

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



A fire eater entertains in Kingtom

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

as at:

Tuesday, 4 November 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Rebels beheaded civilians, says victim

Umaru S Jah,

The Hague

A war victim has told the trial for former Liberian President Charles Taylor in The Hague that rebels decapitated human beings during the war in Sierra Leone.

The prosecution witness Mustapha Mansaray, 60, said in 1993 rebels hacked off the heads of civilians including his uncle, Jibril Turay and connected them to a rope used to man checkpoints in Maola, Pujehun district.

"The rebels cut off my Uncle's head from the back when they met him harvesting his cassava farm in Moala," Mustapha explained and added, "this was after Foday Sankoh ordered his rebels to kill any civilian caught harvesting his or her farm in Maola."

The farms were owned by civilians in the town but according to the witness, "Foday Sankoh announced

in the village that only rebels were supposed to harvest farms."

He said this act committed by rebels was mostly wrecked on civilians attempting to bypass rebel checkpoints in Maola.

Mustapha further recounted how one staff, Alhaji, hacked off his two hands and burnt a house with 53 people inside in Tombodu, Kono district in 1998.

"My two hands and those of five others were amputated in Tombodu by one staff Aljahi," he said, adding that, the amputation of his hands took place after he was captured in Worodu Sandor, Kono District by another rebel commander Staff Farma.

After his amputation, Mustapha said staff Alhaji instructed the rebels to set ablaze a house with 53 people locked inside.

"They sprinkled petrol and lit the house," he dis-

closed.

The witness said they were forced to leave the scene after the cries of suckling mothers and children inside the house became unbearable.

He said they fled to an area controlled by West African peacekeeping forces - ECOMOG at a place called Lebanon, Koidu town.

Mustapha blamed Charles Taylor for the bitter experience he went through during the war; an ordeal he said has had negative effects on his life even after the end of the war.

He said the accused once said in a radio broadcast that Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of war.

"It was shortly after that statement that the war broke out in 1991. I have tasted the bitterness of that war," he said while raising his amputated hands for the Presiding Judge, Justice Teresa Dougherty to see.

The Spark
Tuesday, 4 November 2008

As more harrowing accounts at Taylor's trial



Charles Ghankay Taylor

Another dramatic event over inconsistent evidence at the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor happened between Charles Taylor's Defence team and a prosecution witness,

Gibril Sesay. It followed a similar inconsistency between an account given in court by a prosecution witness and an earlier one he had given in a video interview.

Sesay told the court that eight rebels raped his wife and later stabbed her to death in his presence and the presence of

his children. He said that after his amputation he dropped and was helped by his children. However, the

video recording shown in court by the defence revealed a different account of what happened after

his amputation in 1998.

Asked then what had happened to him, *CONTINUED PAGE 9*

As more harrowing Accounts

FROM PAGE 1

Sesay said in the video that following a rebel attack on Koidu eastern Sierra Leone, he and several others were camped in a forest in a village called Wonedu.

Once they got information that the west African peacekeepers, ECOMOG, had arrived in Koquima, he and his wife and children came out of the bush and went to Penduma where they decided to rest. Sesay said in the video that he lost con-

tact with his children as he attempted to return. He said he managed to reach the ECOMOG base who treated his and took him to Makeni. Asked whether he saw his wife and children afterward, he said "No, it is only my younger brother who is with me here".

After showing the video in court, defence lawyer Courtenay Griffiths QC asked Sesay why there was a difference between his testimonies in court and his previous interview in the

video recording. He replied "I was not sensible enough at that time. I was not in a right frame of mind. It was only because we were being counselled, that was when I was able to give a clear explanation of what had obtained."

Despite the witness's persistent claim that he was not in his right frame of mind when he had the interview at the Connaught Hospital, Mr. Griffiths said Mr. Sesay had not told any truth in the three appear-

als of members of the rebel RUF, the AFRC and now Charles Taylor.

