

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



The Champions – Inspector Foday Kamara holds up the first place trophy following the Police team’s victory over FMU in the Special Court’s intramural football competition.

**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:**

Monday, 26 March 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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The Trumpet  
Monday, 26 March 2007

# *As Registrar Resigns ...*

# Special Court Celebrates



*By Sydney Pratt* Special Court have inti- Acting Registrar of the Leone Herman Von  
Competent sources at the mated this press that the Special Court for sierra Hebel, on Friday March

16, threw a party in ce-  
ebration of his assumption  
of the office as the new  
Acting Registrar.  
The sources say almost  
every staff member of the  
court was invited to the  
party which was de-

*Hebel -Sabotage*  
scribed as, lavishly  
funded, which insiders  
say, was very unusual in  
the history of the court and  
particular with Herman  
Von Hebel.

*contd. page 4*

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# Special Court Celebrates

*From front page*

It could be recalled that Munlo left without any apparent reasons although insiders allege that it was due to the conditions that were attached to the renewal of his contract which according to our source, were to stringent for him to be able to comply with.

Although other sources at the court attributed Mr. Munlo's resignation to the death of the late Sam Hinga Norman, for which the court was blamed, information drip-dripping into our office say there was more to it than that.

These reasons for Mr. Munlo's resignations although not yet fully ascertained, are said to have far reaching effects on the credibility of the court.

When contacted for his comments, the head of Public Affairs Mr Peter Anderson said: "it was not much of a party, it was something normal for staff to do."

We put it to him that the reasons for Munlo's resignation were not stated on the press release. He said it is discretionary for any staff to disclose or not but multiple sources have confirmed that it was indeed, a lavish celebration.

The seeming sealed lips on the reason for the resignation of Lovenore Munlo to many, is a cause for

[Note: The quotes attributed to the Chief of Public Affairs are fictitious.]

New Vision  
Monday, 26 March 2007

# RUFPP to Contest July Elections

*By Ralph Ese' Donnu Sawyer*

The Interim Leader of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP), has affirmed that the party will contest and

win the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Samuel Gbassay Kanu who was speaking in an interview

*Contd. Page 2*

# RUFPP to Contest July Elections

with the New Vision at the party's Secretariat, Lightfoot Boston Street in Freetown over the weekend said the party has already fulfilled the requirements of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and was holding consultations with the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC). He added that 75 percent of RUFPP supporters have registered country wide without force because they needed a change of government to spread the party's ideology. He warned against under estimating their support.

Mr. Kanu said Education, Health, Water, Electricity and Housing are top on the

agenda of RUFPP government. He said some people still hold negative views about the RUFPP, noting that they will be oppurtuned to hear the RUFPP side of the story. Mr. Kanu said the RUFPP took up arms because of unprecedented corruption and injustice perpetrated by past governments.

When asked if the RUFPP can stand the might of the SLPP/ APC/PMDC, he replied, "Notwithstanding their political propaganda, an ant can kill an elephant."

He added that the likes of Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie, Issa Sesay missed their political targets because they were all not politicians,

like him, maintaining that the RUFPP boat is still sailing though in rough waters.

Commenting on the party's financial status, Mr. Kanu said they have international and local sponsorship to contest the forth coming elections.

The Interim leader disclosed that the party will soon go to its convention in April and that they have offices in the regions. He said even if the SLPP build hospitals, schools or parliament in the Little and Great Scarces, the RUFPP has the right to contest and unseat them. He lamented that there is much grumbling over the economy and therefore there is a need for positive change.

Awareness Times  
Monday, 26 March 2007

### **SPECIAL COURT LIES EXPOSED**

At a press conference summoned by Sam Hinga Norman (Jr), son of the late Chief Norma reportedly informed journalist that Lovemore, former special court registrar, lied about late man. He said that his father never went to Senegal for medical attention and that location was a detention camp. He made mentioned of the room and other things which were not befitting for his father. He therefore found out that all what Mr. Lovemore told him about his father was on the contrary- he lied to him.

## Cocorioko

Sunday, 25 March 2007

### **The Death of Sam Hinga Norman has Dual Tracks: Both Lead to S.L.P.P. and Special Court's Awkward Marriage**

By Karamoh Kabba

I cannot think of a better way of responding to your article on March 20, 2007 entitled, The Hinga Norman Debate: It Is Time To Put Country Before Politics, than first contrasting your English boyhood life to my village upbringing at Peyima and Gandahun, notwithstanding my early exposure in Methodist institutions. I can only count myself lucky to have been able to resist holy water from blinding my eyes later on in life in a municipal institution in Koidu town. How many of such institutions, as Kono District Education Council (K.D.E.C.), exist under the SLPP administration you serve? My morning recitations at K.D.E.C. were not the Quranic recitations or Biblical verses, but the pledge of the national allegiance. "Give Caesar what is Caesar's". Sidie Yahya Tunis, a PMDC youth leader, articulated this maxim in a short listed article for award-winning not too long ago. It only reminded me of my upbringing at K.D.E.C. School.

