

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



Central Freetown, from Parliament

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, 29 January 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

Local News

Prosecutor Welcomes Start Date in Taylor Trial... (Press Release) / <i>Office of The Prosecutor</i>	Page 3
Charles Taylor's Trial May be Delayed / <i>Independent Observer</i>	Page 4
Margai's PMDC Gets Endorsed by Hinga Norman & Other Detainees / <i>Awareness Times</i>	Page 5
AFRC –RUF Join Margai's Bandwagon ... / <i>The Spectator</i>	Pages 6-7
Police Tightens Security in the South / <i>The Spectator</i>	Page 8
"Police Set Me On Fire" – Taxi Driver / <i>Awoko</i>	Pages 9-10
Cole Farm Chaos / <i>The Exclusive</i>	Page 11
Police Set Driver Ablaze / <i>The News</i>	Page 12
For Young Offenders, Justice As Impoverish As Africa / <i>Concord Times</i>	Pages 13-14

International News

Rapp Goes to New York / <i>The Patriotic Vanguard</i>	Page 15
Taylor to Appear in Court / <i>The Independent</i>	Page 16
UN Court Puts off Charles Taylor trial to June 4 / <i>Reuters</i>	Pages 17-18
Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor's defense team pleads for time to prepare / <i>Associated Press</i>	Page 19
Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor stays away from pretrial hearing / <i>Associated Press</i>	Pages 20-21
Taylor's Trial: New Prosecutor Regrets Change of Venue / <i>The Analyst (Monrovia)</i>	Pages 22-24
Liberia: Special Court Accused of Bribery / <i>Liberian Times.Com</i>	Page 25
Chief Norman, CDF and RUF Indictees join PMDC / <i>Cocorioko Website</i>	Pages 26-27
Voices from Confinement / <i>Kenyan London News</i>	Pages 28-30
John Leigh Debunks Press Statement / <i>Patriotic Vanguard Website</i>	Pages 31-32
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary (27 January) / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 33-35
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary (26 January) / <i>UNMIL</i>	Pages 36-38
UNMIL Begins Operation 'Seskin-Ii' Today / <i>The Analyst (Monrovia)</i>	Page 39
Court to rule on DR Congo warlord / <i>BBC Online</i>	Pages 40-41
Guineans Express Disappointment in Strike-Ending Deal / <i>Voice of America</i>	Page 42
Advocates pursue justice worldwide / <i>Milwaukee Sentinel-Journal</i>	Pages 43-44

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, 29 January 2007

Prosecutor Welcomes Start Date in Taylor Trial, Promises Access for Sierra Leoneans

The trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor is slated to begin this spring, as ordered by a Judge of the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. The case against Mr. Taylor, who is accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the civil war in Sierra Leone from 1996 through 2002, will begin on June 4.

At the Taylor Status Conference held on January 26 at the trial venue in The Hague, it was announced that the date for commencement of trial had been changed from the original date of April 2 at the request of the Taylor Defence to provide additional time for its preparations.

Justice Teresa Doherty, who presided at the Status Conference, made rulings on several other matters, including the setting of the date for the filing of pre-trial briefs.

Taylor has pleaded innocent to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to the killing, mutilation, and sexual violence involving thousands of victims, as well as the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Responding to reporters' questions after the hearing concerning the nature of the Prosecution's case, Stephen Rapp, The Prosecutor, said, "The indictment alleged acts that included the most horrendous things humans can do to one another".

Whereas the other trials of the Special Court for Sierra Leone are being conducted in that nation's capital, Freetown, the Taylor case will unfold at the facilities of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The Prosecutor noted that the decision to move the trial was a result of negotiations aimed to keep the peace in Sierra Leone and the region as a whole. The decision was supported by the United Nations and the key governments in the region, including Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Mr. Rapp emphasised that while the trial has been moved due to regional security concerns, "it is the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and only the Special Court, that is conducting this trial. I want to emphasise from the outset that this trial will be conducted first and foremost in the name of, and on behalf of, the people of Sierra Leone".

Regarding concerns that the distance between The Hague and the Sierra Leonean capital would prevent the people of the country from witnessing justice being done, The Prosecutor spoke about the extensive Outreach programme of the Court. "Last year, 780 meetings were held in every region of the country to inform the public of the Court's work", Mr. Rapp commented. "Every effort is being and will be made to ensure that Sierra Leoneans have transparent access to this trial. Each case at the Special Court is heard, argued and decided upon in their name, and the many miles between The Hague and Freetown will not change that".

#END

Charles Taylor's trial may be delayed!

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor's lawyers need more time to prepare his defense against charges he directed a campaign of murder, rape and enslavement in West Africa, his lawyer told a judge Friday. Judge

See page 2

Taylor's Trial

from front page

Teresa Doherty made it clear, however, that Taylor's war crimes trial will begin June 4 as planned. It is expected to take a year to 18 months.

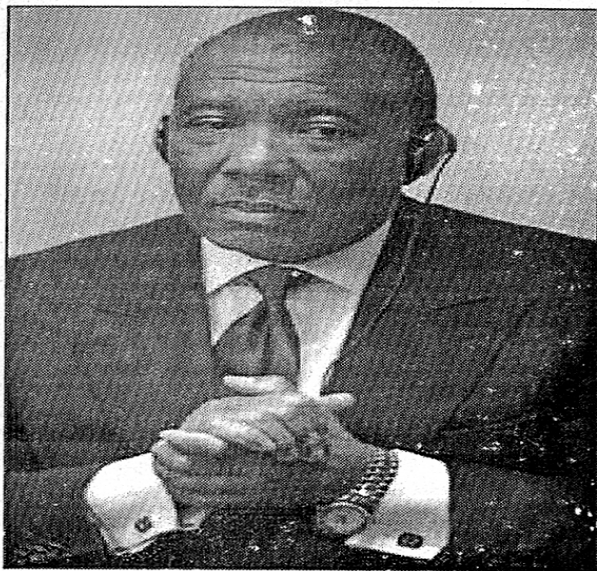
Taylor has pleaded innocent to charges linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during the 10-year civil war in Liberia's neighbor to the northwest, Sierra Leone. He faces a life sentence if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in the Netherlands.

The indictment 'covers the gamut of the most horrendous things humans can do to one another,' prosecutor Stephen Rapp told reporters after the hearing.

Taylor did not appear in the courtroom in The Hague because he is being treated for back problems, Rapp said.

Taylor's lawyer, Karim Khan, told the court the defense team would not be ready given the huge volume of prosecution evidence. He also protested the prosecution's refusal to permit him to distribute electronic copies of the evidence.

The charges against Taylor stem from his alleged arming and training of rebels in Sierra Leone during the later years of their insurgency, which began in 1991. Taylor's indictment covers crimes allegedly committed between November 1996 and January 2002.



Awareness Times
Monday, 27 January 2007

Hinga Norman & other Detainees

JANUARY 11TH 2007 PRESS STATEMENT

This Press Statement is from undersigned individuals, detainees and members of the former Civil Defence Force --Sierra Leone (CDF), the former Revolutionary United Front - Sierra Leone (RUF) and the former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council Sierra Leone (AFRC) and us, the under mentioned:

We are fully aware of the current political dispensation and trends in the affairs of our beloved country, Sierra Leone.

We are also fully aware of our current plight as detainees of the Special Court for Sierra Leone who have been accused of bearing "the greatest responsibility" for various war crimes alleged to have been committed in Sierra Leone.

We fully note and appreciate the unwavering and consistent support shown to us by our various supporters, friends, sympathizers and well-wishers both at home here in Sierra Leone and abroad.

We also fully note and appreciate efforts by the international community to bring peace, stability and security to Sierra Leone through our various collaborative efforts as former combatants and members of the various warring factions in Sierra Leone.

We have each been held in confinement and pain for the past several years by the Special Court for Sierra Leone regardless of our efforts to bring peace, unity, stability and security to our country, Sierra Leone, whilst those who we believe bear greatest responsibility for events of the civil war in our country, are either dead or still out there with you.

We have also continued in confinement and pain notwithstanding provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999 granting absolute pardon to all combatants and their collaborators in the civil war of our country; and we are also aware that the said Lome Peace Agreement was passed into law by our present Parliament.

Because we love our country; because we love peace, unity and stability for our country; because we believe in the development of our country and the welfare of our people; and above all, because we believe that the present SLPP Government does not stand for peace, reconciliation, unity, stability and the development of our country and our people, we hereby unite and state as follows:

That we have put all of our individual differences aside to support a single Political Party of our choice in the forthcoming elections.

That we know that the only dividing force that bears greatest responsibility for the current problems in our country, Sierra Leone, is the Government of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP).

That like us, we urge our supporters, sympathizers, friends, relations and well-wishers to support the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which is the only Political Party we jointly and individually believe in to save our country, Sierra Leone, and bring peace, reconciliation, unity, love and stability to our nation.

That we are unanimously sending this message to the office of the PMDC through our wives and next-of-kin, hoping that the Party will accept our membership, wishes and desires for our beloved country, Sierra Leone.

We urge the PMDC Party to spread this message far and wide within Sierra Leone and beyond to the international community, our friends, well-wishers, sympathizers, relations and supporters.

We are open to any visits questions and comments about this united, friendly and God-inspiring decision we have taken, we thank God for our lives so far and sign accordingly:

Civil Defence Force - Sierra Leone (also called CDF):

- a. Sam Hinga Norman.....
b. Motina Fofana.....
c. Alieu Musa Kondewa.....

Revolutionary United Front - Sierra Leone (also called R.U.F.):

- a. Issa Hassan Sesay.....
d. Augustine Gbowe.....
e. Morris Kallon.....

Armed Forces Revolutionary Council - Sierra Leone (also called AFRC):

- a. Tamba Brima.....
b. Ibrahim Bazzy Kamara.....
c. Santigie Bobor Kam.....

Dated this Thursday 11th January 2007

AFRC-RUF join

Margai's

bandwagon

Former fighters of the defunct Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) are reported to have finally agreed to revive their movements and join the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). Addressing a group of people including his party members

See page 2

Police lights

See page 2

up taxi-driver

Police lights up taxi-driver

A Personnel of the Sierra Leone Police Force is reported to have lit up taxi driver at Cole Farm, Wilkinson Road in Freetown in the early hours of Saturday 27 January, 2007.

According to the police, between the hours of 5 and 6am the Police responded to a call from a concerned citizens at Cole Farm, Wilkinson Road regarding illicit dealing in petrol.

Considering the recent spate of fire incidents, the Police responded promptly to the call and indeed found someone in possession of a five gallon rubber containing petrol who resisted police arrest and sparked a lighter. He caught fire and got burnt. The arresting police officer also got burnt and they are currently admitted to hospital receiving treatment.

