

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Medals ceremony for the Mongolian Guard Force
on Sunday, 30 April 2006

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

Thursday, 4 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion please contact
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For Di People
Thursday, 4 May 2006

SPECIAL COURT INDICTEES COMPLAINED IN COURT

DURING DELIBERATIONS at a status conference held in court No1 on Tuesday 2 May, 2006 prior to the commencement of CDF trial, Dr Bu-Buakie Jabbe, counsel representing first accused Chief Sam Hinga Norman informed Justice Boute that inmates at the detention camp complained of inadequate facilities.

Among the issues raised were that previous communication facilities accorded them have been drastically cut down unavoidably resulting in queuing for calls from both friends and relations. That the quantity of food ration, especially the traditional staple food rice be increased but that is not to say the other varieties should

be ignored. That inmates are also asking for access to computer technology, improved medical attention within the camp. Dr Jabbe said Sam Hinga Norman finds it very difficult to walk a long distance due to the pain he suffers on the lower limb.

According to Dr Jabbe, inmates said they would also like to know whether the Le300,000 provided for each is equivalent to international standards and that they would also like the authorities to review the number of visitors that go to visit them at the detention camp.

Dr Jabbe however promised to put all the demands or proposals in writing and forward them to the appropriate authorities of the Special Court. Trial of the CDF will again start on Wednesday 3rd May, 2006.



NORMAN: demanding better prisons conditions

Awoko

Thursday, 4 May 2006

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"ECOMOG supplied Kamajors with arms" - Arthur Koroma

By Betty Milton

In the trial of the three Special Court indictees of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), one Arthur Koroma has told the court that arms and ammunition used during the fight against the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) were supplied to them by ECOMOG.

Mr. Koroma, who is the

9th witness for the defence team of Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, Moininah Fofanah and Alieu Kondewa, disclosed yesterday that the source of their supply of arms and ammunition was mainly from ECOMOG troops.

Some of the Kamajors, who were based in the North-eastern part of Kenema and Kailahun, he said, had established

contact with the exiled government in neighbouring Conakry.

The witness said the arms which the Kamajors used to attack Tongo were in fact sent from the government directly when Bockarie Lansana travelled to Conakry where he was given the arms.

Arthur Koroma, who is the Principal of a

Vocational Centre in Kenema, maintained that he was initiated in October 1996 for protection. He stressed that he decided to join the fighting force and was assigned to the task of contacting other Kamajors that were already resisting the junta.

The 41-year-old said he made contact with Eddie Massally who was in charge of the Kamajors' resistance activities in that area.

"I informed Massally about our intentions and that I had come to see Chief Norman... two weeks later,

I was taken to Monrovia where I met with Chief Norman," he said.

Answering questions posed to him by Dr. Bu-Buakie Jabbie, lawyer for Chief Hinga Norman, the witness said they were later told to move their camp to Gofor in Pujehun District where they conducted patrols and defended their territory. Attempts, he said, were made by the junta to attack Zimmie. "We were later attacked by a helicopter gunship belonging to the AFRC. We again returned to Fairo where we were

informed that all Kamajors should go back to their various districts as Norman would be returning back to some parts of the country," he stated.

He disclosed that, "at one time, I saw an helicopter loaded with arms and ammunition and upon enquires I was told that the arms were taken to Talia where Norman would be residing."

The witness narrated that in December 1997 President Kabbah paid a visit to them in Lungi and addressed them.

General Khobe, he said, also paid them a visit and tested one of their controllers.

Witness ropes ECOMOG forces

By Alford Dillet

Defence Witness Arthur Koroma in the ongoing CDF trials at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has testified before the court that indeed ECOMOG forces were instrumental in rendering support to the pro-government Kamajoh militia during the ten years brutal war.

