

**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:

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

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

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

Taylor's defence complains detention condition

Courtenay Griffiths, Defence Counsel for the former President of Liberia Charles Taylor has at the status conference held last Friday in The Hague raised concerns over the condition of his client at the detention center.

Though Mr Griffiths could not disclose to the judges the condition of his client which he is complaining about, he however stated that they are going to raise the

matter with the registry which has the sole responsibility of taking care of the health and other issues concerning the accuse.

Mr Griffiths told the judges that at this stage they only want to inform the Chamber.

Mr Taylor's former lead counsel Karim Khan had earlier raised concerns on the detention of his client as he was denied certain facilities.

Since there was no matter to be discussed, the

Chamber including Justice Julia Sebutinda,(presiding), Teresa Doherty and Richard Lussick adjourned the status conference to November 13th as the lead counsel for Taylor lawyer Courtenay Griffiths asked the chamber for a six week adjournment.

Charles Taylor was indicted on 7th March 2003 on an 11-count charge including terrorizing the civilian population and collective punishment, unlawful killings, sexual violence, physical violence, use of child soldiers and abduction.

Concord Times

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

Koroma discusses Special Court with UN

By Mariama Kandeh

President Ernest Bai Koroma during his recent visit to Liberia discussed issues relating to the Special Court with the head of United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

"The UN Special Representative also briefed President Koroma on the protection of the Sierra Leone Special Court by UNMIL's Mongolian contingent," a release from UNMIL Saturday states.

Alan Doss said UNMIL will continue its collaboration and support for the joint border patrols with Sierra Leone and the Liberia security forces.

He assured the president of UNMIL's continued cooperation to ensure that the common border is properly monitored.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General to Liberia outlined the work of Liberia's Economic Governance Programme

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Koroma discusses Special Court with UN

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(GEMAP) which is actively assisting the anti-corruption campaign of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. President Koroma reaffirmed his

commitment to fighting corruption and outlined the measures he intends to take to curb and pursue economic crimes and corruption offenses. Liberia and Sierra

Leone share a common border which has been frequently violated by the movement of arms and ammunition including the smuggling of diamonds.

Australian Agency for International Development

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

More funding for Sierra Leone War Crimes Court

Australia will increase its support for efforts to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the African nation of Sierra Leone.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs Greg Hunt has announced that a further \$100,000 will be provided to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Mr Hunt said this would double Australia's contribution to \$200,000 this year and bring our total support since 2001 to \$800,000.

The Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations established the Special Court to try those most responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law after 30 November 1996.

"Our latest contribution to the Special Court will help sustain its operations in the critical period until it completes trial action, which is forecast to be in early 2010," Mr Hunt said.

"The recent Presidential elections in Sierra Leone have enabled the peaceful transfer of power to a new administration.

"This is a remarkable achievement after the appalling civil war between 1991 and 2001. The Australian Government is pleased to have contributed to Sierra Leone's stability through support for the Special Court."

The Special Court trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor for alleged complicity in atrocities committed by Sierra Leonean rebels is underway. The Court has pursued nine indictments of people on charges including mass murder, rape, enslavement, conscription of children into an armed force and attacks on UN peacekeepers and humanitarian workers.

Mr Hunt said the Court is widely regarded as having made a strong contribution to peace in Sierra Leone. "It recently convicted five former militia leaders for crimes including the recruitment of child soldiers," he said.

Couriermail.com

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,22472464-27197,00.html>

Playing catch-up on child soldiers

IN JULY of this year, the Special Court of Sierra Leone sentenced three former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council to imprisonment for up to 50 years for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the conscription of children under the age of 15 to fight during that country's five-year internal conflict.

This judgment marked the first time an international tribunal has ruled on the charge of recruitment of child soldiers.

In the meantime, the alleged former leader of the Congolese rebel group Union des Patriotes Congolais, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, is awaiting trial before the International Criminal Court in The Hague on similar charges.

While these judicial proceedings are seen as a positive development, they merely scratch the surface of what is a tragic global phenomenon.

There are about 300,000 children currently acting as front-line troops in armed conflict worldwide, with another 500,000 conscripted into government, paramilitary and guerilla groups as sex slaves, porters, cooks, spies and to plant land mines. These young boys and girls are often forced to participate in serious - sometimes heinous - crimes.

This horrific trend has a number of causes. Children are seen as attractive participants in armed conflict. They are vulnerable to outside influences, can be trained to become efficient soldiers and can be made to perform the most dangerous (and brutal) of tasks, if not through sheer intimidation or manipulation, then under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The proliferation of effective small arms and lightweight weapons such as AK47s - equally deadly in the hands of a child - means they can be deployed in active combat without any apparent "hardware" disadvantages.

Adding to the enormity of the problem, the world continues to be racked by armed conflict.

