

**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:

Wednesday, 25 July 2007

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

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The Trumpet
Wednesday, 25 July 2007

Special Court Warns Leaders

By Sahr Kabba

Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone Stephen Rapp has said that punishment meted to the three AFRC indictees “reflects the horrific crimes for which each defendant was convicted for.”

It would be recalled that Alex Tamba Brima, Santigie Borbor Kamara and Brima Bazzy Kamara were sentenced to 45 and 50 years imprisonment after they were found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

According to the prosecutor, the crimes the three defendants committed

include murder and extermination, sexual violence and rape, amputation and mutilation, terror, slavery and pillage.

Stephen Rapp further said the 19th July decision by the Special Court was the first sentence given to those who recruited children as soldiers.

He maintained that the defendants not only ordered, but also directly participated in the commission of these grave crimes.

The prosecutor said one of the defendants showed his men how to cut off the limbs of

victions while another ordered the burning of entire families alive in their homes.

These crimes, according to Stephen Rapp, are a shock to human conscience, adding that the sentences represent an international recognition at the horrible suffering inflicted on the people of Sierra Leone.

He said the sentences also send a signal to similar leaders, whatever they may be, that if you brutalise civilians to gain or hold power you too can face condemnation and punishment.

The Patriotic Vanguard

Tuesday, 24 July 2007

Judgment on CDF August 2

According to a Special Court press alert, judgment in the case of The Prosecutor vs. Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa (the CDF accused) will be delivered on Thursday, 2 August 2007.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Tuesday, 24 July 2007

Forced Marriage Appeal May Influence ICC

Appeal against forced marriage acquittals at Special Court for Sierra Leone might have bearing on ICC prosecutions.

By Katy Glassborow in The Hague (AR No. 123, 24-July-07)

The chief prosecutor for war crimes in Sierra Leone is preparing to appeal the acquittals of three military leaders accused of forcing women into marriage, in a move that he hopes could help bring convictions on similar charges at the International Criminal Court.

On June 20, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, SCSL, found Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, rape, sexual slavery and conscripting child soldiers. On July 19, Brima and Kanu were sentenced to 50 years in prison, while Kamara received 45 years.

But the trial judges said they saw no need to treat forced marriage as a crime separate to sexual slavery, and threw out the charges. Such charges had never before been tried at an international tribunal.

Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp will appeal this decision, which he called "formulistic", on August 2.

He told IWPR that the charge of forced marriage accurately described the experience of women who were kidnapped by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, AFRC, a militia made up of government soldiers who joined up with the rebel Revolutionary United Front, RUF, to fight the government-backed Civil Defence Forces, CDF.

The conflict lasted 11 years and claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions.

Attacks were carried out against civilians to terrorise and punish those who didn't support the rebels, with physical mutilations, including the amputation of hands and feet, a common feature of the conflict.

Civilians were routinely abducted, and captured women were raped and used as sex slaves or forced labourers - an experience prosecutors said comprised a distinct inhumane act of forced marriage.

Rapp identified a "reluctance to convict this crime which has never been pleaded before at an international level".

Just as the charge indicates, forced marriage occurs by force and without the consent of the women concerned, their parents or the community, and Rapp had intended to prosecute it as a crime against humanity.

He will appeal the judges' logic that despite evidence of sexual slavery, the indictments - which

include counts of both sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence - were overlapping.

Trial judges said the prosecutor's evidence was "completely subsumed by the crime of sexual slavery and that there is no lacuna in the law which would necessitate a separate crime of forced marriage as another inhumane act".

They said that the count of "sexual slavery and any other form of sexual violence" is "bad for duplicity", so in the interests of justice elected to consider evidence of sexual slavery under the count of "outrages upon personal dignity".

Despite the legal loopholes and technicalities, the sad fact is that sex crimes and crimes of sexual violence are often pervasive in conflict and examples of rape and sexual slavery as a weapon of war or a tool of ethnic cleansing have a long history.