There is no way for someone whose boyhood life was spent in the comfort of those whose road network and railway wound deep into the heart of our beloved nation like a straw stuck into a ripe orange fruit with England at the receiving end, sucking hard, dehydrating the fruit right to its stem, and putting no nutrient back into the soil just to enjoy the lifestyle you so admired most in your childhood upbringing. Your English verses if they are not mere sophistry: What about Bai Bureh? What about Sengbeh Peah? What about Wallace Johnson? What about Soldier Bayeh? What about those men and women whose chastened valor placed you in the State House, where, all you do, is buy kankankan for you and the President to enjoy, while you ride yourselves in wheelchairs at the expense of the taxpayers, doing nothing?

Your article is akin to a great African scholar who wrote that a woman lay her trap in the middle of her garden only to be accidentally be trapped in it, in a gross forgetfulness or ignorance that, like in law, traps are deterrents that are set around the garden not in the middle of the garden. Above all, this scholar wrote that the woman got trapped in are own trap in a great manifestation of further ignorance that our priority in the morning in a village life is to see check for what's in the trap. Like our African scholar, who got trapped in his own trap in his short story entitled, The Trap, you are trapped in your own trap, Mr. Ishmael Taylor Kamara. A British citizen whose upbringing is limited to London, who has no true knowledge of an English's life on the farm beyond inner city life would hardly know what I am talking about. So, you are excused.

"In the final and penultimate": That verse cannot be the final and penultimate verse of Jerusalem Mr. Ishmael Taylor Kamara. It is the final verse. Please allow me to introduce the penultimate verse you are shying away from: "Bring me my Bow of burning gold; / Bring me my Arrows of Desire; / Bring me my Spear; O clouds unfold! / Bring me my Chariot of Fire!" Simply, the final cannot be second to last in a series or sequence. And besides, do we need such emotive expressions of war in verse for our country? I am not worried about your botching as I am determined to expose your sophistry. Not all writings abound with rhetorical flourish are logically in place or factually correct. My article is out to expose a sophist dressed in cloak, who uses the English language we all know not too well to cover ignorance or to fool the electorates.

"For, to this day, I am still amazed by the seemingly effortless manner in which the English, across all strata of society, express unflinching loyalty to their culture and traditions — indeed to all things English." How would you not be amazed? How would you know that when as a national figure you cannot find a better example in your own culture and tradition? Your upbringing can be explained only in terms of those whose pedigree have been only in politics and their forebears could afford to send them to England at the expense of ordinary electorates the PMDC stands for and speaks for. Such manner is not effortless for the English, Mr. Ishmael Taylor Kamara: The British read the pledge of allegiance in the morning while children under your administration in Sierra Leone busy themselves with Quranic recitations and Biblical verses.

"Whether it was the old age pensioners I often observed sitting in front of a band shell, enjoying an afternoon of English regimental music, or the perfectly behaved children out on a school trip to the Tower of London or the Houses of Parliament, I always sensed a deeper meaning to these otherwise leisurely pursuits: what can best be

described as an emotional connecting with and celebration of a rich heritage - a way of life." I am sure you would have enjoyed it as well, only if you are old enough, when the British wore tailcoat and morning dress to watch the neck of prisoners dangled on the rope for recreation, a tradition of death penalty your administration upholds even when the English you admired so much have long abandoned it. In that respect, you are way behind the English culturally and traditionally as you rightfully admits.

No need to wonder the British had called a whole country "Sierra Leone Company" at one time: It was an enterprise for economic gains for them. Indeed, it was a bed down for European heisting in the entire region.

Sir John Hawkins, the first British, landed in Sierra Leone in 1562. During his third visit between 1567 and 1568, he took part in conflicts between two Mane kings, "... seized and took away 250 slaves."

A termite colony is a better analogy for British slavery and empire building to ensure the lifestyle you so admired at childhood: In slavery, the Queen of England knighted John Hawkins for showing huge profits when he stole those slaves in Sierra Leone. Mr. Hawkins moved up the social rank, for hard work, over and beyond. He became a highly placed economic soldier of the British Empire. He was a great asset to the Queen in inverse proportion; with an increase economic benefit in proportion as Africa's wealth of human resources decreased with a subsequent decrease in economic development.

This pattern of seizing slaves and building empires in Africa, first by Arabs and later by Europeans and renaming places in Africa by the colonialists extended way beyond Sierra Leone and Liberia. In fact, the British took pleasure in naming almost every institution of learning in Africa after British royalties. They named all the beautiful natural lacustrine sceneries of East and Central Africa after European royalties and explorers. Merely, it was consistent with colonialists' over-presumptuousness and purports of knowing everything. Otherwise, the Arabs could have named African countries, cities, towns and villages after Arab kings, kingdoms, imams and sultans way before the advent of the British. No wonder many years later, a senior government official in Sierra Leone reminisces on the English in the comfort of a wheelchair in the State House.

History taught us that Arab traders were the first external influence in Africa. But in nowhere do we find evidence of such manifest arrogance. This action took from Africa more than the taken of slaves from Africa did. It robbed Africa off its culture entirely for a culture you admire so much. It nurtured inferiority complex in Africans to a perceived European superiority from which you seems to be suffering. It served as the root of racism and entrenched stoicism in the European to admit sooner that slavery was wrong. As a government official, I expect you to laud the bold action of the city of Freetown in its initiative to remove the names of British royalties from our landmarks and not to praise them.

