

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



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:

Friday, 5 December 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Standard Times
Friday, 5 December 2008

Reflection

BY IBM KAMARA

Who really merits the praise for ending the brutal and senseless ten years rebel war in our country? Some will say ex-President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his SLPP government, others will say the loyal and gallant Sierra Leonean soldiers; some will say ECOMOG led by the Nigerian troops; some will say the late intervention of the British or the UN Troops; while others strongly hold the view that it was the total resilience of the masses of this country that actually triggered international attention and action.

Well all said and done the war ended, democracy came back into play and today the nation is enjoying relative peace, tranquility and stability.

I would like to reflect back briefly on the rebel war, the NPRC and AFRC military interregnum to the end of what most historians have described as the shortest but most brutal, senseless and inhuman "civil" war in Africa.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) officially began on 23 March 1991 after about 100 armed men, mostly Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front (NPFL) fighters and a few recruited Sierra Leoneans trained in "Taylor land", carried out a surprise attack on Bomaru and Sienga, two obscure border towns in Kailahun district. The guerrillas killed one Sierra Leonean army major, one lieutenant and eleven civilians, looted the town and withdrew into Liberia when troops from nearby Daru Barracks counter-attacked.

Speculations that this attack was an NPFL revenge against Sierra Leonean border soldiers who had cheated them (a brisk business in looted goods was going on between the NPFL fighters and Sierra Leone border soldiers) were cut short after Foday Sankoh, calling from Taylor's base, announced via the BBC Africa Service that he had begun his "people struggle" against the corrupt government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh. Note that at that time, a decade earlier, the former army signals man was cashiered out of the RSLMF for a role in the 1971 coup plot against then President Siaka Stevens. Slowly but gradually this rebel incursion intensified and spread all over the country with the worst type of atrocities unimaginable. Souls upon souls were lost, properties looted and destroyed, infrastructure was left in ruins and virtually those who survived became refugees or Internally Displaced Persons.

The rebel war waged on as if that was just the start of the most unfortunate and destructive era for our nation. The chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) declared in a radio broadcast on Thursday 30th April

Who really ended the rebel war in Sierra Leone?



Kabbah



Strasser



Johnny Paul



The late Foday Sankoh

1992, after the guns of April 29 1992 had gone silent, "we are committed to two major objectives namely to ensure that the rebel incursion is brought to an immediate end and to repatriate our people to their respective homes, to be followed by an intensive rehabilitation and reconstruction of all areas destroyed..."

It was 7:00 am on Wednesday, 29 April, 1992. The morning silence was shattered by the explosions of anti-aircraft shells, the staccato sound of machine guns and AK47 assault rifles. State House, the office of the President in the heart of the city, was surrounded by a small contingent of soldiers whose number varied in estimates from 36 to 50.

They descended on the capital from the war front in the Eastern combat theatre of Kailahun and Kenema districts. Again Kailahun district. I wonder if you can recall the great Dogborwosu episode.

Then in December 1994, a flash of inspiration amid the surrounding gloom prompted the NPRC chairman to send a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General, "to use his good offices to assist in bringing about a peaceful settlement to the war." In addition, to this, the multi-religious council for

peace set up a five man committee to request the intervention of the United Nations, the Organization of African States (OAU), the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union (MRU) and the Carter Centre, for a dialogue.

A ten point peace plan was presented to the military government.

Well in 1996, there was a smooth democratic transition from the military rule of the NPRC to the civilian government of the SLPP led by Ex-President Kabbah. The rebel war continued and was virtually everywhere in the provinces.

Then the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) interrupted the rule of the SLPP in April 1997. The AFRC invited the RUF to join them and so came into Freetown, the seat of power, the RUF rebels.

However, the AFRC Junta's experience was short lived though it also committed serious atrocities.

Well, finally by 2000 after peace talks upon peace talks, military intervention by ECOMOG and later the UN forces and the British cleaning Okro Hill, the war ended.

You, the reader who do you really think ended the war and brought in peace to Sierra Leone.

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Concord Times

Thursday, 4 December 2008

Sierra Leone: Special Court Deputy Registrar Honoured in Moyamba

Ben Samuel Turay and Bryna Hallam

The deputy registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone was honoured last Friday at Fakunya chiefdom in the Moyamba district.

Binta Mansaray was adopted into the community. She also had a building at the Harford School for Girls named after her: the Binta Mansaray Resource Centre. The ceremony was to acknowledge her work with the Special Court.

Mansaray was once the court's outreach officer, and it was in this role that she first came to the Moyamba district. The people living there did not like the court then.

A Kamajor stronghold during the war, Moyamba was one of the first areas targeted for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). When Kamajor leaders were convicted by the Special Court in the case against the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), people were unhappy.