Unfortunately however, some hoodlums in the area maliciously spread word that the police had deliberately set ablaze an innocent taxi driver who was pouring petrol into his vehicle. This caused some youths in the area who did not enquire into the veracity of the claim to attack the police, damaged the police vehicle and started setting up road blocks.

Reinforcement was sent to the area and the situation had been brought under normalcy. No body has so far died neither is anybody reported to have received any gun shot wounds nr any damage done to civilian property.

AFRC-RUF join Margai's bandwagon

From front page

at the Malama Amateur Football Association (MAFA) field, Lumley in the west end of Freetown on Tuesday 23 January, 2007, the PMDC interim Leader, Mr. Charles Francis Margai, disclosed that he and the ex-combatants of the defunct RUF and AFRC have resolved to marry in order that they might build a strong force to defeat the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) in the Presidential and Parliamentary Election due to take place in July this year. The former rebels, he said, have vowed to give him their total support since, according to them, the SLPP government has failed the nation. In this regard, Mr. Margai called on all and sundry - particularly the youths - to vote him for the presidency; and promised that he would bring positive developments to the nation, thereby correcting the mistakes of the ruling government, he added. On the day of the general elections, Mr. Margai expressed that his morale will motivate the electoral college that the SLPP flag bearer Vice President Berewa "will not have the guts to come in the open." He further threatened that when he assumes the office of president, he will hang top government officials in the open for what he called misappropriation of states fund; and many others will run away from the country with their tails between their legs.

Although Mr. Margai could not call names of people that would face the gallows if he becomes president of the nation, many people who felt bad about what they called "Margai's invectives, venom and vindictive tendencies" unbearably quit the field and went back to their homes so that he was left merely surrounded by only his caboodle in the orange.

At the end of his address, many residents in the area told **THE SPECTATOR** that they are not ready to support anybody that may want to bring another trouble in the country. The AFRC and RUF, they said, are perhaps the worst groups of unscrupulous elements in the world with which any civilized human being can identify himself; and therefore Charles Margai's marriage with the two groups is unfortunate, and which may likely spark a recrudescence of civil strife, they noted. The PMDC, they observed, is composition of frustrated people that have lost every hope in life and therefore they have no other alternative than to disrupt plans.

Police tightens security in the south

By George Wilson

As July 28 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections gradually draw near, special modalities are reported to have been already mapped out to establish tight security network for the Southern region. Sources close to the office of the Regional Commander South, Supt. F.U.K Daboh reveals that certain unscrupulous and unpatriotic people are hatching plans to cause havoc in the electoral process.

The report further say that

Superintendent Daboh is working round the clock in concert with other stakeholders to ensure that such diabolic plans by evil-minded people are aborted.

According to information, supporters of either the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) leader, Vice President Solomon E. Berewa or Charles Margai of the People Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) are reportedly uttering statements in certain quarters which have urged the police to be alert in an

effort to forestall any attempt to disrupt the smooth running of the elections.

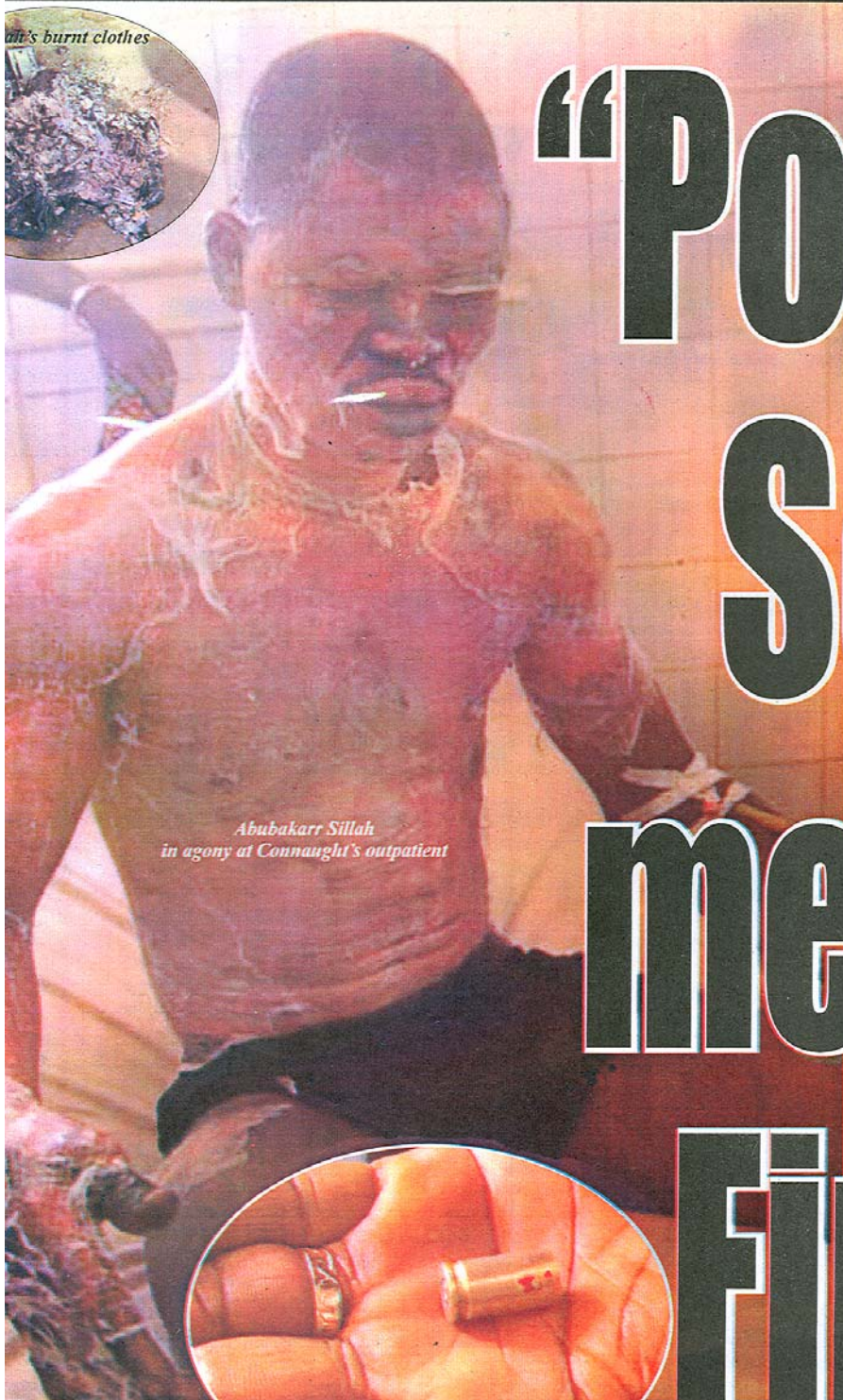
It could be recalled that the Southern Region which used to be a place of easy work-over for the SLPP has been infiltrated by the PMDC which continues to mount tension between the two party supporters.

The Bo Police are reported to be constantly sensitizing and pacifying the two groups against any confrontation that might eventually cause problem in the election.

Awoko
Monday, 29 January 2007



all's burnt clothes



*Abubakarr Sillah
in agony at Connaught's outpatient*



*One of the bullet shell
collected from the scene*

“Police Set me on Fire” -Taxi Driver

As alleged blackmarket deal

“Police set me on fire” - taxi driver

By Ophaniel Gooding

At the time of writing this story Taxi driver Abubakarr Sillah was fighting for his life at the Connaught Hospital outpatient wing, where he was receiving treatment for burns all over his body (picture)

In obvious pain, but wanting to tell his own version of what happened in the early hours of Saturday 27th January 2006 at the bottom half of Wilkinson road, Abubakarr Sillah on his hospital bed in a hoarse voice spoke to *Awoko*.

He explained that he works throughout the night and because no petrol stations are open at night he usually keeps a gallon of fuel in his boot which he uses to refill his tank anytime he feels he is running short.

Abubakarr said on Saturday after 5am in the morning he observed that his tank was low so he decided to refuel and therefore stopped along Wilkinson road, and took out the spare one gallon of petrol from his boot and proceeded to refuel his cab.

At about 5.30 am he said “a police landrover passing by saw me and stopped.”

“4 police officers came down and ordered me to stop putting the fuel in my car and said that I should give them the fuel because it was illegal and it was black market.”

He went on “I refused to do that and explained to them that this was not black market fuel but my reserve fuel which I had kept in my boot” adding “but the policemen refused to listen to me.”

At this point he said “one of the policemen grabbed the fuel gallon and I held on to it refusing to let go – so we started arguing and

wrestling over the gallon.”

According to Abubakarr he distinctly heard one of the policemen say that if I don’t seem to want to let go of the gallon then they should just set me ablaze.

At this point he said one of the policemen struck a match and the fuel caught fire.

Adjusting himself on the hospital bed so that the medical drips could flow properly Abubakarr said he started rolling on the ground to put off the fire which had by now engulfed him.

According to some youths who have asked not to be named, they said they were on the other side of the road watching what was happening between the Police officers and the driver.

The youths said when the police officers realized what they had done, they then tried to leave the scene without even lending a hand to put out the fire which had engulfed Abubakarr.

They said they then grabbed the two policemen who were involved and told them that they were making a citizens arrest because they had set a man on fire.

The youths said it was at this point that police reinforcements arrived at the scene and started firing tear gas and live bullets.

One of the shells shown to Awoko was identified by a soldier as being fired from an Israeli Uzi machine gun which he said is used by OSD personnel on special duty.

Reports about a woman who was shot in the leg could not be confirmed because nurses at the Marie Stopes clinic at Aberdeen road said that when the woman was taken there it was only the section dealing with pregnant women was open so she was advised to go to the Emergency hospital at Goderich.

Explaining their own side

of the story, the Chief Police Officer C-Division, Congo cross Police Station, Superintendent Soluku Conteh said “Police personnel on patrol caught some people with black-market fuel...”

He confirmed that the driver did put up resistance when the police tried to seize the fuel, alleging that the driver “threatened that he would burn the place.”

He stated that [the driver] “then splashed the fuel and lit the place,” adding, “he [the driver] got burnt together with the police.”

CPO Conteh assured that, “the situation as for now has been calmed down and everything is under control.”

He further disclosed, “that investigation is on as to find out what actually happens.”

Questioned by Awoko what resulted in the gun shots, the Superintendent stated, “we did not fire gun, it is only tear-gas that our personnel fired.”

Also collaborating the police angle was the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Tamba Gbekie, who confirmed that there was a riot over fuel due to some arrests made by police personnel adding “the youth said that the police should not go with the fuel so they went on the rampage.”

AIG Gbekie also denied the gun-shot claims, noting that “tear-gas is what my officers released,” emphasizing that “if there was any gun-shot I am unable to determine where it came from, according to briefings from my officers’ tear-gas is what was released.”

“The investigation is in progress,” he said.