"What is conspicuously absent, I believe, is a sufficiently strong sense of national identity. That is why, for instance, a government official can steal with impunity from the treasury he is charged with managing and growing, thereby robbing sick children of vital medicines and denying all of us good roads and modern schools; that is surely how a group of low-ranking army officers can, without any compunction, overthrow a democratically elected government, leaving nothing but chaos and deterioration in its wake." But when we charged that President Kabbah's actions in a similar way you have articulated were the causes of the Johnny Paul Koroma coup, the SLPP gets all bent out of shape in a defensive stance. And is the only good thing you have accidentally highlighted in your article.

"If that article - written by Mr. Kabba, the Director of Comm. & Media, PMDC-USA - were not such a transparent attempt to gain political capital from the death of Hinga Norman, one might have considered addressing Mr. Kabba's contentions." Now, Mr. Taylor Kamara, why should you have a problem with an article that is transparent. According to you, it is not a distortion of facts, Sir. If I caused any discomfort for you for stating the facts, it is unfortunate. A balanced essay as mine that raises questions you yourself refers to as transparent is what we need for Sierra Leone. I guess you are used to dragging things under the rug just as the SLPP did until its caused the death of a hero you only know about now.

Where were you owing to your position in the government? We just only now are hearing from you that Sam Hinga Norman was a hero. I will certainly regret every word I wrote in that article you referred to in your response if the family members of Sam Hinga Norman come forth with such concerns. Until then, the death of Sam Hinga Norman has dual tracks: Both lead to SLPP and Special Court's awkward marriage to destroy a hero. And you are on point with that claim!

Another point before I leave: You have used personal obscenity on me in your essay, in your capacity as an SLPP government official, I would dare not repeat; for when I am long gone from this earth, my children and grandchildren would be surely interested in reading what I wrote as a social commentator.



## Institute for War and Peace Reporting

Friday, 23 March 2007

[http://www.iwpr.net/?p=acr&s=f&o=334328&apc\\_state=henpacr](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=acr&s=f&o=334328&apc_state=henpacr)

### "Turf War" Over Charles Taylor Case

The former Liberian leader's defence team says the International Criminal Court hosting the trial is imposing its own detention rules when jurisdiction belongs to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

By Katy Glassborow in The Hague (AR No. 104, 23-Mar-07)

Despite United Nations resolutions enshrining the exclusive jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone over the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor in The Hague, defence lawyers say rules applied by the International Criminal Court are compromising the special court's autonomy.

A turf war appears to be brewing over which of the two courts has the right to set rules governing Taylor's treatment.

While other trials conducted by the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, SCSL, have taken place in Freetown, the court is trying Taylor at the premises of the International Criminal Court, ICC, in The Hague. The decision to locate the trial in The Hague was taken in the interests of keeping the peace in Sierra Leone and the wider region.

Avi Singh, a legal adviser on Taylor's defence team, told IWPR that as a result of the decision, the SCSL registry fluctuates between its own regulations and interpretations of the rules, and those of the host ICC.

One hotly debated issue has been the ICC's placement of video surveillance cameras in the room set aside for confidential meetings between defence attorneys and their clients.

In early March, Karim Khan, lead counsel for Taylor's defence, notified the Special Court that his team had suspended attorney-client consultations because all possible avenues for seeking the cameras' removal had been exhausted.

The head of public information at the ICC, Sonia Robla, told IWPR that the presence of surveillance cameras is a rule of the court "based on security reasons". They are not there to monitor conversations, as defence lawyers fear, she said.

Although the SCSL registrar and president have backed defence initiatives to have the cameras removed from the consultation rooms, the ICC seemed loath to cede authority.

Robla stressed that talks were taking place between The Hague and Freetown. On March 23, Singh told IWPR that the ICC had informed the SCSL that rules surrounding surveillance cameras would no longer apply to legal visits, in line with the treatment accorded to the ICC's only detainee, Thomas Lubanga from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### TAYLOR CASE SHIFTED IN THE INTERESTS OF STABILITY

The SCSL was established by the UN and Sierra Leone's government for atrocities committed in that country after 1996, based on the concept of a hybrid UN and national institution operating in Freetown.

Taylor was initially indicted in 2003, while he was living in exile in Nigeria. The indictment was amended in March 2006, when he was taken into custody, to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone.

In the same month, the then SCSL president asked the Netherlands government and the president of the ICC to allow the trial to take place in The Hague, citing concerns about stability in the region should Taylor be tried in Freetown.

Singh told IWPR that "allegations that Mr Taylor poses a security risk to West Africa by his mere presence are unsubstantiated".

In June 2006, a UN Security Council resolution was passed giving a green light to the relocation. It said Taylor's presence in West Africa would be "an impediment to stability and a threat to the peace", and called on the Dutch government to facilitate the trial in the Netherlands.

