

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, October 29, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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CONCORD TIMES

Excellence and Objectivity

October 29, 2004

Price: Le500

Special Court witness ropes Charles Taylor



Charles Taylor - wanted by Special Court

By Abdul Karim Koroma

Special Court witness Hassan Bilitay Thursday revealed how erstwhile Liberian President Charles Taylor supported rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

Bilitay, lead in evidence by Prosecution Counsel Christopher Santhora says he lived with his uncle Abu Sesay and other members of Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit at Jamaica Road four mile from the Executive Mansion in Monrovia.

He said Kennedy told him there would be a new government in

Sierra Leone through Taylor's help.

He explained how Sam Benjamin Yeaten's driver escorted some RUF rebels with weapons to the Sierra Leone border at Lofa County to ensure safe passage through the checkpoints.

Bilitay says he saw indictee Issa Sesay disembarking from a green jeep loaded with some 20 AK 47 rifles.

Disasters kill

68 million

annually

See page 3 for story

Revealed...

How RUF obtained weapons

By Tamba Borbor
Popular Liberian
Journalist- Hassan Bility
has revealed how the
Revolutionary United
Front (RUF) obtained
weapons from Liberia
during the conflict.

Testifying as Prosecution
witness in the trial at the
Special Court of
members of the RUF, Mr.
Bility with witness code
number: TF1-355 said
that he recalls sometime
in August 1998, while he

was living in a two-storey
house with 12 rooms at VP
Road in Monrovia, when
he first saw deceased RUF
General Sam Bockarie
alias 'Mosquito' and
General Issa Sesay. He
Contd. Page 2

How RUF obtained weapons

From Front Page

went on to say that as he
was coming from drinking
tea (Ataya) at a nearby
shop at around 8:00pm, a
red jeep drove into the said
compound shortly
followed by another dark
green-coloured one;
adding that he then saw
four men alighting from
the red jeep amongst
whom was General Issa
Sesay. As Issa Sesay
jumped out of the vehicle
the witness explained, he
walked up to the second
apartment on the left in the
compound where John
Doe- who was the
Artillery Commander in
the Taylor Army by then
and asked for a man
named- Sam (the driver of
Benjamin Yeaton- who
was then Head of all
Security Forces in Liberia
during Charles Taylor's
reign). Mr. Hassan Bility
disclosed that Sam was
then ordered to lead an
unspecified number of
cars to the border Liberian
shares with Sierra Leone
through Lofa County;

adding that this was to
make sure the RUF
officials including the
arms and ammunition
they had in their vehicles,
pass easily through the
series of security
checkpoints. Asked by
Counsel in the
Prosecution Team-
Christopher Santhora to
confirm how he knew
there were arms in the
vehicles, the witness said
that he saw AK47 assault
rifles in the red and dark
green-coloured jeeps;
noting also that his
cousin- Abu who was the
Special Bodyguard to
Mousa Sesay- then
member of the Taylor
G o v e r n m e n t ,
confirmed when he told
him that they have got
"raw bitches". This
expression the witness
said meant that they
have acquired new
weapons or rifles/guns.
Continuing his
testimony, Journalist
Hassan Bility recalled
16th January 1999 just
6 days after his son's

birthday in Monrovia,
when he saw Mousa
Sesay escorting two
men- Issa Sesay and
Sam Bockarie
(Mosquito) whom he
explained were in
military-coloured jeeps.
The time he said was
around 5:00pm and that
the RUF strongmen had
come to the compound
to get Sam again to
escort them to the
border with the arms
and ammunition which
they had loaded in their
vehicles. His cousin-
Abu, he further
explained then
presented a pass signed
by former President
Charles Taylor to the
RUF men to ensure
easy passage through
the various security
checkpoints to the
border. The witness
confirmed that it was
the true signature of
Charles Taylor as he
had and have seen
documents bearing the
signature of him. The
trials continue today.

H/W Ho

Friday Oct 6 29th 2004

Betrayal!

Hinga Norman Writes From Jail



Special Court indictee, Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, has in a letter to one time APC minister and top CDF operative Alhaji Daramy Rogers, made astounding revelations regarding his indictment by the UN-backed court.

The letter is reproduced below unedited:

Chief Samuel Hinga Norman

Justice Of The Peace

Alhaji Daramy Rogers

5, Tawa Street

Bo

Sierra Leone

13th October 2004.

My Good Friend and Brother,

I am surprised that since my (our) arrest and detention, (Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa, all being Mendes and of the Kamajor Wing alone,) you, a very senior member of the CDF-Kamajoh, have not found it necessary to pay us a single day's visit up to date of this letter even though I am aware of the fact that you are paying

the (Prosecutor?) or (Prosecution?) like one day sometime in September 2004, when you arrived at the Detention Centre in a Maroon colour jeep - Reg. No. ABU 810.