Meanwhile, a 39-year-old Sierra Leonean woman who encountered the rebels in Tombodu in Kono district also took to the witness stand. Kumba Bindi told the court that the rebels that entered her village spoke in Liberian English. Another witness, Abubakarr Mansaray who was only presented to the defence for cross-examination, said he could not remember most of the evidence he had given in the AFRC trial in 2005 in Freetown. He said he thought he had come to Holland to testify against the AFRC again. He could not recognise in court the Prosecution lawyer that met with him when he arrived in Holland.

Fofana said after burning his children to death, the rebels gave him and four other men heavy loads to carry to Tombodu where they amputated him and set 53 people on fire until they burned to death. "All the doors were locked. They poured petrol on the house. We could hear people screaming in the house while the house was burning and the house burnt down completely and there was silence," Fofana told the court.

Fofana said after burning his children to death, the rebels gave him and four other men heavy loads to carry to Tombodu where they amputated him and set 53 people on fire until they burned to death. "All the doors were locked. They poured petrol on the house. We could hear people screaming in the house while the house was burning and the house burnt down completely and there was silence," Fofana told the court.

The 75th prosecution witness told the court his three children, Mohammed, Kiadiatu and Dauda, as well as his aunt were set ablaze in a house in Peima, eastern Sierra Leone.

Fofana said after burning his children to death, the rebels gave him and four other men heavy loads to carry to Tombodu where they amputated him and set 53 people on fire until they burned to death. "All the doors were locked. They poured petrol on the house. We could hear people screaming in the house while the house was burning and the house burnt down completely and there

the court.

Charles Taylor

He said they were tied to an orange tree nearby where they listened to the screaming until the 53 people burned to death. Amidst tears which he wiped off the stump of his amputated hands as he sat directly facing the Judges, the witness said that after the rebels had burned the 53 people alive, their commander, Staff Alhaji gave orders that the five of them previously tied to an orange tree be amputated and sent to report to then president Tejan Kabbah because they had voted for him.

He said a rebel commander named Rambo, whose duty it was to amputate hands, took a mortar. "I was the first person. I was untied and taken close to the mortar [and] both of [my hands] were cut off" he said. Defence lawyer, Morris Anyah pointed out "inconsistencies" in Fofana evidence.

The Defence played in open court a video recording of an interview with the witness in Freetown after his amputation where he had given a different account of his children. In that video, he was asked about the whereabouts of his wife and children to which he responded, "I left them in the bush... I cannot tell [where I left them]... At the time those guys went and attacked us in the bush, I cannot tell you, I cannot understand."

When asked why the contradiction in his testimonies and the interview, Mr Fofana said he was not in a right frame of mind when the interview was conducted. He maintained that his three children were burnt to death. Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust

The Exclusive

Tuesday, 4 November 2008

Special Court are Champions

By Ayodele Deen-Cole

The annual corporate football tournament organized by the leading mobile communication network in Sierra Leone, ZAIN has reached its climax.

The final match was played between last year's runner-ups, Special Court. Thus they rattled first time finalist, the United State embassy, at the Saint Edwards Secondary school playing field on Saturday 1st November 2008.

The Special Court become champions by thrashing the United State Embassy by 4 to 1 in a match witnessed by large crowds of people including the United State Ambassador to Sierra Leone, June Catter-Perry. The match was tightly contested for but Saidu Turay of Special Court opened the scores in the 5th minute and also scored the third goal.

The other two goals for the Court boys were scored by Alpha Bangura while Sahr Kamanor of the United States Embassy got a consolation from a classic header in the dying minutes of the match.

Saidu Turay of Special Court also won the highest goal scorer prize by scoring four goals in the tournament. Keith Tukei the sales director of Zain Sierra Leone took the kick-off before the final match was played.

Earlier, for the battle of the bronze medal and third place trophy, last year's champion Union Trust Bank was defeated by IMATT in post game penalties, with the scoring as 3-1.

After the match the managing director of Zain Sierra Leone Ted Sauti-Phiri distributed the medals and trophies to the winners and losers.

Standard Times Online

Saturday, 1 November 2008

60-Year-Old Paralysed Amputee Blames Charles Taylor

A 60-year-old wheelchair-bound amputee man has blamed his condition on the former Liberian president Charles Taylor. The 79th prosecution witness Mohamed Mansaray was testifying at the trial of Mr Taylor at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. He said Charles Taylor had announced on the BBC that Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of war and that his amputation and subsequent paralysis were testament to tasting that bitterness.

