

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



At his final press conference on Tuesday, Prosecutor Desmond de Silva ponders his answer while Ibrahim Tommy of Public Affairs fields questions from journalists.

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

Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston -Wright
Ext 7217

Local Press

Special Court Chief Prosecutor Quits / <i>Awareness Times</i>	Page 3
We are Ready to Try Taylor Anywhere... / <i>Awoko</i>	Pages 4-5
Bur For Taylor's Arrest Special Court is A Failed Venture / <i>Concord Times</i>	Page 6
Danger... Norman's Days Numbered / <i>Exclusive</i>	Page 7
Chief Prosecutor Bids Farewell to Journalists / <i>For di People</i>	Page 8
Special Court- No Justice For Norman and Taylor / <i>For di People</i>	Page 9
Doctor Says Hinga Norman is OK / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 10
De Silva's Days Numbered at Special Court / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Pages 11-12
... to Take Over as Special Court Chief Prosecutor / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 13
Special Court Prosecutor Bids Farewell / <i>New Citizen</i>	Pages 14-15
Special Court Has no Definite Mandate... / <i>Spectator</i>	Page 16
American Spy May Die at Pademba Road Prisons / <i>Standard Times</i>	Pages 17-18
Taylor Broke Accord / <i>New Vision</i>	Pages 19-20

International Press

Liberia: Government Not Interfering in Taylor's Trial / <i>African News Dimension</i>	Page 21
Jerseyan Hells for Spying in Sierra Leone / <i>Star Ledger (The New Jersey, USA)</i>	Pages 22-23
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 24-26
U.N. Secretary General Calls for International Contact Group's ... / <i>UN</i>	Pages 27-28

Awareness Times
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Special Court Chief Prosecutor Quits

By Tom E. Tommy

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Desmond de Silver QC, yesterday officially informed media practitioners at a press briefing that he will cease to serve in that capacity by the end of this month, or latest by mid June.

Addressing what was dubbed as his final press briefing as Prosecutor of the Special Court, Mr. Desmond

de Silver QC stated among other things that he is leaving because he needs to undergo a medical check-up back home, having served the court for four good years.

The British-born outgoing Prosecutor started his career with the Special Court as Deputy Prosecutor, working in close concert with the then Chief Prosecutor, Mr. David M. Crane.

It could be noted that when Mr. Crane decided to resign

Contd: page 2

Special Court Chief Prosecutor Quits

From front page

his position as Prosecutor, it did not take the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, much thinking to appoint Mr. de Silver to replace him.

Even before the departure of Mr. Crane, Mr. Silver was considered as a valuable resource in the prosecution team, based on his wealth of experience in the legal field.

He is said to have played a pivotal role in identifying those who bear the greatest responsibility for the despicable crimes committed during the decade long crisis, and like his former boss, Mr. Crane, he was determined to do his utmost to ensure that the culture of impunity is stopped.

When he took over as Chief Prosecutor, his greatest challenge was to ensure the return of Charles Taylor, who had been already indicted by the Special Court and who at the material time was under the protection of the Nigerian Government.

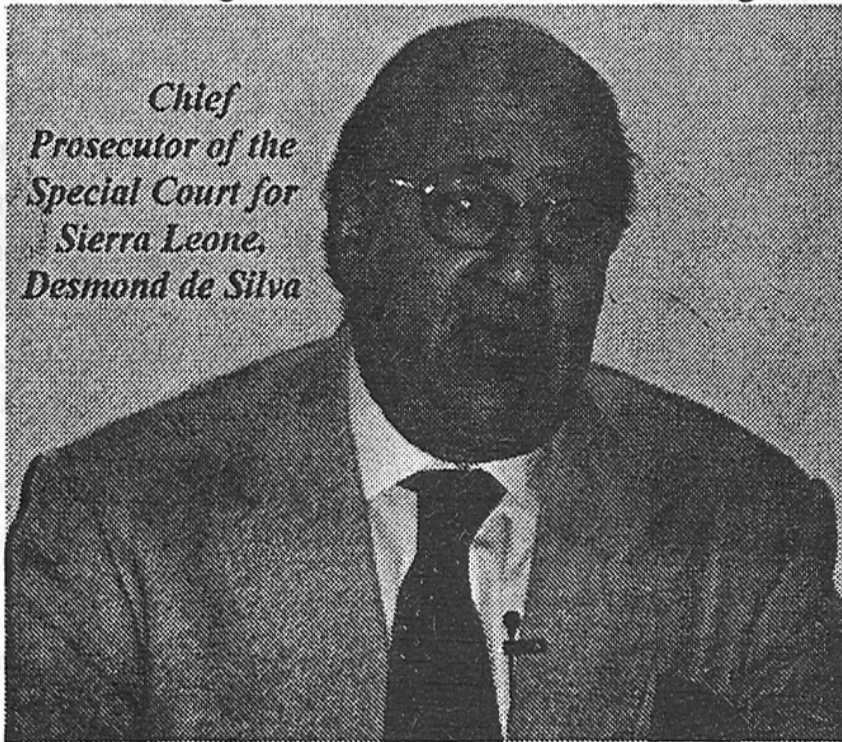
His dream finally came true two months ago when the former president was arrested and turned over to the court. Though he will not be there to further the prosecution of the former president, there is certainly no doubt that his successor will not find it difficult to prove the charges against him.

