

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Wednesday, 4 January 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248

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Sierra Leone Media

No local newspapers will be published until Monday, 9 January due to the vendors taking their annual leave.

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2005: The year in Africa

2005 saw many of the same conflicts continuing in Africa, while a range of deadly diseases again took a fearsome toll.



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S Leone: UN to boost stability

03/01/2006 22:55 - (SA)

Freetown - The head of a new United Nations mission in Sierra Leone, Victor Angelo, says on Tuesday that his mandate is to strengthen democracy and stability in the diamond-rich west African country, where a decade-long conflict left at least 120 000 people dead.

The UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), which replaced the last mission known as UNAMSIL on January 1, would oversee the consolidation of peace and help the country prepare for general elections due next year.

It also planned to set up a reconciliation unit modelled on the lines of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Independent judiciary

Angelo said: "Strengthening democracy and advancing human rights through the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission that will consider the key recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, will pave the way forward for Sierra Leone.

"UNIOSIL will enhance the rule of law, including the development of an independent judiciary and ensuring that the security forces have the conditions to perform their constitutional role".

The Portuguese-born diplomat said good governance, transparency, accountability and eradication of corruption were key factors to enhancing confidence between Sierra Leone and the international community.

Pillar of stability

He said: "With peace and prosperity, Sierra Leone will become a pillar of stability in the region."

In 2001, the UN mission in Sierra Leone was ranked the world's largest peacekeeping force with 17 500 personnel.

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- UN cuts troops in Sierra Leone
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The newly installed UN security council-backed Integrated Mission included a small group of military and police advisors, and a contingent of troops to safeguard the UN war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Some 165 UN military and civilian personnel were killed restoring peace to the country whose 5.4 million people were among the world's poorest.

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PROMOTION

Father Christmas could be dropping £15 million down your chimney this year

December 2005: Father Christmas might need plenty of additional sleds and reindeers this year. Playuklottery.com's Double Superdraw, taking place on Christmas Eve and 7 January 2006, means you stand the chance of winning a guaranteed lottery jackpot of £15 million (approximately R173.4 million). Ho Ho Ho...

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Stop Trafficking

Danish NGO working with foreign woman in prostitution in Denmark.

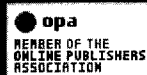
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LIBERIA: UN enforces travel ban on newly elected lawmakers

© Claire Soares/IRIN

Liberians queue to vote in October's elections

MONROVIA, 3 Jan 2006 (IRIN) - Four just-elected members of Liberia's parliament were barred from leaving the country for Ghana on Monday because of their past association with notorious former president Charles Taylor.

The four were to attend a forum on parliamentary work sponsored by the World Bank but were barred from taking off because they were included in a UN Security Council travel ban more than a year ago.

Among those forced to stay home were close associates of the exiled former president, including his wife Jewel Howard Taylor and his former son-in-law Edwin Snowe, managing director of Liberia's Petroleum Refinery Corporation in the current power-sharing transitional government.

Also banned from travel were General Kai Farley, a former rebel commander, and pro-Taylor militia commander General Adolphus Dolo, widely accused of brutality during the war and known as "General Peanut Butter."

But Snowe for one says the time has come to put the past behind.

"Our denial is quite frustrating; it's beyond our own imagination," he told reporters on Tuesday. "I've been accused by the UN for almost two years now. I was married to Mr. Taylor's daughter and we have a child. So if that's an ongoing tie, then it's unfortunate. There's nothing I can do about it. I have no regrets."

Snowe, who won one of the seats in the lower house of parliament as an independent, is a candidate for the position of Speaker of Parliament, the third most senior government job after the president and vice president.

The 64-member lower house is expected to elect its speaker and deputy before the 16 January inauguration of Liberia's newly elected president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Snowe told IRIN in an interview last October that Taylor would have no influence over him in his post as a parliamentarian and denied maintaining an ongoing link with his former father-in-law.

Apart from these four, two other key figures from Liberia's violent past made their way into parliament in last October's elections.

