

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Monday, 25 August 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Times
Monday, 25 August 2008

Training On Taylor Trial Ends

Local tabloids have disclosed that 25 journalists from both the print and electronic media in Sierra Leone have concluded training on reporting the Charles Taylor trial, which is presently ongoing in the Hague in Netherlands. The training was aimed at providing journalists with a better understanding of the Taylor trial proceeding including the purpose of the trial, the role of the prosecution and defence, and the right of the accused to a fair trial, reports says. The three-day interactive training session is expected to have equipped media practitioners with a wider and better perspective on reporting the Taylor trial and also to report on any other international tribunals.

The Spark
Monday, 25 August 2008

Human Rights Report Launched

By Komba Fillie

Minister of Presidential and Public Affairs, Mr. Alpha Kanu on Friday 21st

August 2008 formally launched the Human Rights Annual Report at the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) hall

at the Kroo Bay Community in Freetown. Launching the report on behalf of the President, the minister told the Kroo Bay

Community that they have been deprived of many rights. He added that the report has gone a long way

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HUMAN RIGHTS

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to highlight some of the mistakes that led to the violation of human rights in the country.

He further noted that the report will also serve as a guide for the provision and protection of human rights. He paid special thanks to YMCA for their support towards the community and called on other humanitarian partners to complement the efforts of YMCA in improving the lives of the people.

The Chairman, Mr. Abdul Tejan Cole stated that the report is very significant as it will help the Commis-

sion to address human rights issues in the country.

He recalled that the Human Right Commission was established in 2004 and is empowered to advise the government on human rights issues.

He affirmed that the report will enhance the activities of the commission by pointing out that in 2007 the government approved the human right law.

He appealed for the abolition of the death penalty and the libel laws which he described as violations of human rights. He urged all Sierra Leoneans to move

the country forward.

Mr. Benedict Sannoh on behalf of the United Nations said that for a country to move forward human rights issues should be adequately addressed. He pointed out some achievements the United Nations has scored in the fight against human rights.

Justice Babatunde Edwards spoke of the significance of the report. There were also meaningful contributions from various personalities including Christian Kamara of YMCA and Edward Sam of the Steering Committee and traditional leaders.

BBC World Service Trust

Friday, 22 August 2008

A sudden change of witnesses has taken place in the ongoing war crimes trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague. The cross-examination of the 35th witness was delayed because the Defence lawyer who was responsible for his cross-examination was sick. Defence lawyer Terry Munyard has recovered, so the witness is back on stand, leading to the suspension of the testimony of the 36th witness.

As the BBC World Service Trust, Mariama Khai Fornah reports, the 35th witness is a Sierra Leonean captured by the Rebel group at the age of 11

FORNAH: Little is known about the Prosecution 35th witness because his name is not disclosed and he's testifying in a partial open session. His voice is distorted and his body is shielded from the public gallery where journalists sit.

The witness said he moved to Liberia when he was 18 years and joined Charles Taylor's forces along with Vamuyan Sheriff. He told the Defence lawyer that he campaigned for Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during the 2005 Liberian general and presidential elections. The witness said personnel of the Liberian National Security Agency, the NSA, on February 2ND, 2006, later arrested him allegedly for being an associate of Charles Taylor. He said he was later released after Taylor was arrested and taken to Sierra Leone. Defence lawyer Terry Munyard asked whether the witness was released after promising to testify against Charles Taylor. The distorted voice of the witness is being interpreted.

WITNESS: After he went to Freetown I sat down and looked into my own situation and I said this: This is not life... President Taylor's business, for his business they've jailed me. I have not seen any benefit and I start thinking within myself. I contacted one or two persons from my family and friends, I contacted them and I told them and they said oh. Even the church that I was attending, I contacted my pastor and he said, "Oh, you should take your time for your security, you know that you are well known within the country, so take your time, but we do not think it would be bad, just go and clarify your own area, what you know", and that's what I'm doing here today. What I know is what I'm clarifying, but for one person's business I wouldn't go around hiding... I became willing to come and testify. For me to walk from Freetown to come here to come and testify I was willing. I, I was willing willingly.

FORNAH: When Defence Lawyer, Terry Munyard asked what the witness knew about the former Vice President of Mr Taylor, Moses Blah, around the period Sam Bockarie died, Prosecution lawyer Nick Koumjan rose to his feet immediately and made an application for the trial to go into private session. The Judges having conferred on the legal basis for the application, Presiding Judge, Teresa Doherty informed the public about their decision.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: Certain evidence will be adduced and it will be adduced in private session for reasons of security of the witness, and this means that whilst the public can look into the court they will not hear what is being said. Mr Witness, did you hear what I said to the members of the public and also to you?

