

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



The Cape lighthouse tower at Aberdeen

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:

Wednesday, 28 November 2007

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

Wednesday, 28 November 2007

The Right To Fair Trial

The judiciary in any part of the world is responsible to interpret the laws in an independent and impartial manner without fear or favour. This organ of government is also responsible to settle disputes between individuals and the state in a peaceful and amicable way. It imposes penalties or fines on the wrong doers and acquits the innocent.

Before the civil war in Sierra Leone broke out in 1991, the justice system of the country was seriously polluted with corruption and bribery. The trend degenerated into a peak that resulted in many people losing confidence in the justice system of the country.

However, since the rebel war officially ended in 2002, the former government of the SLPP under President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah embarked on post-war reconstruction exercise through out the country.

The Sierra Leone Police Force responsible for protecting the lives and properties of the country and the people was restructured through DFID initiative and was headed by Mr. Keith Biddle who helped transform it from what used to be a rubber stamp force to a near seeming "force for good".

During his tenure of office as Inspector General of Police, Mr. Biddle's major structural reforms in the SLP include introducing the Community Policing Partnership Board, Family Support Units and the revitalization of the police Prosecution Division.

Obviously these measures brought discipline in the force as the rights of the suspects in police custody were highly upheld as stipulated by the constitution.

In a bid to transform the country's justice system in an effective and efficient manner, the erstwhile SLPP government was supported by DFID which established in collaboration with the government of Sierra Leone, the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) throughout the country.

The JSDP supports the training of Magistrates, Judges, court clerks, jurors, construction of prisons, prisoners' conditions in the cells and improving dialogue between the local authorities and government on customary law. Legal practitioners especially the magistrates, receive regular training.

The aim is to enhance their professional capacity and to make them more responsible and transparent in the dispensation of justice.

But despite huge amounts of money being spent to improve the judiciary to be independent and transparent, corruption and bribery still hold sway in the system.

The rule of law clearly states that "justice delayed is justice denied" but this theory or concept is not applicable in the justice system of Sierra Leone. Some remand prisoners at the Pademba Road

THE RIGHT TO FAIR TRIAL

Prison have spent over two years in detention without judgement. Most of them have only appeared in court twice a month than the stipulated legal time frame.

Other sets of litigants whose matters are called on regularly in court are those that can meet the financial capabilities or have political backing to expedite their matters.

Actually, the notion and concept of justice in Sierra Leone is connected with political influence and financial capabilities. Those who lack the ability to meet these criteria normally find it difficult to have justice and fair trial in the court of law especially with cases before magistrates which are always adjourned than heard. The magistrate courts in most cases would allow these matters to suffer frequent adjournments or failure of the accused to appear in court due to

indicates that corruption and bribery in the judiciary was one of the root causes of the eleven years rebel war in Sierra Leone.

Many people in the country can attest to the fact that the country's justice system is still polluted with corruption and bribery. A case in point was the fake lease scandal that has already brought disrepute to the Sierra Leone Insurance Company (SLICO).

According to investigations, the late Paramount Chief of Boajibu Chiefdom, P.C. Kenewa Gamanga's children are embattling a case of unfair justice meted on them by the high court presided over by Justice Alan Halloway which has provoked human rights activists over the alleged lease of their family house situated at 2 Pademba Road in Freetown.

According to our sources a member

est surprise of the Gamanga Family and handed over the keys of their property to SLICO, because he was alleged to be in favour of the company while the matter is still before his court. Is that justice?

Many people wondered why the judge ordered the closure of the house and handed over the keys to SLICO without concluding the matter. It was expected that the management of SLICO should have taken a court action against Idrissa whom they paid forty thousand United State Dollars as part payment for the lease of the building for two-years.

Reasoning expects that the judge should have reversed his decision and work in accordance with the law.