The then registrar of the SCSL, Lovemore Munlo, welcomed the resolution, and noted that although the trial would take place in ICC courtrooms, it would be conducted by the SCSL's judges and in accordance with its rules.

"The resolution stresses that the Special Court will retain exclusive jurisdiction over Mr Taylor during his presence in the Netherlands," said Munlo.

Taylor was transferred to The Hague later in June 2006.

#### CEDING JURISDICTION

In December last year, Taylor's attorneys requested that an April 2006 memorandum of understanding between the ICC and the SCSL be reviewed, and their client's conditions of detention modified to ensure that the Special Court retained exclusive jurisdiction.

On March 19 this year, SCSL president Justice George Gelaga King dismissed the motion, saying that the memorandum of understanding, MoU, already states that "the Special Court shall retain full legal control and authority over the detainee and shall assume full legal responsibility for the custody of the detainee".

As Justice King pointed out, the MoU states that the SCSL will remain "fully responsible for all aspects arising out of the provision of the day-to-day detention services and facilities under this article, including the well-being of the detainee".

But Singh is adamant that the MoU is flawed in that it "both cedes jurisdiction, without authority, and states that the Special Court retains jurisdiction".

He said Justice King's decision "reaffirm[s] the court's unwillingness to grasp the nettle of responsibility, due to a turf war between the SCSL and the ICC".

The defence team finds this doubly galling as it maintains that the ICC is not assisting in on logistical matters and is refusing to give it offices in its building

"It is clear on the one hand that we are outside the system, but on the other hand it [ICC] wants to apply its rules of detention," said Singh.

#### NO AVENUE FOR APPEAL

Taylor's defence team filed a request in February 2007 for the case to be tried in Freetown, stating that there had been a "significant change in circumstances", and that the security situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone no longer justified the original change in venue.

On March 12, however, Justice King dismissed this request, saying that "the rules do not provide the applicant an avenue for reconsideration or review before the president".

The fact that there is no avenue for appeal is the crux of the problem, in the view of Taylor's defence team. Singh argues that they have been "consistently refused the right to be heard on the issue".

Initial filings were rejected by the appeals chamber as premature, with judges holding that the then president's inquiry as to whether the ICC and Dutch government would be willing to host the trial in the Netherlands was part of his "diplomatic and administrative functions".

The decision on transfer was conveyed to the defence simultaneously with the transfer of Taylor in June 2006, "so the defence were effectively denied an opportunity to contest transfer – it was a *fait accompli*", said Singh.

When the defence tried to get the president to reconsider the issue of transfer, he rejected the motion on the grounds that there was no provision in the rules to allow him to reconsider an administrative decision.

"He is saying he doesn't have jurisdiction to review his own decision, so who is finally responsible?" asked Singh.

#### SURVEILLANCE – THE EYE OF THE STORM

The UN Security Council resolution stressed that the Special Court would have exclusive jurisdiction over Taylor during his time in the Netherlands, but Singh argues that this does not seem to be extended to the conditions of his detention.

Singh is unhappy that video surveillance cameras were installed in the room allocated as a meeting room for Taylor and his defence attorneys.

This happened after cameras were put in the consultation room used by Lubanga. When Lubanga's defence counsel, Jean Flamme, objected in court, pre-trial judges agreed that the cameras should be removed and ordered the ICC's registrar to do so in late 2006.

But Taylor's team does not have a trial chamber in The Hague.

Many defence lawyers feel that the right of privileged legal counsel is part of one's right to a fair defence, and that this cannot be afforded if there is a video camera – even one without a microphone attached – in the consultation room.

Taylor's team told the SCSL that "the mere presence of a live video camera has a chilling effect on confidential communications... and creates an atmosphere whereby an accused does not feel free to communicate with his counsel".

Speaking from Freetown, a spokesman for the SCSL registry, Peter Anderson, told IWPR that this was a matter of interpretation of the rules.

"Our [rules] in Freetown say that during conferences between the accused and their lawyer, a member of the detention facility will be within visual contact but not within hearing distance," Anderson explained.

He said the ICC had decided to put a camera in the room instead of an actual person, and that the SCSL registrar and president had agreed with the defence that the physical presence of a person differs from a camera.

The logistical and legal framework of the arrangement between the SCSL and the ICC arrangement has never been encountered before, "so we have to work it out as we go along", said Anderson, adding that the MoU "adopts the ICC's rules of detention as our rules in The Hague".

#### DEFENCE INSISTS SCSL SHOULD NOT CONCEDE ON RULES

Robla said that the MoU between the SCSL and the ICC clearly states that the latter institution is responsible for the detainees in The Hague, and therefore applies its own rule on having cameras present for security reasons.

"These are our rules and if the camera is going to be removed we have to follow the appropriate channels" added Robla, stressing that the MoU includes provisions to "open up dialogue between the courts, and we are now in the process of consultations".

The defence feels that the ICC is imposing its authority and creating confusion over whose rules apply, but that ultimately Taylor is an SCSL accused and detainee, and therefore Freetown is responsible for the conditions of his detention.

"Any concession of this [SCSL] authority should be avoided," said Singh.

The SCSL president gave an order that the SCSL registry communicate its views on the surveillance cameras to the ICC, and that action should be taken.

