

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Monday, April 26, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248
MOBILE: 232 76 645 914

David Crane : He has the blessings of the Sierra Leonean people

CAN SPECIAL COURT REALLY DELIVER JUSTICE ? PART 1

Day and night, the blood of the 250,000 innocent children , women and men slaughtered by the warring factions in Sierra Leone cry out for justice from the grave. Their blood cry out day and night for justice because they had no reason to be set upon by the fighters and wickedly bludgeoned , hacked or shot to death during the senseless Civil War in the country. Most of them were innocent citizens or foreigners who had no hands in the political dynamics in the country.

The warring factions in Sierra Leone , in an inexplicable shift from the principles of warfare , hunted out only the poor, the hapless, the innocent and ordinary people instead of targetting enemy fighters. When they did not burn, bludgeon or shoot innocent people to death, they hacked off their limbs , thereby rendering them hopeless for the rest of their lives.

Those unlucky thousands underwent that gruesome agony only because they were unfortunate to live in a country where some of their citizens had developed contempt and spite for human dignity and human life. How men and women who grew up in a country established on Godly principles could sink to such depths of moral depravity, callousness and contempt even for the God who created them could be easily attributed to the demonic assurance that our people have developed that they can rape, loot, kill, amputate and steal and nothing will come out of it. It is now customary in Sierra Leone to hear men and women brag with devilish alacrity : "I will blow yor head off and nothing will come out of it. I will kill you and pay for you at the Police Station."

One can therefore empathise with men like Dr. David Crane , Geoffrey Robertsen and other members of the Special Court in their unbridled zeal to make sure that those bearing the greatest responsibility for such diabolical mentality in Sierra Leone are given their just recompence. Only people with a warped sense of justice and patriotism will stand in the way of these men as they try to bring justice to Sierra Leone.

Thankfully, most Sierra Loneans adore the Special Court .Despite the agitation over the indictment of the Kamajor Commander, Chief Hinga

Norman, whom many Sierra Leoneans believe should have been indemnified because he was fighting on the side of the effort to defeat the rapists, arsonists, anarchists and human butchers who had turned Sierra Leone into a living Hell, the generality of Sierra Leoneans still support the Special Court.

Despite their support for the court, however, some Sierra Leoneans have lately become sceptical about the ability of the court to succeed in its mission. The court has committed administrative and legal blunders that should not have been seen happening in the first place. For this, the UN and the daft government that negotiated the formation of the court should bear some of the blame.

The Special Court erred in trying to arrest the Kingpin of the suffering of the Sierra Leonean people, Charles Taylor, while he was attending a conference in Ghana without first putting the mechanism in action to ensure that once it issued the international warrant of arrest for Taylor, it will be implicitly executed by the host country. The court is assuming too much. It should have known that Africa, by no stretch of the imagination, is the First World. It is unconscionable in some developed countries for an international arrest warrant on an internationally known war criminal to be snobbed as was done in Ghana. But this is Africa, a still dark continent, where the rule of law is not regarded and where leaders thumb their noses at international law because they too are criminals worthy of indictment like the selfsame Charles Taylor.

READ PART 2

CAN THE SPECIAL COURT REALLY DELIVER JUSTICE ? PART 2

One would have thought that an international tribunal like the Sierra Leone Special Court should have been given the necessary authority and international jurisdiction to arrest at will any accused person, wherever he is domiciled in the world. But this was never done. Therefore, hardened war criminals are at large while the men who fought them are in jail. It is a mockery of justice for a man like Hinga Norman to be languishing in jail while Charles Taylor, the devil himself, who instigated all the chaos and suffering, is enjoying amnesty in Nigeria. There is absolutely no excuse for this bizarre twist of events. The fault is not the court's. It is the UN and the Kabbah government who negotiated the formation of the court that should be flayed in this respect.

Taylor and many of his accomplices like Prince Yormie Johnson , Ben Yeaten , Issac Musa and others who deliberately sought to provoke and bring to action the sequence of events that led to the death of a million people in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, are breathing the sweet air of liberty while the men who fought against them are behind bars .What do we call that ? Is it justice ? Like the many notorious war criminals we see flourishing in the world today, Taylor may even be gloating about this double standards . The UN should have given the Special Court all the authority it needed to storm Nigeria with international Police and arrest Taylor. No war criminal should be allowed to prevail , but Taylor, a man who caused the death of a million people is doing just that. It is not fair.

The corrupt nations of Africa can never co-operate with the Special Court. Their leaders themselves have skeletons in their cupboards and many of them benefited from Charles Taylor's international criminal enterprise during his bloody reign as rebel leader and later President of Liberia. They will always shield these war criminals because they were partners in crime. This was also responsible for the failure of the court to bring Taylor's Army Commander Ben Yeaton to Freetown from Togo recently. Again, the court fell victim to its own propensity to assume . It thought that all would have well and the Togolese authorities would have allowed Yeaten to enter the UN plane waiting for him at the Lome Airport. How can a court with such international flavour fail to be obeyed by puny nations ?

Most disturbing of the Special Court's miscues , though, are the legal blunders it has committed so far. Again, the court fell into this embarrassing situation because it is relying more on assumptions than evidence. Two months ago, the court announced that it had suspended all outside contacts with Hinga Norman because he was recorded on the phone trying to incite unrest in Sierra Leone. This was a very serious charge for which even Chief Norman would have lost the goodwill he is presently enjoying from some Sierra Leoneans. We are tired of war in Sierra Leone and anyone who incites chaos is the enemy of the nation.