Prince Johnson, warlord-turned-evangelist, who is linked to the hacking death of former president Samuel Doe in the early days of the civil war in September 1990, and Saah Gbollie, an ex-deputy police chief accused of abuses under Taylor's regime, both won seats.

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New Liberian leader mulls fate of Charles Taylor

Clarence Roy-Macauley | Freetown, Sierra Leone

24 December 2005 08:37

Liberia's president-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said on Friday she's deliberating on what should be done about Charles Taylor, who is in exile in Nigeria but wanted in Sierra Leone on war-crimes charges.

Nigeria granted Taylor -- a long-time warlord and ex-president of Liberia who helped fuel Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war -- asylum in 2003 in part to help end Liberia's own 1989-2003 armed struggle.

Nigeria says it won't hand Taylor to a United Nations-backed war-crimes tribunal unless requested by a democratically elected Liberian leader, which Johnson-Sirleaf is set to become on January 16 when she takes over from a transitional government.

"We have been juggling with this matter of Charles Taylor," she told reporters after meeting Sierra Leone President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a long-time Taylor foe.

"Because I believe in justice, we shall take a decision that would safeguard the security and integrity of Liberia," she said without elaborating.

The Freetown-based UN court has accused Taylor of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from his support of brutal Sierra Leone rebels known for hacking off the lips, ears and limbs of civilians with machetes.

Taylor helped the insurgents trade gems mined in Sierra Leone's rich diamond fields for guns and helped direct the rebel attacks against Freetown-based governments.

Johnson-Sirleaf is set to become Africa's first-ever elected female leader. Her opponent in Liberia's first post-war election, George Weah, gave up his legal fight to quash results in the election he branded fraudulent but deemed largely free and fair by international observers.

Liberia's burgeoning peace is seen as a lynchpin for calm across West Africa, long roiled by strife and fighters emanating from Liberia. -- Sapa-AP

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 3 Jan. 2006**

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC Monitoring - 3 January 2006

Ghana pledges to support Liberia's democratic transition

Excerpt from report by Ghanaian GBC radio on 3 January

[Presenter] About 100 parliamentarians from the Liberian legislative assembly are currently attending a week-long workshop on parliamentary practice and democratic governance in Accra. The workshop organized by the World Bank is intended to give participants an insight into the workings of parliament and parliamentary procedure. Speaking to Radio Ghana, the director of public affairs of Ghana's parliament, Jones Kugblenu explained that Ghana was chosen for the workshop in view of the strides the country has made in parliamentary practice.

[Passage omitted]

Meanwhile President [John Agyekum] Kufuor has promised Ghana's support for Liberia as she goes through the challenges of building and restoring the country to its former glory to enable it to take its rightful place in the comity of nations. He was addressing a week-long capacity building and orientation workshop for Liberian legislators-elect at GIMPA [Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration] in Accra.

International Clips on West Africa

31/12/2005 20:59:16

Cote d'Ivoire's leader calls for efforts for disarmament, presidential race

ABIDJAN, Dec 31, 2005 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Cote d'Ivoire's President Laurent Gbagbo on Saturday urged various sides of the country to pave way for presidential elections next year with concrete actions.

In a New Year speech, Gbagbo appealed for efforts from Cote d'Ivoire's factions to realize a disarmament plan for national reunification and ensure the presidential race to be held in a fair, transparent and open way next year.

Gbagbo said he will fully support the transitional government headed by Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, calling on the various sides to cooperate with the authorities closely for a lasting peace and ethnic reconciliation in the war-torn African country.

Cote d'Ivoire troops repulse armed attack on military base near Abidjan

ABIDJAN, Jan 02, 2006 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Cote d'Ivoire government Forces repulsed an armed attack early Monday against a major military base near Abidjan, the commercial capital of the west African country.

After a tense hour of gunfire, armed forces chief Gen. Phillipe Mangou went on state television to reassure local residents, saying military forces had repulsed the attack at Akuedo in northeastern Abidjan. The situation is under control, according to him.