Bearer, is one of the Investigators of the CDF Defence Team on behalf of the Accused who are still Detained and waiting to be served with Indictment to commence their Trial. Once he met you and found it difficult to get your cooperation in discussing issues relative to our defence, you being a very senior member of the CDF-Kamajor.

Indeed, it pleased the Government of the SLPP under President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah who wrote to the United Nations to have us (Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa - KAMAJORS and MENDES only) indicted for DEFENDING the MENDES and also for assisting the ECOMOG/SLAF

Hinga Norman Writes From Jail

and UNAMSIL to RESTORE the Constitution and REINSTATE him the President to power, declaring us (the MENDE KAMAJORS specifically) as CANNIBALS, MURDERERS, RAPISTS and WAR CRIMINALS of despicable characters considering that you, others and I always ate together from the say Tray Dish at Base Zero.

During the WAR, you were, and you still are the Chairman of the Appointments and Promotions Committee and a member of the "BASE ZERO WAR COUNCIL" your responsibility being that of recommending the most suitable members of the CDF SL for senior commanders position in the battle field. This position you still hold until Parliament of Sierra Leone (eventually?) Dissolves the CDF SL. Therefore, even in spite of your being a Prosecution AGENT, you are requested to please be in readiness to be available at any time the CDF Defence Team considers your suitability to testify in court relative to activities that may be to your knowledge in the period under review especially considering that you (Alhaji Daramy Rogers) served in a Government that DECLARED SIERRA LEONE A ONE PARTY STATE and you became a Junior Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture in that Government and that the Declaration of the ONE PARTY system was one of the KEY reasons for the Rebel War in Sierra Leone.

That you Alhaji Daramy Rogers became:

a) Chairman: Appointments and Promotions Committee

b) Regional Coordinator - Southern Region

c) Liaison, CDF ECOMOG - Southern Region

d) Overall Administrator of the entire Southern Region.

You Alhaji Daramy Rogers, became a Kamajor Initiate together with your son, Junior Rogers alias Chemical, on the same day at Base Zero and when you became Regional Coordinator and took over Administrative Control of the South, your son became a member for the RUF with your consent (he is still a member of the RUF) and your son carried out lootings in Bo Town and environs and stored those looted properties in your house: some of the loots are still suspected to be in your possession (I hope that on receipt of this letter, you may not be tempted to dispense with all of them).

You Alhaji Rogers, should not be a paid Agent for the Prosecution and I hope the Prosecution is Not Paying You as an Agent for services rendered. You were a member of the SLPP, then you became a member of the APC and now, you are a member of the SLPP/CDF-KAMAJOR and SCSL PROSECUTION TEAM. What are you going to become next, is I guess, an informant to the ICC when they start investigating the SCSL in the very near future: because, that was exactly what you did to Allieu Kondewa when you collected money from the Prosecution, bought a bag of rice, took that rice with some loaves of bread and some cash to Kondewa in a village near Bumpo one evening pretending to Kondewa that you were his friend and the very next morning the Sierra Leone Police picked Kondewa up and detained him on orders allegedly from the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Alahu-Akbar!!!

The bearer of this letter or any one connected with the Defence Team of the Accused may at any time call on you (not for any harmful reason) for clarification of relevant issues. Please feel free to receive them in peace with the safe understanding that we should all do our very best in revealing the truth to get at the criminals NOT selectively by SCSL method but by exposing lies and those who tell lies to hide their crimes. ALAHU-AKBAR

My warmest regards, friendly, brotherly and Kamajor salutations to you and all Senior Members

Your friend and brother

Chief Samuel Hinga Norman - JP

His Excellency, Alhaji, Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President and National Commander - CDF/SL
Hon. R.E.S. Lagao, Member of Parliament (SLPP), Chairman Natl. Coord. Comm. - CDF/SL
Registrar - Prosecutor - SCSL
The Principal Defender - SCSL
Sandy Counsel for Hinga Norman / All CDF Defence Counsel
Same at Home and Abroad

to the Democrat

Friday Feb 29 2004

NEW VISION

Motto: A Better Vision Is A Better Future

Friday October 29, 2004

Independent

Le 500

Chief Hinga Norman again lambasts Kabbah from detention

Chief Samuel Hinga Norman has written a letter from detention accusing a senior member of the CDF-Kamajor of deserting him.