Giving a chilling account of his experience, he told the court that his uncle, Gibril Turay, a farmer, was dispossessed of his produce and later beheaded by the rebels in a Sierra Leonean village called Moala in Pujahun District. In what he said happened to his face, Mansaray said the head kept jumping and blabbing for about five minutes before losing life.

Defence lawyer Morris Anyah quickly rose to his feet saying the disclosure of the uncle's name was a violation of the principle of disclosure. He said the Prosecution document given to the Defence did not bear the name of Mr. Mansaray's dead uncle so the evidence about the decapitation should be omitted. But the prosecution told the judges that they had made full disclosure to the defence.

Having listened to legal arguments from both sides, Justice Julia Sebutinde delivered her ruling on the matter. "Mr Anyah, we do acknowledge that the accused has a right to have full disclosure of this name that you've just named, in addition to the incident of decapitation. We acknowledge that this is the right of the accused in order to help him prepare or enable him to adequately prepare" she said, adding that this was a right under the statute. She said it would be "drastic to simply strike out this evidence given the fact that the incident itself was disclosed to you... in this case we will not strike out the evidence altogether."

From his wheel chair, Mr. Mansaray clenched the fist of his amputated hands as he testified to how he and five other men were systemically amputated by a rebel commander identified as Staff Alhaji in 1998 in Tombodu, Kono district. He said they chopped off his hands by placing them on a mortar starting with the left. He said there were armed rebels surrounding them in case anyone attempted to escape until all five had their hands chopped off with a machete.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Monday, 3 November 2008

Prosecution and Defence Make Joint Application for Adjournment of Court.

The trial of Charles Taylor resumed in open session, presided over by Justice Teresa Dougherty. Ms. Brenda Hollis and Ms. Maya Dimitrova were present for the prosecution and Mr. Courtenay Griffiths and Silas Chikera for the defence. Mr. Taylor was also present in court.

Justice Dougherty noted that there was no witness in court. Prosecution counsel Ms. Hollis responded that there was an order to hear the testimonies of Witnesses TF1-168 and 579 but that due to issues with personal schedule, Witness TF1-168 was unable to travel to The Hague to testify today. Witness TF1-579, she said, was present in The Hague but that a few security issues needed to be cleared in order for him to testify. She noted that TF1-168 will be ready to testify in the week of November 17, 2008. In the case of TF1-579, Ms. Hollis said that prosecution had told defence counsel to confer with Mr. Taylor and based on his response, it will be determined how they will proceed.

Defence counsel Courtenay Griffiths, in his response stated that he had not had the time to speak with Mr. Taylor on said issue but wanted to ask for a five minutes break in order to confer with him. He said that after said consultation, a joint application will be made by both Prosecution and Defence. Court took a short break.

When court resumed after a few minutes, defence counsel Mr. Griffiths informed the court that his team was aware of the problems faced by the prosecution with regards the witness in question and that based on talks with Mr. Taylor, it is suggested that there be no sittings for the whole week and that the trial should resume on Monday next week. He said that his team will also ask the prosecution to provide them with a list of all the remaining witnesses so that they can better plan on how to handle them.

When asked for her response, prosecution counsel Ms. Hollis said that they were in agreement with defence counsel and that they have agreed to providing a list of witnesses on a two weeks basis, based on those who are left to testify. She also stated that they will make sure that all witness related problems were solved before hand.

After conferring with the other judges, Justice Terasa Dougherty stated that since TF1-579 was present in the country, it will make sense to hear his testimony this week. She ruled that court be adjourned till Wednesday November 5, 2008, and that Witness TF1-579 be made to testify on that day.

