also noted that religious bodies, government, cultural groups, NGOs and the country as a whole are committed to peace in Uganda.

Awoko (website)

Wednesday, 23 April 2008

RUF terrorist army created by Taylor - prosecution

A prosecution lawyer in the trial of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor has referred to the RUF as a “terrorist army”. Speaking in court at The Hague on Monday at the trial of Mr Taylor Nicholas Koumjiam said the RUF was created “exactly in the image of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia which Mr Taylor headed. It comes as lawyers representing the former Liberian President Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone have lost a key motion. The lawyers wanted to block new evidence of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone allegedly by the RUF and the AFRC rebels and blamed on Mr Taylor.

Cotton Tree News

Wednesday, 23 April 2008

Sierra Leone Red Cross Society host Moot Court Competition

Written by James Tamba Lebbie

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society says it will host this year's National International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition for student in university colleges and tertiary institution. The Red Cross Society says organizing the competition is in fulfillment of its mandate to disseminate International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian principles. Although the series marks the fourth inter-collegiate contest on IHL in Sierra Leone, the Red Cross says this is the first time ever that the National Society has organized the competition. The Red Cross Society says six teams have been pre-selected to take part in the Competition, Fourah Bay College, Njala University, Milton Margai College of Education & Technology, International Institute of Islamic studies and the Northern and Eastern Polytechnics will each provide a team. The Red Cross says students will be judged on their knowledge of IHL and public international law, their capacity to use the instruments of law to argue a study case, their team work and the quality of oral expression. The Preliminaries, the Red Cross says, have been scheduled for the fifth and sixth of May at the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society Fundraising Centre in Freetown. The grand final will take place at Trial Chamber 2 of the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 7th of May. It adds that the college or institute that emerges as winner will represent Sierra Leone at the 8th International IHL Moot Court Competition to be held in Arusha, Tanzania, in November 2008.

The Monitor (Liberia)
Thursday, 24 April 2008

At War Crimes Court: **Roll call for Taylorists**

The war crimes trial of Former Liberian President Charles Taylor will continue to make headlines back home, not only because of Mr. Taylor as a Former President, but more and more key figures with strong ties to Mr. Taylor will be appearing before the UN backed Special Court as Prosecution witnesses to face Taylor.

Recently, the Prosecution announced, Former Liberian President Moses Blah will now appear



some times next month to testify against Mr. Taylor, after Mr. Blah failed to show up on the 14th as he himself had an-

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Roll call for Taylorists

nounced.

Now Special Court Chief Prosecutor Steven Rapp has announced the prosecution had summoned other key Liberians with strong connections to Taylor to testify against the Former President.

Mr. Rapp told BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground in The Hague an unspecified number of key individuals have been summoned to testify in the case.

He said all of them have asked not to be identified, but the court had rejected application by a few others to testify in camera. He said the court asked them for strong showing why they wanted to be protected witnesses. Rapp, a former US Federal Prosecutor, said while most of the witnesses will be protected, their testimonies will be broadcast.

However he said three or four others will have their testimony completely closed, meaning there will be no disclosure of whatever they will say.

He ruled out the appearance of Former Senate President Pro-temp, Grance Minor, a strong Taylor insider who had her travel ban lifted by the Security Council this year to testify. "We have no plan to call her here to testify" Rapp said in an interview.

It can be recalled,

Former Liberian President Moses Blah failed to show up recently at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

The Prosecution had scheduled former President Blah before the Court to testify against his former boss, who is also a former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor who bears greater responsibilities for heinous crimes committed against the people of neighboring Sierra Leone.

Blah announced that he had been invited by the Court to testify in the Taylor trial or risk seven-year imprisonment and a fine if he fails to appear before the Court.

In a Subpoena Testificandum dated March 7, 2008 with reference number (Ref/REG/155/2008/VM), to Mr. Blah, a one time Inspector General of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), ordering him to appear voluntarily before the SCSL next Monday, April 14, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. or show good cause why he cannot comply with this subpoena.

At a press conference, Blah said he could not appear before the court due to his heart problem that requires regular attention and however failed to state how long he has been suffering from such illness.