But even though the registry agreed that the video cameras should be removed, it apparently has no jurisdiction over ICC decisions.

Nor does the jurisprudence set by Lubanga's pre-trial judges seem to be binding or relevant for Taylor. The ICC's Robla explained that "in principle, our rules apply for all our detainees, but with Lubanga the chambers took a decision. It is a general rule that the ICC has, and we are open to changes."

On March 23 Singh notified IWPR of an apparent U-turn on the matter, as the ICC told the SCSL that after internal consultation between judges and the presidency over surveillance cameras for Lubanga, a decision had been made that the rules would not apply to legal visits.

This is consistent with the decision taken by Lubanga's pre-trial judges, and means that for the sake of maintaining a uniform regime at the detention centre, surveillance cameras will not be used for Taylor's legal consultations either.

Singh explained that it had also been made clear by the ICC that any changes to Lubanga's status in respect of the rules and regulations of the ICC could have an impact on Taylor, so consultation between the two courts would take place.

#### FURTHER DISPUTES POSSIBLE ONCE TRIAL STARTS

Even though the issue of the surveillance camera seems to have been resolved, it appears to have happened as a result of an internal debate, rather than consultations between the two courts. This therefore leaves open the question of what happens the next time there is an inconsistency between the rules of the SCSL and the ICC.

The case exemplifies the unique problem of a Freetown-based, UN-backed hybrid court managing a trial in The Hague, and rings alarm bells for when Taylor's case reaches the trial stage. There could, for instance, be a battle over whether ICC or SCSL rules apply to the management of witnesses, the conduct of the courtroom, and the ability to access documents.

Taylor's trial is due to start in The Hague in June 2007.

*Katy Glassborow is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.*

  
**United Nations Nations Unies**  
 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 23 March 2007**

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **Despite Relative Stability, Liberia Still Faces Security Obstacles, Says UN Envoy**

New York, Mar 23, 2007 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The United Nations top envoy to Liberia today told the Security Council that although the impoverished West African country, which is rebuilding after a brutal 14-year civil war, has made progress in consolidating stability, numerous threats to peace remain. Alan Doss, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Special Representative for Liberia, said in a closed meeting that "although the political situation has remained quite stable, there are still serious security challenges that require continuing attention and action," according to Mr. Ban's spokesperson.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

#### **France to withdraw some troops from Ivory Coast**

ABIDJAN, March 22, 2007 (AFP) - France will soon reduce its forces in Ivory Coast to below 3,000 following a peace agreement signed by the government and rebel forces, a military official said Thursday. France currently has 3,500 troops in the country who have operated alongside United Nations forces to patrol a buffer zone dividing the rebel-controlled north and the government-led south.

### **Local Media – Newspaper**

#### **President Dismisses Ministers for Corruption**

*(The News, The Analyst, The Inquirer and Public Agenda)*

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has acknowledged that corruption is still widespread in her Government but vowed to deal with those involved.
- According to an Executive Mansion release issued yesterday, the President has dismissed a Deputy Minister, Charles Dagosah and an Assistant Minister, James Konuwa at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy for corruption. Accordingly, the two public officials were dismissed for supposedly granting "bogus licenses" for mining operations in the country.

#### **UNMIL Disappointed over Assistant Minister's Removal**

*(The News, Daily Observer)*

- The Legal Judicial Support System Division of UNMIL has expressed disappointment over the Government's recent removal of the Assistant Minister of Justice for Litigation, Attorney Morris Kaba, from his post. According to The News newspaper, the Division assumed that Kaba's removal derived from his ruling against the Government in a deportation hearing involving a Lebanese businessman.

#### **Nigeria Donates Anti Riot Equipment to Liberian Police**

*(The Analyst, The Inquirer, Heritage and The News)*

- As part of its effort to strengthen the capacity of the Liberia National Police (LNP), the Federal Republic of Nigeria through its embassy in Liberia will today present several anti-riot equipment including 15 vehicles to the Liberian Government for the police.

#### **Liberian Government Reaffirms Commitment to Press Freedom**

*(Liberian Express, The News, The Liberian Diaspora, The Informer, The New Liberia)*

- Addressing a group of Liberian media executives in Monrovia yesterday, President Johnson Sirleaf reaffirmed her government's commitment to freedom of the press and of free speech, noting that her government absolutely has no intention to undermine the integrity and independence of the press. The President described the press as a partner in national development and expressed the belief that the media can be more helpful by exercising internal restraint.
- The President's meeting with the media personnel followed last week's allegation by the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) that the Government through the Ministry of Information and the National Security Agency (NSA) was trying to censor the work of the press. A statement issued by the PUL suggested that the Government was trying to undermine press freedom when it recently invited the heads of some printing houses in an effort to preview the headlines of newspapers before they are printed, an allegation the Government denied.

#### **Former Taylor Minister Says UNMIL's Presence is Scaring Away Investors**

*(The Liberian Diaspora)*

- [sic:] Former Minister of Public Works, Emmet Taylor has attributed the slow pace by international investors to return to Liberia to the presence of an occupational force, UNMIL. Mr. Taylor said he strongly believes that the presence of UNMIL in Liberia is giving wrong signals to the outside world that Liberia is still fragile, thus scaring away investors. The former Public Works Minister noted that foreign investors want to see a stable Liberia run by Liberians without the presence of foreign military forces.