The Monitor (Monrovia)
Monday, 3 November 2008

More inconsistency at Taylor trial

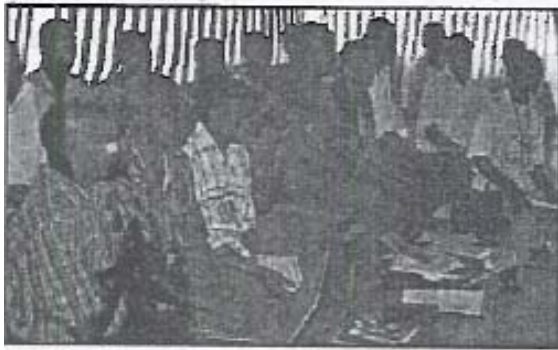
By Joseph Cheeseman

Another dramatic event over inconsistent evidence at the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor happened between Charles Taylor's Defence team and a

prosecution witness, Gibril Sesay. It followed a similar inconsistency between an account given in court by a prosecution witness and an earlier one he had given in a video interview.



IRC, MOH train TB caregivers in Lofa



The Health Program of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in

collaboration with the National Leprosy and Tuberculosis (TB)

See Story on Page 6

Sesay told the court that eight rebels raped his wife and later stabbed her to death in his presence and the presence of his children. He said that after his amputation he dropped and was helped by his children.

However, the video recording shown in court by the defence revealed a different account of what happened after his

amputation in 1998.

Asked then what had happened to him, Sesay said in the video that following a rebel attack on Koidu eastern Sierra Leone, he and several others were camped in a forest in a village called Wondédu. Once they got information that the west African peacekeepers, ECOMOG, had arrived in Koquima, he and his wife

See Story on Page 6

Taylor trial

and children came out of the bush and went to

Penduma where they decided to rest.

Sesay said in the video that he lost contact with his children as he attempted to return. He said he managed to reach the ECOMOG base who treated his and took him to Makeni.

Asked whether he saw his wife and children afterward, he said "No, it is only my younger brother who is with me here".

After showing the video in court, defence lawyer Courtenay Griffiths QC asked Sesay why there was a difference between his testimonies in court and his previous interview in the video recording. He replied "I was not sensible enough at that time. I was not in a right frame of mind. It was only because we were being counselled, that was when I was able to give a clear explanation of what had obtained."

Despite the witness's persistent claim that he was not in his right frame of mind when he had the interview at the Connaught Hospital, Mr. Griffiths said Mr. Sesay had not told any truth in the three appearances he had made in the trials of members of the rebel RUE, the AFRC and now Charles Taylor.

Meanwhile, a 39-year-old Sierra Leonean woman who encountered the rebels in Tombodu in Kono district also took to the witness stand.

Kumba Bindi told the court that the rebels that entered her village spoke in Liberian English.

Another witness,

Another witness, Abubakarr Mansaray who was only presented to the defence for cross-examination, said he could not remember most of the evidence he had given in the AFRC trial in 2005 in Freetown. He said he thought he had come to Holland to testify against the AFRC again. He could not recognise in court the Prosecution lawyer that met with him when he arrived in Holland. *Courtesy: BBC World Service Trust*

National Chronicle (Monrovia)
Monday, 3 November 2008

TAYLOR'S FAMILY CRIES FOUL

The Taylor family has given a strong reaction to the guilty verdict announced against the son of detained President, Charles Taylor.

According to the spokesman of the Taylor family, "Chuckie" Taylor's trial was "politically motivated".

Sando Johnson alleged that the United States Department of State asked "Chuckie" to testify against his father in the Hague, but he refused.

Johnson claimed that had "Chuckie" honored the request to testify against his father all charges against him would have been dropped.

He claimed the plan for "Chuckie" to testify against his biological father was revealed to the Taylor family through Chuckie's American lawyer. *Cont'd on page 6*



Chuckie Taylor



Charles Taylor

DISMISSED AFL SOLDIERS WANT PRES. SIRLEAF'S INTERVENTION

Some dismissed officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) have appealed to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to intervene in their dismissal.

The soldiers claimed they

have been dismissed from the Army without being court-martialed.

They said they were professional soldiers who were degraded by their top officials, who tried to compel them to

share room with four persons.

The dismissed AFL soldiers want the Commander-in-Chief to intervene as quickly as possible because they were never being inves-

tigated, to be described as "renegades".

They argued that they are professional soldiers trained by the government against any foreign aggression.