Rape and sexual slavery feature in cases at the ICC, including the insurgency in Uganda, the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan, the failed military coup in the Central African Republic and the inter-ethnic fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Indeed, the founding statute of the ICC formally criminalises a whole tranche of sex crimes used as a tool in conflict, such as enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity, for the first time in international law.

Despite this leap forward in the recognition of sexual war crimes, international prosecutions of such acts have only occurred in the recent past at the UN backed International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

But Rapp says they were invariably prosecuted as rape, and argues that the experience of women in conflict is often a lot more complex. He argues that forced marriage should not be viewed unequivocally as a sex offence.

Women who were kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery for troops during the Japanese occupation of Korea in World War II are often referred to as "comfort women", but Rapp insists that the experience of "bush wives" in Sierra Leone was unique.

"They were conscripted into a marital relationship, with all that that entails, which is more than being a comfort woman or a rape victim," he told IWPR.

This is why SCSL prosecutors were so keen to prosecute this charge as an inhumane act in the first place, and will now appeal the not-guilty verdict.

"We talked to women who still feel tied to their 'husbands', even after the conflict has ended," said Rapp.

But judges found the men guilty for sexual slavery and orchestrating forced sex on a continuing basis, as opposed to something broader encompassing ways women were made into wives, like cooking and caring for their kidnappers in a relationship akin to a forcibly-imposed civil marriage.

"In the context of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population, voluntary consent was rendered impossible," said Rapp.

However, he told IWPR that proving the ways women were abused or compelled to perform “marital” services wasn’t the focus of witness testimonies, so judges thought it possible to encompass this experience within the umbrella of sexual slavery.

The chief prosecutor also argues that being conscripted into a marital relationship causes psychological damage, and that the particular ways in which the rights of women are violated goes beyond pure sexual violence.

"This is why we wanted to have forced marriage recognised as a crime that took place in Sierra Leone, and we will continue to try to have this recognised beyond this appeal," said Rapp.

Judges found that the motivator in the relationships between soldiers and kidnapped women was sexual, and therefore overwhelmingly a situation of the women being exclusive sex slaves.

Rapp said that if another man had taken one of these women away, it would have been seen as a violation of the “owner’s” rights.

"We saw that as an aspect of forced marriage," said Rapp, "but the judges saw this as an exclusive form of sexual slavery."

The trouble is that rape and sexual slavery are crimes clearly set out in the statutes of both the SCSL and the ICC, while forced marriage is not explicitly listed as a crime under either statute but can be charged as an inhumane act.

International law relating to war crimes provides that if other acts occur in connection to a widespread and systematic attack against civilians, which constitute a crime against humanity and are of equal gravity to other offences under the statute, they can be charged.

"I think the judges left it open that if you have proof of criminal activity that goes beyond sexual slavery that fits within the context of other obligations that arise out of marriage, there could still be a conviction on that count," said Rapp.

He is hopeful that a successful appeal would make it possible for forced marriage to be prosecuted in other conflicts where the crime occurs.

Sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence are crimes under the ICC's statute, so Rapp says the prosecution and appeal at the AFRC will guide investigators and prosecutors at the ICC in how to pursue these charges.

The AFRC trial could set a precedent enabling war crimes tribunals to deal with other horrendous acts which cannot specifically be foreseen in the chaos of conflict, but of equal gravity to crimes already listed under other inhumane acts.

If SCSL judges hold that on appeal, the crime of forced marriage can be prosecuted, Rapp feels this may have a bearing on the ICC.

"We have seen that the tribunals do not slavishly follow each other, but find each others decisions highly persuasive," said Rapp.


United Nations **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 24 July 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

VOA 24 July 2007

Liberia Renaissance Launched to Celebrate 160th Independence

By James Butty, Washington, D.C.

Liberia is in a festive mood this week as the country prepares to celebrate its 160th independence anniversary this Thursday, July 26. For Liberians living here in the United States, the celebration began Saturday, July 21 with an all-day picnic and cultural performances on the grounds of the Liberian Embassy in Washington. In Liberia, the government has launched a Liberian Renaissance in commemoration of the 160th Independence Day anniversary. Lawrence Bropleh is Liberia's minister of information.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone Investigates Alleged Attempted Assassination

By James Butty, Washington, D.C.