Between 1990 and 2003, 59 wars were fought around the globe. Over that period, 16 of the world's 20 poorest countries - where the use of child soldiers is particularly prevalent - endured violent internal conflict. As fighting escalates, the recruitment of children becomes an easy way to make up for any shortages of personnel through death or injury.

There have been many warning signs demanding that international law establish a stringent regulatory regime to deter the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war. Yet, sadly, this has not happened, primarily due to the highly sensitive and political nature of armed conflict.

The failure to provide for appropriate legal standards exacerbates the difficulties in finding a solution. A protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child sets a minimum age of 18 for compulsory recruitment and "direct" participation in conflict - an unclear term given the wide

range of roles performed - yet allows for the use of children under 18 where it is justified by military contingencies.

Voluntary recruitment of children is still permitted at international law. Indeed, many developed countries of the world, including the US and the United Kingdom, permit children under the age of 18 to join their armed forces.

Australia could set a positive example in this regard by raising from 17 years its current minimum voluntary recruitment age for the Defence Forces.

While recruitment in these countries will generally be genuine expressions of the child's free will, other so-called instances of "volunteering" are not. Many government and paramilitary commanders in various parts of the world claim they cannot stop the flow of children seeking to join their ranks. Yet the reality is that it is the extreme circumstances in which these children find themselves - hunger, poverty, abandonment, the death of parents and family, disease or the threat of violence - that often leave them little choice but to join a cause.

In the end, the only permanent way to eliminate the use of child soldiers is to stop armed conflict altogether. The "advantages" of using children in warfare mean that, as conflict continues, so will the use of children to wage its deadly fight. Unless more is done, another 800,000 (or more) children will, over time, replace those currently being used.

For every child forced to participate in armed conflict, there is a childhood lost.

Steven Freeland is associate professor of international law, University of Western Sydney and a visiting professional at the International Criminal Court, The Hague.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 24 September 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

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Liberian lawmakers reject bill to freeze Taylor's assets

JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH

MONROVIA, Liberia_Liberian lawmakers voted unanimously to reject a bill that would have frozen assets and confiscated property belonging to former President Charles Taylor and his associates, a legislator said Sunday. The decision throws up a roadblock to United Nations sanctions that ordered the assets of Taylor as well as those of his family members and former associates to be frozen. The legislation was needed to enact the sanctions, which were called for in a 2004 Security Council resolution.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone's leader seeks to boost ties on three-nation tour

OUAGADOUGOU, Sept 21, 2007 (AFP) - Sierra Leone's new President Ernest Bai

Koroma on Friday embarked on a three-nation tour aimed at boosting ties in the

region on his first official trip abroad since taking office. His talks with the leaders of Guinea, Liberia and Burkina Faso centred on peace, regional security and cooperation. On the last leg of his tour in Burkina Faso he held talks with President Blaise Compaore, who holds the rotating presidency of regional bloc ECOWAS.

Local Media – Newspaper

Liberia and Sierra Promise to Strengthen Cooperation

(The Informer, Heritage, New Democrat, National Chronicle, Daily Observer, Public Agenda and The Monitor)

- The new President of Sierra Leone on Friday paid an official visit to Liberia at which time he and President Sirleaf signed a communiqué pledging to further strengthen the cooperation between the two neighbouring countries and to enhance the peace building process in their respective countries through the promotion of good governance and democracy

UN Supports Nationwide Gender Training for Local Authorities

(Public Agenda, Liberian Express, The Informer and The Analyst)

- The UN Country team is supporting a series of training workshops for local authorities on integrating gender issues in their programmes and policies, with a launch in Tubmanburg, Bomi County.

Auditor General Faces Senate in Legal Battle

(New Democrat, Public Agenda, Liberian Express, The Informer and The Analyst)

- Auditor General John Morlu and the Liberian Senate are due to come face to face in a legal battle before the Supreme Court on November 2 to thrash out contending statements attributed to Mr. Morlu on a website.
- The Senate last Tuesday held Auditor General John Morlu in contempt for a statement he supposedly made against the Senate and fined him nearly LD\$5,000 for failing to reinstate more than 75 employees at the General Auditing Commission.
- However, the Supreme Court of Liberia issued a Writ of Prohibition on the Senate following a petition filed to the Supreme Court by Morlu. In the writ, the court placed a stay order on further proceedings until otherwise ordered.

Flood Paralyzes Movement of People in Nimba County

(Daily Observer)

- Heavy flooding has hit Nimba County paralyzing the movement of vehicles and human traffic on the Ganta-Sanniquellie Highway leaving several families homeless in Sanniquellie City. The flood resulted from a heavy downpour Wednesday night which lasted for several hours.

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

Suspected Armed Robbers Attack Senator and Family

- Correspondents said that Montserrado County Senator Hanna Brent and her husband sustained injuries on Friday night when armed robbers attacked their vehicle in Mamba Point as they dropped off some family members after attending a function at the Monrovia City Hall.
- According to reporters who visited the victim's home, the Senator and her husband were seen with deep wounds on their bodies.
- Meanwhile, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf visited the home of the Senator and urged them to muster courage as the security forces were up to the task to continue to provide security for all.