In the letter sent by one of the Investigators of the CDF Defence Team he accused Alhaji Darany Rogers of not paying him a single day's visit up until the date of writing his letter on October 13,

2004 in spite of the fact as alleged that Alhaji Darany Rogers was paying visits to the detention center as an Agent of the (Prosecutor) or (Prosecution?) He went on to write that it had pleased the

Government of the SLPP under President Kabbah who wrote to the United Nations to have them (Samuel Hinga Norman Monina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa-KAMAJORS and MEMBERS only)

indicted for DEFENDING THE MENDES and also for assisting the ECOMOG/ SLA and UNAMSIL to restore the

Constitution and REINSTATE him the President to power declaring them the
Continued page 2

Hinga Norman lambasts Kabba

MENDE KAMAJOR specifically) as CANNIBALS, MURDERERS, RAPIST and WAR CRIMINALS of despicable characters.

Chief Norman opined that Alhaji Rogers should not be a paid Agent of the Prosecution and expressed the hope that the Prosecution was not paying him as an Agent for services rendered. He observed that Alhaji Rogers was a member of the SLPP, then a member of the APC and now member of the SLPP/CDF/KAMAJOR and SCSL Prosecution team.



UNMIL Daily Radio Summary
Thursday, 28 Oct 2004

Following are excerpts of select Liberian radio stations' news programs. Parts of the transcripts have been paraphrased and edited to conform to UNMIL style.

ELBS (*News monitored yesterday at 19:00 and 21:00*)

UN Grants Former President's Wife Permission to Leave Liberia

- The United Nations yesterday granted permission for Liberia's former first lady, Jewel Howard Taylor, to travel abroad for medical treatment.

* * * *

Associated Press Worldstream October 28, 2004 Thursday

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October 28, 2004 Thursday

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

DISTRIBUTION: Europe; Britian; Scandinavia; England; Africa; Middle East

LENGTH: 240 **words**

HEADLINE: Former **Liberian leader's wife flown to Ghana to seek medical treatment**

BYLINE: **JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH; Associated Press Writer**

DATELINE: **MONROVIA, Liberia**

BODY:

The United Nations suspended a travel ban on the ailing **wife** of former **Liberian** President Charles Taylor, allowing her to fly to **Ghana** for **medical treatment**, officials said.

Jewel Taylor, 42, is suffering from severe stomach pains. She left **Monrovia** aboard a U.N.-chartered plane after the transitional government expressed concerns over her deteriorating health.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on **Liberia** in 2001 that included a ban on travel for Taylor, his family and key associates. The sanctions were aimed at stopping the flow of arms and diamonds believed to have been fueling years of conflict in West Africa.

Jewel Taylor was admitted to St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital in **Monrovia** on Sunday and her family said she had repeatedly tried to **seek** treatment abroad, but was refused permission to leave the country.

Liberia's Justice Minister Kabinah Janneh commended the U.N. decision, saying "it shows that the U.N. is not here to witch hunt."

Charles Taylor has been living in Nigeria since he was pressured to step down in a peace deal brokered as rebels swept into **Monrovia** last year.

Jewel Taylor had been with her husband in Nigeria, but returned to **Liberia** several months ago, family members said.

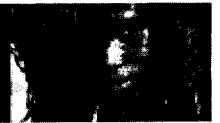
Charles Taylor was indicted by a U.N.-backed war-crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone last year as a primary backer of Sierra Leone's rebels, who became notorious for hacking off the limbs of civilians.

LOAD-DATE: **October 29, 2004**



**AFRICA
2004**

"a roadmap to opening up the continent..."



The Dilemma of Our Time

The Analyst (Monrovia)

EDITORIAL

October 28, 2004

Posted to the web October 28, 2004

THE LIBERIAN INFERNO stopped officially on July 18, 2003 with various stakeholders in the search for peace pledging to play a designated role in sustaining the process and eventually bringing Liberia to civil rule.

The United Nations agreed to provide a security arena within which the armed stakeholders will turn over weapons of destruction to the peacekeepers through a system of coordinated and synchronized activities involving demobilization, disarmament, rehabilitation, and resettlement. The NTGL undertook to reunite the country politically thereby paving the way for the Liberian people to elect new leaders within two years.