AIG Gbekie disclosed, “so far 21 arrests has been made,” which he said are mostly youths who were caught stoning police, after barricading the road.

He disclosed that the “Police Landrover SLP 210 was burnt by the youth,” adding that the driver sustained injury on his feet.

Gbekie promised “We will pursue those responsible.”

The Exclusive
Monday, 29 January 2007

Cole Farm Chaos

By David A Jabati Jnr.

Last Saturday, 27th December was like doomsday at Cole Farm, Wilkinson Road, West of the capital when a team of police personnel attached to the Congo Cross Police Station intercepted oil smugglers in the early hours of that morning.

According to police sources, suspects resisted police arrest which led to serious confrontation by a group of angry

youths.

One of the suspects, Abu Bakar Sillah, resident of No 13 Soldier Street who was arrested with a quantity of the hoarded fuel according to police sources, sparked up a fire that engulfed both himself and a police officer, Joseph Turay, in a futile attempt to resist arrest.

In the ensued commotion, angry youths stormed the scene, pelting stones at the police resulting to injuries

and damage on police vehicle: SLP 210.

Sporadic gun shots by the police in a bid to bring the situation under control, report say, did not only send people running helter-skelter for dear lives, but also led to injuries sustained by innocent civilians.

Some twenty-seven (27) suspects were arrested while the victims are said to be hospitalized as investigations continue.

Police sets driver ablaze

By Prince Scott and Gracie Bagrey

The Sierra Leone Police has again come under serious criticism following the setting ablaze of a taxi driver allegedly by one of its members which resulted to a serious riot.

According to report gathered by this medium, a taxi driver of a Toyota Corolla with registration number ABD 845 at

about 4:30 am on Saturday 27th January was halted by a police patrol team whilst trying to re-fill his tank at Murray Town junction.

Upon reaching his car the police patrol team interrogated him on where he is coming from with a gallon of petrol. The

report said the driver responded that he ran out of petrol and went to buy a gallon about 100 meters

Cont. page 2

Police sets driver ablaze

From front page

away. The police officers who were not pleased with the answer asked for his driving licence which he failed to produce. The police officers then requested for the gallon that contained the petrol but the driver refused to comply and in a twinkle of an eye, one of them allegedly lit a match and threw it on the taxi driver

and drove away which eventually erupted to a conflagration. Youths of the area who noticed the fire raised alarm and a host of others rushed at the scene to rescue the driver. He was then rushed to the emergency hospital.

As the news spread, youths converged and set up road blocks to prevent any movement of

vehicles. A truck filled with riot police then descended on them and fired shots in order to ease the tension one of which reportedly hit a lady on her right leg.

Speaking to one of the youths Mohamed Samba he said the police who are suppose to protect their lives and properties have now turned enemies.

For Young Offenders, Justice As Impoverish As Africa

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - Set in a wasteland of derelict buildings and furrowed alleys, the Kingdom Remand Home for young lawbreakers here was itself a dilapidated mess, until British donors renovated it in November. Now it boasts a new roof, freshly plastered walls, refurbished domes and a coat of Kelly-green paint - all in all, a refuge far better than Freetown's mean streets.

Yet the new Kingdom houses all of four teenage inmates. Fourteen others escaped in October, mostly, the home's matron said, because there was not enough food. Nobody stopped them because the sole guard was on his deathbed. No one was called to replace him. Across sub-Saharan Africa, where 350 million young people often subsist amid poverty, orphanhood and separation from their parents, running afoul of the law is a fact of life. So are places like the Kingdom Remand Home.

Juvenile justice here is, in almost every sense, an oxymoron. This region's nations endorse international norms for fairness and humanity, employ dedicated staff members and benefit from foreign donations, yet Africa's juvenile-justice systems routinely, almost blithely, deliver injustice and brutality instead. In even a cursory review of child justice in Sierra Leone and three other African nations, a visitor found children locked up with adult criminals in a medieval prison; others recounted their weeks in police-station pens barely bigger than closets. Children languished in rehabilitation centers with little food, few beds, no activities, not even electricity. Some have stayed well beyond their sentences, simply because there is no money to send them home.

One child said he had been locked naked in a cell for three days with five adults who beat him and took his food; another was in his fourth year in an adult prison, awaiting trial, without ever seeing a judge.

Boys faced years in detention for offenses as minor as stealing a phone or having sex with a girlfriend. Girls bought protection from the law by giving themselves to corrupt policemen. Again and again, children said they had been beaten and robbed by police officers who arrested them, jailers who imprisoned them or inmates who shared their cells.

Most African nations have embraced the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including some of its rules for treating child offenders, and many have enacted or drafted laws to make its provisions binding. But across the continent, child justice problems compete against malnutrition, AIDS and illiteracy for money and attention. Juvenile justice, raw though it may be, is often a second- or third-tier issue.

"A lot of these countries are trying to constitute children's rights, but when you look at their resources, it just blows you away," said Louise Ehlers, a juvenile-justice expert for the Open Society Foundation in South Africa, Africa's most advanced nation on the issue. "In places like Zambia, you can't even start talking about the things we're talking about here. There's no electricity; no vehicle to get a child from point A to point B; no facilities for children awaiting trial."

Many nations face a fundamental problem: millions of children lack birth certificates. Children nearing legal adulthood, usually age 17, are difficult to tell from adults, while adult offenders often claim to be juveniles. Hardened by such deception, officials often regard all

but obvious children as adults, and treat them accordingly.

Reforms also face a cultural divide. The global child rights standards adopted by African parliaments trickle down sluggishly to villages, where the concept of children's rights can be a curiosity. Harsh discipline frequently is the norm. In Sierra Leone, more than one in five children recently surveyed by Unicef said they had experienced severe physical punishment at home.

Public sentiment also weighs heavily on juvenile-justice efforts. With violent crime endemic and voters inflamed, legislators in South Africa, for instance, are loath to change laws that treat minors like adults for serious crimes like murder and rape.

Little Money and No Luck

Ambrose, a 17-year-old with hooded eyes, hails from Mpigi, west of Uganda's capital, Kampala. He is detained in the Naguru Remand Home in Kampala, a complex of brick halls, their windows shrouded in wire mesh, built in 1954 for 45 inmates. On this day, it holds 98.

The crime he is accused of - and which he denies - is having sex with his employer's 16-year-old daughter. Underage sex is called defilement here, and 36 of Naguru's 86 boys, ages 12 to 17, face defilement charges. The penalty, in theory, is death.

The boys' greatest offense, however, is being unlucky. Defilement frequently amounts to blackmail. A boy who pays a girl's parents for violating her virginity almost always goes free; one who cannot often faces prosecution, even if the girl was a willing partner. Girls cannot be similarly charged.

Ambrose could not produce 70,000 shillings, or \$40, to mollify the girl's parents. He has not gone to trial, and already he has paid a heavy penalty.

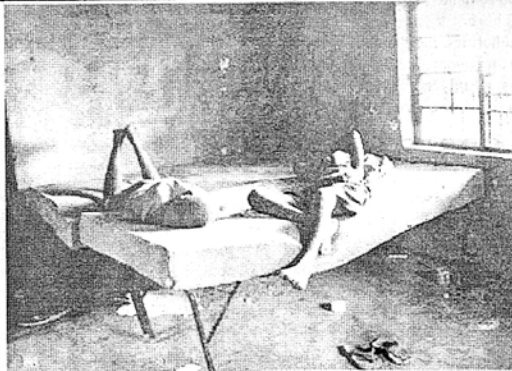
"I spent two weeks in a police cell," he said. "I was beaten. I was forced to make statements which I wasn't willing to make. I was being forced to accept that I really defiled that girl."

That was last December. Ambrose has spent a year behind Naguru's wire mesh waiting for a trial, even though Uganda law limits such pretrial detentions to six months. The reason is that capital charges must be heard by Uganda's High Court - and the High Court docket is swamped.

"Over 50 percent of cases heard by the high court are defilement cases," said Richard Butera, Uganda's director of public prosecutions. "Cases come in from all over the country." For defilement trials, some children wait two years. The High Court is short of money to assemble lawyers, witnesses and evidence for hearings. The remand home's deficits are even more basic.

"We have no fuel," said Rose Etit, a social worker at Naguru. "Now two weeks we are not going to court, almost three, and they are escaping. They climb on the roof and they jump the fence."

Africa's child-justice failures may be pervasive but that does not make them exclusive. "The issue is universal," said Geert Cappelaere, Unicef's Sierra Leone director and a scholar of juvenile justice in 60 nations. "You may have in a few countries a situation that's apparently worse - overcrowded, no beds, no facilities. But from the perspective of the kids, that doesn't make much of a difference." Indeed, African nations sometimes hew closer to United Nations



standards that do parts of the United States.

Sierra Leone, among the world's least developed nations, bars children under age 10 from being held responsible for a crime; in Uganda, the minimum is 12, the age urged by the United Nations. In some American states, it is as low as 6. Similarly, 31 African nations prohibit sentencing juveniles to life without parole, as the United Nations convention dictates. In the United States, 27 states mandate life sentences for juveniles who commit selected crimes.

After a guard at the Kingdom Remand Home beat a young inmate to death two years ago, hiding his body in a plastic bag, Sierra Leone promised widespread changes. But while the government has a justice plan and support from British donors, there is no one at the Justice Ministry responsible for juvenile justice.

At the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs - an agency for five million people - the annual budget is \$250,000. Child-justice spending is a sliver of that. There are few social workers, few probation officers, few lawyers and few judges - fewer still trained in children's rights.

"How can you have law students or proper judges trained?" Mr. Cappelaere of Unicef asked. "If you don't have a proper law program in your university?"

Other African nations are also troubled. In Maputo, Mozambique's capital, about 60 children await trial in a stifling antediluvian dorm of the main prison, their cots and mats arranged as far as possible from the open privy. In Mozambique, only 3 of 60 inmates in the juvenile-detention section - a dorm in the national prison - have been tried.

Uganda is by comparison middle class. But its National Rehabilitation Center suffers similar ills: sporadic water, two years without electrical power for the girls' dorm, no furniture, no job training and little to eat. Government food deliveries are hit or miss, and the center feeds inmates fortified meal from the World Food Program.

"They escape when there is no food," said Onn Nserko, the center's program manager. "When there is food," she added wryly, "it's very hard for them to escape."

Boys Among Men

Saidu, a 14-year-old with the oversize eyes of a younger child, is one of the four boys who did not flee the Kingdom home in Freetown, though he had reason. Saidu is a murderer. His is a cautionary tale of what happens even when most of the system's protections for children - defense lawyers, a separate juvenile court and a probation officer - are in place.

The victim was 15. He argued with Saidu at a theater, then beat him up to the mocking chants of onlookers. Humiliated, Saidu ran home, found a knife and returned. As his tormentor whipped him with a belt, Saidu said, he shoved the knife into the boy's chest.