Sierra Leoneans will go to the polls August 11 to elect a new president. The political tension has been heightened by the announcement that someone tried to assassinate the presidential candidate of the main opposition party, the All People's Congress (APC). Police are investigating the severe beating of former military junta official Tom Nyuma for allegedly attempting to assassinate APC candidate Ernest Bai Koroma.

Local Media – Newspaper

Minister and Rights Lawyer Differ Over Assets Freeze Bill

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

- Justice Minister Frances Johnson Morris and a Human Rights lawyer, Dempster Brown, on Monday gave opposing views on the proposed assets freeze bill currently before the Legislature for passage into law.
- Minister Johnson Morris defended that the passage of the bill into law would give the Government the political will to fight corruption. But Counsellor Brown says the Government was applying the wrong procedures to fighting corruption and urged the lawmakers not to pass the act on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.
- Despite criticisms against the bill, the media continued to portray the property seizure Acts as a giant leap for justice, and entreated the National Legislature and the civil society interested in justice and transparency to ensure its passage.

Port City Braces for Independence Day Celebrations

(The Analyst)

- Massive preparations are said to be ongoing in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, where official celebrations commemorating Liberia's 160th Independence Day would be held.

Grand Bassa County Superintendent Julia Duncan Cassell have encouraged residents of the county to brace themselves for the celebration.

- Amid the preparations, *The Analyst* said the selection of a youth advocate, Kimmie Weeks, to serve as this year's Independence Day Orator was a positive move to reunify the country. However, *The Analyst* said the Government needed to think about having its own buildings in which agencies and ministries can operate instead of renting or leasing private houses.

Coup Plotters Go to Court after Independence Day Celebrations

(New Democrat, The Forum, New Vision, (Heritage, The News, National Chronicle, The Inquirer and Daily Observer)

- Public opinion in the print media continued to articulate a speedy and transparent trial for two former public officials accused of planning to overthrow the Government.
- The treason trial involving a former army chief Charles Julu and former transitional speaker George Koukou, according to *The Inquirer*, would commence after the 26 July Independence Day celebrations.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

President Appoints Committee to Monitor Approved Projects

- In a release, the Executive Mansion said that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has constituted a committee to monitor and appraise the implementation of approved projects, naming the Ministers of Finance, Lands and Mines and Planning and Economic Affairs as well as the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee Secretariat and Mittal Steel Liberia Holding Limited.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Canadian Energy Group Sends Heavy-Duty Equipment to Liberia

- According to an Executive paper which was released to reporters yesterday, the Government said that through its instrumentality, the Canada-based Buchanan Renewable Energy sent to Liberia some heavy-duty equipment worth about US\$10 million. The equipment include 6 excavators, road works machines, fire trucks, ambulances and mobile accommodation and production equipment.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UNMIL Relaxes Checkpoints

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Deputy Force Commander Gen. Mohammed Tahit told reporters that the Mission relaxed several checkpoints in the Country to enhance free movement of people and goods. He said that major checkpoints along the Somalia Drive have been removed for now although UNMIL troops were still being positioned in structures around the vicinity of the checkpoints to observe the movement of traffic.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

University Riot Probe Committee Releases Report

- The Special Investigative Commission mandated to probe a violent demonstration of University of Liberia Faculty Association recently found that the Association did not violate the rules and regulations of the University even though the act was morally wrong in that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had personally and directly appealed for the action to be call off.
- The Commission also found that the Faculty Association bridged the chain of command by having direct communication with the President of Liberia instead of the University's Board of Trustees while it described as disorderly conduct, the University's student union protest action in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the seat of the Liberian Presidency.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Opposition Party Calls for Speedy Trial of Alleged Coup Plotters

- Reacting to reports of attempts by some Liberians to subvert the State, the National Chairman of the United People Party (UPP), Marcus Dahn called for a free, fair and speedy trial of the accused while cautioning Liberians to never again allow for such unlawful change of their elected Government.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Bassa Legislative Seat Run-Off Election Underway