According to media

reports, Mr. Blah has been subpoenaed by the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to appear before it as a "fact witness" in the trial against his former chief, Charles Taylor currently taking place at Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

The subpoena placed in the hands of Mr. Blah said any willful failure on the part of the former President constitutes contempt of the Special Court pursuant to Rule 77 of the rules.

The subpoena: "Should you fail to comply, the Trial Chamber may deal with the matter summarily itself, refer the matter to the appropriate authorities of Sierra Leone or, if there are sufficient grounds to proceed against you for contempt, issue an order in lieu of an indictment and direct independent counsel to prosecute the matter," the subpoena states; adding, "If you are convicted for contempt of the Special Court you may be imprisoned for up to seven (7) years or fined up to two (2) million leones, or both."

Mr. Blah ascendancy as Vice President for Liberia followed the demise of Enoch Dogolea. He was one of the several rebels the launched the infamous rebellion against the government of the slain President Samuel K. Doe.

New Democrat (Liberia)
Thursday, 24 April 2008

"Short Sleeve Or Long Sleeve" Mass Amputations Were Executed




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A CHILD VICTIM OF "SHORT SLEEVE" AMPUTATION

Mass Amputations Were Executed

Alimamy Sesay, a top-ranking member of Sierra Leone's erstwhile junta Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), has told the court trying former President Charles Taylor that a special Liberian battalion, "Red Lion Battalion", fought against ECOMOG forces in the 1998 Freetown offensive that dislodged the rebels from capital, and that mass amputations, along with indiscriminate mass killings, were executed as the rebels retreated.

After we withdrew towards the east, Gullit (one of the commanders) came and said that the people in Freetown had changed their song. Now the people are singing that our brothers have come to steal. He said now we should move and go as far as Ferry Junction. Wherever we saw people singing that song or setting fire to make light for security, those people are betrayers and we should kill them. If we meet any civilians setting fire anywhere we should kill them because they are trying to show our positions.

Wit: We saw people dancing in the hills when ECOMOG troops came. They were singing "they are our brothers - they have come to steal". They wanted ECOMOG to come, so we should go kill people and burn. Changa Bulanga and his squad should go to Low Cost Housing.

Wit: Five-Five said we should start amputating. He said he would demonstrate it. They captured about three civilians. They had something we call mortar, used to pound pepper or groundnuts. They put their hands on that mortar, and he asked if they wanted long-sleeve or short-sleeve: being amputated at the wrist or elbow. He said this was a demonstration and we should start amputating people. Five-Five amputated those people.

Pros: When he said long-sleeve, what did that mean?

Wit: It means they'd cut from this area.

Judge Doherty: For the record, witness indicates just above elbow. For short-sleeve, he indicates the wrist.

Pros: The three civilians - how were they amputated by Five-Five?

Wit: Five-Five placed the mortar on the ground. The civilians placed their hands on it. Five-Five said they had voted for Kabbah and they should go tell Kabbah.

Pros: Of the three, how many had short-sleeve amputation?

Wit: He gave short sleeve to one, and two long-sleeves.

Pros: Who did the actual amputation of these three civilians?

Wit: Five-Five did it.

Pros: Did anyone else participate?

Wit: Immediately after this, Major Mines and Kabila started capturing people and amputating them.

Pros: How many?

Wit: I can't recall. We saw them amputating arms and telling the civilians to tell Pa Kabbah.

Pros: Did you do anything in Up Gun?

Wit: I was with the defensive force. We were prepared for any attacks from ECOMOG. Five-Five, Mines and Kabila meanwhile amputated people.

Pros: From Up Gun where did you go?

National Chronicle (Liberia)
Thursday, 24 April 2008

SPECULATION



With
Stephen Thomas

JUSTICE AT TAYLOR'S TRIAL: A DREAM INDEED!

It is a common judicial practice that individuals with interest in a case cannot be judges or jurors for the matter. British trained judges appointed by Sierra Leone and the United Nations cannot remit transparent justice at The Hague's trial of Charles Taylor for it would mean the very nations accusing the defendant of criminal offenses would be the very nations prosecuting and judging him.