But as it turned out, the court erred .The tape, when it was released, did not contain any incitement by the Chief. The court lost that psychological battle because it failed to satisfy the evidential burden that Chief Norman was engaged in incitement. Readers are ofcourse now conversant with this week's ruling by Justice Bankole Thompson that the Special Court failed to provide evidence that Chief Norman's account in the Union Trust Bank in Freetown must have been accrued from criminal avenues (Transfer from the activities of the Kamajor militia) .

Again, the court must have ASSUMED that because the Chief was indicted for war crimes and he is presently an agitated man , such allegations against him would have been swallowed hook, line and sinker without legal scrutiny. Why the court hastily come out with this accusation without first ascertaining that Norman indeed did incite people on the tape ? The fact that a court of the stature of the UN-supported tribunal should be defeated in such petty matters in which the burden of proof was not that intricate, scared exponents of the court who do not want to see

any of the indicted persons freed because of legal blunders by the court. How will this court fare when it comes to the nitty-gritty of a high-tension war crimes trial , in which mere speculation will not be treated with kid gloves by a hyped Defence team ?

We at the DAILY NEWS-INQUIRER have profound respect and trust in the Special Court. Despite our concern about the continued incarceration of Chief Norman when the real war criminals who purposely endeavoured to harm the innocent people of Sierra Leone and Liberia have not been roped in, we still have great respect for the integrity and ability of the court. We believe that the Special Court has the ability to bring justice to Sierra Leone. However , we cannot conceal the fact that we are worried about the mistakes being made by the court. Our worries are predicated upon by the fact that we do not want the court to fail. We want those who perpetuated the culture of impunity in Sierra Leone to be punished to the full extent of the law.

It is our hope, therefore, that the court really did its work in procuring sufficient relevant evidence to convict any one who actually took part in war crimes and crimes against humanity. Even a first year student in law school knows that an accused in a criminal case is not culpable until his guilt has been established by clear and convincing evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. There should be no doubt about the guilt of an accused person as the accused is given the benefit of any iota of doubt. There is so much at stake here. The prosecution cannot afford to lose these cases because the future safety of Sierra Leone hinges on them.

A sloppy prosecution team is as bad as none. The celebrated O.J. Simpson case was lost because the prosecution shot itself in the foot when it decided on having Simpson try on the gloves alleged to have been worn by the killer of Nicole Brown-Simpson and Ron Goldman. The gloves did not fit and the theatrical and brilliant Johnny Cochran seized on that blunder with his immortal "If it does not fit, you must acquit " blockbuster legal argument to plant doubts in the minds of the jury that Simpson was not the killer.

That prosecution also erred in putting on the stand a discredited cop, Mark Furhman , whose background was not researched enough to find out that he had called black people 'niggers' before. The remarkable F. Lee Bailey tore that cop limb by limb on the stand and demolished the prosecution's case. If David Crane doubts that there are Sierra Leonean legal luminaries with the ability to become Johnny Cochran or F. Lee Bailey in court , he has not researched Sierra Leone enough to know that our's is not only a land of suffering and disaster, but we have a fabled reputation for intellectual excellence and we have produced some of the best lawyers in Africa.

The court should not also ASSUME again that because the deeds done by our combatants were so horrid and satanic , any evidence will be enough to convince the judges of the trial chamber and bring a conviction. . It will be a legal calamity

to so assume. The judges of the Trial Chamber have proved that they are not easily moved by sentiments. Remember George Gelega-King's strong and uncompromising argument about the need for even kids to defend themselves during the pretrial submissions on the use of child soldiers by the Kamajors ? According to the Law of Evidence, the reliability of relevant evidence generally is a question of weight rather than admissibility. Mere circumstantial evidence that has no probative value will never convince the judges to convict, not to mention Hearsay Evidence. There must be sufficient Direct Evidence to establish all the facts and propositions without further reasoning that those in the dock bore the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the war. We hope the court has clear, convincing and direct evidence to link the accused with every element of the crimes for which they were indicted.

Short of this, the Sierra Leonean people will lose a second time when the people who harmed them are set free all because the prosecution did not do its job well, and the culture of impunity will not only be enthroned then, but it will flourish throughout the land, as perpetrators would be encouraged by the fact that not even a UN war crimes tribunal was able to bring them to justice.

In the end, it is the Sierra Leonean people who will fail.

And we do not want them to fail.

In this regard, our prayers are with the prosecution. We hope they succeed.



SPECIAL COURT : AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN SIERRA LEONE'S POST -WAR NATIONAL RECOVERY AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Whatever mistakes the Special Court may have made, one fact stands out like a sore thumb--The court is an essential ingredient in Sierra Leone's post-war national recovery and national

reconciliation.

No nation should be allowed to sink to the depths of moral depravity that Sierra Leone plunged. There have been wars in other countries. Nigeria fought a brutal Civil war in the late 60s until the early 70s but nowhere in the length and breadth of that big country did any of the combatants take pleasure in the callous depravity that marked the Sierra Leone war. Limbs of innocent babies , hapless old men and women as well as able-bodied young people were wickedly hacked off ; pregnant women were disembowelled and the poor, innocent angels inside them ripped out with cruel glee .

Thousands of innocent people were burnt alive in their houses , their gory screams of unspeakable pain rising with the ferocity of the billowing fire and wafting smell of burning human flesh ; Others were sexually tortured to death , with tree branches devilishly thrust into their private parts .Some had the skins of their heels peeled off, and their male organs and tongues cut off and then left to stagger in humonguous pain in the forest until they dropped dead , their glassy, deathly eyes starring Heavenwards as if questioning whether there is a God. We have not even mentioned the thousands more killed in cold blood or buried alive because they did not support the combatants' hellish cause.

Those in the U.S, Canada, Britain and other parts of the diaspora fighting to derail the work of the Special Court , need to be wrestled from the comfort and security of their homes abroad and taken through a tour of the many camps in Sierra Leone holding the victims of the war for them to see what others suffered while they were in Europe enjoying the relative safety of life in the diaspora.