Conclusively, the rule of law presupposes that the law is supreme than man. If this is anything to go by, it suffices to

Conclusively, the rule of law presupposes that the law is supreme than man. If this is anything to go by, it suffices to state that every individual should have the right to fair trial in the court of law irrespective of political or economical status. The law should protect every individual to ensure peace and tranquility for all

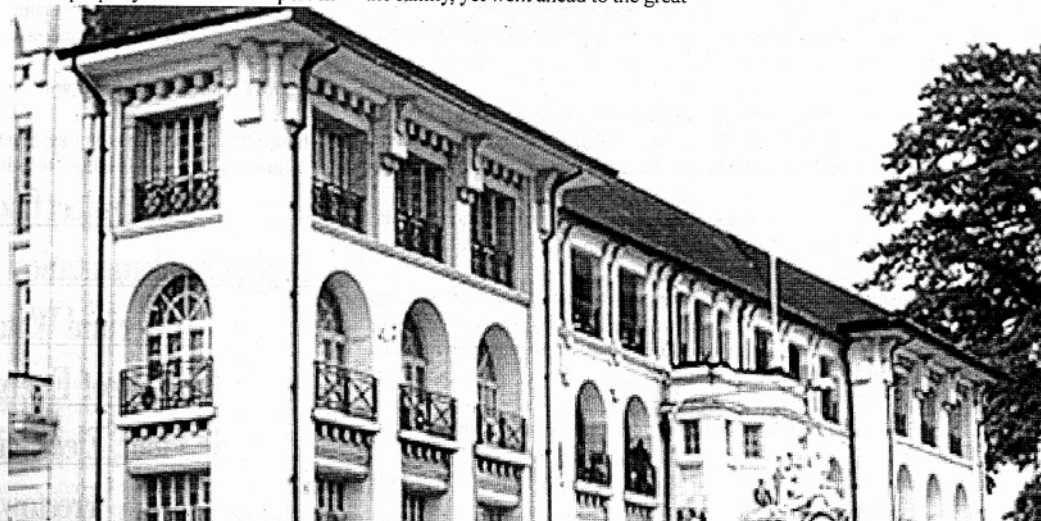
lack of transport .Despite this reality, the suspects are always requested to pay a bail fine of one hundred and fifty thousand Leones (Le 150,000) to fulfill a bail bond.

The government of the APC under the leadership of President Ernest Bai Koroma should look into some of these issues properly as the TRC Report in-

of the family without the title deeds and administration of authority connived with the Sierra Leone Insurance Company (SLICO) to lease the house, while the matter is in the High Court. The presiding judge who understands that an individual cannot go into a lease agreement without the consent of the rest of the family, yet went ahead to the great-

state that every individual should have the right to fair trial in the court of law irrespective of political or economical status. The law should protect every individual to ensure peace and tranquility for all.

Where there is no law and order, the law of the jungle will prevail.



Sierra Leone's diplomatic community probes development hitches

Members of the diplomatic community in Sierra Leone at the weekend embarked on a one-day field trip to two districts outside Freetown, in an effort to see first hand the problems affecting the growth of the districts.

The diplomats, from China, Germany, Ghana, Nigeria, Britain and the US, as well as the Commissioner of the European Union and the Special Representative of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra

Leone (UNIOSIL), visited the southern B o district, some 272 kilometres from Freetown, and the Eastern Kenema District, 3 19 kilometers from the city.

According to United Nations Communications Officer Sheku Bakarr Kamara, the field trip enabled the diplomats to meet with provincial authorities, political parties, political parties registration commission, Sierra Leone Police, Office of National Security, Civil Society

Organizations and Paramount Chiefs to identify the economic and social challenges being faced by the Southern and Eastern parts of the country. A diplomat, who preferred anonymity, said two thirds of approved developmental projects costing tens of millions of US dollars were approved for the two areas.

“The trip will give us an opportunity to listen to what the people have to say to us,” the diplomat said

Cotton Tree News

Tuesday, 27 November 2007

SL women fight gender-based violence

Written by Bassie B Kanu



Women in Sierra Leone still suffer gender-based violence and violation of their fundamental rights.