Britain and Sierra Leone initiated, planned, and conclusively decided and established the so-called "War Crime Court" for Sierra Leone, and of course with the backing of Britain's Western powerful allied countries. And to give the Court an internationally acceptable flavor, through the cunning, intrigues and trickery of Britain's Tony Blair, the backing of the United Nations was solicited for the sole and only purpose of getting at Taylor, after whose trial, the Court will cease to function.

Common sense tells us that no where in the world would the very nations accusing an individual, establishing the trial court, appointing the judges of the court and at the same time prosecuting the accused would such an accused be expected to have transparent justice.

Legally all judges or jurors who have any connection or interest in matters being adjudicated by them, would have to automatically reclude themselves from participation in any form, directly or indirectly in said matters.

In the pending trial at The Hague, one would expect the Defense Lawyers for Mr. Taylor to firstly file a motion praying the Court to have all judges on the Bench with British connection and those appointed by the Sierra Leone government to reclude themselves from further participation in the trial.

The failure of the court to comply with such a motion should leave the defense Team with no alternative but to walk out, leaving the Court to do what it is perceived to do, carry out its proceedings and bringing down the accused guilty. After all, guilty on just one of the Charges levied against the Accused would have him put away in jail for the rest of his life.

Conspicuously and most evidentially, Britain, one of the prime planners, architects and perpetrators of the charges against the accused is ironically the very identical one which has contracted to have the accused imprisoned, even when the trial had not yet commenced. The Court obviously, is expected to hand down a verdict of guilty, come what may. Is this then transparent Justice, or just a dream? Let's wait for the final outcome.

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 23 April 2008

The Prosecution witness in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been recounting yet other incidents of atrocities during the rebel onslaught in the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, January 6 of 1999.

Alimamy Bobson Sesay, Prosecution 23rd witness, told of a massacre in a Mosque in the Kissy community in Freetown and the murder of catholic nuns. Adolphus Williams is watching the trial in The Hague and he sends us this report.

WILLIAMS: Alimamy Bobson Sesay said once the RUF/AFRC rebel alliance was confronted and driven off State House in Freetown, they resorted to widespread violence in the city.

He told the court packed with European law students, they targeted Fourah Bay community, Savage Square, killing people and setting fire to buildings trapped with screaming people.

Sesay said, they went on the Old Road, in the Kissy Community at the east of Freetown, broke into a mosque, and began the slaughter. Sesay, a former fighter of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, said they suspected the West African troops, ECOMOG, were in the Mosque.

SESAY: went to the mosque and saw a lot of people in there and when we saw that then we opened fire. Some attempted to run... some were running away and most of them died in the mosque. Some others actually escaped.

COUNSEL: Who were the people you found at the mosque?

SESAY: Well, we saw civilians in the mosque. They were many. The mosque was full... It's a big mosque. It is in Shell Old Road...we killed and withdrew...When we went to the mosque we met suckling mothers and people said they had gone there to seek refuge... There were adults among them, there were children, there were young adults and young boys in that mosque. The mosque was full... Even my own relatives were there. That I learnt later.

WILLIAMS: The witness said they continued their attacks on religious shrines. Worshipers and people were seeking refuge in them. He said the rebels invaded the Catholic compound in Freetown, took four nuns, and missed by inches the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Freetown and Bo, Bishop Joseph Ganda, who narrowly escaped from their hands.

SESAY: Gullit called (Foday Bah) Bulldoze, he said he should bring the nuns, about four of them, because when we entered Freetown we captured Bishop Ganda. He said now that Father Mario and Bishop Ganda had escaped and if we said we were going to allow the nuns to escape too that would not be good, so he said we should execute them, so Foday Bah executed them.

WILLIAMS: Sesay said they later advanced to the Pademba Road Prison where they broke open the jail and took out detainees, including former President Joseph Saidu Momoh.

SESAY: (in Krio without translation).