It is a fact that mistakes have been made. Questions will forever be asked whether Chief Hinga Norman should have been indicted by the court. He was, after all, fighting to defeat the very rebels who planned to take over Sierra Leone and turn her into a Living Hell on earth . Our opinion is that he should have been indemnified by the Kabbah Government, for whom he fought and helped to keep the government in power. As is known to all, Hinga Norman was indicted because the court is going after the leaders of the combatants, those that the court believed had the opportunity to stop the senseless and merciless carnage but did nothing about it.

But it should be noted also that it was not the Special Court , as is presently constituted, who decided to come after Norman. It is therefore the height of foolishness to blame officials of the court for Norman's predicament. The court's term of reference, to wit , to go after only the leaders of the fighting forces--all of which committed atrocities , though in varying scales---was decided upon by the Sierra Leone Government and the United Nations when they made the agreement to set up the court. David Crane and others are only doing what they had been hired to accomplish--Try those deemed as bearing the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the war. We have to look at issues in their true perspectives.

Any quarrel with the indictment of Norman should be taken up with the SLPP government which should have indemnified their own militia commander and Deputy Minister of Defence. The U.S government wisely seeks to indemnify her fighters wherever war crimes are mentioned. Why the Sierra Leone government did not make that effort is beyond everybody's comprehension .But they will learn with time that they have dug a pit in which many of them might fall too.

The fact cannot be denied that atrocities were committed by all the fighting forces. The RUF, AFRC, ECOMOG and the CDF all carried out extrajudicial killings and they tortured and maltreated prisoners of war. International Law does not give a tinker's damn on whose side an army was fighting. As long as atrocities , war crimes and Crimes against humanity were committed, that army is culpable .

Apart from the fact that we think that Hinga Norman deserved to have enjoyed some immunity from prosecution, an oversight for which his own SLPP government should be blamed, we also think that

some of the hardened rebels and renegade soldiers should have been brought to court. They too should have been tried like their leaders . To indict only 13 people from the multitudes of demons who harmed the Sierra Leonean people, is really ludicrous. And this is perhaps why critics of the court think that the tribunal could do better.

But when all is said and done, the Special Court still has a place in post-war Sierra Leone. People have to be taught a lesson that impunity is inhuman and is intolerable in our present civilization. Sierra Leone can only go forward in national recovery and reconciliation if a deterrent is set that in future those who commit atrocities and war crimes will face the long arm of the law. We do not want the threats of rebels, militia and vigilantee groups hanging over our heads like the proverbial Sword of Damocles. Sierra Leone is a civilized country within the vortex of a new judicious and democratic world order and we must learn to play politics without recourse to revenge and violence.

Editorial

<http://www.dailynewsinquirer.net/>

26/04/2004

CRANE TELLS HARVARD HE IS DISAPPOINTED WITH AMERICA OVER TAYLOR



DAVID
CRANE : I
can't believe
the U.S. is
covering a war
crimes
criminal...

The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David , has described as a tragedy Charles Taylor's amnesty in Nigeria with Washington's blessings.

According to a report in the INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE TRIBUNE forwarded to this newspaper, Crane expressed his dissatisfaction with America's stand on the Taylor issue during an address to students at Harvard University in the U.S. on April 9 instant.

The TRIBUNE report filed by one Thierry Cruvellier , also stated that the Prosecutor admitted that "he has failed to achieve the task that he has always seen as essential : to prosecute businessmen for their role in crimes against humanity committed during the civil war in this small West African country."

Read the rest of Cruvellier's report below :

! April 19 2004.

International Justice TRIBUNE! April 19 to May 2, 2004

By THIERRY CRUELLEIR

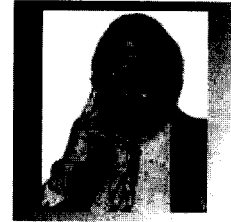
"I have a question that I would like you all to think about: will there be a time when a multi national corporation is criminally responsible? We were that close. But we could not connect the dots. We would have liked to but it did not happen." On 8 April at Harvard University, The chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone had just admitted that he has failed to achieve the task that he has always seen as essential: to prosecute businessmen for their role in crimes against humanity committed during the civil war in this small West - African country. Crane looked tense, his eyes scanning the rows of students. There is something rather direct about this man that allows him such kind of forthright and unambiguous admissions. Crane showed his thirst for the task in an earlier interview on 7 March 2003: "I will look at politicians in

the sub -region and I will look at businessmen. Without them, none of this would have happened," he commented, despite Sierra Leoneans being irritated by the way that he repeatedly reduced the civil war to a battle over a commodity, diamonds. Over the last year and a half, everyone expected the Court to include in its remit prosecution cases linked to business networks. It now looks like this innovative and promising initiative is in trouble. David Crane appears to have handed over the baton to his colleague Luis Moreno Ocampo at the International Criminal Court , who has announced its intention to " follow the money trail" in his investigations in Congo. Wearing a Sierra Leonean flag on his lapel, the prosecutor of the Freetown tribunal was not expressing only one frustration. He admitted to the Harvard audience that he was incensed with the authorities in his own country - the United States - and in particular over its treatment of Charles Taylor. In June 2003, David Crane publicly indicted the President of Liberia, to the great displeasure of those involved the peace talks, including the Americans. Since August 2003, Taylor has been living in safe exile in Nigeria, with Washington's blessing, according to Crane. "It's a tragedy," he railed. "I can't believe that the US is covering a war crimes criminal, and they very much are." David Crane does not hide the fact that he has friends in Congress. But he has very few in the government.

<http://www.dailynewsinqirer.net/>
26/04/2004

CAN SPECIAL COURT REALLY DELIVER JUSTICE ?