The witness cited in particular that ECOMOG aided the Kamajors with a whole platoon, 2 armoured carriers and a pile of arms and ammunition to

augment the CDF fighters in Kenema. Led in evidence by the head of the defence team lawyer Bubakei Jabbie, Arthur Koroma an ex-principal, SLPP youth leader and eastern region commander of the CDF, further disclosed how ECOMOG soldiers complemented their efforts, adding that the exiled government then was in full support of CDF supplying them with the bulk of arms through the porous Sierra

Leone-Guinea boundary in Kialahun.

The Defence witness explained how he travelled together with Eddie Masalay and a Mr Lumeh to meet with members of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy at their headquarters in Conakry and subsequently to Monrovia, where he first met with Chief Sam Hinga Norman.

Arthur Koroma revealed that it was at that meeting that Chief Norman

expressed his people's desire to join forces to restore democracy. The defence witness said that on returning to Sierra Leone he took command over a huge number of fighters and launched several attacks on different parts of the country for their Gaima bough chiefdom in Bo district, but stressed he never set eyes on Chief Sam Norman. "I never saw Chief Norman in any combat activity, and never heard him levied command for combat activity," Koroma asserted.

United Nations

Wednesday, 3 May 2006

Sierra Leone: Youth unemployment, corruption must be curbed says Annan

3 May - United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has urged Sierra Leone's Government to deal with the increasing youth unemployment, rampant corruption, and growing border tension with Guinea, warning that unless these issues are dealt with the calm security situation that has prevailed in the West African country since last year's departure of the UN peacekeeping mission could be destabilized.

In his first report to the Security Council on the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), which became operational on 1 January after the mission had departed, Mr. Annan also highlights "growing concern" that the trials of the former fighting groups at the Special Court and the recent transfer of former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the Court could be a source of security incidents, although so far the situation is under control.

Mr. Annan says he remains "seriously concerned" about potentially destabilizing conditions, citing in particular increasing youth unemployment, the dire economic situation and rampant corruption and mismanagement, as well as the increasing tension in areas along the border with Guinea.

"I urge the Government, with support from its partners, to pay particular attention to these factors and introduce corrective measures expeditiously. Good governance and healthy economic policies and the continuation of major reforms should remain the long-term priority for Sierra Leone." Mr. Annan also points out that next year's elections will be a "major test of the sustainability of the peace and stability." Not only must the polls be credible, they are also "crucial from the standpoint of the democratization and rejuvenation of the political and economic life" of the country.

UNIOSIL is the first integrated UN office established to support the peace-consolidation process after the completion of a peacekeeping operation, and the Secretary-General says that so far this integration experiment has worked well in Sierra Leone.

Further, despite the difficulties described in the report, which also include the need for the Government to "redouble its efforts" to stem corruption in the police force, Mr. Annan says he is "reasonably optimistic about the future of the country," although he calls on the world community to remain actively involved.

"The international community, which has invested considerable resources over the past seven years to end the war and consolidate the peace, needs to keep a close eye on some of the negative trends identified in this report, and continue to support the Government in addressing the many challenges that remain, in particular promoting economic recovery and good governance."

Los Angeles Times

Wednesday, 3 May 2006

Africa's ex-leaders face courts

Craig Timberg

The arrest in March of former Liberian president Charles Taylor was the latest in a series of tentative steps toward holding political leaders in Africa accountable for alleged crimes including corruption, rape and genocide.

After decades in which senior government officials were largely beyond the reach of national and international law, prosecutors recently have pursued Taylor for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone, a UN-backed tribunal has tried former leaders in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and international investigators have been invited into four other African countries.

National courts have also become increasingly aggressive. In Zambia, former president Frederick Chiluba is battling corruption allegations, as are several top officials in Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi. In South Africa, former deputy president Jacob Zuma, accused of raping a family friend half his age, is awaiting a court judgment.

"There is a very important shift in the way people conceive of power and want to do things on the continent," said Claude Kabemba, who monitors governance issues across Africa for the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria, South Africa. "Impunity in many instances is not allowed as it was a decade ago."