Desmond de silver will be temporarily replaced by Christopher Staker, an Australian, who has been his deputy.

Awoko

Wednesday, 24 May 2006

“We are ready to try Taylor anyhow, anywhere “- *Chief Prosecutor*



*Chief
Prosecutor of the
Special Court for
Sierra Leone,
Desmond de Silva*

The outgoing Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Desmond de Silva, has said Charles Taylor will be tried anyhow and anywhere.

“The position of the prosecution is to prosecute Charles Taylor wherever, be it in Freetown, be it in The Hague, be it in China it doesn't really matter. It is not the job of the Prosecution to decide where Taylor is tried

Contd. Page 2

We are ready to try Taylor anyhow, anywhere

From Front Page

... the fact is that we got Charles Taylor here in Freetown," he stressed.

The Chief Prosecutor, at a press conference yesterday to mark the end of his job in Sierra Leone, said he would be happy if he were reappointed to prosecute the regional warlord [Charles Taylor].

He went on to state that the decision of Taylor to be tried outside Sierra Leone would be made by the United Nations (UN) in consonant with the Government of Sierra Leone and that if even he were taken to any other country to be tried, he would be given the same coverage as the other trials which were now on.

Talking about the success of the court, the prosecutor said, "during my first press conference I was asked if the court won't be a failure if it didn't get Charles Taylor and I said

yes. ... From that basis, I can now say to you that we have got him. I can say to that extent that the court is a success, and I think the court would have been a failure if it hadn't got Taylor."

He stressed that in the case of Charles Taylor, "there is a new prosecutor phase because it is a new prosecution that is about to begin".

Mr de Silva further assured that Taylor's trial would not possibly commence this year as both Chamber I and II were now engaged in the trial of the CDF, AFRC and RUF.

However, he went on, "my interest will continue having been at the inception and creation of the court, I have every intention of seeing the court a success and want to be a part of it. I have indicated to the powers that be that assuming my operations and other medical matters, that I will make myself available for reappointment as the

prosecutor."

The Chief Prosecutor said there was no definite mandate of the Court as it was originally hoped that it would take a minimum of three years.

He said, "we are now in the fourth year and if we finish within five years, it means we would have finished the work of the court in record time compared to the other international criminal tribunals. In other words, if we finish the work, then the work of the Special Court would be considered to be a great success. And I hope it will be that success."

Continuing he said, "this means the donor community will have to continue supporting the court, and if the donor community does not support it, why then there is the UN itself. There is no question that the Special Court will be running out of money."

The Chief Prosecutor stated that in the interim Christopher Staker would step into his shoes.

Concord Times
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

But for Taylor's arrest... "Special Court is a failed venture"

...Outgoing prosecutor concedes

Story: Tanu Jalloh

Outgoing Special Court Prosecutor, Desmond de Silver Tuesday held his last press briefing at the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA), Wallace Johnson Street where he conceded that the Special Court would have been a failure if

Charles Taylor was not arrested. "I promised on arrival that if it were to be the last thing for me to do I will bring Charles Taylor. The Court would have been a failure if Taylor was not arrested and brought to face trial. It was my most frustrating moment because we couldn't get

Cont. page 3

"Special Court is a failed venture"

From page 1

him for a long time. I want to see the Court succeed and I would therefore make myself available as a prosecutor should the need arise," he said.

He continued: "Almost about sixty percent of cases in the Court, including that of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), come to an end by 2006. If I am appointed next

year as prosecutor I will be delightful for the simple reason that I believe in what the Court stands for," de Silver said adding that there was no definite mandate of the Court, which means donors will continue to support it or we see the UN funding it.

Desmond de Silver leaves by the end of May or mid June and will be succeeded by Dr. Christopher Staker

who studied at the University of Adelaide and had a doctorate (D.Phil) in public international law from the University of Oxford.

Dr. Staker was first called to the Bar in Australia in 1987 after which he held various legal positions in the Australian Attorney General's Department, including its Office of International Law.

Exclusive
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Danger...



Chief Sam Hinga Norman

Norman's

Days

Numbered

By David A. Jabati Jnr.
The current state of health of Special Court's Indictee, and former Internal Affairs Minister in the Kabbah government, Sam Hinga

Norman keeps deteriorating by the day. According to family sources, if urgent medical attention is not taken, Chief Norman, as he is popularly

called, will anytime from now, kick the bucket. "Our brother will not die in vain. He is not a criminal and he should have full access to proper medical at-

tention which he has been deprived of. We would never forgive the SLPP government should our brother die in detention before justice is done," an elderly member of

the family lamented, adding that both the family and the member of the 'Kamajor' militia group of which Norman was head, would let the whole world know that

they are disgruntled should any disturbing news about Mr. Norman, emerge from his Special Court detention centre.