For the BBC World Service Trust, Search for Common Ground, Adolphus Williams, The Hague

Times Online

Tuesday, 22 April 2008

<http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/law/article3785508.ece>

Money troubles at trial of first African leader to face a war crimes court

The tribunal trying Charles Taylor, the former Liberian leader, will run out of funds in the autumn and there are complaints about witnesses being paid

It is a common complaint in Africa that even the most heinous crimes of some of its leaders and warlords merit barely a flicker of attention in the rest of the world while they are being perpetrated.

As the genocidal slaughter began in Rwanda in 1994, TV viewers in Britain and United States were transfixed by the high-speed Californian car chase that ended in the arrest of O. J. Simpson. And for much of the 1990s, the murder and mutilation inflicted on the population of Sierra Leone in a conflict about “blood diamonds” was largely ignored outside West Africa until Britain’s military intervention in 1999.

Now, Charles Taylor, the former Liberian leader — accused of backing those who committed the atrocities — is standing trial in The Hague, the first African leader to face a war crimes court. True to form, the world remains largely uninformed about a trial that is throwing up legal issues that have implications for other international tribunals.

One is payment of witnesses. For the prosecution, some of the most valued testimony has come from “insider” witnesses, either former aides of Taylor or senior figures in the rebel groups in Sierra Leone, who negotiated with the Liberians to secure guns in return for supplying diamonds.

In the past year one of these witnesses, Isaac Tamba Mongor — a self-confessed killer who admitted in court that he had burnt down villages and slaughtered civilians — received payments totalling \$4,800 (£2,400) for food, medical and childcare expenses, visits to his relatives in the provinces and to buy top-up cards for his mobile phone. All these payments have been made by the victim and witness service section of the court registry. The chief prosecutor and registrar say everything is declared and above board. The defence is crying foul.

Terry Munyard, of Garden Court Chambers, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London, Taylor’s co-counsel, outlines the charge sheet: “Reimbursing witnesses for genuine expenses is entirely legitimate. Handouts to help them with school fees and buy uniforms for their children, which has happened in some cases, is not. Some people have approached us offering to give evidence for the defence if we will pay them more than they are being offered by the prosecution. Frankly, this corrodes the whole system of justice that the international tribunals are supposed to be upholding.”

The defence also complains that press conferences given by the prosecution in West Africa, while the trial has been in progress, have made it more difficult to find those prepared to testify for Taylor. “When the chief prosecutor stands up in Monrovia [the capital of Liberia],” Munyard says, “and makes extravagant claims about Taylor and the millions of dollars he has supposedly salted away, it clearly has an inhibiting effect on potential defence witnesses. They fear that they will be put on some UN war crimes list if they come forward.”

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is not the first international tribunal to be the focus of such criticisms, nor the first where some observers detect a legal culture clash between US and UK practices.

Taylor's defence team comes mainly from the English Bar. The two key figures in the Office of the Prosecutor are American. Stephen Rapp, from Iowa, is the chief prosecutor. "In the jurisdiction I come from, witness payments can be made by a US marshal where appropriate. But listen, we are talking about reimbursement of expenses here. Nobody is being enriched through testifying.

"In cases where we have had to relocate a witness because of fear of reprisals, it's right that we should take care of things such as school fees if their children can no longer go to the local mission school. The principle is that nobody should be worse off as a result of testifying."

The monetary issue of greatest concern to the special court is the continual struggle to garner the contributions to keep it alive and functioning. Unlike the ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the Sierra Leone court relies on voluntary payments from states rather than assessed contributions from the UN.

Four states have borne the brunt — the US, Canada, Britain and the Netherlands. "Other contributions have been sporadic," Herman von Hebel, the registrar, admits. "I spend about a third of my time going around with a begging bowl. We need \$68 million to complete our work by 2010 and we have guaranteed funding of only \$23 million. The present funding will last until the autumn. It is a great worry."

Though this is an African tribunal — albeit one sitting in Europe for the Taylor trial for security reasons — the only financial contributor from Africa is Nigeria. This is ironic because Taylor was given sanctuary there for three years before his protection was removed and he was arrested.