The recent series of legal proceedings across the continent has the feel of victors' justice to some observers. Taylor's arrest was facilitated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former political rival. The case against Chiluba has been pushed by his successor. And Zuma, a populist once widely expected to be South Africa's next president, has blamed his legal troubles on a conspiracy to block his ascent to power.

Despite the political flavour of many of the cases, however, analysts, legal experts and human rights activists say the court actions mark a new era in which African disputes increasingly are being resolved by judges rather than soldiers. It may be a necessary first step, these advocates say, toward a more advanced variety of the rule of law in which all citizens—regardless of political power—are treated equally by impartial courts.

"What's wrong with victors' justice if this is a better form of justice than was there before?" said Desmond deSilva, chief prosecutor of the UN-backed tribunal trying Taylor. DeSilva recently announced his resignation from the post but said he hoped to return to the job to lead Taylor's prosecution.

Taylor now waits in a jail cell in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, for trial on 11 counts of war crimes, including crimes against humanity for backing a rebel group that relied heavily on child soldiers and was known for mass rapes and severing the limbs of civilians. He has pleaded not guilty.

The rise in international tribunals began in the 1990s after the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. The movement gained strength with the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague in 2002.

The Bush administration opposed the international tribunal, instead supporting special courts such as the one that is trying Taylor. It argued that a permanent international court with broad authority could infringe on US sovereignty and put its citizens in improper legal jeopardy.

Despite US opposition, support for the ICC is strong throughout most of the world, and it is widely seen as a way to bring the world's worst human rights violators to justice. The idea has grown popular enough in Africa that national leaders, who traditionally have jealously guarded their sovereignty, have turned to the international court for help.

The presidents of Ivory Coast, Congo and Uganda asked the ICC to investigate the actions of armed groups that control parts of their countries, and in Uganda and Congo arrest warrants have been issued for militia leaders.

In the Central African Republic, President Francois Bozize has asked the court to investigate the actions of his predecessor, Ange-Felix Patasse.

"Politically, it makes sense to be an exponent of justice," said Richard Dicker, head of the international justice programme for Human Rights Watch, speaking from the organisation's New York headquarters.

As international courts have gained strength, national courts in many nations have grown in clout and independence. With the decline of leaders who rule for life, newer generations of African leaders increasingly have been pressured-by the international community and their own citizens-to rely on means other than violence to resolve their disputes. "There seems to be a movement to say we will not tolerate a situation in which impunity is a norm," said Nobuntu Mbelle, coordinator of the Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and People's Rights, with offices in both South Africa and Nigeria. "It's not business as usual."

Corruption investigations in Kenya have led to the resignations of three cabinet ministers, and two sons of former president Daniel arap Moi have been accused of wrongdoing. In South Africa, which in the 12 years since the end of apartheid has become a diplomatic powerhouse and a democratic role model to many other countries, Zuma faces the prospect of years in jail for his rape charge. He also faces corruption allegations.

Many South Africans saw political motives in the prosecutions of Zuma. The same is true in Nigeria, where the anti-corruption campaign led by President Olusegun Obasanjo is seen by many within his country as an attack on enemies as he clears the way for a possible run for a third four-year term.

There are crucial exceptions to accountability in Africa, including the longevity of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who has ruled his southern African nation through increasingly authoritarian means since 1980. Other African leaders have been reluctant to challenge his authority, despite devastating economic decline and extensive evidence of human rights abuses and election rigging. -Johannesburg

The Patriotic Vanguard

Wednesday, 3 May 2006

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=524

Special Court: Ruling on Kabbah Imminent

By Alfred Munda SamForay

The Second Session of the defence phase in the trial of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Dr. Alieu Kondewa started on Wednesday without its witness-in-chief, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Taking the stand in lieu of Kabbah will be former CDF Administrator and SLPP Secretary General for Kenema District, Arthur Koroma.