Madam Batu Jambawai, Human Rights Officer at UNIOSIL was speaking on Saturday at the Miatta Conference Center on the commemoration and official launch of the sixteen days of activism against gender violence. The theme of the commemoration is “Demanding implementation, challenging obstacles: End Violence against Women”. The Coalition on Women’s Rights said they were calling traditional authorities and the public to join hands in the fight against gender-based violence in the country. Madam Gbambawai said the coalition’s intention was to reach communities across the country. Jenneh Kandeh, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare Gender and Children’s Affairs officially launched the sixteen days activism against violence. She said violence against women was a serious violation of human rights and an affront to their reproductive health. The Deputy Minister said her ministry would work hard to ensure the implementation of the gender bills passed by Parliament. The Coalition on Women’s Rights, the UN and other actors organized the programme.

Reuters

Thursday, 22 November 2007

AU names representative to speed Habre trial

The African Union has named a special representative to Senegal to speed progress in the human rights trial of former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre, officials said on Thursday.

Robert Dossou, Benin's former foreign minister and justice minister, said he had been appointed by AU Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare to assist Senegal with the long-delayed case. It will be the first time one developing nation has tried someone for rights crimes committed in another.

A summit of the Africa Union in Gambia last year mandated Senegal to try Habre on charges of ordering thousands of political killings, systematic torture and ethnic cleansing during his 1982-1990 rule.

Habre has lived in the West African country since being overthrown in 1990.

Asked if he thought the case was progressing too slowly, Dossou replied: "That is why the AU has decided to appoint a representative."

Dossou, who headed an AU panel of legal experts which advised the AU summit on the Habre case, said he would visit the organisation's headquarters in Addis Ababa shortly for a briefing before travelling to Dakar.

Senegal has not yet named an investigating judge in the case. The U.N. Committee Against Torture said on Monday its experts believed Senegal was progressing too slowly and called for a start to criminal proceedings.

"Senegal has been asked to prosecute Hissene Habre on behalf of Africa, so it is important that Africa gives Senegal the necessary support," Reed Brody, lawyer for Human Rights Watch, told Reuters.

Habre was first arrested in Senegal in February 2000, but has not since been prosecuted and Dakar refused to extradite him to Belgium in 2005.

An EU team due to discuss technical and financial assistance for Senegal has postponed its visit by three months until January. Senegal, which has no experience of human rights trials, has drafted a budget for the trial of 18.6 billion CFA francs (\$41 million), which the European experts are expected to scrutinise closely. (Reporting by Daniel Flynn; Editing by Giles Elgood)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 27 November 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Lloyds List 11/27/2007 04:05:52

Liberia bid for International Maritime Organization Council rejected

DESPITE having the second largest registered fleet by tonnage, Liberia has failed to be elected to the International Maritime Organization's Council this year, writes Craig Eason. Iran also unsuccessfully submitted its candidature for election, as did Angola, Bulgaria, Kuwait, Poland and Ukraine. A place on the council represents an opportunity to be involved in shaping the IMO's course over the next two years until the next Assembly. The council consists of representatives from 40 of the IMO's 167 member states. Under the IMO Convention (article 17) there are three groups to which a country's candidature for election can be submitted. The first two represent 'the 10 states with the largest interest in providing international shipping services' and '10 other states with the largest interest in international seaborne trade' respectively. A third group is for the 20 states whose election to the Council 'will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world'. This somewhat archaic list of members largely goes unchallenged, despite these states no longer completely reflecting today's maritime patterns. This year, however, Belgium, reflecting a growing feeling among some IMO member states that the IMO Council structure needs to be debated, submitted its candidature under category (b), rather than (c). Having failed to gain a seat in group (b), it also renounced its place in group (c) 'in the spirit of renewal and to give other countries a chance'. Following the elections, Africa now has a larger representation on the Council, with Nigeria representing West African interests.