WITNESS: Yes.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: We will now go back into private session and, Mr Munyard, I will ask you to proceed.

For the BBC World Service Trust, this is Mariama Khai Fornah reporting from the Hague.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
22 August 2008**

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

Newspaper Summary

(The Inquirer)

Government Reacts to Claim of "Maltreatment" of Taylor in The Hague

- The government of Liberia has given its official reaction to news reportedly coming out of The Hague, that former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been subjected to some rigid security measures while attending his trial. Information Minister, Lawrence Bropleh, who spoke on the issue of the alleged mal-treatment of the former President, reiterated the government's position that it considered Mr. Taylor to be innocent and as such, he should be treated in keeping with international acceptable standards as a detainee of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Senate Begins Discussion on Prohibition Writ

(Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, New Democrat, The Inquirer, Liberian Express, The Monitor)

- The Liberian Senate said it has begun discussions on a writ of prohibition against the body by the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) and Senator Isaac Nyenabo.
- On Thursday, Chamber Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie issued a stay order mandating the Liberia Senate to halt all other proceedings in the suspension of Isaac Nyenabo as Pro-tempore.
- This followed a 12-count prohibition petition filed by the NDPL and co-defendant, Nyenabo.
- The petition described the action to suspend the pro-temp as illegal contending that the Senate suspended pro-temp Nyenabo on August 5 while sitting unlawfully.
- Addressing a news conference yesterday, the Acting President Pro-temp, Lahai Lassanah said the Senate was aware of the writ and was reviewing the issue.

UL Faculty Support Staff Threaten Non-Cooperation

(The Inquirer)

- The University of Liberia Faculty and Staff Associations have threatened a non-cooperative attitude in the execution of all conventional activities of the University of Liberia requiring their input if certain issues concerning their welfare are not met.
- The faculty and staff of the university in a prepared statement issued yesterday under the signature of the president of the faculty association, Mr. Clifford Young and the acting president of the University of Liberia Staff, Mr. Joseph Y. Willicor, said they have resolved that the UL administration should immediately implement the 30% upward adjustment in salary as of July 1st, 2008. ULFA and ULSSA said the US\$800,000.00 allotted by the Legislature for special allowances be strictly used for the purpose intended, while the July and August 2008 salaries for full-time faculty and staff as well as the June and July 2008 salaries for part-time faculty be paid immediately.

Former Minister of State Complains of Cyber Scandal

(Daily Observer, Heritage, The News, National Chronicle, The Inquirer, National Chronicle)

- The media reports that former Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Willis Knuckles has complained of some unidentified individuals who have maliciously entered his yahoo email account.

- In a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, Mr. Knuckles said such individuals have gained unauthorized entry into his computers and electronic systems thereby changing his password and all other security information which has rendered his account unusable to him.
- He revealed that they are using said emails in his name to reflect negative and corrupt practices on his part and on the part of others to include highly placed officials. Mr. Knuckles however, called on the public not to give credence to such fraudulent acts thereby cautioning the media to exercise care so as not to damage anyone's name or reputation without verifying the sources. Meanwhile the Heritage newspaper reports that the Ministry of Justice has expressed concerns over the "purported" e-mail revelation and said Government is determined to probe the source of the mail.

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 9:00am)*

Engineering Firm Recommends Reconstruction of Hydro Plant

- Presenting its final report on a feasibility study, the Stanley Consultants Incorporated have recommended to government to reconstruct the Mount Coffee Hydro-Electricity Plant outside Monrovia.
- The Chairman of the company termed the plant as the most viable source of electricity in Liberia and should therefore be rebuilt to maximizing its potential in energy generation.
- The company also recommended the setting up of the plants capacity to 66 megawatts from its previous capacity of 64 megawatts and the construction of a storage facility to provide water supply during the dry season.
- Responding, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said she was aware of the huge capital needed to restore the hydro plant costing over US\$300 million.
- President Sirleaf said government will seek private, bi-lateral and multilateral cooperation in its drive to the restoration of the hydro power plant.
- The plant build in the 60's was destroyed as a result of the civil war.