The Second Session of the defence phase in the trial of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Dr. Alieu Kondewa starts on Wednesday without its witness-in-chief, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Taking the stand in lieu of Kabbah will be former CDF Administrator and SLPP Secretary General for Kenema District, Arthur Koroma.

Koroma, is expected to testify about logistical support for arms, ammunition and food to the CDF. He is also expected to tell the court about command and administrative structures of the CDF, alleged killings by the Kamajors in Kenema and President Kabbah's visit to Lungi to strategize the war and the welfare of the Kamajors. Kabbah has persistently stated that he had no direct involvement in war plans or CDF command and control.

At the status conference held today, issues about the health of Mr. Norman as well as the problematic telephone system at the Detention Center where the twenty million dollar a year tribunal is unable to provide reliable communications between the indictees and their families surfaced. Norman, during his own testimony earlier this year stated that he was thrown into a cargo helicopter after his arrest with no seats. As a result, he may have incurred permanent injury to his hips and reportedly walks with a limp. The lack of adequate recreational facilities, lengthy detention as well as Mr. Norman's age are a concern to family and supporters as the marathon trial enters into the fourth year. The CDF Defence Fund has repeatedly reminded the authorities in Freetown that the health and well being of all Sierra Leonean nationals presently held by the court are the sole responsibility of the court and the government of Sierra Leone.

At the status conference, the Chamber advised lawyers for the Defence that a ruling on the subpoena ad testificandum issued by Norman requiring President Kabbah to appear as a witness will be issued shortly. The defence witness list having being reduced to less than half of its original size, it is reasonable to assume that this session of the defence case will be the last, with or without President Kabbah.

Washington Post
 Wednesday, 3 May 2006

Courts, not soldiers, increasingly resolving disputes

By Craig Timberg

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - The arrest in March of former Liberian President Charles Taylor was the latest in a series of tentative steps toward holding political leaders in Africa accountable for alleged crimes, including corruption, rape and genocide.

After decades in which senior government officials were largely beyond the reach of national and international law, prosecutors recently have pursued Taylor for alleged war crimes committed in Sierra Leone, a U.N.-backed tribunal has tried former leaders in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and international investigators have been invited into four other African countries.

National courts have also become increasingly aggressive. In Zambia, former President Frederick Chiluba is battling corruption allegations, as are several top officials in Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi. In South Africa, former Deputy President Jacob Zuma, accused of raping a family friend half his age, is awaiting a court judgment.

"There is a very important shift in the way people conceive of power and want to do things on the continent," said Claude Kabemba, who monitors governance issues across Africa for the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria, South Africa. "Impunity in many instances is not allowed as it was a decade ago."

The recent series of legal proceedings across the continent has the feel of victors' justice to some observers. Taylor's arrest was facilitated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former political rival. The case against Chiluba has been pushed by his successor. And Zuma, a populist once widely expected to be South Africa's next president, has blamed his legal troubles on a conspiracy to block his ascent to power.

New era of justice

Despite the political flavor of many of the cases, however, analysts, legal experts and human rights activists say the court actions mark a new era in which African disputes increasingly are being resolved by judges rather than soldiers. It may be a necessary first step, these advocates say, toward a more advanced variety of the rule of law in which all citizens -- regardless of political power -- are treated equally by impartial courts.

"What's wrong with victors' justice if this is a better form of justice than was there before?" asked Desmond de Silva, chief prosecutor of the U.N.-backed tribunal trying Taylor. DeSilva recently announced his resignation from the post but said he hoped to return to the job to lead Taylor's prosecution.

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The Bush administration opposed the international tribunal, instead supporting special courts such as the one that is trying Taylor. It argued that a permanent international court with broad authority could infringe on U.S. sovereignty and put its citizens in improper legal jeopardy.

Despite U.S. opposition, support for the International Criminal Court is strong throughout most of the world, and it is widely seen as a way to bring the world's worst human rights violators to justice. The idea has grown popular enough in Africa that national leaders, who traditionally have jealously guarded their sovereignty, have turned to the international court for help.

