

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Monday, 28 August 2006

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

Monday, 28 August 2006

Hingha Norman Sends Message To The SLPP

BREAKING reports from the Southern Provincial capital of Bo confirm earlier rumours that interdicted Civil Defence Coordinator Chief Sam Hingha Norman has sent a historic message to his people acquainting them of the full circumstances surrounding his current situation and urging them to stay loyal to the Sierra Leone People's Party. In a message titled *Letter of Exhortation from Chief Sam Hingha Norman*, the Special Court Indictee absolved the SLPP or any person in that Party of blame for his arrest, detention and trial. He said his present prosecution is wholly an affair of the Special Court.

Norman's lead defence counsel, legal eagle, Dr. Bubuakai Jabbie, read the letter at an overcrowded Bo Town Hall with all Kamajoh Commanders, Initiators and Administrators throughout the South and Eastern Provinces in attendance.

In the 8-point letter, Chief Norman said that he has been a card-carrying member of the SLPP since 1972, He said he has suffered for the Party, believes in the Party and continues to be a paid-up member. He admonished his supporters and sympathizers to never think of leaving the Party, for any other Party [new or old].

Details Next Issue

Salone Times
Monday, 28 August 2006

HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM HITS ROCK BOTTOM

By Theophilus S. Gbenda

The National Forum for Human Rights (NFHR) which is the umbrella body for all human rights organisations in the country is currently in a difficult situation, following the collapse of its secretariat due to what many observers have referred to as financial mismanagement and the divesting of member organisations of their right to implement projects:

NFHR, a coalition of civil society organisations in the country, came in full operations courtesy of the Human Rights section of the former United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1997. Since then its main objective is to champion the adherence to basic human right standards in the country.

The organisation is administered by a secretariat whose main task is to network with the respective member organisations across the country and to serve as the focal point for the handling of all human rights related issues.

The secretariat also has the responsibility of identify training needs for its members and also to solicit funds from internal as well as external donors and other sources.

Over the years however, the secretariat reportedly lost its focus and has become both player and referee, thus holding its members at bay. Rather than apportioning grants received for the imple-

mentation of projects, the secretariat reportedly became the sole implementing body of the organisation.

Reports say the secretariat under the most recent former administrations, lacked the virtues of transparency and accountability that the seeming weakness of the board of the organisation was taken advantage of. All the Board members happen to be heads of their respective organisations and hence hardly find time to discuss issues relating to the NFHR.

Owing to this, the bulk of the member organisations lost faith in the secretariat and hence left it to rot, a situation that led to its eventual collapse.

Currently, the organisation is in disarray, with no focal point where its affairs are coor-

minated, according to many of its members.

In an interview with the current Board Chairman, Abu Brima who is also the Executive Director of National Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), he confirmed that the secretariat no longer functions as it was intended, adding, however, that modalities are currently being worked out to restructure it.

Meanwhile, the organisation is said to have lost its credibility to the international community and it is unlikely that it will regain it in the very near future, according to the members.

One member of the organisation had it that the documents guiding the operations of the organisation need urgent revision if only to have the organisation on its feet once again.

Democrat

Monday, 28 August 2006

MONDAY AUGUST 28, 2006

THE DEMOCRAT

Government Statement On The Proposed Review Of The 1991 Constitution

It is generally agreed that national Constitutions must not be static if they are to remain continually reflective of and responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of the people. The main objective of recurring constitutional reviews is to achieve settled principles and values that underpin stable institutions and forms of governance and the rule of law.

Accordingly, all our national constitutions since Independence in 1961 have always made provision for possibly reviewing the Constitution and enacting a new one, always in accordance with the amendment provisions stipulated in the current Constitution at the time, the present provisions being those of section 108 of the 1991 Constitution.

It will also be recalled that the present 1991 Constitution was the outcome of a comprehensive review conducted by a widely representative national body set up in 1990 for the purpose.

It will be recalled that Article X of the Lome Peace Agreement provided that "the Government of Sierra Leone shall take the necessary steps to establish a Constitutional Review Commission to review the provisions of the present Constitution, and where deemed appropriate recommend revisions and amendments in accordance with Part V Section 108 of the Constitution of 1991."

Although a Constitutional Review Commission was actually appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement soon after its ratification by Parliament the precarious logistical resources of the immediate post-war years militated against the carrying out of its full mandate.

