

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:

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Awoko. Tuesday April 26, 2005.

AFRC Defence Counsel alleges human rights violation

By Tumba Borbor

The Lead Counsel of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Counsel (AFRC) indictees, Wilbert Harris has alleged that the Special Court does not observe the human rights of the

indictes, which he represents. In a letter dated 23rd April 2005, the Counsel stated that while the Prosecutor of the Court has abundant resources available to him, ranging from financial to human resources, they the

Defence struggle with two investigators for the three AFRC indictees. "The delicate balance of justice between both sides was disturbed when in March 2005, an unfounded allegation was made against the most effective

investigator and family members of the three accused persons. The Court ordered the suspension of four persons." Lead Counsel Harris stated, adding that although the Registrar commissioned an

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AFRC Defence Counsel alleges human rights violation

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independent inquiry into the matter, no information as to the outcome of the said inquiry has been made available to the Defence. Noting that the indictees have been in custody for a very long time, the accompanying pressures with the indictees not been able to see their loved ones at Court Counsel Harris maintained, "are immense." These among other things the Counsel said, "is a possible threat to justice and a fair trial for the families and the investigators." "The real question is whether justice is or could be seen to be done. The answer unhappily must be in the negative... As I understand it, applications

by them to be visited by named persons have not been approved for several months. Attempts to gain entry to see the detainees are met with a refusal at the gate of entry. The intended visitors are told that entry is denied unless the Court approves. A visitor to a detainee was subsequently visited by military Police Officers, detained, taken to Wilberforce Barracks and interviewed as to why he visited the Special Court. The detention lasted some five hours," the AFRC Lead Counsel recounted. Maintaining that they also share in the variety of pressures faced by the indictees, "effective representation demands the absence of interference of these types." Counsel

Wilbert Harris went on to firmly state that the failure by the Court to deal with such issues bordering on the proper conduct of the trial, "arguably contributes to the imbalance of the scale of justice." "If I am asked whether the human rights of the detainee I represent are being observed, I will reluctantly have to conclude in the negative," he said. "Justice is an unfulfilled dream of the world governed by reason. To those who do not know, it is a mass of unread literature. To the rest of us, it lies just around the corner. Trials are about achieving justice. It is not about just us," Counsel Harris maintained.

Sierra News. Monday April 25, 2005.

At Special Court...

AFRC strong men implicated in murder

By Alhassan Spear Kamara

Two former members of the defunct Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Lt. Col A.F. Kamara and Bazy Palmer have been implicated in the murder of the late Paramount Chief Joe Demby II of Gerehun in the Bo District. Giving his testimony at the on-going Special Court trials in Freetown, a

prosecution witness, code-named (TF1054) said that when the AFRC toppled the democratically elected government of President Kabbah in 1997, most towns and villages in the Bo district were put under siege by members of the junta, noting

that Gerehun which is 7 miles from Bo was attacked forcing most of its occupants to run for their lives.

The prosecution witness disclosed that Lt Col A.F. Kamara who was Resident Minister, Southern Region, gave orders to his junior army officers to kill, burn and loot properties belonging to civilians.

TF-054 who was testifying behind closed doors revealed that junta soldiers also killed innocent civilians and forced the pro-government militia, the Kamajors to leave Gerehun.

"The late Paramount Chief was unable to run for his life because he was sick and he could not walk and talk as well", pointing that the junta

soldiers burnt down a lot of houses in Gerehun.

He said Gerehun which is the home town of former Vice President, Dr. Joe Demby, suffered greatly in the hands of the junta.

The witness quoted members of the junta as describing Gerehun town as a pro-SLPP township.

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AFRC strong men implicated in murder

The Special Court prosecution witness was giving testimony against the three AFRC indictees: Santigie Kanu (555), Tamba Brima (Gullit) and Brima Bazy Kamara.

'SLPP has a lot to its credit', everything within its capacity to address them.

The National Chairman said he was a member of the All Peoples Congress (APC) from 1977 until 19990 when he resigned and has held positions among others was Resident Minister, Development and Economic Planning, Finance and Interior or Internal Affairs and even acted as second Vice President on a number of occasion.

The Chairman of the occasion was Mr. Mohamed Samoura, Acting Managing Director, SLENA.

Christian Monitor. Tuesday April 26, 2005.

SLPP's Loathing Of TRC Report:

The Reasons

It is apparent from the quotations below why the SLPP government would not want the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report to be in the public domain. It is very critical of the SLPP and the Tejan Kabbah administration. We shall endeavour to bring to our readers the actual findings of the Commission as demonstrated by this first

installment, happy reading.

SLPP Government

Primary Findings

On the Kamajor

Atrocities:

"The Commission finds that the leadership of Government had knowledge of CDF violations and abuses and, to the extent that such leaders were in the chain of command, they are held responsible".