Despite everything — the financial uncertainty, the death threats to witnesses and an attack on the family home of a witness in Liberia — the trial is progressing and impressing many seasoned observers. Professor Michael Scharf, an expert on war crimes tribunals, says: "Although Taylor's very presence is intimidating to witnesses, he is not disrupting proceedings and his legal team is doing an impressive job. For now, the court is setting a good precedent for the future."

United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 23 April 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Secretary-General Ban Says UNMIL Drawdown Will Be 'Cautious and Gradual'

(The Inquirer, New Democrat, The Analyst, Heritage, Daily Observer, National Chronicle, New Liberia, The Informer, Public Agenda, The News)

- The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has assured Liberians that the drawdown plan of the UN Mission in Liberia will proceed in a cautious and gradual manner to ensure that the gains made in consolidating peace are not put at risk.
- "A gradual withdrawal should allow the government sufficient time to assume full responsibility for national security", Mr. Ban said. Addressing a news conference, he observed that despite the considerable progress, Liberia still faces significant reconstruction and development challenges, but noted that government is working hard in partnership with the international community to tackle the challenges.
- The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Informer, The News and New Democrat newspapers report that prior to the Secretary General's address to the joint session of the National Legislature yesterday, House Speaker, Alex Tyler called on the United Nations to review its travel ban on some Liberians and give them due process. But in his reaction, The Inquirer and News quotes the UN boss as saying that the decision rests with the Security Council. The New Democrat quoting Representative Dusty Wolokollie of Montserrado County said the views expressed by the Speaker on the issue of the travel ban was a personal opinion and did not meet the "consensus" of the body.

Supreme Court Halts Suspension of TRC Commissioner

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Informer, Heritage)

- The Inquirer reports that the Supreme Court Chamber Justice, Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie has issued a writ of prohibition on the suspension of Counsellor Pearl Brown-Bull as Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- The writ was issued following a petition filed by Counsellor Bull challenging her suspension from the TRC for allegedly violating the Commission's act. The Justice in Chambers has meanwhile instructed all parties involved to return to the status quo and stay all further proceedings until otherwise ordered. Cllr. Bull was recently suspended for what the commission considered as conflict of interest.
- He contended that Cllr. Bull had taken assignment with the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) something that breached the TRC Act. Meanwhile the Informer and Heritage newspapers report that the TRC and the European Commission have launched a conflict mapping project aimed at understanding the nature of the existing conflict situation that may threaten the country's peace and stability.

Chinese Agro Investment Team Visits Liberia

(The News, The Inquirer)

- A High-Power Chinese delegation is in Liberia to explore investment opportunities in the Agricultural sector. Speaking during an acquaintance meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture on Monday, Mr. Chi Jianxin, and Chief Executive Officer of China-Africa Development Fund

disclosed that his company has an investment package of five billion United States Dollars to invest both in food and cash crops production for a period of fifty years in Africa. He averred that China-Africa Development Fund has the financial capacity and experts to develop and stabilize the food situation in Liberia particularly in the production of rice and other cash crops. Also speaking, Agriculture Minister, Dr. J Chris Toe said commercial rice and cassava production are critical priorities to reduce poverty in Liberia.

ECOSAP Engages Liberia on Arms Control Treaty

Daily Observer)

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) small arms programme (ECOSAP) continues its engagement with the Liberian Government over the ratification of the treaty on proliferation of small arms and light weapons with a two-man mission currently visiting the country. The delegation from ECOSAP has begun consultations with the Liberia Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA), the Government, civil society organizations and the UNDP focal person on small arms control among others. While in the country, the delegation will follow-up on the ongoing ECOSAP sponsored small and light weapons survey launched in the country last year.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

UNMIL Drawdown Will Be Cautious and Gradual, Says Secretary-General *(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

House Speaker Calls for Review of UN Travel Ban

- Speaking when the United Nations Secretary-General met with a joint session of the National Legislature yesterday, House Speaker, Alex Tyler appealed to the UN to review the travel ban imposed on several Liberians linked to former President Charles Taylor.
- Speaker Taylor said the conditions which necessitated the travel restrictions no longer existed but in reaction, the Secretary-General said the decision rests with the Security Council Sanctions Committee on Liberia.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Executive Mansion Troubled by “Confusion” at TRC