Government acknowledges however, that a lot of water has passed under the bridge during the operation of the present 1991 Constitution, including the recent eleven years civil war and the two military coups of 1992 to 1996 and 1997 to 1998 respectively. Certain provisions of the said Constitution have also been subjected to intense debate, including the performance or operation of certain bodies or institutions established by or under provisions of the Constitution. This has sometimes led to litigation in our highest judicial forum, the Supreme Court, or to calls for amendment of certain provisions, or even to provisional administrative guidelines where relevant legislation provided for may not as yet have been enacted.

It is accordingly conceded that the past fifteen years of operation so far of the current Constitution has afforded us as a nation and a people of sufficient time and experience to warrant a review of it with a view to fashioning out a relatively settled national constitutional instrument that would structure and regulate our national polity for a very long time to come.

Our national Constitution contains two kinds of clauses for the purposes of amendment or replacement. The ordinary clauses can be amended by an ordinary act of Parliament. In the case of entrenched clauses an amendment can be effected only through an elaborate procedure requiring the passage of a bill in Parliament and the submission of that bill to the electorate for approval at a referendum.

In instances dealing with the amendment of entrenched clauses countries would do this during a general election to make the process cost effective since a referendum by itself would cost just as much as a general election.

The new Constitutional Review Commission whose membership and terms of reference will be announced very soon will have as wide a representation and participation as possible made up of all stakeholders including Political Parties and Associations, Civil Society organisations, Religious groups, Labour Congress, women and youth groups, Traditional Rulers, Private Sector, professional bodies etc. etc. The Commission will be empowered to conduct the widest possible public sessions or consultations nationwide for the most effective execution of its mandate.

The Law Reform Commission after due consultation with the Chairman has agreed to provide secretariat services to the Constitutional Review Commission.

Finally, Government wishes to make it abundantly clear that notwithstanding the constitutional review exercise the existing Constitution will remain unaltered and in full force before, during and after the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2007.

Arusha Times (Tanzania)

Friday, 25 August 2006

Sierra Leonean Students Brace for Arusha Moot Court

The second Moot Court Competition for Sierra Leonean students on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of Freetown, was held last week at the chambers of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in preparation for an international appearance in Arusha.

The competition comprised five teams, two of which were from the Fourah Bay College-University of Sierra Leone (FBC-USL); the Law Department and History and Mass Communication Department of the Arts Faculty, while the other three teams were drawn from the Njala University College (NUC), Milton Margai College of Science and Technology (MMST) and the Eastern Polytechnique in Kenema.

According to Awareness Times of Sierra Leone, the Team-3 from the Arts Faculty and Fourah Bay College emerged winners in the event and are set to display their skills during a similar Moot court, this time to be held at International levels here in Arusha next November.

A panel of four moot Judges supervised the competition that was based on a given fictitious armed conflict situation in which several instances of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) were perpetuated by either side of the conflict. The teams were required to pinpoint these instances and relate them to the International Humanitarian Law and the charges of war crime and other related violations of the rules of engagement in warfare.

The teams were expected to argue their points based on the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Additional Protocols to justify their cases. Each team was accorded twenty minutes to do their presentation and ten minutes was allocated for questions from the judges on matters outside the periphery of the stated fictitious conflict as well as the documents which form the basis of International Humanitarian Law.

The winning team, Team 3 from the Fourah Bay College, will now represent Sierra Leone at the forthcoming 6th International Moot Court Competition set for November this year in Arusha, Tanzania.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 August 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian report highlights "human cost" of civil war

MONROVIA, Aug 25, 2006 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- The Liberian government launched its first post-conflict human development report on Friday, highlighting the "human cost" of the country's 14-year civil war, which ended 2003. The report said "the high rates of infant and maternal mortality, the high incidents of severe stunting among children and the high rates of illiteracy are among the highly visible costs of the prolonged violent conflict and the stark evidence of conditions to be urgently overcome."

International Clips on West Africa

Six Bangladeshi soldiers die in Ivory Coast accident

DHAKA, Aug 26 (Reuters) - Six Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been killed and two injured in a road accident in Ivory Coast, army sources in Dhaka said on Saturday. "The accident occurred on Friday while a Bangladeshi convoy was traveling to Abidjan from outside the capital," said an army public relations official. "The victims were all Bangladeshi soldiers," he said. Bangladesh has nearly 3,000 soldiers with the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast. Overall, around 10,000 Bangladeshis have been working in 12 U.N. missions worldwide, the army said.

