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 Press and Public Affairs Office
as at:
Monday, 24 September 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Salone Times
Monday, 24 September 2007

MOININA FOFANA, ALIEU KONDEWA TO FACE SENTENCE OCTOBER 1

By Joenal I. Sesay

The Special Court for Sierra Lone will on October 1, 2007 sentence Moinina Fofana, second accused and Alieu Kondewa, third accused in the on-going trial of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF).

In the sentencing hearings on Wednesday 19 September in Court Room No. 1 of the Special Court, the defence counsels for the two indictees Mr. Fofana and Mr. Kondewa submitted to the court that they would recommend jail sentences of four and three years respectively.

Steven Powels, the defence counsel for the second accused, in his submission said his client did not plan or instigate any of the war crimes in the indictment. He maintained that the CDF attacks were directed at the RUF and AFRC who had various villages and chiefdoms under their control as the CDF were fighting for the restoration of democracy, and they were engaged in those actions to restore the democratically elected government.

Mr. Powels also submitted that his client, Moinina Fofana, did take part in the peace building process in the country.

The defence council submitted that Mr. Fofanah accepted crimes committed by the CDF and that he deeply regretted the unnecessary suffering of civilians in the country. "Mr. Fofana wholeheartedly accepts the jurisdiction of the court and has profound respect for the rule of law," the defence counsel said.

Pleading for a lighter sentence, the defence submitted to the Chamber that a 30-year sentence, which the prosecution had asked for, was inconsistent with the Trial Chamber. "Therefore, we are imploring you to impose the right sentence of four years or less as this will enable Fofana to contribute to peace building in the country" he said.

Charles F. Margai, representing the third accused Alieu Kondewa, submitted that the war for which his client was in the court had been described as the most brutal and that it was only through the intervention of the CDF that things changed. He added that if his client received a heavy sentence, this would serve as a deterrent for other civil militia to defend their country in times of war.

Mr. Margai asked the Chamber to give his client a sentence of three years, as he had already spent four years in detention. "If my client had not spent so much time in detention, I would have asked for seven years but I don't want the court to act in vain," he said.

The Prosecution asked the court for a thirty-year prison sentence for both CDF leaders. Fofana and Kondewa were indicted on eight counts each, of war crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian laws in June 2003.

Both Fofana and Kondewa were found guilty on four counts of violations of protocols of war under Article 111 common to the Convention and Additional Protocols also known as war crimes.

Agence France Presse
Sunday, 23 September 2007

Liberian parliament rejects bill to seize Taylor's assets

MONROVIA (AFP) — Liberian lawmakers have shot down a bill to allow the seizure of the assets of former president Charles Taylor -- standing trial for war crimes -- and his aides, a parliamentary official said Sunday.

Isaac Red, spokesman of the House of Representatives said the proposed bill was unconstitutional.

"The parliament had so many problems with that bill," Red said.

"During a plenary session on Friday, the House of Representatives decided to reject the bill," he said.

Taylor, 59, is the first African head of state to stand trial before an international court for war crimes.

He is on trial for his role in Liberia's back-to-back wars spanning 14 years and a brutal decade-long civil conflict in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

Once one of Africa's most feared warlords, Taylor has pleaded not guilty to all 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, rape and using child soldiers during the brutal 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone.

Around 120,000 people were killed in that conflict, with rebels mutilating thousands more, cutting off arms, legs, ears or noses.

Taylor is accused of arming, training and controlling Sierra Leone's notorious Revolutionary United Front (RUF), responsible for many of the mutilations, in exchange for still-unknown amounts of diamonds used to fund the warfare.

United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 21 September 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

New Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma Arrives in Country Friday on a One-Day Working Visit

Monrovia, Sep 21, 2007 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that the President of the Republic of Sierra Leonean, His Excellency Ernest Bai Koroma, at the head of a 17-man delegation, will on tomorrow, Friday, September 21, 2007, be arriving in Liberia for a one-day official working visit. The President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and an array of government officials will meet President Koroma and delegation on arrival at the Roberts International Airport in Margibi County.

Associated Press 09/20/2007 16:52:58

Security Council approves drawdown of UN force in Liberia

SARAH DiLORENZO

UNITED NATIONS - The Security Council voted Thursday to reduce the number of U.N. peacekeepers in Liberia, saying the country's security forces are being steadily rebuilt but warning that peace is still fragile. A resolution adopted unanimously by the council endorsed recommendations set out in a report from the secretary-general in August that said Liberia was a "generally stable country" and that the current forces _ 14,000 troops and 1,000 police _ could be reduced.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone army chief warns army to stay out of politics

FREETOWN, Sept 21, 2007 (AFP) - Five days after the election of an opposition politician as Sierra Leone's new president, the country's military chief warned the armed forces not to try to topple the new leadership. General Sam Mboma asked hundreds of troops from all ranks in the capital Freetown to switch their allegiance to the new political leaders.

Ivory Coast rebel, government forces guilty of rights violations: UN

ABIDJAN, Sept 20, 2007 (AFP) - The UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast on Thursday accused the two armed forces to the country's conflict of committing serious human rights violations including summary executions late last year. Elements of the government army in the south of the country and those of the rebels in the north "continued to perpetrate with all impunity, serious violations" between September and December last year, the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) said in a report.