TAYLOR'S FAMILY

Former lawmaker Johnson also disagreed that "Chuckie" is an American citizen, arguing that by wearing Liberian military uniforms it was clear that "Chuckie" had denied his American nationality and was no longer answerable to American law. The Taylor family, however, said it was compelled to accept and live with the guilty verdict brought against "Chuckie".

New Democrat (Monrovia)
Monday, 3 November 2008



Taylor Takes Charge Of Trial

Reports from The Hague say former President Charles Taylor is leaving his fate in the hands of his legal team, paid US\$100,000 monthly. Last week, he asked the court to adjourn to deal with a special legal issue. He is leaving nothing chance as the trial limps towards the end.
A witness Mustapha Mansaray, an amputee, had mentioned crimes allegedly committed in some parts of Sierra Leone— Pujahun District. Mr. Taylor asked his lawyers to convey to the judges that the district is not covered in his indictment.
Upon Taylor's instructions, Defense Counsel Morris Anyah asked for a brief adjournment of the Court.  Page 10

10 NEW DEMOCRAT

Charles Taylor Commands His Trial

to receive instructions from his client concerning a possible adjournment of cross-examination for further examination of this witness's testimony. The adjournment was granted for about 15 minutes.
Reports: When Court reconvened Anyah said to be grateful for the time given to consult with his client. He is instructed to proceed. Other matters as well have not been disclosed: the information about the checkpoints and the information about Sam Bockarie. Charles Taylor wished him to convey that Pujahun District is not included in the indictment. Maola is in the Pujahun District. This is fundamental to the accused and the Defense seeks remedy from the Chamber. However, considering the witness's physical impairment (an amputee) Mr. Taylor has instructed not to seek an adjournment and proceed with the cross-examination. The judges conferred and decided that it is a matter and not an application so there is a ruling. But the prosecution said that they have complied with their disclosure obligation and will answer appropriately to any application the Defense may make, meaning they disagree with Mr. Taylor's argument about the indictment.
But the witness told the Court that Charles Taylor had said that Sierra Leone would taste the bitterness of war. He said he heard Taylor say this over the radio just after the war started.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 3 November 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

President Sirleaf Recognizes Nyenabo as Pro-Temp – Cites respect for High Court's Ruling

(The News)

- As the leadership crisis within the Liberian Senate continues, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has indicated that she recognizes the leadership of embattled President Pro-Tempore Isaac Nyenabo.
- Speaking during her regular talk show, "Conversion with the President" last Friday, President Johnson-Sirleaf said "We respect the ruling of the Supreme Court," an apparent reference to recent ruling by the high court in which it called on members of the Senate to reinstate Senator Nyenabo as President Pro-Tempore.
- The Liberian leader said every institution in Liberia is under obligation to respect rulings that come from the Supreme Court no matter its status. She emphasized that "we respect the ruling of the Supreme Court; that is our position."
- The leadership crisis within the Liberian Senate is deepening as both Nyenabo and Lahai Lassana claim to be President Pro-Tempore.

Liberian Leader Confident of TPS Extension

(The News)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf says she is hopeful that President George Bush would extend the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for thousands of Liberians living in the United States.
- She said during her recent visit to the United States, she appealed to President Bush to extend the TPS for Liberians, saying "he was positive when I asked him to extend it."
- President Johnson-Sirleaf made the disclosure last Friday during her regular radio talk-show "Conversation with the President" in Monrovia.
- The Liberian leader said she informed her American counterpart that Liberia could not absorb the huge number of Liberians on the TPS now, as such, she appealed to him again to extend their stay.
- President Johnson-Sirleaf: "When I appealed to him last year, I thought that would have been the last appeal, but the present economic situation cannot allow us to absorb the huge number of Liberians; so I have to appeal to him again for extension."

Government Prioritizes Hydro Power across Liberia – Vice President Boakai says

(The News)

- Vice President Joseph Boakai says rehabilitation of the hydro plant is still a major priority, and as such, government is working in that direction to ensure that the country is re-electrified.
- The Vice President made the assertion Friday when he visited the premises of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) to familiarize himself with the activities there.
- "The rehabilitation of the hydro is the final solution to meeting the people's power needs," he maintained.