Sierra Leonean Students Brace for Arusha Moot Court

Arusha, Aug 26, 2006 (Arusha Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The second Moot Court Competition for Sierra Leonean students on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) of Freetown, was held last week at the chambers of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in preparation for an international appearance in Arusha. The competition comprised five teams, two of which were from the Fourah Bay College-University of Sierra Leone (FBC-USL); the Law Department and History and Mass Communication Department of the Arts Faculty, while the other three teams were drawn from the Njala University College (NUC), Milton Margai College of Science and Technology (MMST) and the Eastern Polytechnique in Kenema.

Sierra Leone 'Ahead' of Some African Countries

By Isata Lebbie

Aug 25, 2006 (The Independent/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, Mr. James D. Rogers says the country's economy is growing at a rate of 7%, which is above the 5.5 % average growth rate of most African countries in the sub-Saharan region.

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

President Confers with Marketers to Resolve Leadership Feud

- A press statement issued by the Executive Mansion yesterday said that the Presidency has not taken a decision to appoint former Lone Star player Christopher Kieh as interim President of the Liberia Marketing Association (LMA) but that such decision would be taken after consultation with the marketers.
- The President's statement was in response to a complaint submitted to her by some marketers who reject Mr. Kieh's appointment as interim President of the Association.
- President Johnson-Sirleaf noted that the Government was determined to ensure that the LMA becomes independent and void of its interference.
- However, she warned of drastic action against anyone who would resort to violence in relation to the leadership question.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Report Says Improper Training Impedes Rebuilding Process

- A 2006 United Nations Human Development Report for Liberia identified the lack of properly trained and motivated public servants as a key factor that hinders the Government's ability to reconstruct the nation.
- The Report released in Monrovia yesterday also pointed out that the day-to-day operations of Liberia were being paralyzed by unreliable electricity and water facilities, adding that joblessness and brain-drain were impediments that equally undermine Liberia's growth.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government of Liberia Ready to Reduce Poverty and Conflicts

- Launching the 2006 United Nations Human Development Report for Liberia, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf assured Liberians that the Government would endeavor to curb poverty and conflicts, observing that Liberians would not enjoy sustained development amidst insecurity and lawlessness.
- The Liberian leader said that effective governance system and impressive economic growth were required to secure a peaceful national development.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Envoy Calls on Government to Empower Populace

- Mr. Alan Doss, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General told Liberians that the 2006 UN Human Development Report for Liberia challenged them to elevate their country above vices like poor governance, weak institutions, devastated infrastructure and poverty.
- Speaking at the launching of the Report, Mr. Doss called on the Government and its international partners to empower Liberians and advance human development in the country, stressing that deep-rooted poverty and food insecurity remained fundamental to the challenges facing Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Human Rights Group Abhors Awarding Contracts to Foreigners

- The Human Rights Monitor of the United Methodist Church in Liberia yesterday issued a strong-worded press release condemning DynCorp, an American military trainer, for awarding to the Lebanese-owned Palm Hotel, the contract to feed new recruits of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The group thought it would have been better to award such a contract to Liberian-owned businesses as opposed to handing it to foreigners.
- The Monitor urged the Government to be sensitive to public outcry against the awarding of the contract to non-Liberians because it undermines genuine efforts at self-recovery and self-governance.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Police Probe 34-Year-Old Woman for Illegal of Firearms

- The Liberian National Police yesterday reported that it was investigating 34-year-old Special Security Service officer, Aliju Murrain-Williams for illegal possession of firearms after she had threatened to kill Mr. Prince Gueh, a driver, who accidentally slammed into her vehicle in the traffic.
- Police sources said that the guns the suspect carried were duly registered by the Executive Mansion but were unable to establish whether she was the lawful carrier.
- Mr. Gueh told police that he was terrified when the gun was pointed at him.

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. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.

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UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 25 August 2006

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International Clips on Liberia

BBC 08/25/2006 04:13:44

Liberian journalists' body says President Sirleaf "intolerant" of media

The Press Union of Liberia [PUL] says President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's criticism of the media was made out of frustration. President Sirleaf told a graduation programme in Monrovia that the media was causing serious harm to the country by engaging in what she called character assassination for money. President Sirleaf said the media in Liberia was engaged in what she called "check-book" journalism and "Kato" [bribe]. The secretary-general of the Press Union of Liberia said the president was frustrated over the media's critical reportage of her administration's policies. Mr Alphonsus Zeon said President Sirleaf was intolerant because the media was not dancing to the tone and singing praises to her government.