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

Senate Discusses Prohibition Writ

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

Government Warns Against Publication of Pornographic Materials

- The government of Liberia has warned media institution engaged in publishing pornographic materials to resist.
- The ministry said it has observed that some media houses were involved in airing and publishing material relating to pornography.
- Addressing a news conference Thursday, Information Minister Laurence Bropleh disclosed that the publications were incomplete contravention on the ministry's guidelines.
- Minister Bropleh warned that accreditations of these media houses would be revoked if they do not adhere to the warning.

NHA To Take Over Housing Complex

- The National Housing Authority (NHA) is to shortly take over the Prince Alwaleed Housing unit on the Robertsfield Highway.
- The 100 housing units were constructed through the Saudi Prince US\$2.1 million humanitarian gesture and administered by the Liberia Charity Gift Fund.
- have only one latrine that the occupants use
- Speaking during a consultative meeting for the turnover of the housing unit to the National Housing Authority, the occupants expressed dissatisfaction over the structures saying they were substandard and lacked basic social services including safe drinking water.
- The Managing Director of the NHA, Steven Neufville said the entity remains committed to enhancing the living and sanitary condition of the units but that a minimum amount would be collected for the upkeep of the housing complex.

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

Business Daily (Kenya)

Monday, 25 August 2008

Is Africa an experiment for ICC?

Written by Miriam Mannak

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has defied ICC's indictment. August 25, 2008: The International Criminal Court (ICC) is using Africa as a guinea pig, and is too selective when it comes to arresting, indicting and prosecuting perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This was one of the opinions raised during a recent seminar in Cape Town organised by the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR).

The CCR is a South Africa-based organisation that aims to promote peace, justice and conflict resolution in Africa through training, policy development, research, and capacity building.

"It seems that the court is using Africa as a test case, to determine in what way international law can obtain more legitimacy on the ground in Africa," said Charles Villa-Vicencio.

"The ICC focuses on economically weak and politically vulnerable countries, and on nations that are not able or willing to try perpetrators of crimes against humanity. Many African countries fulfil these criteria."

Critical thinking

Vlila-Vicencio, former executive director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation which aims to promote reconciliation, transitional justice, and democracy across the continent, said it is necessary to think critically not just about the purpose of ICC as an institution of justice, but also about the implications of the way it operates.

"We need to ask ourselves whether retribution is a sufficient deterrent to those who violate human rights. Is intervention by the ICC enough to stop crimes against humanity and war crimes in Africa and elsewhere in the world?"

The ICC was established in 1998 by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The tribunal, which is based in the Dutch capital, The Hague, opened in July 2002 after the ratification of the document by 60 countries. The ICC currently has 106 members, including 30 African countries.

Presently the ICC is dealing with various African cases presented to the court by Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic — all signatories to the Rome Statute. Additionally, the Security Council of the United Nations has referred the situation in Darfur, though Sudan is not a member state.

Vincent Nmehielle, former Principal Defender of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, added that the ICC has a political agenda.

"The court should hold all tyrants accountable, but this is not happening. So far, most of the indictees are African. The powerful — the United States instance — will never be put on trial," he says, referring to the fact that the US government does not recognise the court.

“Russia will probably not be tried for what is happening in Georgia. And the same counts for China.”

Villa-Vicencio asserted that the indictment of tyrants is not necessarily the best course of action. The international community must think about the possible consequences of arresting perpetrators of crimes against humanity, he said.

“Should we prosecute Mugabe, despite (the possibility) this could increase the chance of further deterioration of the situation in Zimbabwe, or should we give him the chance to walk off if this would contribute a more stable peace situation?” he said.

“I am not too much against the former if this will bring peace and stability to Zimbabwe.”

Claudia Perdomo — acting spokesperson of the ICC — told IPS that the court is not using Africa as a guinea pig.

Test case

“The ICC is not an experiment. The court is permanent, and is here to stay and does not treat any part of the world as a test case.”

“The fact is that Africa played an incredible role in the establishment of the court,” Perdomo added.

“The situations the ICC is investigating at the moment were put forward by the party states themselves, except for Darfur which was referred to the ICC by the UN’s security council.

It is therefore untrue that the court is only targeting Africa as the Office of the Prosecutor has publicly announced that his office is monitoring situations in other parts of the world, in Colombia for instance and Afghanistan.”

According to Perdomo it is a misconception that individuals from countries that do not recognise the ICC, such as the United States, cannot be indicted.

“If someone from a non-party state commits crimes against humanity within the territory of a party state, this person might be tried. It is possible.”