Once, such children would have been sent to Pademba Road Prison, a malevolent 60-year-old Freetown dungeon. But there, the toilets are plastic buckets, the holding cells are foul and the howling crush of prisoners seems, at times, to verge on riot. The government has barred juveniles from its cells.

So Saidu was sent to Kingtom. On a recent steamy morning, he was taken to Magistrate Bankole Shyllon, Sierra Leone's only juvenile-court judge, to be arraigned. "I understand the facilities at Kingtom home are not what they should be, and there have been several escapes," the prosecutor said. "I would be very concerned if we had another." Prohibition or not, he said, Saidu should be sent to Pademba Road.

Saidu's lawyer - a rarity, hired by his parents - protested. Any boy imprisoned there must be shielded from adult inmates, he argued. Magistrate Shyllon was not convinced. "I would not advise them where to put their own offenders," he said. "I will send him to Pademba Road," he added. "Hopefully, they will see that he is a child."

Saidu dropped to his seat, sobbing. He went to the prison that afternoon. The next day, Ibrahim Jawara, a probation officer for the Ministry of Social Welfare, pleaded Saidu's case before Pademba Road's officer in charge. "He's 14 years old," Mr. Jawara said. "Are you supposed to keep him with hardened criminals?" "No," said the officer, clearly pained. "But we have 960 prisoners here in a facility that was built for 324. We don't have the facilities."

Saidu was far from the only child in Pademba Road. At a visitor's request, prison guards assembled perhaps 80 inmates who claimed to be underage. Some clearly were not, but others were indisputably youngsters: Alphajallnoh, a 14-year-old sentenced to 18 months for theft; James, 14, doing four months for stealing a cellphone; and Alhaji, 14, who seemed uncertain of his offense, but complained of having to fend for himself against older, stronger inmates.

"I don't have anybody to fight for me," he said. Saidu was jailed in Cell 2, perhaps 8 feet by 10 feet. His cellmates were a bank-fraud artist and a convicted murderer. The murderer, Joseph Bellon, 27, seemed most concerned about him.

"He didn't eat any food last night," Mr.

Bellon said. "He's really traumatized," he added. "He's a young boy."

In an interview, Magistrate Shyllon said he had studied justice in Canada and Britain. He knows, he said, how Western critics view sending a 14-year-old to such a prison.

"This is Sierra Leone," he said. "Nobody spoke about human rights in England in the 1970s, when they were putting people in overcrowded prisons. Do you want me to leave an alleged aggravated burglary to be out of prison because cells are overcrowded? Let him be overcrowded. But solve the overcrowding."

Although the child rights legislation in some countries, like Uganda, is a model for the continent, the justice system matches its ideals only sporadically, wherever fortune has placed money, a caring government official or, perhaps, a program by a children's charity. Seldom do the fates converge.

That, say experts like Mr. Cappelaere, is the problem. Western-style justice systems are supposed to deliver equal and humane treatment but often get bogged down in Africa by cost and complexity. Many juvenile offenses might be better handled by traditional justice practices, which focus less on punishment than on apologies and compensation for victims, some experts argue.

Traditional justice is not ideal: a child rapist, for instance, might expiate his sin by marrying his victim and paying a dowry to her parents. The best system, experts say, would blend Western human rights values with traditional resolutions.

But such systems could take decades to establish. For now, the focus is on plugging the holes in the existing ones.

In Lira, Uganda, the state prison has set aside a dorm for boys - spartan, but freshly painted and clean. Amid Africa's often-brutal prisons, it is an island of civility.

It is only an island. Among the dorm's 60 or so boys is Otim, an orphan accused of murdering a 23-year-old man. Otim is 17. The murder occurred in 2002, when he was 13. He said he had been in prison since then. He has yet to see a lawyer.

Otim claims he was framed by his uncle, who coveted the 12-acre plot Otim's parents left him. "I think I will be free because there's nothing wrong I have done," he said. But, he added: "I am still waiting to be tried. I don't know why I have not been tried."

Neither do his jailers. "Well, that's a problem for the government, really," said the prison's duty officer. "There's nothing we can say about that."

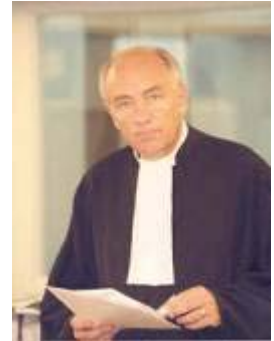
The Patriotic Vanguard

Saturday, 27 January 2007

Rapp Goes to New York

According to a special court press release, Stephen Rapp (photo), the newly appointed Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, will be a guest at the United Nations noon press briefing on Tuesday January 30, 2007 at New York Headquarters. Mr. Rapp will discuss and take questions on his role as Prosecutor, the state of the various cases at the Special Court, and the outcome of the Status

Conference for the trial of Charles Taylor, held in The Hague on January 26. Mr Rapp, an American, was Chief of Prosecutions at the United Nations-International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) since May 2005. In this position, Mr Rapp supervised the prosecution of military, government and political leaders responsible for the Rwandan genocide in trials at the ICTR in Arusha, Tanzania.



The Independent

Friday, 26 January 2007

http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447_2060334,00.html

Taylor to Appear in Court

Mike Corder

The Hague - Former Liberian president Charles Taylor was to appear in court on Friday for a preliminary hearing ahead of his trial on charges of overseeing a campaign to terrorise Sierra Leoneans with murder, mutilation, rape and enslavement.

Taylor had pleaded innocent to 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during Sierra Leone's bloody 10-year civil war, many hacked to death with machetes. .

He faced a life sentence if convicted. Earlier this week, the Special Court for Sierra Leone set June 04 as the start date for Taylor's trial, which was expected to take up to a year to complete.

Friday's hearing at a courtroom in The Hague provided by the International Criminal Court was expected to assess progress by prosecution and defence lawyers in preparing for the trial.

Taylor 'backs' rebels

Taylor was flown to the Netherlands in June last year amid fears that staging his trial in Sierra Leone, where the Special Court usually sat, could trigger fresh unrest in the war-scarred African nation.

Taylor's defence team had asked for the trial to start in September, saying it was unlikely to be ready before then because of the case's complexity, the amount of evidence turned over by prosecutors and lack of facilities for defence attorneys in The Hague.

The charges against Taylor stemmed from his alleged backing of Sierra Leonean rebels, who mutilated, raped and enslaved their victims.

According to Taylor's indictment, the rebels also looted and torched homes, which covered crimes allegedly committed between November 1996 and January 2002.

Prosecutors said: "The primary objective of the attacks was to terrorise the civilian population of Sierra Leone.

"Many civilians saw these crimes committed; others returned to their homes or places of refuge to find the results of these crimes-dead bodies, savaged or mutilated victims and looted and burned property."

Taylor also launched a Liberian insurgency in 1989 and won elections that handed him the presidency in 1997. Rebels took up arms against him three years later, and he fled to Nigeria in 2003 at the end of Liberia's 14-year civil war.

In March last year, he was captured as he attempted to slip out of Nigeria after the country agreed to hand him to authorities seeking his prosecution.

Reuters

Friday, 26 January 2007

UN Court Puts off Charles Taylor trial to June 4

By Anna Mudeva

THE HAGUE (Reuters) - The U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has postponed the start of former Liberian President Charles Taylor's war crimes trial to June 4 to give the defence more time to prepare, the court said on Friday.

The court had set April 2 as a tentative start date for the trial but defence lawyers requested more time, saying they would not be able to start before September due to a large amount of documents and work to be done.

"We will start a trial on June 4 and we will not be ready but we will start because it's your order," Taylor's lawyer Karim Khan told a status conference. "The prosecution had five years (to prepare), we barely had five months".

The court indicted Taylor in March 2003 on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for stoking civil war in Sierra Leone through an illicit trade in guns for diamonds. The charges were condensed to 11 counts in March 2006 to ensure a more focused trial.

The court moved Taylor to The Hague in June 2006 due to fears a trial in Freetown could spur unrest in Sierra Leone or Liberia.

The defence has said it faces difficulties preparing for trial due to a lack of office space and equipment in The Hague, which it said subjected the team to "intolerable" working conditions.

The court's registrar is currently organising office premises for the defence, which are expected to be ready in February, the court said.

Proceedings are being held in the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is not involved in the trial. The U.N. Security Council authorised Taylor's transfer in after Britain said it would jail him if he is found guilty.

Taylor's rise to power in 1989 led to a 14-year, on-and-off civil war in Liberia that spilled across regional borders. He fled into exile in Nigeria in 2003 but was returned to Liberia and transferred to the court in Sierra Leone in March.

The court turned down a defence request for a September 3 start to the trial and the prosecutor's proposal for a July start, saying both dates would have led to undue delay of the trial given that Taylor has been in custody since February last year.

Judge Teresa Doherty urged the defence on Friday to speed up its work related to confirming some basic facts and ordered the prosecution to submit a pre-trial list of witnesses before April 4, earlier than the prosecutors wanted.

Taylor, who did not appear in court on Friday, is being held at a prison near The Hague, where suspects standing trial at the U.N. tribunal for the former Yugoslavia are housed and where former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic died of a heart attack last year.

Taylor has complained about conditions in the jail. His lawyer has said he can not make phone calls as freely as he could in Freetown, lockdown hours were "far more draconian" and he was unhappy about the food in the "rather Eurocentric" facility.

Associated Press
Friday, 26 January 2007

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor's defense team pleads for time to prepare

By: MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands -- Former Liberian President Charles Taylor's lawyers need more time to prepare his defense against charges he directed a campaign of murder, rape and enslavement in West Africa, his lawyer told a judge Friday.

Judge Teresa Doherty made it clear, however, that Taylor's war crimes trial will begin June 4 as planned. It is expected to take a year to 18 months.

Taylor has pleaded innocent to charges linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during the 10-year civil war in Liberia's neighbor to the northwest, Sierra Leone. He faces a life sentence if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in the Netherlands.

The indictment "covers the gamut of the most horrendous things humans can do to one another," prosecutor Stephen Rapp told reporters after the hearing.

Taylor did not appear in the courtroom in The Hague because he is being treated for back problems, Rapp said.

Taylor's lawyer, Karim Khan, told the court the defense team would not be ready given the huge volume of prosecution evidence. He also protested the prosecution's refusal to permit him to distribute electronic copies of the evidence.

The charges against Taylor stem from his alleged arming and training of rebels in Sierra Leone during the later years of their insurgency, which began in 1991. Taylor's indictment covers crimes allegedly committed between November 1996 and January 2002.

Associated Press
Friday, 26 January 2007

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor stays away from pretrial hearing

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Former Liberian President Charles Taylor will not be ready for the start of his trial in June on charges of overseeing a campaign of terror, murder, mutilation, rape and enslavement in West Africa, his lawyer told a judge Friday.