Contd. page 2

Norman's Days Numbered

From front page

Recently, the Kamajors were reported to have threatened to organize a peaceful protest march to the Special Court. The march according to kamajor sources, was to express their dissatisfaction over the current state of health of their former boss.

It could be recalled that

following his indictment by the Special Court a couple of years ago, the former Internal Affairs Minister was arrested at his Liverpool Street offices by police personnel acting on orders from above.

Chief Norman was bundled and dragged in to a police van. This alleged brutal arrest left Chief Norman with an in-

jury in his leg.

Through out his detention at the Special Court, Norman has been working with the aid of a stick. His condition has deteriorated at an alarming rate over the years.

From all what this press has gathered so far with regards Norman's current health status, there is some bad news in the making.

For di People
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Chief Prosecutor Bids Farewell To Journalists

THE CHIEF Prosecutor for the Special Court in Sierra Leone Desmond de Silva informed journalists on Tuesday that he has completed his assignment with the court and that he will return home soonest. He said this at a press conference held at SLENA office at Wallace Johnson Street Freetown.

"After four years in Sierra Leone, I have decided to return back home having delivered to the people of Sierra Leone," he said.

Furthermore he said Charles Taylor's trial would not take place now in Sierra Leone because the trial chambers 1 and 2 are fully engaged. He was however quick to also inform journalists that he has made himself available for reappointment if it is the wish of the powers that be.

He said he is very much confident that Christopher Stacker, the Deputy Prosecutor is quite competent to act in his capacity as he has extensive experience in International and Public Law. He studied at the University of Adelaide, and has a doctorate in Public International Law from the University of Oxford.

He was called to the Bar in Australia in 1987 and has held various legal positions in the Australian Attorney-General's Department, including its office of International Law.

Answering questions from journalists, Desmond de Silva said the health of Chief Sam Hinga Norman is the responsibility of the Registry and not the office of the prosecution. He however declined to state where Charles

Taylor is to be tried but said as far as the prosecution is concerned, where ever it deems it necessary to prosecute him.

Desmond de Silva who spoke in a confident mood said he promised the people of Sierra Leone that Charles Taylor will be arrested and brought to the country and that, that promise has been fulfilled.

As to whether President Kabbah will testify as defense witness in the CDF case, he said that is a matter for the Trial Judge to decide.



DE SILVA: knows history of Salone since 67

For di People
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

SPECIAL COURT-NO JUSTICE FOR NORMAN AND TAYLOR

Anytime the Special Court is mentioned in any setting two names will simultaneously be uttered: Charles Taylor the ex-President of Liberia and Sam Hinga Norman-the mercurial and quintessential commander of the now defunct civil militia which helped in the restoration of the democratically elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

by

JIA KANGBAI

These two names make the UN-backed Special Court thick and hence issue bothering on these two personalities can't be allowed to lie down carelessly like. It is good if the two names are tackled individually because conjugating them will tend to create textual opprobrium.

However, whether the two names are treated as single entity or not it should be stressed from the onset that the issue of Taylor and Norman will

end up bringing the Sierra Leone Special Court into disrepute with regards as to how the UN-backed apparatus dispense justice. Lets start by defining TRUTH. The dictionary definition of the word "truth" simply means all the fact about something...rather than things that are imagined or invented.

Any legal system conducted anywhere is established to bring about the truth in a matter and the Sierra Leone Special Court is not an exemption to that rule. The international tribunal, which is set up to

look at the human rights abuse of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, are during a great job in bringing out the truth about what happened in those countries during their various upheavals and sufferings.

The said tribunals are perusing every information, witnesses etc available to get into the truth of what actually happened so as to bring to the outside world the truth state of events that happened in those country. But what about Sierra Leone-the tiny West Africa State that was quiet recently the scene of a bitter-armed

struggle for power? Following a request by the country's President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah the UN established a tribunal to try those people said to have wielded power, influence



NORMAN:his failing health a cause for concern

and commander during the country's decade long war. Many of the key players including Sam Hinga Norman, and the two of his associates, Charles Taylor, two former senior rebels and

some elements of the ex-military junta that seized power in 1997 have been indicted and are currently facing trial at the Special Court.

Like Taylor, Norman is facing numerous charges allegedly for his role as Coordinator of the civil militia that reinstated the incumbent government in 1998 while Taylor is facing additional charges allegedly for supporting the former Revolutionary United Front RUF. There is really a need for going through this long journey-as it lays the correct map for what an expected just trial of the Special Court should look like.