With the blood of the thousands of victims of the senseless massacres in Sierra Leone crying out from their graves day and night for justice ,there is no way that 250,000 innocent babies, women and men can be allowed to die so needlessly without just recompence for those heartless people who perpetuated the culture of impunity in West Africa. .But the question on the lips of all Sierra Leoneans at this time is :Can the Special Court really deliver ?



Justice Bankole Thompson (pictured above) in dishing out his judgement on the Hinga Norman Account fiasco, brought the court to a stunning reality this week that if it has to bring justice to the Sierra Leonean people, the Special Court has to put its act in order, stop building facts on mere assumptions and use clear and convincing evidence to nail those guilty of sending millions of West Africans to their untimely graves.

The Exclusive

Monday April 26, 2004

Lawyer Throws Bombshell

Special Court Has No Right To Try Charles Taylor

Barrister Edo Okanya has insinuated that the Special Court for Sierra Leone lacks the jurisdiction to try erst-

while President Charles Taylor of Liberia. The Nigerian Barrister

who is in Freetown on a one-week visit claimed that the Special Court's indicted Charles Taylor when he was

president of Liberia and therefore had a sovereign immunity. Okanya also said the Spe-

cial Court's jurisdiction is only limited within the precinct of Sierra Leone, calling

it a "Sierra Leone Local Court" having the same status as the Supreme Court. *Contd. page 2*

Special Court Has No Right To Try Charles Taylor

From front page

Barrister Okanya also lamented that not only the indictment of Charles Taylor was purely done to embarrass him but other African

leaders as well.

Besides, he continued his lamentation, the Special Court is an hybrid court lacking Chapter 7 of the UN Mandate.

Okanya further insinuated

that the Special Court was after Taylor's perceived wealth which he suggested that Taylor does not have, pointing out the difficulties of distinguishing between Kabbah and Taylor as who is the victim.

Strike Two with Chalabi

by Tom Perriello

April 23, 2004

This week, the Coalition Provisional Authority named Salem Chalabi, the nephew of Pentagon-ally Ahmed Chalabi, as General Director of the tribunal that will try Saddam Hussein. This is not unlike that awkward moment when U.S. soldiers put up the American flag over the toppled statue of Saddam Hussein – it's a move that botches a golden opportunity to gain goodwill for America. But this time, the costly mistake was made not by enthusiastic soldiers in the heat of battle, but by those who should know better.

The prosecution of Saddam Hussein and other former regime leaders should provide a great stimulus to the Iraqi public's understanding of and respect for the rule of law. The image of former tyrannical leaders standing before a judge provides a potent message about the capacity of law to trump arbitrary power. Iraq had a thriving legal system before Hussein's regime, and this process should catalyze its return while also providing training to judges, prosecutors and defense lawyers and building the infrastructure for a new judiciary.

The trials of Saddam Hussein and his cohorts should, therefore, be an easy home run for the United States at a time when a momentum shift is certainly needed. The occupation is losing credibility abroad and at home, and the tribunal's work could refocus attention back on the one point on which almost all Americans and Iraqis agree – Saddam was a horrible man and we are all glad he is gone. As the President and his supporters continue to highlight Saddam's crimes, the presentation of hard evidence in the coming months will only underscore the upsides of the invasion.

But in this case, the United States has snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. The first strike came when the United States refused outright to even entertain offers from Europe and other members of the international community to manage *and fund* the trials. The Coalition Provisional Authority passed on a perfect pitch by opting instead to hand the tribunal to Iraqi authorities viewed by most as American proxies.

Yesterday, the Coalition swung and missed again when it named nephew Chalabi to the top post. His presence significantly increases the chance that the story during the trial will not be about the evidence presented, but rather about the shadow of U.S. influence over the proceedings. The proceedings could set a new standard of accountability, but Iraqis may decide instead that it represents yet another extension of American control. It could reinforce our perceived unwillingness to cede anything but symbolic authority because we presume to know what is best for Iraqis.

The arbitrary use of power is anathema to the rule of law, but its specter is raised by the widespread knowledge of the Chalabis ties to the Pentagon. If one begins from the assumption that America is "doing right," then allegations of bias in the process would be

misplaced. But a successful tribunal must be grounded in reality, not failed assumptions - and the reality is that many Iraqis still question American motives.

Iraqis do not assume that America has their interests at heart, and are thus likely to view with skepticism an American "agent" managing the judges. They will no doubt wonder if Chalabi is there to ensure that no cases expand to cover America's role in supporting Saddam during the 1980s, atrocities during the 1991 Gulf War, or the oil-for-food program. Despite whatever success the tribunal will muster, the media in Iraq now has a legitimate reason to focus almost entirely on the issue of undue U.S. influence on the process.

Few in Iraq or the Arab world want to defend Saddam, but that does not mean they will avoid focusing on the recurring problem of "symbolic sovereignty." But while it is unlikely that anyone will defend the behavior of Saddam Hussein, they will continue to insist on a process that is fair *and perceived to be fair*. America has paid a high price for assuming that Iraqis' gratitude for the end goal of punishing Saddam will trump their reaction to the means of arbitrary power.

The Coalition has already missed two key chances to make this tribunal a turning point. First they raised concerns about judicial interference by refusing to internationalize the process. Now they have validated those concerns by appointing Salem Chalabi. This tribunal cannot afford a third strike to its perceived independence or we risk turning another opportunity for progress and praise into another example of American arrogance.

Tom Perriello is a fellow at Res Publica and a former adviser to the Office of the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Unamsil steps up security

By Sayoh Kamara

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has stepped up security in and around its headquarters at Mammy Yoko, Aberdeen.