THE UNITED NATIONS kept its part of the agreement by providing a 15,000-strong stabilization force named UNMIL. After a fatal misstep in November last year, the DDRR program started in earnest in the middle of April this year with UNMIL and NCDDRR Chairman, Gyude Bryant, promising to conduct a DDRR program that will be free of flaw, that will ensure that disarmed ex-combatants are adequately processed and availed the opportunity for medical checkup, psychosocial support, regular education, and vocational training. Besides, the disarmed were promised resettlement packages that will enable them to return to their communities in dignity.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROCESS itself seems to have fallen into trouble somewhere along the way few months into action. Critics of the process are adamant that fewer ex-combatants than being projected in UNMIL's statistics have actually disarmed. There are also media reports about disarmed ex-combatants recycling and some ruthless ex-commanders processing family members for benefits at the expense of the actual fighters. There are also stories of weapons trading with individuals in possession of more than one weapon spreading them over a number of civilians who then present at cantonment sites as demobilized combatants. Some of these tales have been confirmed and corrected while others are either rejected outright or simply ignored. While are not in the position to take a stance on this, we think we are in a real dilemma.


FOR INSTANCE, NOTWITHSTANDING these reported pitfalls, UNMIL announced last month that the DDRR program will close by October 31, 2004. After that deadline, according to the pronouncement, ex-combatants still in possession of arms will be treated as common criminals. Some think the deadline is appropriate while others think it is unrealistic. At first we went along with the pronouncement because we had thought that by assigning itself a deadline, UNMIL was prepared to change tactics and accelerate the DDRR program to cover the deep recesses of Liberia which, as we went to press last night, are said to still be under the exclusive control of armed commanders. But from our information, the not much has changed - deployment in the Southeast is only concentrated in the urban areas while disarmament continues to proceed as it were in western and central Liberia.

THIS INFORMATION PRESENTS sufficient ground for concern in view of the UNMIL deadline. But, it is the dilemma inherent in them that draws our attention: end the DDRR process now and have enough time for other activities in the peace process but be prepared to force compliance, conduct a cordon and search operation across the country - in the jungles and hamlets, digging up caches and incarcerating dissidents, and in extreme cases for lack of enforcement mandate, abandon the whole process and set the nation back on its way to a recycled violence, or to avoid all of these, run the DDRR process perpetually and risk donor fatigue. This is serious and we need to find a solution. In doing this, there is bound to be tradeoffs with no undue posturing. Those who think the deadline is timely and those who believe that the deadline is unrealistic do not necessarily have to be sizing one another up for advantage. The dilemma must be solved lest this nation returns to violence.

FOR US, THE solution is not about who is right or who is wrong; it is about what will ensure that the DDRR program will end without further bloodshed. It is about ridding Liberia of arms without necessarily exposing the peacekeepers to further danger; it is about the dignity of the UN and the security of Liberia - it is most of all, about life. In light of this, we want to suggest that instead of ending the DDRR program in spite of the noted shortfalls for the sake of meeting deadlines, a new approach be adopted whereby UNMIL will simultaneously run the RR program for western, northern and parts of central Liberia while the DD component continues for few more months in the eastern part of the country. In this way, we believe, ample time would be given ex-combatants to turn in their arms while those already processed are rehabilitated and resettled. How long the DD for the East will last can be worked out.

WE BELIEVE THAT when this is done, the dilemma will be solved, the timetable would not be unnecessarily disrupted, and hope about the possibility of complete DDRR program will be rekindled to the glory of Liberia.



 Email this document

Source: UN Security Council
Date: 27 Oct 2004

Final report on ten-year Sierra Leone conflict published; seeks to set out historical record, offer guidance for future

Presidents of Top UN Bodies at 'Launching' of 1,500-Page Statement of Country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ECOSOC/6140
GA/10287
SC/8227

Meeting to Mark Publication of Report of Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission
PM Meeting

Launching the final publication of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission at Headquarters today, Sierra Leone's Deputy Foreign Minister, Mohamed Lamin Kamara, described the report as both documenting his country's ugly past and shining the light on its more promising future.

Today's meeting, chaired jointly by the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, sought to underscore the symbolic meaning of the publication of the final report for the United Nations as a whole, namely, its unique involvement in peace-building and in tackling the problems that emerged in that process.

Seen as a critical element on the road to recovery for Sierra Leone, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established by the Sierra Leonean Government in 2000 to create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, from the beginning of the conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999. Public hearings, which began in April 2003, were aimed at addressing impunity, breaking the cycle of violence, providing a forum for both parties and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their stories and to get a clear picture of the past so as to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.

The Commission's final report consists of 1,500 pages, plus 3,500 pages of transcripts of testimonies. It contains an executive summary and several sections, as follows: the historical antecedents of the war; the causes of the war; its nature, with a focus on such demented atrocities as amputations and sexual slavery; the role of external actors, and circumstances that fuelled the war, such as mineral resources; the impact of warfare on women and children; the relationship between the Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone; and the efforts made to help the country reconcile with its past. It also proffers a detailed set of recommendations, including a call to abolish the death penalty.