Local Media – Newspapers

UN Enforces Travel Ban on Legislators

(Daily Observer, The Analyst, Heritage and The Liberian Diaspora)

- A World Bank-sponsored course in Parliamentary Procedures for members of the incoming legislature did not include four of the new lawmakers as they could not travel to Accra, Ghana due to a UN travel restriction. The affected lawmakers include a former associate of ex-President Charles Taylor and the main contender for Speaker of the House of Representatives, Edwin Snowe, Taylor's reportedly estranged wife Jewel, and two former militia generals, Adolphus Dolo and Kai Farley.

Liberia's International Partners Resist Former Soldiers' Threat to Peace Process

(Daily Observer, The Analyst and Heritage)

- In a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) said that it was particularly concerned about the call to demobilized soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) by former AFL Chief of Staff Brig.-Gen. Kpainkpa Y. Konah to refuse National Transitional Government Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant's order to vacate the Camp Schiefflin Military Barracks in preparation for the recruitment and training of the new Liberian army. Gen. Konah had said that the order was illegal and outside of Chairman Bryant's authority.

U.S. President Pledges Support to Liberia Says President-Elect

(The Liberian Diaspora)

- Speaking at a reception she recently hosted for the new lawmakers, President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that during her recent visit to the United States, U.S. President George Bush assured U.S. assistance in the areas of economic reconstruction and security.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President-Elect Reiterates Her Determination to Fight Corruption

- Over the weekend, President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that her government will not accept bribes in the discharge of its duty.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Barred Legislators from Attending Training Seminar

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government Task Force to Collect Outstanding Taxes

- In a press statement, the National Transitional Government said that it has constituted a Special Task Force on Revenue Collection to begin a vigorous collection of legitimate revenue owed the government.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

International Contact Group Warns Against Disrupting the Peace

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

Lawmaker Detests Travel Ban

- Briefing reporters after he was denied permission to attend a training workshop in Ghana, Montserrado County Representative-elect Edwin Snowe said that the United Nations Travel Ban imposed on him was unjustified.

Association of the Blind President Wants Disabled to Improve their Lot

- Speaking at a New Year celebration in Tubmanburg, Liberia Christian Association of the Blind President Beyan Kota said that people with disabilities should make effort to improve their livelihood and advised them not to see themselves as outcasts regardless of how society treats them.

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

National Muslim Council Must Be Restructured Says Local Muslim Leader

- In an interview yesterday, the Margibi County branch of the National Muslim Council, Chairman Alhaji Kromah, has suggested the need to restructure the Council to reflect a geographical balance.

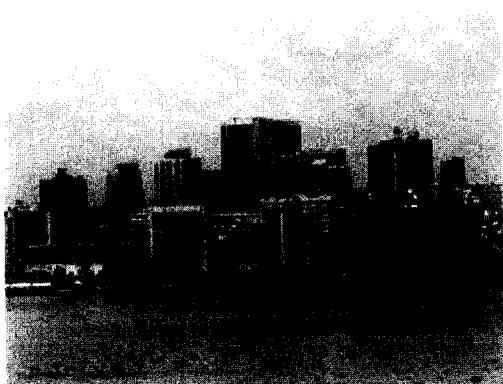
Soldiers Accept to Vacate Barracks

- Speaking to journalists yesterday, the spokesman of soldiers recruited in the 1990s, Willie Toh, said that the soldiers have begun leaving the Camp Schiefflin Military Barracks saying they have been relocated to the unfinished Ministry of Defense building at Congo Town.

Political Party Chairman Scorns Inducting Government without an Army

- Addressing a news conference yesterday, former Chairman of the New Deal Movement, Nigba Wiaplah, said inducting the elected government without first completing the restructuring of the armed forces was a recipe for a failed State, adding the absence of a trained military will compel the United Nations Mission in Liberia to overstay its tenure.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.

COTE D IVOIRE: New attacks on military camps in Abidjan

© Sarah Simpson/IRIN

Abidjan

ABIDJAN, 2 Jan 2006 (IRIN) - Attacks on two military camps in Abidjan left at least 10 people dead on Monday, just days after the formation of a new unity government in Cote d'Ivoire had given fresh hope of a peaceful end to the three-year crisis dividing the nation.