This latest development which started some weeks ago is aimed at sensitizing the staff of

the mission on what to do in the event of an emergency such as a fire outbreak.

This sensitization is done in a way of a simulated exercise wherein an imaginary fire scene is created. A warning announcement is done with a megaphone warning occupants of the complex to

assemble at a point as Firefighters with fire gadgets and fire extinguishers enter the building.

In one of these simulated exercises last Saturday, the SRSG was reported as being the primary target for evacuation. He was dramatically rescued from his office and

taken on board one of the helicopters and flown to an unknown location while the other staff were stationed in an area deemed to be safe.

According to sources within the mission, this seeming preparation is in line with the UN Department of Security's new

Contd. Back Page

From Front Page

measures at upgrading security standards at its missions around the world. This, the sources maintained is connected with the bombing of the UN's mission headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq in August last year where dozens of its staff including the SRSG, Brazilian born, Sergio Vieira Demelo died. The department came under stern criticism following an enquiry into the security makeup of the mission. "Any change in measures therefore that will put the UN in any safe environment around the world is deemed to be replicated anywhere the organisation has a mission", the sources said. However, this latest development within the mission in Sierra Leone is attracting concern as to whether Sierra Leone has been suspected as being in the black books of terrorist cells for a possible attack.

The Pool

Monday April 26, 2004

Unamsil Handover Security To Police

By Amara A Samura

As part of their adjustment, draw-down and withdrawal process in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (Unamsil) yesterday officially handed over the internal security of the entire northern region to the Sierra Leone Police force at a very impressive ceremony held in Makeni. The meeting which took place at the Wusum Field was graced by senior cabinet ministers, senior officers from Unamsil, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), the Sierra Leone Police, Office of National Security, traditional rulers and the community.

Speaking to The New Storm yesterday on telephone from Makeni, the

Acting Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of operations Mr. David S. Sesay said the day was important for the police as they took control of the internal security of the region after Unamsil effectively on that day. The acting SAC Ops noted that the whole exercise is challenging which they are ready and determined to take because it is their responsibility to provide security to both lives and properties in the whole country.

He assured Sierra Leoneans that, the police is working round the clock to ensure that the security of the country is improved to enable them give more confidence to foreign investors to invest in the country and create job opportunities for the youths. Mr.

The New Storm

Monday April 26, 2009

From Front page

David Sesay who is also the Director of the Operational Support Division (OSD) maintained that initially the security of the country was handled by Unamsil first, military second and the police third, but it has now changed to the police first, the army second and Unamsil third, because the police are now

claiming primacy. He noted that with the logistics and professional training his unit has acquired over the years, he was confident that they would continue to maintain law and order in the country even after Unamsil would have left. He noted that with the concept adopted by the force on community po-

licing and the interaction with the public they would perform their duties effectively thereby restoring the confidence once lost in the force. Mr. Sesay called on the community to continue to accept the police as their brothers and sisters and give them any vital information that seeks to destabilize the peace they are trying to strengthen.

Peep

Monday April 26, 2009

UNAMSIL HANDS OVER IN THE NORTH

army and police will now handle security in biggest region

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) on Thursday 22 April has today handed over security primacy of the Northern Province to the Government of Sierra Leone at a colourful ceremony attended by the Vice President Hon. Solomon Berewa, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Governance and Stabilization, Mr. Alan Doss, the UNAMSIL Force Commander Maj. General Sajjad Akram, Government Ministers including the Deputy Defense Minister Joe Blell and Members of Parliament from the region.

handing over

The ceremony was climaxed by an emotional symbolic transfer of control of security in a region

that has five of the country's 12 provincial districts, when the UNAMSIL Commander of Sector Centre in charge of the north, Brig. Gen. Shafiq Uzzaman handed over a red-ribboned file to the Regional Commissioner of the Sierra Leone Police, Christopher John.

sad and moving

Speaking at the ceremony at the Wusum Grounds in the provincial headquarter town of Makeni, Vice President Berewa said the "significant, moving and sad moment" of transfer was a manifestation that "UNAMSIL have accomplished their mission". He praised the peacekeepers' "immense contributions to the return of peace to Sierra Leone" as well as their humanitarian and other social assistance to the com-



Vice president Berewa at Makeni handing over ceremony

munities.
"The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and the Sierra Leone Police are

prepared to take up the security challenges after UNAMSIL" he assured.

AND NOW, UNAMSIL DEPARTS

The formal handing over of security matters in Makeni on Wednesday by UNAMSIL to the security forces of Sierra Leone, especially the Sierra Leone Police Force, must send home the message to all Sierra Leoneans that the international community now expects Sierra Leoneans to be masters of their own security and destiny.

For more than a period of ten years, Sierra Leoneans took up arms to senseless shot at each other, leading to the near collapse of the State.

The international community had to stand up firm to save Sierra Leone from total disintegration when after the UN brokered peace talks in Lome, the same United Nations, thought

it necessary to send to Sierra Leone one of the largest peace-keeping force ever deployed by the UN to any part of the world.

The assignment given to UNAMSIL was clear, to serve as a referee to ensure that combatants of the RUF, the CDF and the AFRC, put their guns down and turn a new page in an effort to rehabilitate the war torn country.

It must be stated for posterity that the sons and daughters of people in distant countries who believe in peace in those parts of the world sent their children to help this country to revert to a state of peace and political normalcy.

Almost every nationality in the world took part in the peace process in Sierra Leone and the participation of UNAMSIL in the peace process paid the desired dividend when the combatants from all the warring factions decided to see reason and eventually surrendered their arms and ammunition to UNAMSIL.

It must be stated that UNAMSIL played no mean feat in ensuring that peace returned to Sierra Leone, but having stated that all Sierra Leoneans must also be prepared to stand on their own feet as soon as possible, the UNAMSIL peacekeepers will depart these shores, leaving Sierra Leoneans to decide whether they want to continue to live in peace or whether they still intend to tear their country apart.