International Clips on West Africa

West African green parties to form federation in Cote d'Ivoire

ABIDJAN, Nov 27, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- West African ecologist political parties are scheduled to hold a meeting here on Thursday to establish a federation aimed at promoting social and political ecology in the sub-region, according to reports. A statement obtained Monday by Xinhua said the impending constitutive congress will be attended by delegates from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. In addition, it will benefit from the supports of other invited "green parties" from the world, notably from Marie-Helene Aubert, the French vice president of the green parties' group in the European Union (EU) parliament. The idea to create a federation of green parties in West Africa was coined in the Malian capital of Bamako in December 2006.

Government Unhappy about Claims by Rubber Company Manager

(The Analyst, New Democrat, Daily Observer, The Informer, National Chronicle, Heritage, The News, The Inquirer and The Forum)

- The government has expressed dissatisfaction over claims by the general manager of Liberian Agricultural Company (LAC) that the government was responsible for the murder because it supposedly failed to provide security for the company.
- Information Minister Laurence Bropleh dismissed the claims saying UNMIL and Liberia National Police officers had been deployed at the plantation for over three months. Minister Bropleh also denied allegations of security excesses in the area. The media had reported on a number of security concerns, particularly by members of the local community in Grand Bassa County who complained of security harassment resulting from the murder of the plantation manager. Mr. Bruno Michiels was allegedly shot by some unidentified men while he along with some employees was carrying out a survey of areas earmarked for the company's expansion programmes.

UNMIL Says Belleh Forest is free of troublemakers

(Heritage)

- Correspondents said that UNMIL Sector-2 Commander Brig/Gen. Ahmad Nawaz reassured residents of the Belleh District in Lofa County that there was no security threat in the area. The Commander's reassurance was in response to security concerns raised by residents that strange men' with ulterior motive were residing in the forest.

Suspected Armed Robber Breaks Jail

(The Inquirer and The News)

- The Liberia National Police (LNP) says it has launched a massive hunt for a suspected armed robber who allegedly broke jail at the Bushrod Island Police Zone One depot over the weekend. Suspect Moses Toe, alias 'General Slippery' escaped from Police detention after he was taken there on suspicion of robbing a used car dealer, Abraham Fofana of US\$4,500 and four cell phones last Tuesday.

Defense Lawyers Allege Treason Suspects Maltreated

(Daily Observer, The Informer, The News and The Inquirer)

- Defense lawyers in the ongoing treason trial on Monday claimed that the two treason suspects are being maltreated by prison guards at the Monrovia Central Prison. The lead defense council Counselor Dempster Brown called for the intervention of the Criminal Court 'A' as the rights of the suspects were being violated, given that Liberia is a signatory to international conventions governing the rights of prisoners.

Auditing Commission Examines Government Functionaries

(The Informer, Heritage, The Analyst, Daily Observer, Liberian Express and New Democrat)

- The General Auditing Commission has begun what it calls a transactional audit of all government ministries and *New Democrat* said the prime objective of the audit is to establish how the government expended US\$134 million in the last national budget.

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

Auditing Commission Commences Audits of Key State Institutions

Government Set to Revise Controversial MOU to Expand Rubber Farm

- Appearing on a radio talk show yesterday, Agriculture Minister Dr. Chris Toe said that the Government will modify by including in the Memorandum of Understanding it reached with the Liberia Agriculture Company recently, a timeline for the Company to commence the building of modern towns during the expansion of its rubber plantation. The Bassa Resilient Council headed by former Finance Minister Dr. Baron Tarr had resisted the expansion because it was illegally done and that the people of Grand Bassa County were left out in the arrangement.

Teachers of Monrovia Schools End Strike Action

- Striking teachers of the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) yesterday ended their strike action after the intervention of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who promised to address their concern and appealed to them to resume regular academic work.
- Speaking to reporters, the President of the MCSS Teachers Association Nathan Suah said that the President assured them that the next fiscal budget will reflect increment in teachers' salaries and benefits while the Government will pay two months salary arrears in addition to a bus she donated to the Association to ease the transportation problems faced by the teachers.