On the violation of human rights:

"The Commission finds the SLPP Government responsible for carrying out the arbitrary arrest and detention of a large number of citizens in violation of their constitutional rights from 1998 onwards. Many of the arrests, detentions, the prosecutions and trials of this period were politically motivated, representing a denial of their basic rights. The

Commission finds that the Court-Martial of 37 soldiers of the SLA, during 1998 and which resulted in the execution of 24, was conducted in contravention of international human rights standards".

Main Findings:

Complacency upon Taking up the Reins of Government

"The newly-instated SLPP Government did not rise to the challenge required for the

management of the war effort in 1996. It failed to heed the lessons of its predecessors or to address the emergent threats to state security that existed within the SLA. In several respects, the Government served to entrench the endemic disaffection of the conventional security forces".

Responsibility in the Breakdown of the Abidjan Peace Accord

"The Government miscalculated in its negotiation strategy at the Abidjan Peace Talks of 1996. It displayed a diplomatic naivety in making several key

military concessions to the RUF whilst demonstrating an over-reliance on the goodwill of the international community for implementation of the spirit of the consequent Peace Accord".

Mismanagement of the State Security Apparatus in the

SLPP's First Year in Office

"The SLPP Government was remiss in allowing such a high degree of ambiguity to develop around the dual role of Chief Sam Hinga Norman as Deputy Minister of Defence and National Co-ordinator of the Civil

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SLPP's Loathing Of TRC Report:

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Defence Forces. Most soldiers perceived Hinga Norman's role as being highly partisan in favour of the CDF. The failure on the part of the executive to address these negative perceptions in the military contributed significantly to the military coup of 25 May 1997".

"The Commission finds that President Kabbah misjudged the seriousness of at least two warnings of alleged coup plots from those in his military High Command. The implicated persons in these alleged plots subsequently proved themselves to be genuine

threats. The President's failure to address the concerns of his Deputy Minister of Defence, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, on 16 May 1997 resulted in the coup that ultimately unseated the President and caused untold suffering for the citizens of the country".

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FDCH Political Transcripts April 21, 2005 Thursday

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FDCH Political Transcripts

April 21, 2005 Thursday

TYPE: COMMITTEE HEARING

COMMITTEE: SCIENCE, STATE, JUSTICE AND COMMERCE AND RELATED
AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE: HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HEADLINE: U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FRANK A. WOLF (R-VA) HOLDS HEARING
ON FISCAL YEAR 2006 BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS

SPEAKER:

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FRANK A. WOLF (R-VA), CHAIRMAN

LOCATION: WASHINGTON, D.C.

APRIL 21, 2005

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...

We're going to have a number of questions on the record.

Charles Taylor, has the U.N. done anything to get Charles Taylor to the special court?

HOLMES: The United States...

WOLF: Would you acknowledge that Charles Taylor did bad things in life...

(CROSSTALK)

HOLMES: Yes, absolutely.

WOLF: ... in Sierra Leone?

HOLMES: Yes.

WOLF: And has destabilizing now Guinea?

HOLMES: Yes.

WOLF: And so what is the U.N. doing to get Charles Taylor?

HOLMES: Well, the United States is -- can I talk about that first? Because we're pressing Obasanjo, as you know, who took Charles Taylor from his voluntary agreement. And we've been pressing them for him to turn over Charles Taylor to the special court.

And we do that consistently. We know how important it is to you. We know important it is to...

WOLF: When does the court end?

HOLMES: The courts ends in (OFF-MIKE) yes, 2007, mid-2007.

WOLF: But I know David Crane is leaving.

HOLMES: I've heard that.

WOLF: So what will happen if he doesn't get there before the court ends?

HOLMES: Well, I hope he gets there before the court ends. We've got two more years, and we're not going to sit back and just let it go on.

I think that what we had to do is focus on making sure that we work with the Nigerians to get him turned over. Now, what happens in the future when...

WOLF: Now, we have a pretty good relationship with the Nigerian government.

HOLMES: Yes, we do. We do. And you know, we are constantly in contact with him. We are aware of the various things that he's doing, trying to undermine the situation in Liberia. We're tracking that very closely.

At some point, you know, we may have to look at what the U.N. mandate would be in the future if there was a case where the situation changes. That was when the question of what the U.N. does, specifically inside the mandates like (ph) Liberia will become a critical question for it.

So I think in the meantime what we need to do is to keep up the pressure on the Nigerian government to have him turned over. And that's what we're doing.

WOLF: Who will take David Crane's spot when he goes?

HOLMES: I don't know yet.

WOLF: Because that is the U.N. court? And I think the U.N. has an obligation...

(CROSSTALK)

HOLMES: Yes.

WOLF: I've been very, you know, appreciative of Secretary Rice's comments that I've been hearing, and that she's really committed...

HOLMES: Yes, she is.

WOLF: ... to do this. But I think you really have to do everything you can to get him back.

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