International Clips on West Africa

High-level meeting on Ivory Coast planned at UN next month

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 24, 2006 (AFP) - A high-level meeting on Ivory Coast, which may postpone an upcoming presidential vote in the cocoa-rich West African country, will be held here next month, a UN spokesman said Thursday. Stephane Dujarric said the meeting would take place on the sidelines of the General Assembly and would be attended by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Ivory Coast politicians want polls by Oct 31 despite snags

ABIDJAN, Aug 24, 2006 (AFP) - Ivory Coast political players said Thursday they preferred to keep to an electoral timetable calling for polls by October 31 despite logistical problems. An alliance of four main opposition parties described a UN announcement that the elections would have to be postponed as a "failure", while President Laurent Gbagbo's party also said it preferred to stick to the original calendar.

Ivory Coast's Gbagbo rejects opposition demands to limit powers

ABIDJAN, Aug 25, 2006 (AFP) - Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo vehemently rejected proposals from leading opposition figures including a former president and a former prime minister that the United Nations should limit his powers. "As soon as there is a meeting at the UN, there are people who tremble and dance thinking that Gbagbo is going to be removed from power. They day-dream," Gbagbo told a rally in Anyama, near Abidjan on Thursday.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Johnson-Sirleaf and the Liberian Media in Disagreement

(The News, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Analyst, The Informer, Heritage, New Democrat, Liberian Express, New Vision and Public Agenda)

- President Ellen Johnson and the Liberian media are at variance over Wednesday's statements by the President that "some" media institutions were doing severe damage to the noble profession of journalism and that good professional ethics have been substituted for "check-book" journalism and "Kato" [a Liberian term for gratis or favor given to journalists by newsmakers].
- However, the Secretary General of the Press Union of Liberia, Alphonsus Zeon, said on Wednesday that the Head of State made the statements out of "frustration," claiming that it is because the media has refused to dance to the tune of the President.

Forum Newspaper Links Guinean Company to Shoot-out at Cocopa

(The Forum)

- *The Forum* has reported that rubber stolen by armed bandits who normally attack the Cocopa Rubber Plantation in Nimba are being sold to a Guinean rubber processing company known as "SOKIPA."
- [sic:] *Forum* has reliably learnt that these rubber thieves reportedly sell their looted rubber in Guinea and use some of the proceeds to purchase arms and ammunition for their ongoing operations. These armed men are said to be coming from the nearby towns of Flumpa, Geepo and Gbeiblen.
- [sic:] The Sunday broad day attack on workers as well as residents of Cocopa Plantation in Nimba County by rubber armed bandits amidst UNMIL deployment in the area indicates how volatile the security situation is at the plantation.

Kidnappers Released Firestone Security Guard

(The Forum)

- A security guard of the Firestone Rubber Plantation, Momo Boakai, supposedly kidnapped by four unidentified gunmen, has been released by the "kidnappers."
- Mr. Boakai said that he was kidnapped at the company's outstation purchasing center in Gbarnga, Bong County.

UNMIL Poised to help Government Repossess Rubber Plantation in Sinoe

(Public Agenda)

- Addressing a regular press briefing on Wednesday, Special Representative of the Secretary General, Alan Doss, said that UNMIL will help the Government repossess a second rubber plantation[Sinoe Rubber plantation] occupied by former fighters. Former combatants occupying the plantation said that they will not leave the plantation until they are compensated

UNMIL Begins Crack Down on Illegal Arms

(The News and Daily Observer)

- Special Representative of the Secretary General, Alan Doss, told a news conference on Wednesday that UNMIL has begun a crackdown on the movement of illegal arms around the country. Mr. Doss said that "we will close the roads and check vehicles to ensure that no arms are being brought into the country." He revealed that UNMIL would launch an operation called "Operation Fast Move" to collect arms and ammunition from illegal carriers.

"Isakaba Boys" Demand US\$10,000 from Residents

(The News, Heritage and New Vision)

- A notorious criminal gang known as "Isakaba Boys" has dropped leaflets demanding US\$10,000 from residents of the St. Paul Bride Community outside of Monrovia, threatening to storm the community if it fails to make available the amount. At the same time, the Liberia National Police has announced that it has arrested and subsequently detained eight suspected members of the Isakaba group for allegedly harassing and making away with money and several valuable items from residents of New Kru Town, Bushrod Island.