Trial of Treason Suspects Begins today after Court Named Jurors

- Court reporters said that the trial of former Armed Forces of Liberia Gen. Charles Julu and Col. Andrew Dorbor is expected to start today Tuesday now that the parties involved have completed the appointment of a 15-member Jury yesterday. The two men were charged with treason for allegedly planning to overthrow the Government of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Government Faces Development after building Country's Image Outside

- Addressing a senatorial by-election campaign rally in Bopolu, Gbarpolu County, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said that the Government was now focusing on reconstruction and development after it has restored Liberia's international image in the first two years in power.
- For his part, the UP senatorial candidate called on Gbarpolu citizens to vote for someone who prioritizes their welfare and not those who stole resources intended for the Country's development.

Political Party Loyalists Say Government is Scheming

- A pressure group which is sympathetic to the opposition Liberty Party's standard bearer Friends of Brumskine (FOB) alleged that the Liberian Government orchestrated a plan to implicate Cllr. Charles Walker Brumskine in the recent violence in Grand Bassa County.

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.

Press Release, 27 November 2007
UNMIL/PIO/PR/143

UNMIL Military conducts exercise “Green Horizon IV” in Sierra Leone

Freetown, Sierra Leone - The Military component of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is conducting – with the full participation of the Mongolian contingent stationed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone - an exercise named “Green Horizon IV” in Freetown, Sierra Leone between 03 to 07 December to test the readiness of troops to respond to any emergencies around the Court.

The objective of the exercise is to strengthen security of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in accordance with UN Security Council resolution mandating UNMIL to provide security for the SCSL. The exercise involves the rehearsal of an evacuation plan and ground movement of UNMIL’s Quick Reaction Force (QRF), the Mongolian Guard Force (MGF), the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and Republic of Sierra Leone Police (RSLP) aimed at reinforcing security.

The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and the Government of Sierra Leone are fully involved in the planning of the military exercise, with support from UNMIL Force Headquarters in Monrovia.

UNMIL’s Quick Reaction Force will be deployed by air to Freetown in preparation for the exercise and will return to Liberia following completion of their mission.

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African Echo

Wednesday, 28 November 2007

<http://www.africanecho.co.uk/africanechonews8-nov23.shtml>

Liberia grants citizenship to 2,600 Sierra Leone refugees



Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf - Liberian President

LIBERIA is granting citizenship to 2,600 Sierra Leonean refugees who chose to stay in the country after the end of a 10-year civil war back home, a government official said on Tuesday.

The refugees, who will go through a process of naturalisation, started receiving portions of farmland this week being dished out at Bensonville, 60 kilometres (40 miles) northeast of the capital.

Gotomo Gordon, a Liberian government official in charge of repatriation and resettlement of refugees, said the decision to resettle the refugees was taken after a voluntary repatriation programme ended in 2004.

There were some who did not want to go back home for various reasons such as having married in Liberia or having lost all their families to the war back home.

"And so we thought (of) ... a durable solution by facilitating their reintegration into our society," Gordon told AFP. Both Liberia and Sierra Leone have emerged from more than a decade of devastating back-to-back civil wars that claimed in all nearly 400,000 lives and sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing across their borders. Henok Ochalla, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field officer, said there still remain 3,563 Sierra Leonean refugees in the country. Of these 75 percent have opted for naturalisation.

One of the beneficiaries of the land scheme, Lombay Asuma, 45, was delighted to have found a new permanent home in Liberia.

"I don't have no mother I don't have no father in Sierra Leone. They have all been killed. If I go there who do I go to? My house has been burnt down," she said.

At the height of the Sierra Leone civil conflict, backed by Liberian former warlordturned- president Charles Taylor, Liberia sheltered according to the UNHCR, some 120,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who fled the decadelong war that ended back home in 2001.