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

#### **President Reaffirms Government's Commitment to Press Freedom**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Assistant Minister Rejects Dismissal**

- Former Assistant Justice Minister for Litigation Morris Kaba yesterday rejected his appointment as County Attorney for Rivercess and described the appointment as a "demotion". Speaking to reporters, Mr. Kaba said that normally, professionals seek career advancement and not the full closure of their careers. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf transferred Kaba last month after he presided over a case involving a Lebanese-national and the Government, which the latter lost.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Nigerians Donate Vehicles to Liberian Police**

- In her remarks when she received 11 vehicles from the Government of Netherlands yesterday, Liberia National Police Inspector-General Munnah Sieh announced that the Nigerian Government would today handover 15 vehicles to her sector in fulfillment of that Country's promise to help equip the Police in its fight against crimes. He praised the Netherlands and UNMIL for the donation, and appealed to other friendly governments to follow suit as the donation would help the Police respond to crimes effectively.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Acting Agriculture Minister Raps on Seed Rice Multiplication**

- Acting Agriculture Minister Lorpu Kandakai said that the process of seed rice multiplication was crucial to the Country's national food security programme and would therefore establish seed multiplication projects around the Country to boost food production.

- Speaking at Garyemah Town in Bomi County Wednesday when she visited Garyemah Town in Bomi County where a seed multiplication project is ongoing, Madam Kandakai said that more than 40 farmers and technicians from other towns would be recruited in the project.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Public Works to Demolish Structures under Major City Bridge**

- In an interview, Thursday, the Public Relations Officer of the Minis Public Works, Mr. Fassama Kollie announced that the Ministry would carry out a massive demolition exercise of illegal structures put up by squatters under the Gabriel Tucker Bridge, on Saturday after the individuals concerned had been served removal order four months ago that provided relocation.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Government Moves to Dismiss Case with *The Independent Newspaper***

- The Government of Liberia filed a motion to dismiss its case against *The Independent* newspaper because the paper was unregistered under Liberian Law. In a four-count dismissal filed to the Supreme Court Thursday, the Government contended that *The Independent* newspaper lacked the legal capacity to sue as it had neither an Article of Incorporation nor a Business Registration Certification from the Ministry of Commerce.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

#### **Government Hires American Cops to Train Presidential Guards**

- In an effort to improve the performance of the personal security of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 5 United States Secret Service Officers were in the Country for one year to conduct in-house training to increase the professionalism and skills of security forces. Recently, Rhodes Island Congressman Patrick Kennedy promised to lobby in Congress to raise US\$30 million for President Sirleaf's personal security to check the many threats on her live.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star 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](mailto:karpeh@un.org).*

New York Times  
 Sunday, 25 March 2007

### **Diamonds Move From Blood to Sweat and Tears**

By LYDIA POLGREEN

KOIDU, Sierra Leone — The tiny stone settled into the calloused grooves of Tambaki Kamanda's palm, its dull yellow glint almost indiscernible even in the noontime glare.

It was the first stone he had found in days, and he expected to get little more than a dollar for it. It hardly seemed worth it, he said — after days spent up to his haunches in mud, digging, washing, searching the gravel for diamonds.

But farming had brought no money for clothes or schoolbooks for his two wives and five children. He could find no work as a mason.

"I don't have choice," Mr. Kamanda said, standing calf-deep in brown muddy water here at the Bondobush mine, where he works every day. "This is my only hope, really."

Diamond mining in Sierra Leone is no longer the bloody affair made infamous by the nation's decade-long civil war, in which diamonds played a starring role.

The conflict — begun by rebels who claimed to be ridding the mines of foreign control — killed 50,000 people, forced millions to flee their homes, destroyed the country's economy and shocked the world with its images of amputated limbs and drug-addled boy soldiers.

An international regulatory system created after the war has prevented diamonds from fuelling conflicts and financing terrorist networks. Even so, diamond mining in Sierra Leone remains a grim business that brings the government far too little revenue to right the devastated country, yet feeds off the desperation of some of the world's poorest people. "The process is more to sanitize the industry from the market side rather than the supply side," said John Kanu, a policy adviser to the Integrated Diamond Management Program, a United States-backed effort to improve the government's handling of diamond money. "To make it so people could go to buy a diamond ring and to say, 'Yes, because of this system, there are no longer any blood diamonds. So my love, and my conscience, can sleep easily.'

"But that doesn't mean that there is justice," he said. "That will take a lot, lot longer to change." In many cases, the vilified foreign mine owners have simply been replaced by local elites with a firm grip on the industry's profits.

At the losing end are the miners here in Kono District, who work for little or no pay, hoping to strike it rich but caught in a net of semifeudal relationships that make it all but impossible that they ever will.

A vast majority of Sierra Leone's diamonds are mined by hand from alluvial deposits near the earth's surface, so anyone with a shovel, a bucket and a sieve can go into business; and in a country with few formal jobs, at least 150,000 people work as diggers, government officials said.