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Doctor Says Hinga Norman Is OK

By
Ishmael
Bayoh



Deputy Public Information Officer of the Special Court, Peter Anderson yesterday

tion by relatives of Sam Hinga Norman that the indictee's life was in danger as he is

and unable to attend court sessions.

Andersen told journalists at a press briefing hosted at SLENA in Freetown that Norman is in no life threatening condition and that the doctor attending to him had informed him that Norman is in a very satisfactory condition.

all what is been published about the health of Norman were not true and that there are procedures which the Registry had to follow in providing medical services for Norman.

There has been series of reports about Norman's health lately that he cannot walk

losing weight.

Chief Prosecutor of the Court Desmond de Silva, who was meeting journalists for the last time before stepping down as Chief

of next month, says his office has nothing to do with inmates, when asked to comment on the health condition of Hinga Norman.

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

De Silva Days' Numbered At Special Court

By Ishmael Bayoh

With about a month and few days more on the job, Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Desmond de Silva said yesterday he was leaving a rather happy man having delivered to the people of Sierra Leone his promise to bring Charles Taylor to justice.

That trial, he says, is

See page 2

De Silva Out

from
front
page

not likely to begin this year, whilst those involving the CDF, RUF and AFRC were at their defence phase and might finish to end this year. And went on to say he will make himself available if needed by the UN Secretary-General to continue as Chief Prosecutor.

Desmond de Silva said he was leaving behind an effective prosecution team in the interim to be headed by Dr. Christopher Staker with extensive experience in international and public law.

"The court would have been a failure without Charles Taylor and his case is in its prosecution phase and because of that it would be necessary for me to think of coming back," he said.

Reacting to speculations that the prosecution prefers Charles Taylor trial in The Hague, Desmond de Silva said it was not the business of the prosecution to determine where Taylor should be tried but stressed the prosecution was ready to prosecute him anywhere in the world excluding Africa.

His nice moments, he recalled, was the renewal of friendship with Sierra Leoneans he first met in 1969/70 here when he served as defence counsel for Hinga Norman in a treason trial. Today he is prosecuting that same person. On that note, he said such is life.

His frustration was missing his family and one of the reasons for him leaving the job.

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Christopher Staker To Take Over As Special Court Prosecutor

Dr. Christopher Staker has extensive experience in international and public law. He studied at the University of Adelaide, and has a PhD in public international law from the University of Oxford. He was called to the Bar in Australia in 1987. He has held various legal positions in the Australian Attor-

ney-General's Department, including in its Office of International Law. He later served as the Counsel Assisting the Solicitor-General of Australia. Internationally, he has held the posts of Principal Legal Secretary at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and Senior Appeals Counsel at the In-

ternational Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Dr. Staker was counsel in a number of prominent cases before the High Court of Australia,

and other Australian courts, involving issues of constitutional law, administrative law and public international law. He has also appeared before the International Court of

Justice (for Australia in the East Timor case and the Nuclear Weapons advisory opinions) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (as agent and lead counsel for

Guinea-Bissau in the Juno Trader case.

During his two years at the ICTY, he worked for the Prosecution, and served as lead counsel before the Appeals Chambers.

He took up his post as Deputy Prosecutor at the Special Court on 15 July 2005.

New Citizen
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Special Court Prosecutor Bids Farewell



*New Chief Prosecutor,
Christopher Staker*

By Aminata Khumala Desmond De Silva
The outgoing Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, whose term of office as Chief Prosecutor has ended, hosted his last

press briefing to bid Journalists farewell at

Cont. page 10

the SLENA Conference Room, Wallace Johnson Street yesterday where it was also announced that Dr. Christopher Staker will take over the position of Chief Prosecutor at the Special Court.

Desmond De Silva stated that he is leaving because his term of office has finished and after being in Sierra Leone for four years, he has decided to go back to the United Kingdom.

He further stated that he had promised to bring Charles Taylor to Freetown to face trial and he has delivered him to the people of Sierra Leone.

Desmond de Silva also stated that he is departing Freetown for a while, adding that he is not saying 'Goodbye but Au revoir' because if he is reappointed and his health permits him, he will make himself available to serve the Special Court.

Desmond De Silva further stated that the course of the Special Court will continue and he intends to see the success of the Court, as he is leaving behind his successor, Dr. Christopher Staker who is a redibly qualified in Law and in whom he has confidence.

Desmond De Silva explained that the AFRC and RUF trials are in the defense phase, adding that Charles Taylor's trial will start when they finish the AFRC trials.

He further stated that the Special Court has a new prosecution phase because of the coming trial of Charles Taylor.

He also stated that the Special Court has a mandate of five years, it will close when the cases have finished, adding that if the Special Court of Sierra Leone ends within the one year timeframe that will be a record.

He also stated that the Special Court will not run out of funds because it is being supported by the Interna-

TAKE WELL

tional Community and emphasized that the Special Court for Sierra Leone is a court worth supporting.

When asked if the Special Court has achieved within its mandate he said, "yes, because Charles Taylor has been arrested and the Special Court has succeeded in bringing him to Freetown to answer to crimes against humanity."