But we have learnt the lesson that there can be no alternative to peace in determining the happiness of individuals as so many Sierra Leoneans suffered degradation and hardship during the war years.

Surely, those people who slept in the open and whose hands were chopped off and whose houses were burnt down would never want to experience what befell Sierra Leoneans during the ten years of a debilitating war.

Now that UNAMSIL is bidding farewell in parts of the country more than any time before, Sierra Leoneans must be determined to ensure that the destruction that visited this country should never again be allowed to recur.

We may have been talking about peace, indeed, Sierra Leoneans have started to enjoy the benefits of peace, but real peace can only be a matter of fact if after UNAMSIL's departure, Sierra Leoneans embrace each other and work together to sustain peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

True, UNAMSIL is departing and there is need for us to assure ourselves and the rest of the world that in the past five years, all Sierra Leoneans have come to the full realization that without peace, there can be no development.

One lesson, which we learnt from UNAMSIL is that peace pays positive dividends, and thanks to UNAMSIL.

The New Citizen

Monday April 26, 2004



BREAKING NEWS

FRONT PAGE

NATIONAL

AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL

BUSINESS

SPORT

ELECTIONS 2004

WHEELS & DEALS

WEEK IN PICTURES

INSIGHT

NATIONAL

AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

COLUMNISTS

CONVERSE

BY INVITATION

MEDIUM

ONLINE

EDITORIALS

MONITOR

KRISJAN LEMMER

BODY LANGUAGE

ARTS

ESCAPE

FRASER'S RAZOR

HIV/AIDS BAROMETER

REGULARS

ZAPIRO

MADAM & EVE

THROUGH THE LENS

FORUMS

NOTES & QUERIES

LETTERS

ARCHIVE SEARCH

GAMES

PARTNER SITES

THE MEDIA ONLINE

THE TEACHER

EARTHYEAR

SERVICES

SUBSCRIPTIONS

NEWS BY SMS

SEND FLOWERS

DATING BUZZ

JOBS

NEWSLETTERS

Digital M&G

AFRICA

Liberia disarmament still on track

Monrovia, Liberia

26 April 2004 11:16

United Nations peacekeepers in Liberia disarmed more than 200 rebel fighters on Sunday in the territory of Tubmanburg in the north west of the country, according to the UN mission in Liberia (Unmil).

Unmil's regional commander, Pakistani Colonel Javid Iqbal said his troops disarmed 254 ex-fighters of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy group and called it the most successful operation so far in the disarmament programme.

The UN-controlled disarmament scheme was resumed 10 days ago in the central provincial city of Gbarnga. It had been suspended last December after disturbances by fighters insisting on immediate benefit payments in exchange for surrendered weapons.

A estimated 12 persons died in the disturbances, according to reports at the time.

An estimated 15 000 fighters have been disarmed since December last year, including nearly 4 000 over the past eight days in Gbarnga and Buchanan. -- Sapa-DPA

- Talkback: [Have your say about this article](#)
- Daily cellphone alerts: [Get news headlines by SMS](#)
- Daily Newsletter: [Get the news by e-mail](#)

[AFRICA](#) | [HOMEPAGE](#)



SIGN ME IN

Archive Search

Go

☒ Print edition

☒ Daily news

[[Advanced](#) | [Help](#)]

Career search

Search South Africa's #1 job listings and career advice site.

Find me a job!

This story was printed from [channelnewsasia.com](http://www.channelnewsasia.com)



Title : Liberian fighters turn up eager but empty-handed for disarmament
By :
Date : 26 April 2004 0331 hrs (SST)
URL : http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/81832/1/.html

TUBMANBURG, Liberia : The United Nations took its campaign to disarm Liberia's 45,000 combatants to the rebel stronghold of Tubmanburg amid new concerns that only half of the fighters are actually handing in weapons.

"First class, the best operation so far," Clive Jacknik, the head of the UN's disarmament program in the west African country, said from the crossroads town 60 kilometers (36 miles) northwest of Monrovia.

Pakistani battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Javid Iqbal that peacekeepers disarmed their daily quota of 250 fighters plus a few more within hours of kicking off the program, calling the opening day "extremely smooth".

Tubmanburg marked the third stop on a staggered-start campaign resumed this month by UNMIL, the UN mission in the west African country to relieve fighters from three warring factions of their arms before they go home, where they will receive vocational training or schooling.

The combatants, most of whom have been fighting since they were children, also receive a 300-dollar stipend in two payments.

Disarming the rebels is seen as crucial to putting Liberia firmly on the road to peace. A nearly-uninterrupted civil war raged for 14 years until last August, ending with president Charles Taylor fleeing into exile in Nigeria under massive international pressure.

Sunday's success here, and the ease with which UNMIL has disarmed some 4,000 fighters since the process resumed April 15, marks a huge improvement over the disastrous December 7 launch of the 50 million-dollar process.

Poor planning and a shortage of troops sent thousands of fighters in to the streets of Monrovia for three days due to confusion over the cash payments. Twelve people were reported killed in the riots.

UNMIL disarmed 12,000 fighters in that first week but then suspended the campaign, first until January and then until two weeks ago, when it resumed in Gbarnga, another stronghold of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

Nearly 2,700 fighters in Gbarnga have since been admitted to the cantonment site, where they will stay for seven days before returning to civilian life and a choice of a trade or an education in what UNMIL spokeswoman Margaret Novicki has called a "long-term" commitment by the UN.

Thanks to a five-month public awareness blitz of radio ads, posters and a traveling song-and-dance revue, the process has also run smoothly in Buchanan, the port stronghold of another rebel grouping, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) which is known to have been funded by eastern neighbor Ivory Coast.