- The Grand Bassa County District #3 Legislative seat run-off election started today, although the National Elections Commission (NEC) said that the Government has not provided funds for the exercise. The Commission's Chairman James Fromayan said that an alternative arrangement was made to hold the elections as planned.
- Commissioner Fromayan told a news conference Monday that the NEC officials had to make a decision to salvage the funds from a project funded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). The OSIWA project seeks to provide through the NEC civic education to the people of Southeastern Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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

Wife Killer Jailed for Life

- Criminal Court A has sentenced 32-year-old Jerry Washington to life in jail based on a unanimous guilty verdict against him last week, for stabbing his wife to death. Mr. Washington allegedly killed his wife Dorcas Bulukpah in 2005, because he suspected her of having an extra-marital affair. Judge Charles Williams announcing the sentence said the Court could not grant a plea of manslaughter, because the defendant admitted brutally killing Dorcas.

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.

United Nations assists Liberian police in meeting international human rights standards

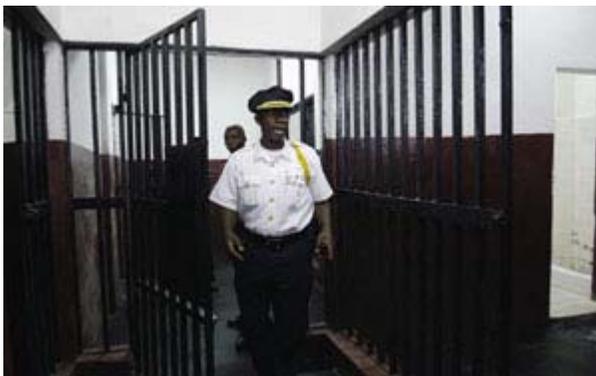
Monrovia, Liberia – Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, has handed over the newly renovated detention facilities at the Liberia National Police (LNP) Headquarters in Monrovia to the Inspector-General, Ms. Beatrice Monah Sieh. Reconstruction of the detention cells which were funded by the Netherlands Government is of particular importance in ensuring that the conditions under which detainees are held meet the basic international human rights standards.



Deputy IGP for Administration, Asatu Bah Kenneth, SRSR Doss, IGP Beatrice Munah Sieh, and Acting UN Police Commissioner at the handing over event

In his remarks, Mr. Doss highlighted the important role of the Government of The Netherlands by funding this initiative and further stressed that “UNMIL and the UN in Liberia will continue to support the LNP to become a professionally managed and adequately equipped national police force.” The SRSR urged the LNP to help safeguard human rights including those of prisoners.

Guiding the UN Envoy through the freshly-painted and renovated Charge of Quarters, the Inspector-General of Police expressed her appreciation to UNMIL and the Netherlands for the completion of the rehabilitation work on the cells. “This project will enable the Liberia National Police to live up to international human rights standards when suspects are questioned and temporarily detained before they are referred to court,” she stated. Ms. Sieh further explained that it has been over 14 years since the sewers in the cells had been functioning properly and that for the first time detainees now have access to water provided directly inside their cells.



An officer inspects the Criminal Service Department cells

Inspecting the premises, the Acting UN Police Commissioner, Generaal Maritz Du Toit explained that the renovated facilities comprise of three different kinds of cells: the patrol cells, which will be used for suspects involved in minor offenses; the Criminal Service Department cells for suspects involved in capital offences; and the female cells for women exclusively. The re-furbished detention facility at the LNP Headquarters has a total capacity for approximately 75 suspects.

The renovation work was carried out by the LNP Maintenance Section, with the support of the UN Police. Funds from the Netherlands Government were administered by the UNDP.

Also present at the hand-over ceremony were the Deputy IGP for Administration, Asatu Bah Kenneth and other senior LNP and UN officials.

Associated Press

Monday, 23 July 2007

Stability in Liberia still fragile, says U.S. President

US President George W. Bush on Friday extended by one year a freeze on the assets of former Liberian president Charles Taylor and members of his regime and family.

"Charles Taylor is today standing trial in The Hague by the Special Court for Sierra Leone," Bush said in an executive order renewing a freeze he first imposed in July 2004.