When asked about Chief Sam Hinga Norman's health, Peter Anderson, the spokesman for the Special Court explained that Chief Sam Hinga Norman has no life threatening situation as reported in some newspapers and his medical doctor has assured that his health condition is very satisfactory.

Desmond De Silva was asked by journalists about his nice and frustrating moments in Sierra Leone as Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court.

He replied that his nice moments are renewing his friendship with Sierra Leoneans because he was first in Sierra Leone between 1967-1970 adding, "it is wonderful to serve the people of Sierra Leone with great pride, playing an important part once more in the lives of Sierra Leoneans".

He said his frustrating moments were when he was unable to arrest Charles Taylor and to be away from his family.

Asked whether Charles Taylor is to be tried in The Hague, the departing Chief Prosecutor replied that it is not the business of the prosecution to decide.

"What is important is that he has been arrested and he is in Freetown. All I want is for Charles Taylor to be tried so that he can answer for the crimes

committed against the people of Sierra Leone. Whether in The Hague or China, we only want to ensure that justice is done.

Dr. Christopher Staker who will succeed Desmond De Silva has extensive experience in International and Public Law.

He studied at the University of Adelaide, and has a Doctorate (D.Phil) in Public International Law from the Oxford University in England.

He was called to the Bar in Australia in 1987 and has since held various legal positions in the Australian Attorney General's Department, including in the Office of International Law.

He later served as the counsel assisting the Solicitor-General of Australia.

Internationally, Christopher Staker has held the posts of Principal Legal Secretary at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and Senior Appeals Counsel at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Dr. Staker has acted as Counsel in a number of prominent cases before the High Court of Australia, and other Australian courts, involving issues of Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Public International law.

He has also appeared before the International Court of Justice (for Australia, in the East Timor case and the Nuclear Weapons Advisory Opinions) and the International Tribunal For The Law of the Sea (as agent and lead counsel for Guinea-Bissau in the Juno Trader case)

During his two years at the ICTY, Christopher Staker worked for the prosecution and served as Lead Counsel before the Appeals Chamber and later took up his post as Deputy Prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 15th July 2005.

Spectator
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

“Special Court has no definite mandate”

... *Outgoing prosecutor*

By Joseph Kamanda

The outgoing prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Desmond De Silver Tuesday said in Freetown that the Special Court had no definite mandate or life time set for its operation in the country.

Mr De Silver made this statement during a news conference held at the

Sierra Leone News Agency, Wallace Johnson Street, Freetown.

“We are now in the fourth year of operation of the Special Court in Sierra Leone. The Court will finish when it finishes and that there is no definite time set for the operation of the court to end. Thus it is quiet

continued page 3

“Special Court has no definite mandate”

from front page



Desmond de Silver: Outgoing Prosecutor

Sierra Leone. The Court will finish when it finishes and that there is no definite time set for the operation of the court to end.

Thus it is quiet incorrect to say that the Special Court has a limited mandate, which will come to an end this year,” he said.

On the front of abandoning the proceedings of the tribunal, when the court’s most wanted suspect is now

on trial, Mr De Silver said he would make himself available for reappointment indicating that the Special Court for Sierra Leone is worth supporting and believing.

He further stated that having completed four years and being confronted with health problem, he is returning to the United Kingdom to seek medical attention and at the same time meet with his family.

Mr De Silver said his nice moment in the country was his relationship

with the people of Sierra Leone in the late 60’s adding that his frustration was how to bring Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Special Court.

He went further to state that if his health status permits him he would surely make himself available for any reappointment and work back in Sierra Leone.

He added that his deputy Dr Christopher Starker who has vast experience in International and Public Law would replace him in the capacity as prosecutor.

Standard Times
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

American spy may die at Pademba Road Prison

BY SANTI GIE KAMARA

Micheal Chenilili, an American citizen who has been charged together with Collins Kamara and Felix for conspiracy has been reported ill at the Pademba Road maximum-security prisons in Freetown.

In his application, lawyer representing the accused persons, Pa Momoh Fofanah maintained before the court that his clients have spent ten days in police custody and two weeks at the Pademba Road Prisons, which has adversely affected the health of the first accused person, Micheal Chenilili.

The American is alleged to be suffering from malaria resulting from his incarceration in mosquito-infested cells at the prison.

Pa Momoh Fofanah also stated that the hospital at the prisons can not help his client who has been suffering from frequent mosquito bites and may have been infected with a fatal strain of the disease.

He craved the indulgence of Magistrate Sam Margai, who presides over the matter to grant his clients bail adding that the pass-

port of the first accused is already with the police.

He also pointed out that the sec-

ond and third accused are Sierra Leoneans who have credible sureties to stand for them, which

should ensure their appearance at court when his lordship pleases.

CONTINUED PAGE 11

American spy may die at Pademba Road Prison

Deputy public prosecutor, Mr. Robin Maison rejected the idea of bail stating that the security of the state is paramount.