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Not business as usual

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Yomiuri Shimbun

Tuesday, 2 May 2006

Countries reluctant to house former warlord Taylor

Joe Geni Yomiuri Shimbun New York Bureau

Charles Taylor, the architect of Liberia's destructive civil war that killed about 250,000 people and destabilized its neighbors, is heading to The Hague to be tried for alleged war crimes. That is, as soon as a country agrees to take him when the trial is over.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to 11 war crimes, most of which concern atrocities committed by a rebel group he led that launched a debilitating civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone, often using child soldiers. The Sierra Leone war led to 50,000 deaths and more than 500,000 people being displaced. Taylor remains a destabilizing force in the region's fragile political scene, and it is widely agreed that keeping him in West Africa would be dangerous.

Before Taylor can be moved, however, the Netherlands has requested that a post-trial home be found for him. Sweden and Austria were initial candidates, but have declined, and no other country has stepped forward. Most recently, Denmark said it would reject any request for Taylor to be held there. Until a place is found, Taylor remains under close guard in Sierra Leone, as the region awaits the U.N. Security Council resolution that would authorize his transfer from Freetown to The Hague.

Taylor led a rebel group that fought a civil war in Liberia for most of the 1990s before he became president in 1997. By 2003, however, continued warfare and international pressure forced him to resign and he accepted asylum in Nigeria in exchange for staying out of Liberian politics.

Earlier this year, Liberia held national elections and newly elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf requested Taylor's extradition in late March. Days later, Taylor disappeared from his Nigerian residence, but was apprehended by Nigerian authorities while trying to cross into neighboring Cameroon. He was helicoptered to Sierra Leone where he is being detained under the authority of a U.N.-backed tribunal there.

The international tribunal and Johnson-Sirleaf have requested Taylor be moved to the Netherlands, where he would be tried by the U.N.-backed Sierra Leone court. The move was requested because it is feared Taylor, who still has allies in the region, could foment further unrest if he remains in Sierra Leone, where the last of the United Nations' peacekeeping forces have been gone for barely four months. But a British-backed resolution in the Security Council to authorize his transfer has stalled, largely due to the question of where Taylor would go after the trial.

Countries have been reluctant to take Taylor in part for the same reason his trial will be moved to The Hague: With many of his allies still at large, holding him could be a security risk.

"I don't think there's any provision in our legal system that will allow us to do so, but I do hope he will find a nice place," said Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations Wang Guangya, when asked two weeks ago if his country would take Taylor.

The other major concern is financial. As of last week, the Sierra Leone court had received only 9 million dollars in pledges, but needs 25 million dollars to operate this year. This has not, however, been the most significant factor holding up Taylor's transfer.

"The funding of the special court is a problem. But it has been a problem [before]. Taylor being in The Hague is only an added increment of cost," said British Ambassador to the United Nations Emyr Jones Parry.

Taylor broke out of a Massachusetts jail in 1985 where he was being held on charges of embezzlement. It is believed he spent the next four years in Libya, where he was trained in guerrilla warfare tactics that he would later use to start the Liberian civil war.

Perhaps his penchant for escapes is another reason why no one seems eager to be responsible for him.

"Our jail system maybe is not the most appropriate for this case," said Greek Ambassador to the United Nations Adamantios Vassilakis.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 3 May 2006 - REVISED

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

International Clips on Liberia

DPA May 03, 2006

Thirty Liberian grave-dwellers arrested

Monrovia_(dpa) _ Police in the Liberian capital Monrovia have arrested 30 people, including three nursing mothers, in an empty tomb at the Centre Street cemetery in central Monrovia, press reports said Wednesday. Police Director Colonel Beatrice Munnah Sieh told journalists that the three nursing mothers were caught selling dangerous drugs at the time of their arrest. The police director said the three breast-feeding mothers who are still in police custody, would be turned over to the Child Protection Unit of the Liberia National Police until they can identify an organization to take care of them.