- The Veep lauded the management of the LEC for utilizing the meager resources to provide electric supply to Monrovia and its surroundings.
- The acting Managing Director of LEC Joseph Mayah termed the Veep's visit as rewarding and hoped such visits would continue to ensure checks and balances within the public sector.
- Mr. Mayah said excluding the Emergency Power supply, the corporation is also embarking on some medium and short-term projects to expand power throughout the country. Mr. Mayah said some of those projects include the electrification of the southeastern region, among others.

Sinoe Superintendent Admits taking money from Development Fund – Says the Money Will Be Refunded'

(Daily Observer, The News)

- Sinoe County Superintendent Sylvester Grigsby, who in recent times has been in the center of alleged financial misappropriation and lack of accountability, has admitted taking US\$25,000 from the county's development funds, but promised a refund.
- Superintendent Sylvester Grigsby also confirmed that the money was given to Sinoetrust, a company he said belongs to the county on whose Board of Trustees members of the Sinoe Legislative caucus serve.
- He explained that the county was experiencing a shortage of rice thereby necessitating his decision to capitalize the Sinoetrust Company to import rice to the county to remedy the situation.
- "I took that decision as a head of the county to establish a rice facility to guarantee the constant supply of rice on the County market and to ensure that there were no wild swings in the price of this vital commodity during the rainy season", Superintendent Grigsby said.

'ArcelorMittal Vehicle Donation Was on My Request' – President Says

(Public Agenda, Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has disclosed that vehicles recently donated to Government by ArcelorMittal for use by Liberian legislators were donated upon her request. The President's comments followed a controversy over the donation, particularly criticisms in many quarters of the country that the company's donation was meant to induce the lawmakers to seek the interest of ArcelorMittal against the interest of the people they claim to represent.

Local media reports inconsistency at Taylor trial

(The Monitor, New Democrat, New Vision, The Informer, The Monitor, Liberian Express)

- [sic] Another dramatic event over inconsistent evidence at the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor happened between Charles Taylor's Defence team and a prosecution witness, Gibril Sesay. It followed a similar inconsistency between an account given in court by a prosecution witness and an earlier one he had given in a video interview. Sesay told the court that eight rebels raped his wife and later stabbed her to death in his presence and the presence of his children. He said that after his amputation he dropped and was helped by his children. However, the video recording shown in court by the defence revealed a different account of what happened after his amputation in 1998. Asked what had happened to him, Sesay said in the video that following a rebel's attack on Koidu eastern Sierra Leone, he and several others were camped in a forest in a village called Wonedu. Once they got information that the West African peacekeepers, ECOMOG, had arrived in Koquima, he and his wife and children came out of the bush and went to Penduma where they decided to rest. Sesay said in the video that he lost contact with his children as he attempted to return. He said, he managed to reach the ECOMOG base where he was treated and later taken to Makeni. Asked whether he saw his wife and children afterward, he said, "No, it is only my younger brother who is with me here". After showing the video in court, defense lawyer Courtenay Griffiths QC asked Sesay why there was a difference between his testimonies in court and his previous interview in the video recording. He replied "I was not sensible enough

at that time. I was not in a right frame of mind. It was only because we were being counselled, that was when I was able to give a clear explanation of what had obtained.”

IMF Mission Ends Visit to Liberia - Acknowledges Increased Inflation

(Public Agenda)

- Head of Mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation Robert Powell says, economic activity in Liberia remains buoyant despite the impact of higher International food and fuel prices.
- According to Mr. Powell, the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of around 7 percent in 2008 is expected to be driven by higher production of rice and local timber, as well as in construction services. Powell noted that inflation has increased to about 20 percent, but is expected to return to what he called single digits, which he put at 7 percent by the end of 2009.
- He said, performance under the IMF supported program has been strong, adding, we commend the Executive and the Legislature for their continued commitment to strengthening public financial management, as well as Liberia’s efforts to improve governance and combat corruption.
- The IMF Mission Head spoke over the weekend at the Finance Ministry, when he addressed journalists in a news conference at the end the Mission’s two weeks stay in the country.
- The IMF Team which met with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf , Finance Minister Augustine Ngafua, Central Bank Governor Joseph Mills Jones, members of the Legislature, the private sector, civil society, and other senior government officials said, it has reached preliminary understanding with the Liberian authorities on the key elements of its 2009 program in the country.