Judge Teresa Doherty made it clear; however, the trial's June 4 start date would not change. The trial was expected to take up to a year.

Taylor has pleaded innocent to 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during Sierra Leone's bloody 10-year civil war. He faces a life sentence if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Taylor's lawyer, Karim Khan, said during Friday's 80-minute hearing that he would work toward the start date, but said, "we will not be ready" given the huge amount of prosecution evidence he has to study.

Taylor did not to appear in the courtroom in The Hague provided by the International Criminal Court. His attendance is not required at such preliminary hearings.

Khan also protested that prosecutors were not allowing him to distribute electronic copies of evidence to his client or other defense lawyers in Africa and requested that they release details of expert witnesses they plan to call in the case.

Prosecutor Stephen Rapp said prosecutors fear that giving electronic versions of their evidence could allow confidential details to leak into the public.

Doherty ordered prosecutors to disclose details of their expert witnesses "as early as possible" but did not order any change in the way they shared information.

She also ordered prosecutors to provide a document outlining their case by April 4. Prosecutors expect to call more than 100 witnesses, Rapp said.

Taylor was flown to the Netherlands in June last year amid fears that staging his trial in Sierra Leone, where the Special Court usually sits, could trigger fresh unrest in the war-scarred African nation.

Taylor's defense team had asked for the trial to start in September, saying it was unlikely to be ready before then because of the case's complexity, the amount of evidence turned over by prosecutors and lack of facilities for defense attorneys in The Hague.

The charges against Taylor stem from his alleged backing of Sierra Leonean rebels, who mutilated, raped and enslaved their victims.

The rebels also looted and torched homes, according to Taylor's indictment, which covers crimes allegedly committed between November, 1996 and January, 2002.

"The primary objective of the attacks was to terrorize the civilian population of Sierra Leone," prosecutors say in a summary of the allegations. "Many civilians saw these crimes committed;

others returned to their homes or places of refuge to find the results of these crimes — dead bodies, savaged or mutilated victims and looted and burned property."

Taylor also launched a Liberian insurgency in 1989 and won elections that handed him the presidency in 1997. Rebels took up arms against him three years later, and he fled to Nigeria in 2003 at the end of Liberia's 14-year civil war.

In March last year, he was captured as he attempted to slip out of Nigeria after the country agreed to hand him over to authorities seeking his prosecution.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Friday, 26 January 2007

Taylor's Trial: New Prosecutor Regrets Change of Venue

War-crime indictee, former Liberian president Charles Taylor, was flown to The Hague last year on the strength of the argument that his trial in Sierra Leone would jeopardize the peace momentum that was building up in the Mano River Basin.

Taylor's friends, family members, and defense counsels variously and at different times expressed concerns about his right to access to witnesses and family and fair and transparent trial.

But it was the will of the world community, advised by the suspicion that some argued was unjustified, that prevailed.

But the new American chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is wishing that that decision was never taken, and he has vowed to ensure that the good news of justice is communicated to the victims of war excesses in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Analyst Staff Writer compiled this report from the files of the Sierra Leone News Agency.

New Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra, Stephen Rapp, said venue change may deny Sierra Leoneans direct access to Taylor's trial but it will not deny them justice.

The third chief prosecutor since the founding of the special court in 2001, Rapp said it was his mission to present evidence and the strongest possible case against Taylor.

Besides, he told a press conference co-hosted by Special Court registrar Lovemore Munlo in Freetown last Wednesday, it's his goal to communicate whatever happens in the Taylor case to the people of Sierra Leone and the people of the region that were affected by his alleged war atrocities.

He revealed that the special court has completed trials in cases involving the leaders of the rebel Kamajo and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and that the trial of Charles Taylor was set to begin this year in The Hague.

While he supported Taylor's transfer to The Hague for security reason, he said, he was concerned about the challenges it places on the Court's Outreach Programme through which it hopes to communicate its messages to everyone to ensure that a maximum number of citizens learn about what is happening in the Taylor case.

"For this reason, some are concerned about the decision to move the trial of Charles Taylor to The Hague. And... let me say how important I believe it is that the Taylor trial be brought home to the people of Sierra Leone and to this region.

"Every effort is being made and will be made to ensure that Sierra Leoneans have transparent access to this trial. Each case at the Special Court is heard, argued and decided in the name of the people of Sierra Leone.

The Judges, some of whom come from Sierra Leone, and attorneys for both the Prosecutor and the Defence that include Sierra Leoneans, and the many miles between here and Mr. Taylor will not change that," Prosecutor Rapp said.

According to him, while it was not the business of prosecution to ensure domestic media coverage of the trial, modalities were being worked out with the BBC Trust provide opportunities for Sierra Leone journalists to attend at The Hague and also to receive audio and video and other materials from the court to enable them do their job.

"I'm off on a visit this weekend in Europe and in the United States and North America with President King, the President of the Court, Justice King, and we're going to be talking to national authorities for whom we rely for contributions.

But we're also going to be talking to non-governmental organizations, and an important part of the support that we seek will be toward this effort of Public Information and Outreach.

We do not want to die with the secret of the Court," the Rapp, who came to the Sierra Leonean post from Arusha, Tanzania where he served as Chief of Prosecutions, said.

He noted further: "We don't want to put on great evidence and have a judgment and decisions and for the people affected not to know about it.

Because if they don't know about it, they're denied justice, but also what we're hoping is that a message is sent that no matter how big you are, no one is above justice, and that those who suffered because of the alleged acts of an individual will receive justice and will receive information about it.

And of course to the extent that they're witnesses, will be well treated and have an opportunity to tell their story in a way that doesn't compromise their safety and security."

In response a reporter's question, Mr. Rapp minced no word that his mission to the Sierra Leone Court was to present the evidence and the strongest possible case against Taylor, to make sure that the story is told so that the judges understand his level of criminal responsibility.

He said this would prove that the court supports the amended indictment in all of its particulars.

"But we do it in a manner that's efficient, that doesn't take as long as Milosevic case did at The Hague, that shows how this process can be done right and effectively.

This Court has in many ways set the standard, and has done many things better than the much more expensive institutions that were supported like the ICTR and the ICTY.

For one thing, other than the Taylor trial itself, it's been in-country, much more accessible to the people of the country than the case of the ICTY, Yugoslavia tribunal which is 1,500km away in The Hague, or the Rwanda tribunal which is 800 kilometres away from Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania," he said.

He praised those he succeeded for expeditiously conducting the trials of the Sierra Leonean war crime indictees and projected that Taylor's trial, which will be conducted as with great transparency for the people of Sierra Leone, it will also be a case that will gain great attention internationally because of its location at The Hague.

"And I think it will tell the people of the world about the suffering the people of Sierra Leone experienced, and the people of the region. And I think that will be positive for an understanding of the challenges of the society.

And I also think it'll be good for international justice to see how things can be done through a court that is a cooperative venture, both the international community and the affected nation," he said.

Moreover, he said, it will be his mission to make sure that the Taylor case is finished properly, that if he is convicted his convictions would be upheld on appeal.

"If there are decisions by the Trial Chamber that should be challenged on a legal basis on appeal that those appeals are properly lodged by the Prosecutor, and that justice is done in each of those cases right down to the end, and that whatever happens in those cases is communicated to the people of Sierra Leone and the people of the region that were affected by the alleged acts of these men.

So those are my goals," he said, revealing the special court's expectation for the conclusion of cases it heard and expected to hear. He discounted reporters' suggestion that the Liberian government does not favor Taylor's trial and revealed that government was cooperating with the court.

"We expect a number of witnesses to come from Liberia and we are working with witnesses who've agreed to come from Liberia, and we expect cooperation from the Government of Liberia and believe that that cooperation is there," Rapp disclosed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rapp said while Taylor's trial was set for April 2, 2007, the case may not actually be heard until sometime in July this year. "It may well be moved back to June or July, but it's entirely within the hands of the Judges. The Defence has asked that it be moved to September.

The Prosecutor has said that some delay is justified, but not beyond July, but it's in the hands of the Judges.

That case will start in the next several months, and we believe be concluded by the end of 2008. And so we can now look, I think, for the Special Court to, after a very busy year of 2007, to be winding down its work to an absolute completion by the end of 2009.

And for that reason the Secretary-General appointed me as Prosecutor for three years or until the work is done, whichever comes first. And obviously if we can get it done more quickly we will," Rapp said.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has so far expended US\$125M, according registrar Munlo, is moving heaven and earth to get more funding so that the Court goes on efficiently and without disruption.

"We're working on it now and working on it because of the new developments.

We're talking to the International Criminal Court where we are renting premises to try this case," Munlo, whose responsibility it is to find funding for the court said. He said the court was looking up to the government of the United States and the UN for support.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, a hybrid court that operates under the jurisdiction the government of Sierra Leone, according Rapp, is both a concrete example and a symbol of the turning point in Sierra Leone.

"The Court also represents a greater hope for the international community as a whole. In the words of the UN Security Council, it is part of an effort "to end impunity, establish the rule of law and promote respect for human rights and by doing so to restore and maintain international peace and security."

The Liberian Times.com

Saturday, 27 January 2007

http://www.theliberiantimes.com/article_2007_01_27_3250.shtml

Liberia: Special Court Accused of Bribery

by Michael Kpayili / Staff Writer

In an attempt to collect legal data in the pending trial of former President Charles Taylor, who is behind bars for crimes against humanity, two top officials of the Special Court in Sierra Leone have been accused of attempting to bribe two former Generals of the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia to testify against their former leader and former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor. Taylor is currently being detained in Hague.

Dopoe Menkarzon, former Frontline Commander of NPFL and former Bomi County Lawmakers Sando Johnson said Pete McLaren and Joseph Siaffa of the special court attempted to bribe them if they were prepared to testify against Charles Taylor who is currently languishing in jail for crimes allegedly committed during the civil war era in Sierra Leone. The 11-count charges range from forceful recruitment of child soldiers to rape.

Speaking at a joint press conference yesterday in Monrovia, two confidants of Charles Taylor disclosed that two special court officials guaranteed them of security and compensation if they unearthed pertinent information surrounding charges levied against Charles Taylor. In a relaxed mood, Dopoe Menkarzon revealed that he first received a telephone call from McLaren requesting him to schedule a meeting with him at the German Embassy building in Congo Town where they both agreed to meet at 10:00am last Thursday. After the meeting date and time was scheduled, Menkarzon told the public that he subscribed to meeting with the Special Court officials but asked Mr. Sando Johnson to go along with him. According to Johnson and Menkarzon, while approaching the gate at the German Embassy, they came in contact with McLaren who asked them to join him in a black jeep that was parked and waiting to carry them to the meeting place in the compound of the German Embassy but they refused to enter the jeep on grounds that they were insecure riding in an unknown jeep.