Most days, diggers like Charles Kabia, a 25-year-old grade-school dropout who has been digging since the rebels forced him to mine as a teenager, come up empty — he has not found a stone in two months. That last diamond, a half-carat stone, went for about \$65, which he split with his three partners.

"From all my years of mining I don't even have one bicycle," said Mr. Kabia, his hands trembling. "I really get nothing out of it."



The struggle to reform Sierra Leone's troubled mining industry is emblematic of many of the difficulties faced by this small, impoverished nation as it tries to heal.

Sierra Leone is at peace, its economy is growing and in July it will hold a presidential election that will turn a fresh page in the country's troubled history. But the recovery has been painfully slow. In the center of Koidu sits an enormous tank gun with a sign slung around its barrel — "War don don, we love peace," a hopeful message in English and Sierra Leone's lingua franca, Krio, placed there at the end of the war.

But five years later, the city still has no electricity. The crumbling streets were last paved in the mid-1970s. People live in roofless buildings left by the fighting, doing their best to scrub off the stinking mold and rig tarpaulin roofs.

Sierra Leone has struggled for much of its history to turn its diamonds into development and prosperity, but they have mainly been a source of pain.

"Diamonds, from the very beginning, corrupted Sierra Leone's most basic sense of governance," said Mr. Kanu, the diamond policy adviser.

Some countries, like Botswana, whose diamonds lie locked deep underground, have been able to make their deposits a source of wealth through careful management and control. But countries like Sierra Leone, Congo, Angola and Ivory Coast, where diamonds wash up in rivers and often sit just a few feet below the surface, have struggled to manage what may be the world's worst resource curse.

The sprawling mining business here includes about 2,500 small operations. Unlike oil, iron ore and even gold, diamonds are so easy to transport that if regulations are too onerous and taxes too high, miners and exporters will simply turn to smuggling. In 2005, Sierra Leone officially exported \$141 million worth of diamonds, government records show. That is a vast improvement over the \$24 million officially exported in 2001, before stringent new rules known as the Kimberley Process required diamond deals to be certified by the authorities. Before that, most diamonds were smuggled out of the country through Liberia and Guinea and sold for weapons.

But even now, the government's share of the revenue is modest, just 3 percent. In 2006, the government's take was only \$3.7 million. Licensing fees add to that total, but it is hardly enough to rebuild a nation of six million people, still broken by war.

Usman Boie Kamara, the deputy director of the government's mining office, noted that new laws requiring permits for dealers, mine owners and exporters have forced out shadowy operators, smugglers and money launderers. Laws also set minimum standards for the pay and benefits of diggers — though they are scarcely enforced, miners and experts say.

"These issues are being addressed, but it takes time," Mr. Kamara said.

At the Bondobush mine here, the grim routine of mining is on daily display — hundreds of diggers sifting through tons of gravel. The mine is divided into areas of 210 square yards, with each controlled by a license holder. By law that person must be Sierra Leonean, but in practice the licensees are often fronts for foreign backers or migrants from the Middle East or other West African countries.

Some are paid a small sum per day, usually about 75 cents, and given tools, food and shelter in exchange for about 30 percent of whatever their backers claim to be the value of the diamonds they find. And the financiers first deduct their expenses.

A few workers have no stake in their finds but are paid a wage, usually \$2 a day. Still others work solely for a share of the gravel they extract from the vast, watery pits. In most arrangements, a great deal of the risk is shouldered by the laborer.

The industry has long been dominated by outsiders, feeding a nationalism that was exploited by Foday Sankoh, leader of the Revolutionary United Front, the brutal rebel force that claimed to be liberating the mines but instead enriched itself and terrorized the populace.

Yet even with the laws requiring local control, working conditions have not improved much. The mine where Mr. Kabia works is operated by a chief who functions as a kind of local government executive. The chief, Paul N. Saquee, 46, is a former truck driver who spent the past two decades in the United States, most recently around Atlanta. Mr. Saquee's brother Prince is the chairman of the local diamond dealers association, the first Sierra Leonean to hold that position.

Paul Saquee employs two kinds of diggers. Some are paid about a dollar a day and 30 percent of the value of their stones, which they must hand over to Mr. Saquee's representative, another of the chief's brothers named Tamba. He watches with hawklike vigilance as the miners dig.

Others, like Mr. Kabia, work for a percentage of the gravel they extract and own any stones they find. In theory, this means they should get a fair sale price, but dealers often exploit their ignorance.

Prince Saquee, the chief's diamond-dealing brother, bankrolls several mines and scoffs at the notion of selling his stones to only one buyer.

"If you are working for an exporter, he will dictate the price," he said. "To me that is indirect slavery." But he has no qualms about demanding precisely that arrangement from those below him on the diamond food chain. The mine owners and workers he bankrolls must sell only to him.

"For the miners, it is different," he argued. A digger, "he depends on you. He doesn't know the value so you as the dealer have to tell him."

Paul Saquee, the chief, said that despite the low pay and hard working conditions, he was providing at least some form of employment to desperate people with no alternative.