It may be recalled that Micheal Chenilil, Collins Kamara and Felix were arrested a couples of weeks ago in the vicinity of the Special Court and charged to court for conspiracy bordering on the security of the state.

Magistrate Sam Margai is expected to give a ruling on the health of the first accused today.

New Vision
Wednesday, 24 May 2006

Taylor Broke Accord

By Mohamed Kallon

The Secretary General for Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court in (NCICC) Mr. Voke Ighorodje said in Freetown recently that the Special Court indictee, former Liberian President Charles Ghankay Taylor while in Nigeria breached 3 key agreements among others that



Charles Taylor

allowed him to stay in that country.

According to Mr. Ighorodje, Taylor while in his Calabar exile-residence, deliberately failed to adhere to the agreement that restricted him from contacts back in Liberia. He broke the non interference aspect by granting interviews to people and engaging in

Contd Page 2

Taylor Broke Accord

Liberia's politics.

These agreements which enabled him to stay in Nigeria reached between Taylor, the Nigerian Government and ECOWACS to allow him peacefully leave the war-torn country in the wake of the rebel advance on the city in order to avoid further destruction.

"If Taylor would have stayed to fight the rebels, they would have overcome him," the Secretary General said, adding that this was the reason why he accepted the gesture.

Mr. Ighorodje stressed his coalition's need to try Mr. Taylor here in Sierra Leone, for as he puts it. "We want other African leaders to see the trial themselves in order to avoid inflicting sufferings on their people with impunity, and above all, to allow the victims to participate in the proceedings. "We want Taylor who said Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of the war,



to taste the sweetness of justice," Mr. Voke Ighorodje stressed.

African News Dimension

Tuesday, 23 May 2006

Liberia : Govt not interfering in Taylor's trial

By Patrick Wrokpoh

Brussels (AND) Liberia has denied claims by the chief prosecutor at the United Nations Court in Sierra Leone that it is interfering with the trial of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor.

Taylor is currently in the custody of the court and is facing prosecution on eleven count charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Over the week, news surfaced in Monrovia from the special court quoting the chief prosecutor of the Special Court as saying that the Liberian leader Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in collaboration with other African leaders, have requested the court to transfer the case of the former Liberian indicted leader to the Hague.

Reacting to the report today when he addressed the press, presidential press secretary Cyrus Badio, said all that the Liberian government has done, is to ask for the transfer of the former Liberian leader from Nigeria to the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Badio added: "I have no ideal whether the Liberian government has officially asked for the case to be transferred to the, Hague. But if the case was transferred, to the Hague, will that be a problem?"

He added that if the case was asked to be transferred as is being alleged, he is not sure whether that will be a problem adding, "the most important thing is that Mr Taylor get a free and fair trial which this government is committed to seeing".

The Star-Ledger (New Jersey, U.S.A.)

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Jerseyan held for spying in Sierra Leone

BY MARK MUELLER

Star-Ledger Staff

A self-styled missionary from Scotch Plains has been charged with espionage in Sierra Leone, where prosecutors allege he plotted to free former Liberian President Charles Taylor from a United Nations court complex.

Michael Chemidlin, 58, an Army National Guard staff sergeant who served in Iraq last year, was arrested April 29 as he photographed the U.N. complex in Freetown, the west African nation's capital. Taylor, awaiting trial for alleged war crimes, has been held in the complex since March.

Chemidlin, a postal worker and divorced father of three sons, faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted under Sierra Leone's treason laws.

Family members in New Jersey called the arrest a terrible misunderstanding, describing Chemidlin as a gentle, apolitical and deeply religious man who was on a four-week visit to Africa to proselytize.

"When we found out, it was such a shock," said Andrew Chemidlin, 31, a Scotch Plains resident and the oldest of Chemidlin's sons. "The more we learned, the more we had to laugh, because there's no way my father was involved. I don't think my father even knows who Charles Taylor is."

But if the charge seems absurd to Andrew Chemidlin, it also fills him with dread to think that his father, who suffers from back and leg problems, could spend the next 15 years in a foreign prison.

Family members have received daily updates from the U.S. consulate in Freetown and have been in contact with the State Department in Washington, D.C., but say Chemidlin's fate rests mostly with the Sierra Leonean justice system.

"By me saying I'm scared is an understatement," Andrew Chemidlin said. "My wife and I both are. My brothers are. It's been hard."

Michael Chemidlin, approached by police after snapping photos of the U.N. Special Court, initially was charged with a lesser conspiracy offense. Three companions, all Sierra Leoneans, also were charged.

On May 15, a court dismissed the counts, ruling that no law had been violated. Chemidlin walked free from Pademba Road Prison, telling reporters gathered outside, "I am surprised at the charges, and time will vindicate me."

Shortly afterward, he spoke to his sister, Emmy Salerno of Edison, by phone from the U.S. consulate.