According to Johnson and Menkarzon, they both walked into the building of the German Embassy, the venue of the said meeting. The two Charles Taylor loyalists disclosed that while at the center of discussion, they alleged that they were asked by McLaren and Siaffa to testify against Taylor and they would be compensated and provided with United Nations security which according to them was rejected. They both walked out of the meeting without arriving at justifiable result. To substantiate their statement, a business card with following the inscription was produced

Pete McLaren, Sr. Investigator,
Jomo Kenyatta Road, New England,
Sierra Leone. Tel. +232(0) 76800544
Email: mclaren@un.org
redcoat33@hotmail.com

Sando Johnson and Dopoe Menkarzon however expressed possible fear of kidnapping by the special court officials currently visiting Liberia. All efforts to contact the two court officials prove futile due to security constraints.

Cocorioko website

Saturday, 27 January 2007

<http://www.cocorioko.net/HINGANORMANJOINSPMDC.html>

CHIEF NORMAN, CDF AND RUF INDICTEES JOIN PMDC

Sierra Leone's political stage took on a more sensational outlook and received some strange bedfellows today as the People's Movement For Democratic Change (PMDC) announced officially that all the individuals facing trial presently for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity have joined the party

The new PMDC members include the much-celebrated former Commander of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) , Chief Hinga Norman, who despite his indictment by the UN-supported Special Court of Sierra Leone (A War Crimes Tribunal) remains a hero to many Sierra Leoneans, especially those from the South/East. The same respect is accorded his colleague CDF indictees Allieu Kondowa and Moinina Fofana.

The PMDC's Interim Publicity Secretary of the USA Chapter, Mohamed Varfie Sheriff, sent COCORIOKO the announcement that was made about the switch to the PMDC by the indictees in Freetown , Sierra Leone , on January 19, 2007. Signed by the National Secretary-General of the party, Mr. Ansu Lansana, the statement reads: .

Dear All,

Greetings in the name of Positive Change! On Friday 19th January 2007 a Press Statement was delivered at our Head Office at Hannah Benka-Coker Street, Freetown. It was prepared and signed by all nine detainees of the Special Court for Sierra Leone indicating their resolve to join the PMDC in the interest of Positive Change for Sierra Leone.

Regards,
Ansu.

Ansu B. Lansana
National Secretary General (PMDC)
Movement House
9A Hannah Benka-Coker Street
Brookfields
Freetown

According to the statement released by the men, "We have put all our individual differences aside in order to support a single political party of our choice in the forthcoming elections." The men also called on all their supporters, sympathisers, friends and relations and well-wishers to support the PMDC. According to them, the PMDC is the only political party they jointly and individually believe has the capacity to save the country while also bringing peace, reconciliation, unity, love and stability

The men who signed the documents were: Chief Norman, Moinina Fofana, Allieu Musa Kondewa, (The CDF indictees) and Issa Sesay, Augustine Gbow, Morris Kallon, Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santgie Borbor Kanu (RUF/AFRC indictees).

According to Varfie Sheriff, though the whole event had occurred on January 19, the PMDC and the CDF decided to keep the news in the back burner so that it did not affect or overshadow the

departure of the former CDF Chief Norman and the Ex-RUF Leader Issa Sesay for Senegal for medical treatment.

About what the PMDC members themselves think of this victory and the leverage it will give them, we reproduce an article from the party's website, analysing how Richard Olu Gordon's PEEP Magazine saw the move by the indictees:

Norman's defection ...A big blow to SLPP

According to the Peep Magazine, the declaration of former Deputy Defence Minister Chief Sam Hinga Norman for the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) haste shockwaves down the spine of leading SLPP officials. The Peep Magazine writes: - "It's not true..." a senior SLPP Secretariat official initially said. When shown a copy of the declaration for the PMDC signed by Hinga Norman and eight other Special Court indictees, he tried to wave it off. 'Norman is going to jail...what can he do? Another SLPP official, who asked not to be named, admitted that the defection of Chief Norman was a blow. 'But we will overcome it', he said.' Political analysts say Norman's declaration will definitely dent the SLPP in its eastern and southern heartlands where the former CDF leader is still popular. And if Norman walks free after the Special Court judgement in June the political impact will be even greater.

Kenya London News

Monday, 29 January 2007

http://www.kenyanewsnetwork.com/artman/publish/article_2487.shtml

Voices from Confinement

Posted By: Karamoh Kabba

Sierra Leone's decade-long war is over at last, but the new coalition of detained former members of warring factions says the awkward combination of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Special Court (SC) of Sierra Leone is the detractor of the provisions of the Lome Peace Accord of 1999 and TRC's imperative recommendations. The Lome Peace Accord, which was ratified by the government of Sierra Leone Parliament grants pardon to all combatants of the civil war, whilst one of the 'ten commandments' [imperative recommendations] of the TRC reads; "Release of person held in Safe Custody detention. Never again resort to Safe Custody detention." Nonetheless, detaining and trying those allegedly bearing "the greatest responsibility" for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone by the SC contradict the aforementioned provision of the Lome Peace Accord and recommendation of the TRC.

On Thursday, January 11, 2007, various members of warring factions in SC detention for allegedly bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity coalesced in common interests to participate in the democratic process and jointly support a single political party in Sierra Leone. Chief Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Alieu Musa Kondewa of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF); Issa Hassan Sesay, Augustine Gbow and Morris Kallon of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF); and Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Kanu of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), signed a press release denouncing violence, thanking the international community for bringing peace to Sierra Leone, accusing the SLPP government as the dividing force in Sierra Leone and declaring their joint-support for the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC).

Scholars are divided between the usefulness and counter-productiveness of the TRC and SC in Sierra Leone. One argument that stands out the most amongst many Sierra Leonean scholars supports the detainees' claim that the SC is a distraction to especially the TRC's recommendations:

How would the ANC have become the honorable democratic institution it is if South Africa had chose a special court over a truth commission? One question that often garnishes the preceding assertion is; what would have become of the fate of Nelson Mandela? The most egregious war crimes and crimes against humanity were reported out of Sierra Leone during its darkest period of that bleak decade.

These crimes were because of fighting one of the most ruthless civil wars in recent histories. As well, members of the ANC and the Apartheid government of South Africa committed serious crimes against humanity on the long walk to freedom.

Sierra Leone's war was unique in the sense that unlike many rebel wars in Africa that metamorphose into ethnic cleansing, a fourth angle to the rebel, army and peacekeepers in Sierra Leone was fomented by ethnic groups against their tormentors in the form of what we know as CDF that was headed by the then Deputy Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, who is now one of the SC's detainees. It is a fair to middling assertion that the CDF helped to avert ethnic cleansing in Sierra Leone. The army had been demoralized and its members transmuted either into various warring factions by force,

by default or by choice or fled. The Commander in Chief was at the head of that fleet of soldiers that fled.

That left the Deputy Commander in Chief, Sam Hinga Norman, with no choice but the courageous members of the CDF that came to his rescue to represent his Commander in Chief, President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, with valor and honor. Chief Norman had the fullest support and backing of President Tejan Kabbah, who gave directives from Guinea, until the badly negotiated SC by Solomon Berewa, the then Attorney General, now Vice President and frontrunner of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), came into the picture.

What would be the fate of the President of Sierra Leone after he leaves the office of the president when the SC sticks to its gun of going after those bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity? In 1998, President Tejan Kabbah wrote an article for the Daily Mirror in London denying an allegation of using mercenaries provided by Sandline and trafficking of weapons to the CDF through the same source, [Sandline now mines Sierra Leone's diamonds]: "My Government did not use mercenaries provided by Sandline. It is true that a delivery of light weapons, arranged by a third party, was made by Sandline for the use of our Civil Defence Units.

But that only occurred after the removal of the illegal regime." Wayne Madsen, in his well-researched work, "Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999" writes; "On February 22, 1998, Sandline, with the approval of the Britain's Foreign Office and British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone Peter Penfold, arranged to ship thirty tons of Bulgarian AK-47 rifles to Kabbah's waiting forces in Sierra Leone."

The Nigerians of the ECOMOG troops at Lungi Airport seized the cargo of ammunition, bound for the Kamajor local militias who were waiting to stage a counter coup against the military regime that had kicked President Kabbah out of office, Madsen explains. Is it a double coincidence that Sandline Company mines Sierra Leone's diamonds?

The warring factions that signed the January 11 press release are the major stakeholders in Sierra Leone's civil war and peace process. These united voices from confinement accusing the SLPP government as the dividing force empirically debunks the SLPP's claim of bringing peace to Sierra Leone. These former warriors who are signatories to the January 11 press release surely know who brought peace to Sierra Leone.

They write; "We also fully appreciate efforts by the international community to bring peace, stability and security to Sierra Leone through our various collaboration efforts as former combatants and members of the various warring factions in Sierra Leone." These men know very well that there would have been no peace without their collaborations and continuous admonishment of their followers to remain peaceful despite their status in confinement. That cannot be said of President Kabbah who might have been busy trafficking weapons to CDF against the UN—Resolution 1132 that barred the purchase and shipment of weapons to all warring factions.

What is more, the detainees know very well that their demise in SC confinement is because of the deceptive Lome Peace Accord that promised them what the government of Sierra Leone could not deliver.

These men demonstrate a complete commitment to the peace process and stability when they write; "Because we love our country; because we love peace, unity and stability for our country; because we believe in the development of our country and the welfare of our people; and above all, because we believe that the present SLPP government does not stand for peace, reconciliation,

unity, stability and the development of our country and our people, we hereby unite and state as follows:

1. “That we have put all of our individual differences aside to support a single political party of our choice in the forthcoming elections.
2. That we know that the only dividing force that bears greatest responsibility for the current problems in our country, Sierra Leone, is the government of the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP)
3. That like us, we urge our supporters, sympathizers, friends, relations, and well-wishers to support the People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which is the only political party we jointly and individually believe in to save our country, Sierra Leone, and bring peace, reconciliation, unity, love and stability to our nation.
4. That we are unanimously sending this message to the office of the PMDC through our wives and next-of-kin, hoping that the party will accept our membership, wishes and desires for our beloved country, Sierra Leone.
5. We urge the PMDC to spread this message far and wide within Sierra Leone and beyond to the international community, our friends, well-wishers, sympathizers, relations and supporters.
6. We are open to any visits, questions and comments about this united, friendly and God-inspiring decision we have taken. We thank God for our lives so far and sign accordingly.”

Patriotic Vanguard website

Monday, 29 January 2007

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php?id_article=973

John Leigh Debunks Press Statement

By Our Correspondent.