UNMIL Boss Says Rape Cases Top Major Crimes List

(Daily Observer)

- Rape has been identified as the most frequently committed crime in Liberia, doubling other crimes such as murder, theft and armed robbery. Special Representative of the Secretary General, Alan Doss, made the disclosure at a press briefing in Monrovia on Wednesday.

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

President Wants Economy Policy to Narrow Gaps between Poor and Rich

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf acknowledged Wednesday that there were still gaps between poor and rich Liberians and called for economic policies to narrow them, noting that her Government would not repeat mistakes of the past by not permitting one group of Liberians to monopolize economic and political sectors of the country.
- Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the United Methodist University, the President maintained that the days when various organs of the State were used to repress and frighten the population were gone, claiming that the very foundation of Liberia had been built on contradictions and constraints.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmaker Unhappy about Court Jurors Arrest

- The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Tokpah Mulbah said that it was an affront to the justice system that some jurors who acquitted accused economic saboteurs of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation had been arrested and has subsequently informed the Ministry of Justice.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Public Works Minister Urges Liberian Contractors to Form Partnerships

- In a meeting with Liberian contractors in Monrovia yesterday, Public Works Minister Luisene Donzo suggested the need for Liberian contractors, engineers and architects to organize joint ventures in order to strengthen their position to benefit from World Bank-funded projects. Minister Donzo observed that individual Liberian contractors lack the manpower and financial capacity to competitively bid for projects as such they should form said ventures to participate in the bid for the Emergency Road Projects and Rehabilitation being funded by the World.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Leading Oil Refinery Unable to Contribute National Budget

- Mr. Harry Greaves, Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company told a news conference that the entity was unable to pay dividends to the coffers of the Government because it was currently focusing on reconditioning its facilities to prevent it from collapse. However, Mr. Greaves disclosed that the Company made significant gain in its revenue generation, recording more than US\$1 million in its first 6 months of operations.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Marketers Protest Interim Leadership

- A conglomeration of Superintendents of the Liberia Marketing Association said that it would lead a sit-in action today, Friday, at the residence of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a protest to the appointment of former Lone Star player, Christopher Kieh as Interim President of the Association. The group said that they would propose three women from which President Johnson-Sirleaf would appoint a President of the Association to replace the interim leadership.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Indigenes Oppose Expansion of Rubber Plantation

- According to a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, local group, United Bassa Citizens for the Protection of Bassa Land said that the citizens of Number Four District would oppose the expansion of the Liberia Agriculture Company and would thus obstruct any survey of land in the area.
- The statement was issued in reaction to Grand Bassa County Senators Gbezohngar Findley, Nathaniel Innis and Agriculture Minister Dr. Chris Toe who said that the rubber company wanted a survey to ascertain the population of each town, number of houses, private rubber trees and other crops.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

BBC

Sunday, 27 August 2006

LRA rebels in DR Congo withdrawal

Lord's Resistance Army rebels are leaving their bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo as demanded by a peace deal with Uganda's government.

The truce, signed on Saturday, has a ceasefire coming into effect on Tuesday and gives rebels three weeks to move into assembly points in southern Sudan.

The Ugandan government has pledged that it will not try to attack the rebels.

Thousands have died during the 20-year conflict in northern Uganda, and more than one million have fled their homes.

Under the terms of the truce signed by both sides, the rebels will leave Uganda and their bases in Sudan and DR Congo to gather at two assembly points, where they will be protected by the government of southern Sudan.

Talks on a comprehensive peace agreement will then get under way.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has set a 12 September deadline for a final peace deal.

Villagers in DR Congo said they had seen groups of Ugandan rebels marching from a national park towards the Ugandan border.

Amnesty deal

Meanwhile, rebel leader Joseph Kony and his senior commanders are gathering on Congolese territory near the border of the Central African Republic.

Diplomats say the plan is to fly them to the assembly points in Sudan.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) wants the LRA's top officials - among them Joseph Kony - to face charges including murder, rape and forcibly enlisting children.

The LRA has abducted thousands of children and forced them to fight since the conflict began.

Against the wishes of the ICC, Uganda offered amnesty to LRA leaders in exchange for the peace talks.