"He was going to come home the next day," said Salerno, 62. "He was just going to get his passport and his belongings from the prison, and then he'd be on a plane."

Chemidlin was rearrested the next day, charged by prosecutors with the more serious espionage count, and returned to the prison.

During a court hearing in Freetown on Friday, a prosecutor accused Chemidlin of plotting to stage a jailbreak for Taylor and referred to the American defendant as a "terrorist," according to an Associated Press account of the hearing.

Taylor, a former warlord who seized the presidency of Liberia, is accused of backing Sierra Leonean rebels who became known for hacking off the arms, legs, lips and ears of their victims during that nation's civil war. He is charged with 11 counts of war crimes. Chemidlin's family bristles at the notion that the men are connected.

"This is so sick," Salerno said. "This man would not hurt a fly."

Andrew Chemidlin said his father took up photography as a hobby after buying a new camera ahead of his 10-month deployment to Iraq, where he served as a cook and occasionally pulled more perilous duty, guarding a training facility for the Iraqi police.

"This was his first time in Africa, and I imagine he was taking pictures for the same reason he took them in Iraq," the son said. "He was doing the tourist thing."

Michael Chemidlin grew up in Fanwood and has lived in Scotch Plains for about 15 years. A Vietnam veteran, he has served in the Army National Guard for about 20 years, relatives said. He was deployed to Iraq with the 250th Signal Battalion, based in Westfield.

It was in Baghdad that Chemidlin became acquainted with two African soldiers serving in the war effort. During religious discussions, Chemidlin's family said, the men invited him to visit Africa.

"He was just going around and speaking to people," Andrew Chemidlin said. "He was trying to build a church people-wise."

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 23 May 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC Monitoring International 05/23/2006 04:06:56

Fiji police peacekeepers home from Liberia

Excerpt from report by Fiji newspaper Fiji Times website on 22 May

Thirty police officers were relieved to be back home last night after a year of peacekeeping duties in Liberia. The team of officers was welcomed by the station officer Namaka, Insp Nitya Sharma, at the Nadi International Airport. Team leader Senior Supt Emosi Lagilagi said the officers were glad to be back home and could not wait to spend time with their families. SSP Lagilagi said after a grueling year of peacekeeping work in Liberia, the officers would take a break before resuming their duties with the Fiji Police Force.

International Clips on West Africa

05/23/2006 10:22:02

Ivory Coast rebels announce their disarmament strategy

By Herve Bar

ABIDJAN, May 23, 2006 (AFP) - Military chiefs of the rebel movement holding half of the divided West African state of Ivory Coast have announced their plan for regroupment and disarmament of their forces under a national peace process. The Military Council of the New Forces (FN) rebels, who have controlled half the West African country since late 2002, said Tuesday in a statement that they were committed to "the process of ending the crisis, by applying peace accords in full."

COTE D IVOIRE: Little known Buruli ulcer disease on the rise

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

KONGOUANOU, 23 May 2006 (IRIN) - With her left arm amputated and her chest eaten away by large festering wounds, little Diane Akissi is disfigured for life. The eight-year-old girl suffers from Buruli ulcer, a little-known tropical disease that afflicts mainly children and youths with potentially devastating consequences. The infection usually starts with a painless swelling on the skin, but causes massive ulcers on legs and arms if left untreated.

Local Media - Newspapers

UN Envoy to Address Bar Association on Status of Forces Agreement

(The Inquirer)

- Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Luiz Carlos da Costa will on Saturday address the May Quarterly Assembly of the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA).
- According to an LNBA press release, Mr. da Costa will speak on the topic: Agreement on the Status of UNMIL (The Status of Forces Agreement): What are the Procedures for Seeking Redress for Acts Committed by UNMIL Personnel in Liberia?
- A four-member panel including Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Edwin Juah and Foreign Minister George Wallace will discuss Mr. da Costa's address.

Lawmaker Wants UN To Account for Donor's Fund

(Heritage)

- Grand Kru County Senator Cletus Wotorson has written to the UNDP to account for the US\$520 million donor funds for the reconstruction of Liberia. Senator Wotorson's letter comes amid public concerns in Liberia that the money was being misapplied with the argument that projects undertaken did not impact the lives of ordinary Liberians.

Man Gets Life Imprisonment Sentence for Rape Law

(The Analyst)

- The jury in the ninth Judicial Circuit in Gbarnga, Bong County, yesterday convicted a 22-year-old man, Mulbah Browne, guilty of rape and sentenced him to life imprisonment after the trial jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty.