A leading member of the ruling SLPP government in Sierra Leone, Dr. John Leigh(photo), has dismissed a recent statement purportedly written by the nine Special Court detainees, saying the



nd

Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana, Alieu Musa Kondewa (CDF), Issa Hassan Sesay, Augustine Gbow, Morris Kallon (RUF) and Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara, Santigie Bobor Kanu (AFRC) signed the alleged statement January 11, 2007. The Special Court for Sierra Leone currently detains all nine, with Hinga Norman and Issa Sesay presently in a hospital in Dakar, Senegal where they are undergoing medical treatment.

In their statement, the nine detainees noted, with disappointment, that they are being held in “confinement and pain” for the past several years by the Special Court for Sierra Leone “regardless of our efforts to bring peace, unity, stability and security to our country, Sierra Leone, whilst those we believe bear the greatest responsibility for events of the civil war in that country are either dead or still out there with you”.

The detainees further complained that they are in confinement and pain notwithstanding provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999 which they said granted absolute pardon to all combatants and their collaborators in the civil war in the country and that the said Lome Peace Agreement was signed into law by the present parliament in Sierra Leone. The statement further declared that the present SLPP government in Sierra Leone does not stand for peace, reconciliation, unity, stability and the development of the country and the people. Consequently, the detainees went on, they have decided to put aside their individual differences to support a single political party of their choice (the PMDC) for the forthcoming elections while observing that the only dividing force “that bears the greatest responsibility for the current problems in our country, Sierra Leone, is the government of the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP).”

The nine Special Court indictees also called on their supporters, sympathizers, friends, relations and well wishers to support the People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which, they said, “is the only political party we jointly and individually believe in to save our country, Sierra Leone, and bring peace, reconciliation, unity, love and stability to our nation”.

They also urged the PMDC to “spread the message far and wide within Sierra Leone and beyond to the international community, our friends, well-wishers, sympathizers, relations and supporters.”

PMDC leaders and supporters at home and abroad have greeted the development with great jubilation as the nine detainees enjoy the support of hundreds of thousands of voters across the

country. SLPP leaders and supporters have however received the news with fear and consternation as it definitely spells disaster for their party.

Stay tuned for developments on this controversial issue.

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 27 January 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

Despite Turmoil, UNHCR to Repatriate More Liberian Refugees from Guinea

VOA
26/01/07

Despite the current turmoil in Guinea-Conakry, the UN refugee agency plans to repatriate hundreds more Liberian refugees, who are in camps there. Guinea is host to more than 31-thousand refugees, most of them Liberians. André Mahechic is a spokesperson for the UNHCR. From Geneva, he spoke to VOA English to Africa Service reporter Joe De Capua about the situation in Guinea. "The strike that has been paralyzing Guinea has also limited our access to the camps...but we have managed, despite this, to keep the minimal presence and certainly to keep the life-saving operations active. At the same time, we had a number of Liberian refugees, who volunteered for repatriation to Liberia. And we have scheduled a convoy for tomorrow, Saturday, which should take 460 returnees back to Ganta in neighbouring Liberia," he says.

Charles Taylor's Defense Team Eyes Delay

Source: AP Online Regional – Europe Date: January 26, 07--THE HAGUE, Netherlands_ Former Liberian President Charles Taylor's lawyers need more time to prepare his defence against charges he directed a campaign of murder, rape and enslavement in West Africa, his lawyer told a judge Friday. Judge Teresa Doherty made it clear, however, that Taylor's war crimes trial will begin June 4 as planned. It is expected to take a year to 18 months. Taylor has pleaded innocent to charges linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during the 10-year civil war in Liberia's neighbour to the northwest, Sierra Leone. He faces a life sentence if convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, sitting in the Netherlands.

International Clips on West Africa

Sweden to close embassies in Ivory Coast and Namibia

Source: Dpa English Date: January 26, 2007 --Stockholm_(dpa) _ The Swedish government has decided to close the Swedish embassies in Ivory Coast and Namibia as part of spending cuts, the Foreign Ministry said Friday. The decision to close the embassy in the Ivory Coast as of March 1 was also partly linked to the several years of conflict in the West African country that has limited its operations. A Stockholm-based ambassador has been monitoring the country since 2006, while Swedish embassy in Senegal would offer assistance to nationals in need and issue passports and visas.

Local Media – Newspaper

“Majority” Lawmakers Concurs With Senate Resolution

(National Chronicle)

- “Majority” lawmakers sitting in Virginia, outside Monrovia yesterday passed a resolution concurring with the Senate to hold sessions at the Unity Conference Centre including the joint session of the National Legislature scheduled for January 29.
- The lawmakers had earlier rejected the resolution from the Senate on grounds that their gathering in that part of the country was not “illegal” and did not need a resolution to legitimize it.
- Meanwhile, Lawyers representing the Virginia-based Representatives yesterday filed a return to a writ of prohibition issued them by the Supreme Court.

Former President Taylor Confidantes Accuse Special Court Officials of Attempted Bribery

(National Chronicle)

- [sic:] Two Officials of the Special Court in Sierra Leone have been accused of attempting to bribe two Liberians to have then testified against former President Charles Taylor.
- Speaking to journalists yesterday, Former Bomi County Senator, Sando Johnson and Dopoe Mankarzon former military officials in the Taylor regime accused Pete McLaren and Joseph Siaffa of the court of attempting to bribe them to testify against Taylor who is currently on trial in the Hague.

Labor Minister Wants Corrupt Official Prosecuted

(National Chronicle)

- Addressing a students gathering yesterday, Labor Minister, Samuel Kofi Woods corrupt officials engaged in financial mal-practice must be prosecuted to serve as a deterrent.
- Minister Woods pointed out that government needs to allow accountability to triumph over justice.

Liberian Government Cooperation Will be Key in Extraditing Representative Murray, FBI Says

- [Sic] To extradite Kettehkumue Murray, (CDC- Third District, Montserrado County) back to the United States to face trial for his alleged involvement in sexual activities with a minor in Charlotte, NC will require the help of the Liberian government, a spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI told international press yesterday.
- Murray was charged with attempted rape and a federal arrest warrant was issued in April 1999 by the U.S. District Court, Western District of North Carolina, after Murray was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

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

Truth Commission Postponed Public Hearings

- In a statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) announced a postponement in the commencement of its hearings which was due to begin on January 30.
- The TRC statement said it has worked hard to stick to its plan regarding the beginning of hearings but said more needs to be done before the exercise starts.
- No new date has been set for the commencement of the hearings.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Supreme Court to Hear Prohibition Case

- The Supreme Court will today hear arguments from lawyers representing “embattled” House Speaker, Edwin Snowe and majority lawmakers after both parties asked for time to present their arguments before the Justice in Chambers.
- In their returns to a writ of citation, lawyers representing lawmakers sitting in Virginia said the Supreme Court can not reverse the decision of majority of the lawmakers to punish it members.
- Meanwhile, Virginia-based lawmakers have passed a resolution concurring with the Senate to hold sessions at the Unity Conference Centre including the joint session of the National Legislature scheduled for January 29.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Representative Murray Denies Being Wanted by FBI

- In an interview, Representative Kettehkumehn Murray who has been linked to attempted rape in the US denied being wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and dismissed claims that he was a fugitive from Justice in the United States.
- He challenged his accusers to provide proof and called for those wanting more information on the issue to contact the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia for clarification.

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 8:35 am)*

World Trade Organization Promises Technical Support to Liberia

- An Executive Mansion statement said the President of the World Trade Organization, Mr. Pascal Lamy has promised to render technical support to the country as government institutes the necessary democratic and economic reforms.
- The statement said the commitment was made when President Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf held talks with him in Davos, Switzerland.

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 January 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

AP January 26, 2007

Ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor to appear in court for pretrial hearing

By MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE, Netherlands_ Former Liberian President Charles Taylor was to appear in court Friday for a preliminary hearing ahead of his trial on charges of overseeing a campaign to terrorize Sierra Leoneans with a campaign of murder, mutilation, rape and enslavement. Taylor has pleaded innocent to 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity linked to the killing and mistreatment of thousands of people during Sierra Leone's bloody 10-year civil war.

Los Angeles Times January 25, 2007

Taylor's Arrest Relieved Liberia

One big step for Liberia was the arrest of Charles Taylor in March, which sent a shudder of relief through the country. When the former president was in exile in Nigeria, which granted him asylum after the war ended in 2003, the question of his extradition on international war crimes charges dogged Johnson-Sirleaf everywhere -- especially on a trip to the United States, which had pressed for his arrest.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast rebel chief announces talks with president in February

BOUAKE, Ivory Coast, Jan 25, 2007 (AFP) - Ivory Coast's rebel leader Gillaume Soro said Thursday that direct talks with President Laurent Gbagbo could start early February to promote a stalled peace process in the country. "The start of the direct dialogue could be at the beginning of February," Soro told reporters in an interview at the New Forces rebel headquarters, which has been in the central city of Bouake since conflict split the country in two in 2002.

Local Media – Newspaper

Man Arrested with Military Hardware at Liberia-Sierra Leone Border

(Daily Observer)

- [sic:] A man driving a commercial truck carrying military hardware and UNMIL medals was arrested and his goods intercepted after crossing into Liberia from Sierra Leone. Sources said the driver, Abdullai Swanneh, entered Liberia under the guise of bringing in the locally pounded cassava flour known gari for commercial purpose.

Police Dispersed "Thugs" at Unity Conference Center

(New Democrat and Daily Observer)

- The confusion over the removal of Speaker Edwin Snowe could have taken a bloody turn yesterday had the police not swung into actions to disburse a crowd of former

fighters who had been allegedly driven to the Unity Conference Center by Mr. Snowe to disrupt normal sessions of the House majority bloc. In a related development, the majority lawmakers yesterday rejected a resolution presented to it by the House of Senate.

Taylor's Trial Now Set for June

(New Democrat and The Analyst)

- Lawyers representing former Liberian President Charles Taylor, facing 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, have been granted two additional months to prepare their Defense, according to a release from the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor's lawyers had requested more time to prepare for the case, which was initially set for April this year.

Ecobank Employees Arrested for "Stealing" from Customers' Accounts

(The Analyst)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested eight employees of Ecobank for allegedly stealing US\$407,000 from customers' accounts. This is not the first time that employees at the bank have stolen money from customers' accounts. It can be recalled that in 2005, a group of employees secretly withdrew US\$307,000 from private accounts at the bank.