Sierra Leone's Deputy Foreign Minister recalled that, on 23 March 1991, the first shot of the scrimmage fired in a small village would develop into full-scale armed conflict and usher in 11 years of war. For a country that had prided itself on peace and security, that had been a total nightmare. As for the Commission's report, there was

only one choice -- to learn from the nature and consequences of the conflict, address its causes, and create an environment conducive to restoring dignity and pride. It was one thing to produce a landmark report, and another to implement its recommendations. The will to implement existed; additional resources would ensure that the fruit of those efforts were not lost.

Hailing the publication of the final report, Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom), Security Council President for October, noted that the Commission had worked tirelessly over the past two years to give the Sierra Leonean people a chance to voice their feelings and views. It had taken the statements of more than 7,000 people from across the country, making a specific effort to include children. Finally, it had produced a set of recommendations which everyone, especially the Sierra Leonean Government, would want to study very carefully. He hoped the Commission would prove to have made a real contribution towards lasting peace in Sierra Leone, which its people so richly deserved.

Calling the release of the report an important event for the people of Sierra Leone and the world, Assembly President Jean Ping (Gabon) said it was an example for Africa and for the entire international community in the aftermath of a decade-long bloody war and massive human rights violations. The Peace Agreement signed at Lomé in July 1999 had put an end to one of the cruellest wars in Africa and had opened the way to dialogue and tolerance through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Its recommendations had reflected the will and determination of Sierra Leone to rebuild unity and eradicate impunity.

Economic and Social Council President Marjatta Rasi (Finland) said that the Commission had been needed so that the history of the conflict could be examined through a victim-centred, truth-seeking process. It had investigated numerous cases, and it had examined the causes and nature of the conflict itself. The recommendations and guidelines had covered the key areas, with the aim of promoting reconciliation and national healing. The report would assist the people of Sierra Leone in moving beyond their complex past. The child-friendly part of the Commission had paved the way for children to break the cycle of violence and build a better future.

Also speaking today were the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Carol Bellamy; Aminu Bashir Wali (Nigeria), on behalf of the African Union; and the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations and Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nana Effah-Apenteng.

Background

A joint meeting of the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council was held this afternoon upon the launch of the final report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Representatives of Sierra Leone, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the media were expected to attend. The 5,000-page report of the Commission, set up in 2000 to create an impartial historical record of human rights abuses related to the armed conflict in Sierra Leone from the start of the conflict in 1991 to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999, concludes that building a lasting peace in Sierra Leone can begin only with a comprehensive understanding of the country's past the many lessons it holds for forging a politically and economically healthy Sierra Leone.

Statements

Opening the meeting, EMYR JONES PARRY (United Kingdom), Security Council President for October, said the three Presidents were co-chairing the Meeting because of what it symbolized for the United Nations as a whole, namely, its involvement in peace-building and in tackling the problems that that process encountered. Everyone made their individual contributions and, hopefully, their sum would be a collective and successful intervention in peace-building.

Hailing the publication of the final report, he said the Commission had worked tirelessly over the past two years to give the people of Sierra Leone a chance to voice their feelings and views. The Commission had taken the statements of more than 7,000 people from across the country, making a specific effort to include children. Finally, it produced a set of recommendations which everyone, especially the Sierra Leonean Government, would want to study very carefully. He hoped the Commission would prove to have made a real contribution towards lasting peace in Sierra Leone, which its people so richly deserved.

Similarly, JEAN PING (Gabon), President of the General Assembly, said the publication of the final report was an important event for the people of Sierra Leone and the world. It constituted an example for Africa and for the entire international community. After a decade of bloody war and massive human rights violations, efforts by the international community at the regional and subregional level, and by the United Nations, had helped to restore peace to that country. The Peace Agreement signed at Lomé in July 1999 had put an end to one of the cruellest wars in Africa and had opened the way to dialogue and tolerance through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He said the Commission's relevant recommendations had reflected the will and determination of Sierra Leone to rebuild unity and eradicate impunity. He congratulated the members of the Commission, and the Government and people of Sierra Leone, for their commitment to promote the rule of law, good governance, and respect for human values and dignity. He called for further international support of the Sierra Leonean people, particularly the victims of the conflict, in order to foster hope and faith for a better future.

MARJATTA RASI (Finland), President of the Economic and Social Council, said that, in light of the decade-long suffering marked by cruel violence against civilians, especially women and children, it had been encouraging to note Sierra Leone's adoption of a national policy on advancement of women and gender mainstreaming. That action had been intended to cultivate better understanding of gender issues in society. Another important factor had been the support of the family by the police force, which had established the means to investigate and combat physical and sexual abuse of women and children, and was now present in almost all local units throughout the country. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been needed to examine the history of the conflict through a victim-centred, truth-seeking process.