"I wish that the miners would all go back to the farm, but they are here and need work," he said.

Part of Mr. Saquee's role is to administer a fund that sends a quarter of the government's diamond revenues back to the community the stones came from. Kono, home to more than half of all mining license holders, received \$377,900 in 2005 for a district of 475,000 people.

"I don't believe that diamonds are the future of this country," Mr. Saquee said. "We need to find something else to get ourselves moving."

Indeed, the poverty rates are highest in the mining districts — Kono's poverty rate is 20 percent higher than that in nearby Pujehun district, which is largely agricultural.

In the central bank building in Freetown, Mustapha B. Turay sorted gleaming stones into small mounds to determine their value for taxation. On a recent afternoon the country's largest exporter, Hisham Mackie, a longtime Lebanese kingpin, brought in \$2 million worth of stones bound for Antwerp, Belgium, that night.

Most had been dug by hand by workers in places like Koidu. But the paper trail does not reach all the way back to the miner, so there is no way to know how much a miner was paid. It is a gap, said Mr. Kanu, the diamond policy adviser, that can lead to the illusion that the problems brought to light by the civil war have been solved.

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<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21447987-2703,00.html>

### Island of ghosts where slavery is an echo

Jonathan Clayton in Bunce Island, Sierra Leone

THE thick walls of the fort have all but crumbled away; the remains held together by a mat of creepers and vines. Rusty cannon, stamped with the King of England's seal, point out to sea. Abandoned long ago, they once protected one of the most valuable commodities on the West African coast – slaves.

Bunce Island, set up in 1670, was for years the most important and busiest of about 40 British slave forts from where millions of African captives were loaded on to slave ships from Bristol, Liverpool and London and transported to the West Indies and the Americas.

From here, an estimated 150,000 captives made the short walk through an archway, now collapsed, and on to ships taking advantage of a natural deepwater harbour — the closest point to the mainland that ocean-going vessels could then reach.

The island is uninhabited.

Residents on neighbouring ones say that its waters are empty, the fish frightened off by muffled cries that drift across the sea on most nights.

Unlike on other slave islands off West Africa, there is none of the tourism largely sponsored by the vocal African-American lobby and contemptuously dismissed by critics as “Disneyland tourism”. The Bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery Act yesterday went unmarked, in sharp contrast to ceremonies in neighbouring Ghana.

Sierra Leone, mired in conflict for much of the 1990s, until recently largely ignored its links to slavery. That is beginning to change. The Government is renaming streets after Africans who fought in the abolition movement instead of the British, and is involved in efforts to preserve what is left of the ruins on Bunce Island.

Yesterday, however, no ceremonies took place to mark William Wilberforce's Bill finally passing through the House of Lords to become law.

“Slavery and its legacy have had a tremendous impact on Sierra Leone, but not all our people are very aware of it. Most of the slaves released on the African coast were encouraged to set up settlements here,” Professor Joe Alie, of the Department of History and African Studies at Fourah Bay College, told The Times.

The first recorded episode of slaves being taken from West Africa happened just outside Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, when John Hawkins, an English sailor, arrived to capture 300 local people in 1562.

The land that comprises the country today later became known as the Rice Coast. Its Mende and Vai tribes were prized in the Carolinas and Georgia because of their knowledge of growing rice, which had by

the 1750s succeeded sugar and tobacco as the cash crop on which fortunes could be built. Today Sierra Leone is the most frequent result for DNA tests in the United States to trace African ancestry.

“The slave trade was a crime on a par with the Holocaust. Our post independence leaders played it down because they were fearful of the forces it could unleash,” said Olu Awoonor-Gordon, the editor of the satirical paper *Peep* and a descendant of Ajai Crowther, the first black Anglican bishop.

Freetown was created in 1787 — many years before abolition — as a home for freed rescued slaves. A group of philanthropists landed with 411 settlers, including a number of freed slaves found destitute in Britain and several white prostitutes who had been offered a new chance in life. They were soon joined by a group of “Nova Scotians” — blacks encouraged to fight on the British side during the American War of Independence who London agreed to resettle after losing the war — and “Maroons” from Jamaica who had successfully revolted against their slave masters.

After abolition, the British Navy’s AntiSlavery Squadron, which patrolled the entire West African coast, was based in Freetown. Between 1807 and 1860, the British Navy seized 1,600 ships — often captained by British slavers using flags of convenience — and set free 150,000 Africans.

Nearly all of them were taken to Freetown. Still in chains, they would be taken up “freedom steps” to a special sitting of the Court of the Admiralty and declared free men.

In Ghana, yesterday’s anniversary was marked by a cultural festival organised by the British Council at St George’s Castle in Accra. Among the guests was President Kufuor, recently returned from a visit to Britain, where he was entertained by the Queen.

Outside the walls a crowd listened to performances by Hugh Masekela, the South African jazz trumpeter, and Linton Kwesi Johnson, the Jamaican poet. Baroness Amos, the Leader of the House of Lords and the descendant of slaves, represented the Government. She told *The Times* that the slave trade was as much a crime against humanity as the Holocaust or the Rwanda genocide, but ruled out reparations.

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