The New York Times 3 May 2006

The Dutch Try One of Their Own Over Links to Liberia

By MARLISE SIMONS

THE HAGUE, April 30 -- They became partners during some of the worst convulsions in West Africa: Charles Taylor, the warlord and former president of Liberia, and Guus van Kouwenhoven, a resident Dutch businessman and lumber trader. Mr. Taylor, who was arrested in March for war crimes, is in an African prison still awaiting trial. But very different legal proceedings have already opened against his former business associate at a district court in The Hague.

The Kansas City Star 30 April 2006

Hali's mind is on mother; Chiefs' No. 1 pick hopes to bring her to this country

By ELIZABETH MERRILL

Like any first-round draft pick, Tamba Hali was flooded with the typical questions. How surprised were you to go in the first round? How will you spend the money? Inevitably, Hali's thoughts turn to something not so typical for a 22-year-old football star. How to find his mother.

The Chiefs [an American football team] say their first-round draft selection out of Penn State is a character pick. He's 6 feet 3 and 275 pounds, he's a punishing defensive end and he has a motor that won't quit. But most of all, he's relentless. He fled Liberia during a civil war at the age of 10, escaping the gunfire and the bodies piled in the streets, and hasn't seen his mother since 1994. They speak a couple of times a week via cell phone, and Hali hopes to bring her to the United States once he's granted citizenship.

International Clips on West Africa

Côte d'Ivoire: First convoy could mark reopening of north-south trade route

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

ABIDJAN, 2 May 2006 (IRIN) - The arrival of a convoy of 29 trucks in Cote d'Ivoire's port city of Abidjan from northern landlocked neighbour Burkina Faso may lead to a resumption of transit trade between the two countries after a nearly four-year war-imposed blockage, an official said on Tuesday.

Local Media – Newspapers

Police Raid Major Criminal Base in Monrovia

(Daily Observer, The News, New Democrat and Heritage)

- Acting on a tip-off, police in Monrovia on Sunday raided the Palm Grove Cemetery, which serves as a hideout and a major narcotic drugs market for criminals, Inspector-General of Police Beatrice Munnah Sieh told journalists yesterday.
- She said that among the 30 people arrested during the raid, three were women who had been found along with their babies in a tomb at the cemetery used as a drug den.

Chief Justice Dismisses 34 Magistrates in Southeastern Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News and Heritage)

- Speaking yesterday at the program marking Law Day, Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis said that he had dismissed 34 magistrates operating in the southeastern county of Sinoe. The reasons for dismissals, included desertion of post and their failure to honor an invitation for consultation during his recent visit to the area. He also threatened to recommend the dismissal of Circuit Court Judges in cases where their performance would bring reproach to the court system.

Former Presidential Guards Demand Unpaid Salaries

(National Chronicle)

- Several members of former President Charles Taylor's elite guards from the Anti Terrorist Unit (ATU) are demanding salary arrears incurred during the transitional administration of Moses Blah. In a letter of complaint to House Speaker Edwin Snowe, the former ATU men accused the government of denying them back pay that they are entitled to.

Lawmakers to Debate Civil Servants' Salary Increment

(The Analyst)

- House Speaker Edwin Snowe told journalists yesterday that the House of Representatives were considering debating an increase in salary for civil servants, especially teachers and doctors. He said that the House had decided to conduct special hearings aimed at taking the necessary steps to increase public servants' pay.