- The Executive Mansion has described as “troubling” signs of unfolding events at the TRC and said the President was disappointed over the events.
- The TRC has of late been surrounded by controversies ranging from a bribery allegation to the suspension of Commissioner Bull.
- Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said President Sirleaf believes such distraction does not help the Commission in carrying out its mandate.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Supreme Court Issues Stay Order in TRC Commissioner Bull Suspension Saga

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Dismissed Magistrate Takes President Sirleaf to Supreme Court

- A dismissed Magistrate, Milton Taylor, has filed a petition for a writ of prohibition against his sacking.
- Counsellor Taylor filed the petition nearly two months ago after he was dismissed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf following a ruling in a drug case.
- The Judge had ruled to grant nine alleged Ghanaian drug traffickers on LD\$200,000 bail bond but in a dismissal letter the President said the act was a risk to state security.

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Voice of America

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UN Secretary General Urges Continued International Support for Liberia's Recovery

By James Butty
Washington, D.C.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says any decision on whether to lift the travel restriction on some officials of former Liberian President Charles Taylor would be made by the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee. The Secretary General made the comment Tuesday while addressing a joint session of the Liberian legislature during a visit to Liberia.

The Secretary General also said the planned drawdown of UN peacekeepers in Liberia will be done in a way so as not to jeopardize the gains the UN has made in Liberia.

Liberia's Information Minister Lawrence Bropleh told VOA the Secretary General came to Liberia to see for himself the achievements the Liberian government has made in post-conflict reconstruction.

“The Secretary General said that he had come to Liberia to see first-hand the remarkable achievements that Liberia has made in recovering from a devastating conflict. And he said that he had come to Liberia to reassure the Liberian people of his and the United Nations’ steadfast commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity in the nation,” he said.

The Secretary General went to Liberia even while President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was out of the country visiting the United States. But Bropleh said the visit went very well.

“The cabinet and the leadership of the legislature were all hand to meet the Secretary General. Additionally, our president spoke the Secretary and assured him that his presence here, she will be with him in spirit, and that her visit across the world was planned long in advance before the Secretary General decided that he would come to Liberia,” Bropleh said.

He said the Secretary General assured Liberians that the planned phase withdrawal of UN peacekeepers in Liberia would be done in a way that would not jeopardize the gains the UN has made in Liberia.

“The Secretary General said that the drawdown would happen in a conceptual way, that the United Nations will make sure that it would not put at risk the gains that have been made so far by the United Nations peacekeeping mission here in Liberia. The Secretary General that this drawdown would proceed in a cautious and gradual manner. He said a gradual withdrawal would allow the government sufficient time to assume full responsibility for national security,” he said.

The Secretary General also addressed the issue of UN travel restrictions on some of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Bropleh said the Secretary General a joint session of the Liberian legislature that the issue is the concern of UN Security Council’s Sanctions Committee.

“What the Secretary General did say was that this is a matter for the Sanctions Committee and the Security Council. He as the Secretary General does not make that kind of decision. And so the Speaker (of the House of Representatives) asked the Secretary General to please look into this. And I believe that the Secretary General will appropriately refer this matter to the Sanctions Committee and the Security Council,” he said.

Bropleh said Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon talked about the rising worldwide food prices and challenged Liberia to show that it can not only meet its own food supply needs, but also export food to other parts of Africa.

“What he did share with us is that this is an issue for the world, and as the Secretary General of the United Nations he was concerned. But he also acknowledge the fact that even though commodity prices are high around the world, he is cognizant of the fact that Liberia does have the fertile soil and that Liberia can start the process to self-sufficiency to food production,” he said.

Bropleh said the Liberian government is considering plans to do mechanized farming in order to improve agricultural productivity.

“Our agriculture minister, Dr. Toe (Joseph) is working toward improving the capability of farmers where they receive from government strategic guidance on how every Liberian can begin to go back to the soil and improve the possibility of making sure that we as a nation can start to feed ourselves,” Bropleh said.