And while there have not been any riots since the April 20 disarmament of around 1,200 MODEL troops, reporters who attended the opening day of the process in Buchanan noted that roughly half of the fighters who showed up came empty-handed.

UNMIL officials corroborated this, the UN news agency IRIN reported Wednesday, saying that while 1,789 former fighters had been processed by that point, peacekeepers had collected only 782 weapons, some of which were unuseable.

Unarmed fighters say their commanders have seized their weapons, who have since hidden them or spirited them away to Ivory Coast or Sierra Leone, both under UN mandate. Some weapons have also reportedly ended up in Guinea, which also has the potential to destabilize.

Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is widely believed to have armed disgruntled ex-LURD rebels in their fight against Taylor's armies in Liberia's southeast. In exchange he got their help in quashing a September 2002 uprising in the Ivory Coast that remains unresolved 19 months later.

Protracted political battles have prevented the launch of the Ivorian disarmament process, which will offer fighters twice as much money to hand over a weapon as in Liberia.

UN special envoy to Liberia Jacques Klein told UN officials in Dakar in February that there were roughly three weapons for every combatant in Liberia, a country of 3.3 million people.

"We can't rely solely on the ongoing disarmament program for a gun-free Liberia," pro-democracy activist Tobias Nagbe told AFP.

"UNMIL will have to institute cordon and search operations to ensure that guns are taken from our midst."

- AFP

Copyright © 2003 MCN International Pte Ltd

<< [back to channelnewsasia.com](http://www.channelnewsasia.com)



INTER PRESS SERVICE NEWS AGENCY

[Homepage](#)[Search](#)[Contacts](#)[Headlines](#)

ELECTIONS-SIERRA LEONE: An Election 30 Years in the Making

Lansana Fofana

Local elections aren't a rarity, some would claim. But, they are if you live in Sierra Leone and have not had a say about local councillors in three decades.

FREETOWN, Apr 21 (IPS) - That the elections are happening is the good news. The bad news is that the contest is not going to be a pretty one.

Osman Yansaneh, secretary general of the opposition All Peoples Congress (APC), has already alleged "gross interference of (tribal) 'chiefs' in the electoral process in favour of the ruling SLPP (Sierra Leone Peoples Party)."

Of the 17 registered political parties in the country, only four are taking part in the elections - the others having run out of steam after the last general election in May 2002.

The local government contenders include the SLPP of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) - formerly a rebel movement that gained notoriety in Sierra Leone and beyond for amputating the limbs of civilians during the country's civil war.

The Peace and Liberation Party (PLP) and the biggest opposition party in parliament, the APC, are also participating in the poll, which is being administered by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

Yansaneh told IPS, "We will resist all attempts by the SLPP to rig or influence the elections."

For his part, NEC's chairman Eugene Davies said he wants to conduct "free, fair and transparent elections devoid of violence, intimidation and rigging." However, he expressed concern about the alleged meddling by tribal leaders in the selection of candidates for the municipal elections.

The municipal elections are crucial and clearly a test for the SLPP, which got 70 percent of the votes in general elections held almost two years ago. The SLPP is serving a second five-year term.

Political analyst John Mansaray says "It will be a tough fight for the SLPP. Most people here believe that the government has failed to deliver on its election promises in 2002."

During its 2002 campaign, the ruling party promised decent medical services, working roads, a reliable electricity supply and improved education. But, it has failed to match words with action, according to Mansaray.

Foday Kumara, a young voter, says he cast a ballot for the SLPP in the last elections, "but this time around I will be very careful in making my choice."

Others could not be bothered. "I find it difficult to feed my children and pay their school fees. Things are very hard for me, so the elections are not a priority for me," says Isatu Bangura, a housewife with four children.

But according to Sidikie Brima, the minister responsible for local government, these elections are merely about the "devolution of power and restoration of local government authority."

A total of 1,560 candidates will be competing for 390 electoral wards across the country. This in itself is significant because during the last elections, some regions were not entirely accessible because of rebel activity.

For the first time since democracy was re-introduced in 1996, independent candidates are participating in a nation-wide poll.

One such independent candidate, Michael Kanneh, told IPS after a day of campaigning: "The existing parties have failed to

address the needs of the electorate, a reason why there is considerable voter apathy. I think party politics no longer attracts voters who have been more than doubly disappointed.”

In the meantime, the campaign is heating up although there have been no reports of incidents yet.

The U.N. peacekeeping force here (around 11,000 military personnel) with assistance of the local police is providing security for the May 22 election. A grant of ten million dollars has been pumped in by the World Bank for the elections and revitalization of local councils.

However, the European Union refused to help with funds because of alleged financial improprieties with the 2002 vote.

At a court hearing earlier this month, Justice Robert Schuster set a bail of 43,000 dollars for Joseph Aruna and Francis Hindowa, who formerly served as electoral commissioners in eastern Sierra Leone. They stand accused of embezzling about 1,000 dollars of government money that had been intended to purchase office furniture and the like.

For most of the past decade, Sierra Leone - diamond-rich but plagued by a brutal civil war and political instability - remained one of the world's poorest countries in spite of its substantial mineral, agricultural, and fishery resources. However, the successful British-led military intervention in 2000 and the subsequent U.N. peacekeeping operation brought a measure of hope.

The civil war ended in early 2002, and President Tejan Kabbah was re-elected for a new five-year term in May 2002.
(END/2004)

[Home Page](#) | [Global affairs](#) | [Africa](#) | [Asia-Pacific](#) | [Caribbean](#) | [Europe](#) | [Latin America](#) | [Middle East](#) | [North America](#) |
[Environment](#) | [Development](#) | [Human Rights](#) | [Columns](#) | [Market Place](#) | [Culture](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Subscription](#) | [Reprint](#) |
[About IPS](#)

Copyright © 2004 IPS-Inter Press Service. All rights reserved.