Local Media – Newspaper

New Sierra Leone President Arrives Today
(The News, The Analyst, The Informer, The Inquirer, New Democrat, National Chronicle and Daily Observer)

- According to a release issued by the Office of the President, the new President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma will pay a one-day visit to Liberia and hold talks with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf focusing on the Mano River Union, Sub-regional security, ECOWAS, the African Union and other matters of international concerns.

UN Security Council Extends UNMIL's Mandate for One Year
(National Chronicle, New Democrat, Public Agenda, The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst and The Informer)

- Correspondents said that the United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia by 12 month, citing progress made in improving governance, combating corruption, consolidating government control over the country's natural resources as some of the major achievements of the Government.
- The resolution however warns that the country faces significant challenges in its post conflict transition including consolidation of State authority, judiciary reform and enhancing the rule of law.

Auditor-General Drags Senate to Court
(Heritage and The Inquirer)

- The Supreme Court of Liberia has issued a Writ of Prohibition on the Senate following a petition filed to the Supreme Court by Auditor General, John Morlu. The Auditor General is seeking judicial interpretation of the Senate's action against him.
- The Upper House on Tuesday held Mr. Morlu in contempt and fined him nearly LD$5,000 for failing to reinstate nearly 75 employees of the General Auditing Commission(GAC) and going to the press on matters pertaining to his contempt proceeding before plenary.

House of Representatives Rejects Assets Seizure Bill
(Daily Observer, Heritage, National Chronicle, New Democrat, Public Agenda, The Informer, The Inquirer, The News, The Liberian Diaspora)

- The House of Representatives yesterday rejected the Assets Seizure Bill submitted to it by the Executive Branch because it violates the Constitution of Liberia. The Bill seeks to seize the properties of corrupt public officials.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

New Sierra Leone President Arrives Today
(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

UN Security Council Extends UNMIL's Mandate for One Year
(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Senate Confirms Commerce Minister-Designate and Three Others

- Barely two days after rejecting several presidential nominees, the Liberian Senate yesterday confirmed four individuals previously denied.
- Those confirmed are Commerce Minister-designate Frances Johnson-Morris, Deputy Education Minister for Instruction, Hester Williams-Catakaw, Clarence Momolu and Charles Collins as Commissioners of the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC).
- The Senate however cited Foreign Minister-designate Olubankie King-Akerele to appear before plenary next Tuesday to give reasons why she should be confirmed to the position. Akerele was among the group of Presidential nominees previously denied by the Senate.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Supreme Court Issues Writ of Prohibition on Senate

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(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

House of Representatives Rejects Assets Seizure Bill

- The House of Representatives has rejected the Assets Seizure Bill submitted to it by the Executive branch, saying the Act violates the constitution of Liberia.
- The Act seeks to seize the properties of corrupt public officials
- Meanwhile, the lawmakers have also rejected another Bill that seeks the amendment of title 2 of the Criminal Procedure Law of Liberia. The plenary of the House argued that the bill violates Article 35 of the Liberian Constitution, which states that no bill should have more than one title.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

Press Release, 22 September 2007
UNMIL/PIO/PR/115

International Day of Peace celebrated in Liberia amid calls for continued peace consolidation

Monrovia, Liberia - Hundreds of young people thronged the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia to join the UN family and the Liberian Government in celebrating the International Day of Peace in Liberia.

DSRSG Ryan addressing the audience at the sports stadium

The event was celebrated with sporting events, entertainment, and sensitization on peace messages, among other activities, and was jointly organized by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Sport for Peace Taskforce of Liberia.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Recovery and Governance, Mr. Jordan Ryan, delivered the message of the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon at the event. "The International Day of Peace is an occasion to take stock of our efforts to promote peace and well-being for all people everywhere," he said. "As the guns fall silent, we should use this opportunity to ponder the price we all pay due to conflict."

Mr. Ryan also told the gathering of his satisfaction that everyone was involved in consolidating peace in Liberia. He encouraged them to "continue in this spirit as we face the challenges ahead because peace means security and development,"

The Amputees Sports Association in action

Liberia's Youth and Sports Minister, Ms. Etmonia Tarpeh, said the Liberian Government placed emphasis on sustaining peace. "Peace is the bedrock of any meaningful development," she noted. As a universal language, sport offered powerful ways to promote peace, tolerance and understanding. "We will ensure that sport is vigorously applied to enhance peace and social development," she promised.

Liberian Deputy Defence Minister for Operations, Mr. Dionysius Sebwe, a former defender of Liberia's national soccer team, Lone Star, kicked off the games, while UNMIL Deputy Force Commander, Maj.-Gen. Muhammad Tahir, awarded trophies to the wining teams. The sporting activities continue throughout the weekend in Monrovia.

Later in the day, during another commemorative activity, at which a film on the role that prominent Liberian women have played in post war recovery was screened, UN Envoy Alan Doss stated that, "The International Day of Peace is meant to get people not just thinking of peace, but doing something about it. Nowhere is this day more significant and relevant than here in Liberia where peace proved elusive for so long."

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