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

President Appoints Commission to Probe Violence in Nimba County

- An Executive Mansion press statement yesterday said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has constituted a commission headed by Internal Affairs Minister Ambullai Johnson to investigate land and other real estate disputes among the people of Nimba and make appropriate recommendations to the President.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Executive Mansion Dismisses Report of President Interfering in Taylor's Trial

- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio denied that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was interfering with the ongoing trial of former President Charles Taylor. Speaking to journalists yesterday, Mr. Badio added that the government was only interested in a free and speedy trial for Mr. Taylor.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

U.S. Presidential Guards Being Withdrawn

- In a press interview yesterday, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said that the U.S. security officers that protect President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf were being withdrawn because some Liberian security officers had been trained to replace them.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Governance Reform Commission Urges Lawmakers to Ratify Conventions against Corruption

- In a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, Governance Reform Commission Chairman Dr. Amos Sawyer urged the Legislature to ratify the international anti-corruption conventions which Liberia had signed. He said that the United Nations has made the ratification of the conventions a benchmark for Liberia's economic development.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Ghana to Ship Electric Poles for Electrification of Monrovia

- Briefing journalists in Monrovia yesterday, Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio said that Ghana's Volta River Authority would deliver electric poles to electrify Monrovia. He said that the Government of Ghana was undertaking the project with support from the European Union.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Local Health Group Distributes Mosquito Nets to Vulnerable People

- Speaking to Radio Veritas yesterday, a local health awareness group, Restore Our Children Health (ROCH) Executive Director Isaiah Wisseh said that the organization has begun the distribution of mosquito nets to pregnant women and children in Monrovia. Mr. Wisseh said that the nets were being provided by the UNDP through Global Fund and distributed free of charge.

Police Apprehend Suspected Nigerian Drug Traffickers

- According to Police Patrolman Samuel McCarthy, the Liberian National Police have apprehended three suspected Nigerian drug traffickers. He added that the suspects had also attempted to kidnap two airport police officers who tried to arrest them on suspicion of possessing the narcotics.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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

County Superintendent Denies Receiving Bribe from UNMIL

- Speaking to Star Radio correspondent, Bong County Superintendent Rennie Jackson has denied allegations that he had received bribes from the UNMIL personnel who had been accused of ritualistic killing to drop investigations against him.

United Nations

Tuesday, 23 May 2006

Secretary-General calls for International Contact Group's continued support to overcome challenges in still volatile Mano River Basin

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message to the 12th session of the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, in Vienna today, 23 May, as delivered by Alan Doss, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia:

It gives me pleasure to send my greetings to the participants in this important meeting of the International Contact Group. I commend the role you are playing in promoting peace and reconciliation in the Mano River Basin, and for your support of United Nations peace operations in West Africa. The Contact Group's resolve has contributed greatly to the progress made in establishing and consolidating peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and in helping to keep the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire on track. I am also grateful to the donor community for the considerable assistance that they have provided to these countries.

Liberia has entered an era of hope, and has an opportunity to rebuild and pursue national reconciliation. Since her inauguration in January of this year, President Johnson-Sirleaf has showed real determination in tackling the difficult issues of corruption and economic governance. In addition, following her official request, former President Taylor was handed over to Liberia, and subsequently transferred to the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he will answer charges for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

However, Liberia still needs the continued support of the international community in addressing a number of critical tasks. These include completing the reintegration and resettlement of ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and refugees; restructuring and reforming the army and the police; consolidating State authority throughout the country; meeting the conditions for the lifting of sanctions; cultivating a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law; and carrying out the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I call on the Contact Group to continue its active support in these crucial areas.

In Sierra Leone, the Government is making steady progress in consolidating peace. But, to ensure lasting stability and development, Sierra Leone will need to continue its efforts to promote good governance, implement long-term economic policies, tackle youth unemployment, strengthen the judicial system and protect human rights. It will also have to prepare for the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007. In addition, I earnestly hope that Sierra Leone and Guinea will resolve the territorial dispute over the border area around Yenga village. I urge the Contact Group to provide encouragement and support to the Government of Sierra Leone in addressing and overcoming these challenges.

I welcome the recent positive developments in Côte d'Ivoire. The international community must now support the Government's efforts to kick-start the simultaneous processes of identification and disarmament countrywide. Time is running out, and there is a risk that the parties may not meet the election deadline set by Security Council resolution 1633. In order to maintain momentum in implementing the road map for peace, I encourage the Contact Group to press the Ivorian parties to honour their obligations under existing peace agreements. The United Nations

Operation in Côte d'Ivoire will continue to do everything it can to support the process, and I hope that the Security Council will provide the additional resources required for that purpose.

While the overall situation in Guinea appears to be somewhat stable, the political climate remains polarized, and the socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate. The internal political situation must not be allowed to deteriorate, as this could spill over and threaten gains towards peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. I ask the Contact Group to continue to support the dialogue among the various segments of Guinean society, as they strive to reach consensus on their country's transitional arrangements. At the same time, it would be important to encourage the Government to continue implementing the political and socio-economic reforms, which it began in 2005.

Meetings of the Contact Group continue to be an important forum for exchanging ideas and coordinating approaches to some of the most challenging problems in the subregion. I commend the co-Chairs for convening this session, and offer my best wishes for the success of your deliberations.