Indeed, she said, the Commission had investigated an extensive number of cases -- their causes, nature and extent, and it had examined the causes and nature of the conflict itself. The recommendations and guidelines covered well the key areas and themes and were aimed at promoting reconciliation and national healing. The report would assist the people of Sierra Leone in understanding and moving beyond their complex past. The child-friendly branch of the Commission had paved the way for the child to break the cycle of violence and build a better future. Through its

Commission on Human Rights, the Council had welcomed the essential work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and urged the Sierra Leonean Government to contribute to promoting and protecting human rights. It had also encouraged the country to implement the Commission's recommendations.

MOHAMED LAMIN KAMARA, Deputy Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone, before presenting the report, thanked all those present on behalf of the President of Sierra Leone and Sierra Leone's people. He said the ceremony was the result of weeks of collaboration between the missions of Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). On 23 March 1991, the first shot of the scrimmage that had developed into full-scale armed conflict had been fired in a small village, ushering in 11 years of war. For a country that had prided itself on peace and security, it had been a total nightmare. The war had been characterized by crude violence, including rape, killing, abduction, forced labour, torture, mutilations, arbitrary detention, sexual servitude and the forceful recruitment of children for armed combat. The Lomé Peace Accord had provided for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After two years of hard work and against the background of financial constraints, the Commission had completed its work.

The report was an authoritative documentation of an ugly past and the light to see the way clearly to the future, he said. Sierra Leone's Government took the findings and recommendations seriously. The report left only one choice -- to learn from the nature and consequences of the conflict. The major objective of learning was to address the issues that had generated the conflict and to create an environment that would restore dignity and pride. It was one thing to produce a landmark report, and another to implement its recommendations. The will, urgency of purpose and responsibility to implement the recommendations existed. Coming out of a conflict that had paralysed the economy, however, meant that extensive assistance would be needed to implement the report's recommendations. Much had been sacrificed to bring Sierra Leone to where it was today, and additional resources would ensure that the fruit of those efforts were not lost.

CAROLE BELLAMY, Executive Director of UNICEF, said numerous truth commissions had been convened in various countries over the last several decades. While many had addressed the experiences of children, never before had a report focused on children as victims and also profiled their role as actors in the reconciliation process. The child-friendly truth and reconciliation report for Sierra Leone was the first of its kind. During the 10-year war in Sierra Leone, some 10,000 children had been targeted for abduction and forced recruitment. They had been taken from their homes, drugged, threatened with death and forced to kill. Thousands more had been abducted for sexual slavery. Thousands had been massacred, raped and mutilated.

The report recorded the heartbreaking stories told by children to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including children's recommendations to prevent a recurrence of war. Children had been eager to play a role and give shape to a report that would bring about positive action for and by children. Children had been involved in the Commission's activities from initial preparation and planning, to research and investigation, to the drafting of the final report. Special measures had been put in place to provide confidentially and to conduct interviews in a safe environment. Initially there had been concern that children's involvement in reporting the horrors of war might have negative effects. In fact, however, the children who had participated in the hearings had expressed a sense of relief and even pride in their contributions.

By creating an accurate record that acknowledged the crimes committed, the Commission provided a basis for social and political reform to prevent further abuse, she said. Children's involvement in the process demonstrated how children could become active partners, helping to break the cycle of violence and re-establish confidence in the rule of law. In telling the story of war, the children of Sierra Leone had expressed their determination to build a bridge to the future. Children were impatient for the future, and there was not a moment to lose.

NANA EFFAH-APENTENG (Ghana), in his capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), said he had been gratified to note that, after several setbacks, the report had finally seen the light of day. He commended the Commission's members who, faced with grave constraints, had produced an insightful and illuminating report. Based on its findings, the Commission made a number of recommendations covering political and other areas, with a view to preventing a recurrence of the violence, addressing impunity, responding to the victims' needs, and promoting national healing and reconciliation.

He said that ECOWAS had taken note of the Commission's findings and would urge their speedy implementation, especially since many of the causes of the conflict, such as the use of thousands of young people in the war, had not yet been addressed. Already, cross-border problems and other regional phenomena had been identified in West Africa. The recommendations had set out the essential priorities for effective reconciliation in Sierra Leone and West Africa and beyond. He urged the continued engagement and support of the international community for their implementation.