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

Libyan Government Donates to Liberian Counterpart

- Presidential Press Secretary, Mr. Cyrus Badio told reporters yesterday that the Government of Libya presented two 1,250-megawatt generators to assist the Government of Liberia in its Emergency Power Program.
- Libyan Ambassador to Liberia, Mohammed Omar Talbi presented the generators and 5 tractors to the Liberian Government through Lands, Mines and Energy Minister, Dr. Eugene Shannon.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and S tar Radio)

Majority Lawmakers File Response to Supreme Court Writ

- Sources at the Unity Conference Center where the Majority Lawmakers have been meeting, said that the Lawmakers filed their response to the Petition of Prohibition earlier filed by House Speaker Edwin Snowe.
- The Justice in Chambers Gladys Johnson had issued the writ citing the Majority Lawmakers to a conference to say why the Writ of Prohibition, asking them to return to Status quo ante, should not be granted.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and S tar Radio)

UNICEF Lauds Liberians for Supporting Campaign against Measles

- UNICEF/Liberia Senior Program Officer, Keith Wright and Expanded Immunization Programme Officer, Dr. Burbarcar lauded Liberians for supporting the nationwide measles vaccination campaign, and added that the more than 900 selected vaccination sites in the Country were fully functioning administering one vaccine and one Vitamin-A to children from 9 months to 5 years old.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and S tar Radio)

Star Radio *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Liberian Refugees Agency Embarks on Border Monitoring

- In an interview, the Liberia Refugees Repatriation and Resettlement Commission Deputy Executive Director, Saah Nyumah stated that the Agency was currently conducting a monitoring exercise at the Liberia-Guinea border to identify any effect on Liberia, of the latest Guinean crisis. He added that the Agency has put in place a contingency plan to respond to refugee influx from Guinea.

Rural Women Protest Jail Break of Convicted Rapist

- Correspondents said that nearly 200 women in Tubmanburg in Bomi County yesterday protested to demand the Liberia National Police authorities in the county to produce convicted rapist, Varney Gangarmah who reportedly broke jail in the area. The rapist had been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and the process to transfer him to Monrovia was on when he escaped.

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.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Friday, 26 January 2007

UNMIL Begins Operation 'Seskin-Ii' Today

By Sallu Swaray

The United Missions in Liberia (UNMIL) in collaboration with its Liberian security counterparts will today begin an extended phase of 'Operation Seskin' launched recently.

According to UNMIL, the launch of phase two of the operations comes against the backdrop of the ongoing melee in Guinea which may have spill over effects.

For the past weeks, Guinea has been engulfed with a violent demonstration in which over 28 persons have reportedly lost their lives.

Guineans are calling for the resignation of President Lassanah Conte, who according to them is ailed enough to serve in the position.

The demonstration has met with taut resistance from government security forces but they (demonstrators) seemed determined to achieve results.

During the exercise, UNMIL military officials said they would put into place measures aimed at closely monitoring the security situation at the Liberian-Guinean border.

Speaking at an UNMIL weekly press briefing yesterday at the Pan African Plaza in Sinkor, UNMIL Military Chief for Operations, Col. Gerald Aherne said that the exercise was also aimed at carrying out a concurrent patrol along both country's borders.

He indicated that forces expected to execute Operations Seskin-II will comprise the Liberian National Police, Bureau of Immigration, UNMIL Peacekeepers and other paramilitary agencies of government.

Col. Aherne noted that in order to re-enforce the importance of this operation, the Force Commander, Lt./Gen. Isaac C. Obiakor yesterday began visiting the operations site at Yellah Town in Lofa close to the Guinea border where he will meet with his Guinean counterpart.

According to him, Operations Seskin-II will remain in force until part three can take place in February. All of the operations will come to an end in February he said.

He noted that they would carry on routine operation along Liberia - Sierra Leone border as well as Liberia-Ivorian border with ONUCI Force in Ivory Coast. He intimated that this is the first time that UNMIL is conducting these operations since 2007.

BBC Online

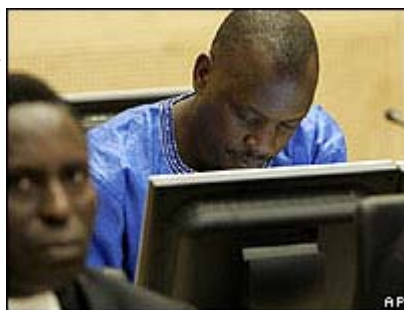
Monday, 29 January 2007

Court to rule on DR Congo warlord

The only permanent international war crimes court is due to rule on whether to put a Democratic Republic of Congo militia leader on trial.

Judges at the International Criminal Court (ICC) are to decide whether there is enough evidence to proceed with charges against Thomas Lubanga.

Prosecutors allege that children as young as 10 were forced to fight for him. He denies war crimes charges.



Lubanga denies three war crimes charges

If the judges proceed, it would be the first trial at The Hague-based ICC.

The five-year DR Congo conflict led to an estimated four million deaths.

The US strongly opposed the creation of the ICC, fearing the political prosecution of its soldiers.

The ICC was designed to end the need for the various ad hoc war crimes courts which have recently been established, including the chambers created to deal with war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda.

Mr Lubanga, 45, led the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) militia in DR Congo's north-eastern Ituri district, where fighting continued long after the official end of the five-year war in 2003.

Death threats

"Lubanga made children train to kill, Lubanga made them kill and Lubanga let the children die... in hostilities," prosecution lawyer Ekkehard Withopf told the court during a hearing last November.

The prosecution says children as young as 10 were snatched as they walked to school and forced to fight for Mr Lubanga's ethnic Hema militia against their Lendu rivals.

The child soldiers were later instructed "to kill all Lendu including men, women and children", a prosecution statement says, based on testimony from six children.

His lawyers say he was trying to end the conflict and is being punished by the international community for refusing to give mining concessions in areas he controlled to foreign firms.

Referring to his enemies, he once told UN peacekeepers: "Those who have committed genocide or massacres have to be punished."



[Profile: Thomas Lubanga](#)

The BBC's Mark Doyle says the conflict in Ituri manifests itself as an ethnic war, but its root cause is the criminal mining of the region's gold and other minerals.

Lobby group Human Rights Watch says some 60,000 civilians have been slaughtered in Ituri province by various militias.

It calls for them all to be investigated, along with government officials from DR Congo and others who may be implicated from neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda.

Guineans Express Disappointment in Strike-Ending Deal



Guinean demonstrators protest the regime of President Lansana Conte, across from White House in Washington, 25 Jan 2007

expressing disappointment.

Many Guineans are expressing disappointment in a deal to end a three-week strike, saying President Lansana Conte should resign. VOA's Nico Colombant reports from our regional bureau in Dakar.

Conakry-based journalist Maseco Conde says, many people he has talked to, say the deal did not go far enough.

He says guarantees to lower the prices of rice and gasoline are not seen as sufficient. He also says Guineans now want the ailing and erratic president, Mr. Conte, out.

He says, many people stocked up on goods Sunday at an open market, fearing there will be a new protest march on Monday.

He says, people he has talked to in the interior of Guinea are also

Strike leader Ibrahima Fofana, who announced the deal on Saturday, tells VOA he understands the frustration.

He says, it was not possible to change everything at once, but that important steps will be taken.

He also says, if Mr. Conte backs off from anything, union leaders are ready to resume their protest.

The diabetic, chain-smoking president now must follow through on his pledge to appoint a consensus prime minister with increased powers.

The deal also calls for capping the price of staple goods and gas, pursuing the prosecution of two of the president's allies in a corruption probe and making January 22nd a national day of remembrance for the dozens of protesters killed in a security crackdown.

A local analyst with U.S.-based Human Right Watch, Dustin Sharp, says many Guineans have the feeling, even though the protest was union-led, that union leaders are now, in his words, "selling out" to Mr. Conte.

"I think it is important not to forget the unions represent, in a very little way, a very small portion of Guinean workers," said Sharp. "The reason that it has turned into a much bigger movement is there has been a certain sense of solidarity and agreement with the general principles the unions were perceived to represent. I think it is possible that certain portions of the population will not accept."

One move that could placate angry Guineans is the immediate naming of a popular prime minister, but another analyst Gilles Yabi, with Brussels-based International Crisis Group, says that could prove difficult.

"I do not have the feeling they have a candidate. I think they just said that they want a prime minister who has not been associated to the corruption, to the financial scandals in the past of the country," said Yabi.

Mr. Conte has not had a prime minister since last April. Since then, prices have continued to soar, while government services have crumbled even more. Mr. Conte has been in power since a coup in 1984.

Milwaukee Sentinel-Journal

Saturday, 27 January 2007

Advocates pursue justice worldwide

Conference unites those giving a voice to victims of atrocities around globe

By MARK JOHNSON

mjohnson@journal sentinel.com

Beloit - Close to 100 people spent Saturday at Beloit College considering mass graves in Iraq, executions in Srebrenica, 1.2 million people murdered, raped and maimed in Sierra Leone - and the fight for justice that has followed such atrocities.

"Mankind has done itself in in the 20th century. I'm being a little bit conservative, but over 235 million human beings died in the 20th century; 135 million died at the hands of their own government," said David Crane, former prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

"Millions of people around the world have died and their last thought has been, 'I hope there is justice,' " said Michael Newton, a professor at Vanderbilt University Law School in Nashville, Tenn., who served as an adviser to the judicial chambers during the Iraqi Special Tribunal.

The daylong conference, "Transitional Justice: Accountability in the Wake of Mass Atrocities," brought together many who have worked on the front lines of war crime and genocide tribunals around the globe.

The event was held in conjunction with the college's Weissberg Professorship in International Studies, given this year to Richard Goldstone, a former justice for the Constitutional Court of South Africa who served as chief prosecutor for Yugoslavia tribunal.

Participants heard discussions about the role of politics in the search for justice and the complications involved in prosecuting heads of state such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Slobodan Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia and Charles Taylor in Sierra Leone.

Newton did not address the controversial scene of Hussein's execution but spoke of how Iraqis carried out the tribunal, holding international law above their own.

Participants also heard from David Scheffer, former U.S. ambassador for war crimes, who said the U.S. must ratify the treaty establishing the international criminal court, and do so in time to enter the discussion of possible amendments in 2009.

He cited a recent poll that found 74% of Americans favoring U.S. involvement in the court.

But it was the discussion of political will that seemed to frame the other issues.

"Too many people forget about the politics. Without the politics these things just don't happen," Goldstone said. "Without the politics there wouldn't have been a Nuremberg trial."

In the former Yugoslavia, he said, the will came about in part because of what he called "the CNN factor," the transmitting of photographs of emaciated men behind barbed wire fences - images that called to mind photos from Nazi concentration camps.

Although the tribunals in the former Yugoslavia cost some \$148 million, Goldstone said the price was relatively cheap.

"I have little doubt that the cost of the bombing in Yugoslavia over Kosovo in 1998 - the bombing must have cost some \$50 million to \$60 million a day, to kill people, to use military force," he said. "So when one talks about \$148 million for the Yugoslavia tribunal, that's the cost of two or three days of using military force."

Even though Milosevic would eventually die four years after his trial began, before a verdict, his trial left a graphic historical record, including videotape of the executions in Srebrenica.

By contrast, Cambodia has waited 27 years for justice, said Gregory Stanton, director of the Cambodia Genocide Project.

"It's a long time," he said, "but the political will has been engaged, and it is God's work."