Source: [News & Business](#) > [News](#) > **News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text)** 

Terms: **human trafficking in africa fueled by economic hardship and lack of birth register** ([Edit Search](#))

 Select for FOCUS™ or Delivery



Associated Press Worldstream April 23, 2004 Friday

Copyright 2004 Associated Press
All Rights Reserved
Associated Press Worldstream

These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The
Associated Press

April 23, 2004 Friday

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

DISTRIBUTION: Europe; Britain; Scandinavia; Middle East; Africa; India; Asia; England

LENGTH: 517 words

HEADLINE: UNICEF: **human trafficking** in Africa **fueled** by war, **economic hardship and lack of birth** registration

BYLINE: JONATHAN FOWLER; Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

Sexual **trafficking** and near-slave labor of women and children across Africa has been **fueled** by war, economic desperation and a failure to **register births**, the U.N. Children's Fund said in a new study.

Half the continent's 53 governments have declared **trafficking** a serious concern but few are able to identify the real extent of the problem, let alone tackle it, said Andrea Rossi, an Italian expert who wrote the UNICEF report.

"Every country represents a different problem," Rossi told reporters ahead of Friday's release of the 72-page study at a meeting of African Union ministers in Benin. "But at the national level in Africa there is a **lack** of capacity to collect data."

Rossi said there are no reliable figures for the number of trafficked individuals. An estimate of 200,000 in West Africa alone - suggested by campaigners - is unverifiable, he said.

Flawed or nonexistent **birth** registration makes it easier for traffickers to move youngsters between countries, because unregistered children never formally acquire a nationality, said Rossi.

"It becomes impossible to prove whether a young girl working as a housemaid in Gabon, for example, really comes from that country or has been trafficked from elsewhere," he added.

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 70 percent of **births** go unregistered, according to a separate U.N. study. That represents about 17 million children.

About 80 percent of African nations also reported "internal **trafficking**," where individuals do

not cross borders, but instead are moved around the country to meet the demand for cheap domestic and agricultural labor, and prostitution.

"Poverty is definitely linked to **trafficking**, but poverty is not the only reason," Rossi said. It makes worse an already desperate situation caused by war, repression and discrimination, he said.

The study found that those most vulnerable to **trafficking** are Africa's 3.3 million refugees and the estimated 12.7 million people displaced by conflict within their own countries, so desperate to find a better life that they are easily fooled by traffickers' promises.

Nigeria and Gabon are the major destinations for individuals trafficked from neighboring countries in West Africa, including strife-hit Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Individuals from countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Angola are taken to South Africa - one of the few countries to establish an anti-**trafficking** program, Rossi noted.

Many individuals are unable to escape the clutches of the traffickers once drawn into prostitution and labor exploitation, he said.

"You find people who are pulled in to the prostitution network at home who are then moved elsewhere in Africa, before being taken to Europe after a couple of years," he said.

The study found that at least 34 percent of African countries are major sources for **trafficking** to Europe. Those countries included Morocco, Algeria, Congo, South Africa, Madagascar, Somalia and Nigeria.

In addition, 26 percent of African countries - mostly in East Africa - reported **trafficking** to Arab nations.

LOAD-DATE: April 24, 2004

Source: [News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days \(English, Full Text\)](#) 

Terms: **human trafficking in africa fueled by economic hardship and lack of birth register** ([Edit Search](#))

Mandatory Terms: **date from 04/20/2004**

View: Full

Date/Time: Monday, April 26, 2004 - 5:54 AM EDT

[About LexisNexis](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

Copyright © 2004 LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Salone Times

Monday April 26, 2004

Ex-Combatants, Please Back Off

COMMENTARY By Fayia Sellu

After some four years of service the National Commission For Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) has finally shut its doors to the public. However, there are a few ex-combatants who refused to take advantage of the programme threatening to disturb the peace of former DDR officials and the public as a whole.

The other day there were some ex-combatants hanging around the former offices of the NCDDR on Pademba Road in Freetown, claiming that they are owed some benefits by that institution. The signcard was down. Yet the ex-com-

batants were there, throwing threatening remarks.

Most people will agree that the NCDDR, in all fairness, is one of the most successful national programmes in the country, in more ways than one. Particularly relevant is the indisputable fact that the programme received about the widest publicity. It was expensive to achieve such feat. The purpose of such publicity was not to make Dr. Francis Kaikai's voice or face a household thing in the country. It was meant to inform ex-combatants appropriately about the programme as it progressed.

Every radio station and newspaper benefited from the campaign to sensitize ex-combatants about deadlines, and pro-

cesses. Every ex-combatant had the opportunity to grab. There will always be negligent citizens who will not make good use of good things or opportunities. That is not even the issue; as much as the ex-combatants are an insignificant fraction of the general youth population in desperate need of salvation, are we expecting DDR to last forever and we continue to pamper those ex-fighters for wreaking havoc on this country? The donors have other priorities. That's the very reason they insisted on deadlines. We owe no obligation to the ex-combatants as a matter of preference.

SEE BACK PAGE

There is gainsaying the fact that the bitter pill of offering former combatants who perpetuated serious atrocities on the citizenry such a DISCRIMINATORY package, is in itself, infuriating; let alone that those who failed to make use of it are coming to again threaten law and order.

The police must be made to be alert and very severe with these jokers. NCDDR is over, as is the game of making protest noises here and there to blackmail the people of this country. Anything else is a law and order matter. It is in your (ex-combatants) interest to back off. Other youths who deserve assistance are scattered all over the country. They have a right to complain, not you.