After the ravages of war visited on that sister country, he said he knew it would not be possible for Sierra Leone to shoulder that onerous burden alone. The international community, therefore, must come to its aid and fulfil its obligations in that regard. The history of the United Nations had been punctuated by "patchy management"; the international community became actively engaged in a crisis when it was on the front pages, but then relegated it to the back, along with the media coverage. In addition, the international community intervened in Sierra Leone at a very late stage; it would be sad to all if the international community failed to take measures to deal with the prevailing conditions in the country and then witnessed a relapse into conflict.

He added that his feelings were mixed on recent developments. While he had appreciated the continued support of the development partners and welcomed the Security Council's decision to extend the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to June 2005, he had been disheartened by the fact that a recent United Nations inter-agency appeal for funds for Sierra Leone's recovery and rehabilitation had yielded only 10 per cent of the funding goal of \$60 million.

AMINU BASHIR WALI (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Union, said his country was delighted to participate in the ceremony and recalled Nigeria's modest contribution to peace and security in Sierra Leone. Nigeria had supported the Commission in the belief that it would help heal past wounds caused by the war. The conflict had been characterized by gross violations of human rights. In the mayhem, there was hardly a family that had not suffered one form of indignity or another. Nigeria hoped the Commission's recommendation would help restore dignity and confidence to the victims. He also hoped they would be compensated adequately. In that way, the Commission would have helped to create the necessary conditions for reconciliation.

Thanking the United Nations for the success of its peacekeeping operation in Sierra

Leone, he also expressed appreciation for the Security Council's gradual approach to the drawdown of the force in Sierra Leone. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to peace and security in Sierra Leone and called on the people to continue to sustain the peace process, to forgive the pain of the past and to look forward to a brighter future.

Top

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Security Council urges stepped-up efforts to protect women from violence in war

28 October 2004 – The Security Council today called on the United Nations to make a comprehensive, system-wide effort to end the continuing violence against women and girls in war and to give women a much stronger voice during post-conflict peace processes.

After a day-long debate on women, peace and security, the Council released a presidential statement asking Secretary-General Kofi Annan to outline an action plan by October next year showing how the UN can achieve those goals.

Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, which holds the Council's rotating presidency for this month, said the plan would include a detailed timetable for implementing such targets as eliminating gender-based violence and boosting women's participating in peacekeeping and peace-building operations.

Mr. Jones Parry said gender perspectives must be integrated into the planning and running of every peace and security operation by the UN, including its peacekeeping missions, so that women can fully participate in them.

The statement also:

- Urged Mr. Annan to increase his efforts to "identify suitable female candidates" to fill posts in peacekeeping, conflict prevention or humanitarian operations, especially senior posts.
- Called for an end to the culture of impunity for the perpetrators of physical or sexual violence against women and girls in war.
- Recommended all staff involved in conflict or post-conflict operations to be given specific training so they can recognize and respond quickly and appropriately to gender-based violence.
- Stressed the need for increased support programmes for victims of gender-based violence.

Today's debate was held in part to measure what progress has been made since the Council adopted a resolution in 2000 that decried gender-based violence and called for an overhaul in the planning of peace and security operations so that women's perspectives are always included.

Earlier, describing the international response so far as "completely inadequate," the head of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) demanded a drastic improvement in both attitude and action to end the "massive and systematic" violence against women and girls.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, told the Council that victims of violence still faced stigma or shame, most perpetrators went unpunished and there were not nearly enough resources devoted to tackling the problem.

Ms. Obaid said most of the progress since the Council resolution of 2000 has been in creating better policies and guidelines, and not on the ground in those States where women and girls are at greatest risk.

Ms. Obaid said it was vital that police officers, security personnel, UN peacekeepers and humanitarian staff are trained to identify and tackle vigorously violence against women, and that more women are placed to work in these "male-dominated arenas."

"We do not need a few good women sprinkled here and there," she said. "We need gender parity so women in positions of power can stop abuses of power."

Ms. Obaid said one of the worst aspects of gender-based violence was the lingering damage it does to both the individual victims and to the society as a whole. Many women and girls suffer physically and psychologically for years, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS spread through communities, and family structures are permanently undermined.

Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said people-trafficking and sexual exploitation occur during UN peacekeeping operations on a scale "which has yet to be fully acknowledged and effectively addressed."

She said "there can be no tolerance" for the behaviour, adding Mr. Annan has made clear the responsibility of every UN staff member, and particularly senior managers, to ensure that the exploitation does not occur.

"Sexual predatory practice by international 'interveners' cannot just be condemned as the isolated, deplorable actions of a few 'bad apples,' " Ms. Arbour said.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said that while many challenges remain, the UN is working much harder today than it did in 2000 to ensure that the needs and perspectives of women are included in its conflict and post-conflict operations.