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

Ethnic Clashes Erupt in Lofa County

- Correspondents in Lofa County said that ethnic clashes recently erupted in Voinjama and Vesselah with some members of the ethnic groups reportedly using cutlasses in the dispute.

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

Prison Watch Group Donates Medicines to Inmates

- Speaking to reporters yesterday, the Prison Fellowship of Liberia Executive Director Francis Kollie stated that his group donated a consignment of drugs valued at over US\$1,000 to treat 300 inmates at the Monrovia Central Prison and sprayed chemicals on the entire compound of the Prison to get rid of the diseases which he attributed to over crowdedness of the facility.

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

Information Minister Launches New Radio Station

- Officially launching the United Methodist Radio (ELUM 98.7) yesterday, Dr. Laurence Bropleh urged the management of the Station to put the interest of the Liberian people first in their broadcast as the Government was committed to a free but responsible media.

(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.

BBC Online

Monday, 24 September 2007

Doctor 'aided Rwandan genocide'

A doctor granted British citizenship was a key organiser in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, a court has heard.

Dr Vincent Bajinya is considered a "category one offender" by Rwandan prosecutors, the City of Westminster Magistrates' Court was told.

The 46-year-old Rwandan is one of four men facing extradition from Britain to Rwanda under a special diplomatic deal.

All four deny personal involvement in the slaughter of the Tutsi ethnic group and are fighting extradition.

Dr Bajinya, of Islington, north London, appeared alongside Charles Munyaneza, 49, a cleaner from Bedford, Celestin Ugirashebuja, 54, from Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, and Emmanuel Nteziryayo, 45, of Manchester.



The men all deny charges of conspiring to kill Tutsis

'Genocide meetings'

Each faces a range of charges, including genocide, crimes against humanity and participation in acts of devastation, massacres and looting.

District Judge Anthony Evans is presiding over the week-long extradition hearing in London.

Rwanda waived the death penalty to enable extradition from the UK.

James Lewis QC, representing the Rwandan government, opened the first full hearing of its kind to come before a British court.

After outlining the allegations against all four in turn, he repeated the line: "As a result of his actions, on his own and in concert with others, thousands of Tutsis were killed."

An orgy of violence erupted in the African country in 1994 after the Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was shot down and ethnic Tutsis were blamed.

As soon as his death was announced, killing squads began attacking Tutsis across the country.

Slaughter

The court heard that Bajinya, who changed his name to Dr Vincent Brown by deed poll on becoming a British citizen last year, is accused of being a militia organiser in the capital Kigali at the time of the carnage.

The other three were allegedly bourgmestres - or mayors - of local communes in the country and are accused of organising and leading the killing in their areas.

Mr Lewis told the court that before the genocide, Dr Bajinya had been part of President Habyarimana's inner circle - or "akazu" meaning "little house".

He added that Dr Bajinya, a former member of the governing MRND party, was present at key "genocide meetings".

Mr Lewis told the court that he became a leader in the Interahamwe militia, which was to spearhead the slaughter.

Court papers allege he ordered the militia to cut a suspected Tutsi "into pieces so that he would not recover".

Dr Bajinya is also accused of personally interrogating a Tutsi woman about where her fellow "inyenzi" - or cockroaches - were before a militia man shot her dead.

BBC Online

Monday, 24 September 2007

Thaw in Franco-Rwandan relations

The foreign ministers of France and Rwanda have met for the first time since relations broke off in 2006.

France's Bernard Kouchner and his Rwandan counterpart Charles Murigande met for talks at a hotel on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Rwanda severed relations after a French judge implicated President Paul Kagame in the 1994 assassination of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana.



France seems keen to repair relations with Rwanda

The shooting down of Mr Habyarimana's plane sparked the genocide.

Rwanda has repeatedly accused France of supporting the Hutu extremists who perpetrated the genocide and of dragging its feet to cooperate with the investigations that followed the massacres.

In July, France detained two Rwandans - Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, a 49-year-old Catholic priest, and Laurent Bucyibaruta, 62, a former government official - sought by the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) for their alleged roles in the 1994 genocide.

Kigali welcomed the arrests as a sign that France was willing to cooperate more actively with the tribunal since President Nicolas Sarkozy was elected and a new government was sworn in.

Father Munyeshyaka is accused by the ICTR of murdering three young Tutsis in his Holy Family parish in Kigali, of raping four young Tutsi women between April and June 1994 and of calling on the extremist Hutu Interahamwe militia to commit rape.

The ICTR has accused Mr Bucyibaruta of "direct and public incitement to commit genocide".

However last week, a Paris appeals court ordered the release of the two Rwandan suspects, saying the warrants issued by the international tribunal were "invalid".