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

Police Clear Public Cemetery of Drug Dealers

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Government Poised to Freeze Assets of former Officials

- In an interview, Justice Minister Frances Johnson-Morris said that the government would harmonize international treaties to which Liberia is a signatory and local laws to permit the freezing of assets of some former government officials as mandated by the United Nations.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Democracy Group against Formation of War Crimes Court for Liberia

- Addressing journalists yesterday, Liberia Democracy Watch Executive Director George Williams dismissed calls for the establishment of a war crimes court for Liberia. He said that he was disappointed that people were calling for such a court after a Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been established to help restore justice in Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Former Justice Minister Urges Government to Revamp Justice System

- Speaking at a program to celebrate the Law Day yesterday, former Justice Minister Clarence Simpson entreated the government to revamp the country's criminal justice system to guarantee credibility and ensure high standards in the system. He noted that there were still qualified personnel to run the courts but said the system needed to be overhauled.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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

Lawmakers Chastise Colleague

- At a plenary session yesterday, members of the House of Representatives mandated Maryland County Representative Dr. Bhofal Chambas to circulate a letter he had written to the House urging his colleagues to serve the interests of the people instead of serving their own interests.

House Speaker Wants Salary Increments for Civil Servants

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

Defense Counsel Outlines Problems at Special Court for Sierra Leone

- According to correspondents covering the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown, the Court's Defense Counsel said that detainees, including former President Charles Taylor, were being paid the equivalent of US\$1 as daily allowance. The counsel also complained that the prisoners were being served inadequate African food and were allotted a single telephone line.

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.

BBC

3 May 2006

EU halts Serbia talks over Mladic

The European Union has called off talks on closer ties with Serbia because of its failure to arrest war crimes suspect Ratko Mladic.

EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said he was disappointed Belgrade had not detained Mr Mladic. The deadline set by the EU expired on Sunday.



Gen Mladic has been indicted over the 1995 Srebrenica massacre

Serbia's Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said Mr Mladic was "alone" in hiding and called on him to surrender.

His deputy prime minister has resigned over Mr Mladic's continuing liberty.

Miroljub Labus, a key negotiator with the European Union, said his government had "betrayed" the interests of the country and its citizens by not arresting Mr Mladic and failing to secure talks with the EU. He quit after the EU decision was announced.

Mr Mladic, a former leader of the Bosnian Serb army, is accused of genocide in relation to the massacre of about 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995.

Along with his civilian counterpart, Radovan Karadzic, he is the most wanted war crimes suspect in Europe.

He is thought to be hiding somewhere in Serbia.

'Misled'

Mr Rehn said he had discussed the situation with the UN tribunal's chief prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, who said Serbia had let the tribunal down.

"Her assessment is negative," he said. "I must say that it is disappointing that Belgrade has been unable to locate, arrest and transfer Ratko Mladic to The Hague.

"The Commission has therefore to call off the negotiations on the stabilisation and association agreement.

"The Commission is ready to resume negotiations as soon as Serbia accedes full co-operation."

Ms Del Ponte said: "The obvious conclusion I can draw is that I was misled when I was told at the end of March that the arrest of Mladic was a matter of days or weeks."

Mr Kostunica, who had promised that Mr Mladic would be located, arrested



and transferred to the tribunal, said everything had been done to try to bring in the fugitive.

He said Mr Mladic was "alone" on the run since the government had cracked down on his support network.

"His entire network has been uncovered; Mladic is now hiding all alone," he said.

Serbia was hoping to reach a new deal with the EU by July to take its first step on the road to eventual membership.

Significant language

All the other countries in the Balkans, except Bosnia, already have such stabilisation and association agreements, providing for closer political and economic ties with the EU.

But Ms del Ponte has already called for the EU to take a tough stance on Belgrade and Mr Rehn had said that the next round of talks, set for 11 May, could be called off unless Mr Mladic was arrested.

The BBC's Oana Lungescu says Mr Rehn's use of "calling off" rather than "suspension" of talks is significant as it means the EU executive can resume talks instantly once Mr Mladic is arrested - rather than go through the lengthy procedure of getting political approval from all 25 EU governments.

She says there are, however, fears of a nationalist backlash at a sensitive time in Serbia's political calendar.

This year, Belgrade stands to lose both the province of Kosovo, where the majority ethnic Albanians demand independence, and its partner Montenegro.

It will be holding a referendum in just a few weeks on whether to pursue its union with Serbia.