"However, stability in Liberia is still fragile. The actions and policies of Charles Taylor and others have left a legacy of destruction that still has the potential to undermine Liberia's transformation and recovery," Bush said.

The former president, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, has pleaded not guilty to all 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder,

rape and using child soldiers during the 1991-2001 civil war in Sierra Leone.

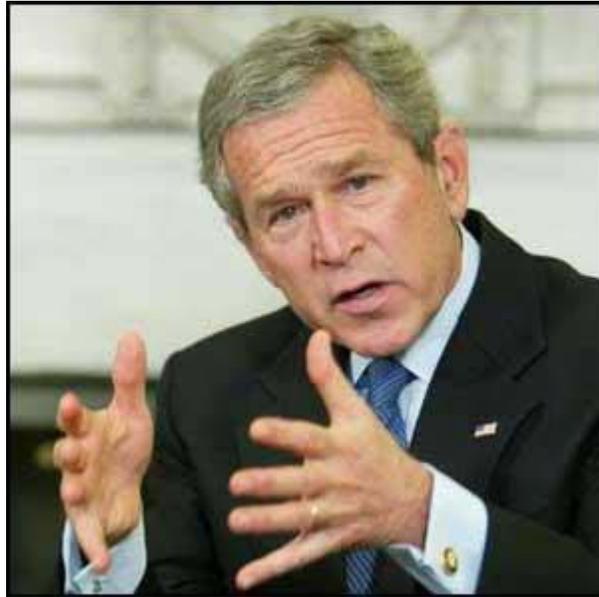
Up to 200,000 people were killed in the Sierra Leone conflict, with rebels mutilating thousands more, cutting off arms, legs, ears or noses.

Taylor allegedly armed, trained and controlled the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), responsible for many of the mutilations, in exchange for still-unknown amounts of diamonds used to fund warfare.

Taylor, who was president of Liberia from August 1997 before yielding to massive international pressure and stepping down in August 2003, has denied all the charges.

Taylor, 59, the first African head of state to stand trial before an international court for war crimes, has argued that he cannot get a fair proceeding.

"Today, Liberia is engaged in a peaceful transition to a democratic order under the administration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf," whose government is not targeted by the order, Bush said.



U.S. President, George Bush

ICC

Friday, 20 July 2007

The International Committee of the Red Cross paid third visit to the Detention Centre of the International Criminal Court

On 20th July 2007, a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concluded an unannounced three-day visit to the Detention Centre of the International Criminal Court. The findings and conclusions of the inspection were presented orally by the ICRC delegates to the Registrar, Mr Bruno Cathala.

This independent inspection was classified as a 'complete visit' which included an initial meeting with the Registrar, a tour of the Detention Centre and private interviews with persons detained at the ICC Detention Centre.

According to regulation 94 of the Regulations of the Court (ICC), an independent inspecting authority shall undertake regular and unannounced visits to the ICC Detention Centre. In its commitment to duly implement the international standards, the Court has signed the Agreement with the Red Cross on Visits to Persons Deprived of Liberty Pursuant to the Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

The ICRC is an independent and neutral institution tasked by the Geneva Conventions with carrying out periodic visits to prisons and any other places of detention and to detainees to ensure that the conditions of detention and the treatment of the persons visited are in conformity with widely accepted international standards governing the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty.

'Pakistan Times' Wire Service

Wednesday, 25 July 2007

UN Chief for Special Court for Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited the government of the Netherlands to host the world body's special tribunal to try suspects involved in the murder of former Lebanese premier Rafiq Hariri.

The secretary-general sent a letter to the prime minister of the Netherlands on Monday "in which he invites the government of the Netherlands to consider hosting the Special Tribunal for Lebanon," his press office said in a statement.

In the letter, Ban stressed the fact that "the Netherlands already hosts several courts and tribunals, such as the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and that the experience gained could be of great value for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon."

He voiced hope that the government will "give serious consideration to the request."

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution in late May to establish the tribunal on the assassination of Hariri, who was killed along with 22 others in a massive car bombing in downtown Beirut in February 2005.