Speakers representing dozens of countries then addressed the Council, outlining the steps they have made in their own States and calling for much greater international cooperation to end violence and increase women's role in peace-building and peacekeeping.

Meanwhile, the UN has released FACES, a publication that details 10 examples from around the world of how women are playing a vital and useful role in contributing to peace and security.

COTE D IVOIRE: Rebels declare state of emergency, warn of return to war



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BOUAKE, 28 Oct 2004 (IRIN) - The rebel movement which controls the northern half of Cote d'Ivoire declared a state of emergency on Thursday and warned that the West African country was heading back towards an early resumption of civil war.

"Disarmament is no longer a live issue, because the war isn't over yet. It is going to resume shortly," rebel leader Guillaume Soro told a press conference in Bouake, the rebel capital in central Cote d'Ivoire.

He said the New Forces rebel movement had ordered its seven ministers in Cote d'Ivoire's broad-based government of national reconciliation to return to Bouake immediately for consultations.

Is Cote d'Ivoire sliding back into conflict?

This move raises the prospect that the rebels may withdraw from the power-sharing government for the third time in 13 months.

Colonel Soumaila Bakayoko, the rebel military commander, meanwhile announced the imposition of a state of emergency and a 9.00pm to 6.00am curfew in all rebel-controlled areas.

Following the discovery of a large consignment of weapons and ammunition hidden in a commercial truck entering Bouake on Tuesday, all vehicles would be searched as they entered the rebel zone, including UN vehicles and the vehicles of humanitarian organisations, he added.

The rebels displayed 80 AK-47 assault rifles, nine RPG-7 rocket grenade launches, 20 hand grenades and a large cache of ammunition which they said had been hidden in the truck beneath bags of rice.

They accused President Laurent Gbagbo of sending the weaponry clandestinely to supporters of Ibrahim Coulibaly, an exiled rebel leader known as "IB," who is widely seen as a challenger to Soro for the leadership of the rebel movement.

At least 99 people died during two days of clashes between supporters of Soro and IB in the northern city of Korhogo in June, according to the UN human rights mission which conducted an inquiry afterwards.

The rebels' decision to suspend their participation in Cote d'Ivoire's power-sharing government follows a fresh impasse in the country's flagging peace process.

President Gbagbo, the rebels, and parliamentary opposition parties agreed at a meeting in the Ghanaian capital Accra on July 30 to a timetable for the rapid implementation of political reforms and an early start to disarmament.

However, Gbagbo failed to deliver the promised reforms by the agreed deadline of 30 September, so the rebels refused to begin handing in their weapons to UN peacekeepers on 15 October as planned.

The civil war broke out in September 2002 and rebel forces quickly seized control of the north of Cote d'Ivoire, whose cocoa and coffee exports have made it the most prosperous country in West Africa.

However, the fighting stopped seven months later following the signing of the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis peace accord in January 2003.

Gbagbo has never disguised his dislike of Marcoussis, saying it gave too many concessions to the rebels. He and his Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) party have dragged their feet over implementing many of the political reforms which the peace agreement demands before the holding of fresh presidential elections in October 2005.

The rebels have cited slow progress in the implementation of these reforms to justify their refusal to disarm.

Despite the presence in Cote d'Ivoire of 4,000 French troops and 6,000 UN peacekeepers to keep the two sides apart, a series of government crises over the past year have raised the ugly prospect of the country sliding back into conflict.

Tension has increased markedly over the past week. A group of rebel fighters exchanged fire with a patrol of French peacekeepers 50 km south of Korhogo on Tuesday, a French military spokesman said.

Meanwhile, in Abidjan, the "Young Patriots," a militia-style youth movement which supports President Gbagbo, has resumed its former tactic of seizing and ripping up opposition newspapers on sale in the street.

Soro's decision to recall all rebel ministers to Bouake meant that the rebels were unlikely to take part in a special cabinet meeting on Friday, called to accelerate the passage of the remaining political reforms. Most of these are aimed at giving greater rights to four million immigrants in Cote d'Ivoire from other West African countries and their descendants.

Specific measures to be discussed on Friday include a new nationality law and the creation of an independent national electoral commission to oversee future elections and the organisation of a referendum to approve a constitutional amendment that would make it easier for the children of immigrants to run for the presidency.

One official close to independent Prime Minister Seydou Diarra, said the embattled prime minister still hoped the rebels would turn up for the meeting.

"The Prime Minister cannot give a reaction now, but I am sure he will be hoping to the last minute that everybody will come tomorrow," she told IRIN.

Officials at the presidency were not immediately available for comment.

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[\[Back\]](#) [\[Home Page\]](#)

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