Radio Summary

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

President Sirleaf Hope of TPS Extension

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Sinoe Superintendent Promises to refund County Development Fund

Head of State Says ArcelorMittal Vehicle Donation Was on her Request

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Thursday, 30 October 2008

Fmr. NPP Chaplain Writes Taylor's Lead Counsel

Scolds Gov't, Terms TRC's Request as mockery

The Rev. Clearance Moore, former Chaplain General of then Ruling National Patriotic Party (NPP), and now General Overseer/Pastor of Gate of External Life Children International has written, Cllr. Courtenay Griffiths, the lead counsel of the defense team of the former President Charles Taylor, expressing disgust about the manner in which the former Liberian president is being treated in his own country.

In his letter dated October 23, 2008, Rev. Elder Moore, Sr. primarily saluted Cllr. Griffiths and his defense colleagues for job well done.

“I should first of all congratulate and commend you and your hardworking legal defense team for the splendid and very fruitful legal services you all are rendering so effectively and relentlessly for our former president Charles Taylor and country.”

Besides applauding the team, he recognized that the interest of the former president is stake as far as the case is concerned, not only in the team's legal work, but also ensuring his safety and personal well-being.

He credited the work of the legal team as “remarkable and a worthy initiative” which should be welcomed and cherished by every patriotic Liberian at home and abroad.

In the letter which, by and large, epitomizes his displeasure about the approach of Liberians to the Taylor case, the prelate also applauded the stance of the legal team to deny and shun the decision of “so-called TRC in Liberia” for what he called “their dubious, hypocritical and sheer pretending request for former President Taylor to be permitted to appear before its ongoing public hearings.”

He said he had thought the government would have protected the former president when he was brought to Liberia, but very embarrassingly, the government turned him over the United Nations.

He thought the issue could have been treated like a national tragedy that would claim the attention of every Liberian. Instead, Liberians are engaging in acts that are detrimental to the interest of the former president at the trial.

“Therefore I share your concerns that this request by the TRC is an affront mockery and total disregard for the present status of the former president, as his trial has been ignored and downplayed by both the current UP-led government and the TRC,” he said in his letter.

He said the TRC and the government are trying to serve as both grand jury for the court to “clandestinely convict former President Taylor at all cost in the trial in favor of the people of Sierra Leone.”

Cocorioko

Monday, 3 November 2008

Sec.Gen's address on UN Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment during wars

The natural environment enjoys protection under Protocol 1 of the Geneva Conventions. But this protection is often violated during war and armed conflict. Water wells are polluted, crops torched, forests cut down, soils poisoned, and animals killed, all in order to gain military advantage. The draining of the marshlands of the Euphrates-Tigris Delta during the 1990s deliberately targeted the ecosystem for political and military goals.

From the Balkans to Afghanistan, from Lebanon to Sudan, the United Nations is studying the environmental impacts of conflict across the world. We have seen how environmental damage and the collapse of institutions are threatening human health, livelihoods and security.

These risks can also jeopardize fragile peace and development in post-conflict societies. In Afghanistan, warfare and institutional disintegration have combined to take a major toll. In a clear case of environmentally induced displacement, tens of thousands of people have been forced from rural to urban areas in search of food and employment.

The environment and natural resources are crucial in consolidating peace within and between war-torn societies. Several countries in the Great Lakes Region of Africa established trans-boundary cooperation to manage their shared natural resources. Lasting peace in Darfur will depend in part on resolving the underlying competition for water and fertile land. And there can be no durable peace in Afghanistan if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed.

The United Nations attaches great importance to ensuring that action on the environment is part of our approach to peace. Protecting the environment can help countries create employment opportunities, promote development and avoid a relapse into armed conflict. On this International Day, let us renew our commitment to preventing the exploitation of the environment in times of conflict, and to protecting the environment as a pillar of our work for peace