There was heavy gunfire heard during the early morning attack against the main Akuedo military barracks but within two hours Ivorian army chief of staff Philippe Mangou went on state television to reassure residents that the army was in control of the camps located in an eastern district of the city.

In a statement broadcast later during the evening news, Ivorian army spokesman Colonel Hilaire Gohourou Babri said 10 people had been killed - three soldiers and seven

assailants - and 32 assailants taken prisoner.

The army statement said "the two Akuedo camps were simultaneously attacked with light and heavy weaponry by assailants who came from outside."

But a spokesman alleging to represent mutinous soldiers claimed responsibility for the attack. The trouble arose from demands for 900,000 CFA francs each (US \$1,800) in unpaid wages and war bonuses, according to the spokesman who gave his name only as Commander Albert.

"We're Ivorian soldiers, we're not rebels, and we want to get paid," he told IRIN.

But Mangou denied there had been a mutiny and accused international radio stations who spoke to Commander Albert of "intoxication".

Cote d'Ivoire has been divided into a government-run south and a rebel-held north since disgruntled soldiers tried to topple President Laurent Gbagbo more than three years ago.

On Monday, the New Forces rebel movement denied involvement in the attack.

President Laurent Gbagbo briefly visited the barracks late Monday and stressed that the shooting was not caused by a mutiny.

"These were aggressors who came from outside the two Akuedo camps," he said. "Some were disguised, others were wearing camouflage gear but had their clothes underneath. So it wasn't a mutiny."

Eyewitnesses told IRIN that the bodies of at least 10 people, some of them stripped naked, had been lying at the destroyed entrance gate and in the courtyard of the new Akuedo camp before being hauled away in army trucks.

Security forces set up roadblocks across the city and around the national broadcasting station. Shops remained closed and most residents stayed home. In residential neighborhoods near the camps, pro-government students set up barricades in support of the security forces.

"I've seen a lot of military drive by since this morning but I can't say I feel reassured," said a resident who gave her name as Aisha, several hundred meters from a roadblock in the central neighborhood of Cocody. "This is a very confusing situation."

By early afternoon, troops carried out a mopping-up operation around the barracks arresting an unknown number of people.

In December, another military camp in Abidjan briefly came under attack when unidentified gunmen walked through the gate, fired several rounds into the air and sped away in a taxi.

The assault comes only days after Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny announced a new 32-member unity cabinet with representatives of the ruling party, the rebels and the political opposition.

In a statement, the prime minister said he condemned the use of violence whatever the reasons and "asks his compatriots to prioritise dialogue."

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Ivorian army patrol after attack

Troops in Ivory Coast have been patrolling the streets of Abidjan after Monday's attack on a major military base in which 10 people were killed.

In a television broadcast, new Ivorian Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny expressed regret at the violence.

He said the attack is at a time when the country "is engaged in seeking solutions through the path of peace".

Mutinous soldiers told the BBC they rebelled over pay and status, but officials blamed "outsiders".

The fighting comes five days after a new government was named to oversee disarmament and elections in October.

The allocation of ministerial posts followed several weeks of tense negotiations between supporters of President Laurent Gbagbo, opposition parties and rebel forces who control the north of Ivory Coast.

The rebel New Forces movement - which has controlled the northern half of the country for three years - has denied involvement.

Prisoner

Three soldiers and seven attackers were killed, says the army.

The army is reported to have taken over 30 prisoners.

Gunfire and heavy explosions shook two camps at Akuedo - separated by a main road - just outside Ivory Coast's main city for about an hour at dawn on Monday.

Witnesses say explosions shook buildings in Abidjan itself.

Outside Akuedo, two vehicles were burnt-out - one an army pick-up truck.

Several attackers were taken prisoner.

There have been a number of unexplained attacks on barracks in recent months.

A barracks in Abidjan was attacked by unknown gunmen a month ago.

Ivory Coast has been prone to army mutinies for the past five years, some of which have expanded into full-scale coup attempts.

Story from BBC NEWS:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4576942.stm>