Moinina Fofana was sentenced to 15 years, while Allieu Kondewa was sentenced to 20 years. The men were convicted on counts for murder and inhumane acts as crimes against humanity, and on counts of murder and cruel treatment as war crimes. Chief Samuel Hinga Norman, who was also the deputy defense minister, was also charged but passed away before the judgment was issued.

"I testified for the defense in Chief Samuel Hinga Norman's case," said Paramount Chief Joseph Alie Kavura Kongoromoh II. "When they [CDF leaders] were found guilty, I was the first there protesting."

Many people felt the same way. The pro-government CDF fought against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and protected the local communities. To many people, they were heroes.

"The Kamajors were hired through the will of the people," explained Albert Senessie, a former councilor in one of the wards in Moyamba council. "People were unhappy with the court because they thought the Kamajors were innocent of the violations and should not have been tried."

The problem, he said, was that people - both the fighters and the civilians - did not know about international humanitarian law.

But the community's feelings towards the court have changed. Thanks to the work of the Special Court's outreach programme, people understand more about the court and how the trials work.

"Now people appreciate it," Senessie said.

"I myself did not know the role of the SC," Kongoromoh said. "Later I agreed that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court are good. We will not go for any war. We are very happy today about SCSL."

The court's outreach work has been going on since the court itself was established in 2003. Its mandate was to create links between the court and the people, something that had never been done before. The idea came out of complaints about the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Civil society organizations there said the court was isolated from the people it was meant to serve.

"At the beginning it was very tough," said Patrick Fatoma, the Special Court's outreach coordinator. "The war was just over. Many people were very fearful about what would happen. The initial feelings were that it would be a conflict raiser."

At the first event, Nigerian soldiers wouldn't let the outreach team into a disarmament camp in Northern Sierra Leone, afraid that tensions would escalate into violence.

But to everyone's surprise, the ex-combatants were very receptive to what the team had to say. Once the mandate of the court and its limitations - the fact that only those most responsible, and not the foot soldiers, would be tried - were explained, they even stood up and clapped.

The struggle for acceptance in former CDF strongholds hasn't always been easy. Some people, Fatoma says, still have difficulty accepting that the Kamajors were indicted.

This makes the naming of the Moyamba school building for Binta Mansaray even more significant. "It's another sign of support for the court," Fatoma said.

And the fact that people don't agree with the court's decisions is fine, he says. The role of outreach isn't to convince people to agree with the court's decision, just to make sure that they have accurate information and can have an informed opinion on its work. In that regard, Fatoma feels they have been successful.

"As the trials went on, perceptions changed," he said.

From the beginning, the outreach programmes have included information not only on the court and its workings, but also on international humanitarian law and human rights.

During the trip to Moyamba, there was also a forum for women and children, which focused in part on Sierra Leone's new gender acts and women's and children's rights.

Fatoma says this work is an important legacy of the Special Court. If people learn about their rights and international law, it could help bring development and good governance to Sierra Leone. It could even help prevent anything like the war from happening again.

"We are here to make sure peace holds its ground," he said.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 4 December 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

UNMIL Cites Weakness in Liberia's Justice System

(New Democrat, The Inquirer, Liberian Express, The Analyst, The News, Heritage, The Informer)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) on Wednesday released its bi-annual report with concerns over the weakness in the criminal Justice System due to the absence of key personnel, and inadequate resources for essential rule of law institutions, including the Judiciary, the Liberia National Police and the Corrections services.
- The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu told journalists that the report covers human rights issues monitored by the Mission Human Rights and protection Section.
- Highlighted in the report are prevailing human rights concerns in the country, including measures being instituted to address them, and that these concerns also include challenges being faced in the criminal justice system and delay in making operational the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, and the prevalence of rape and other violence incidents.
- The report covers the period November 2007 to June 2008. According to the Mission, some challenges still remain despite steps taken by Government to address some of the human rights concerns.

New Rape Court Dedicated to fast track cases

(The News, Heritage, The Analyst, New Democrat)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday dedicated a new circuit court, Criminal Court "E", at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia to prosecute cases of rape and Gender-based Violence (GBV).
- Speaking at the dedication ceremony, President Sirleaf observed that governance and rule of law continue to pose challenges in Government's overall effort to meet its development priorities.
- An Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia said the President praised the Danish Government for providing the funds for the renovation of the court.
- She hoped the establishment of the court would help confront the increasing wave of sexual violence in the country

Deportees Sent to Zwedru Correction Palace

(New Democrat, The Inquirer)

- Twenty-two Liberians recently deported from the United States of America have arrived in the country.
- The deportees arrived yesterday and were immediately sent to the Zwedru Correction Palace in Grand Gedeh County.
- Speaking to journalists, Immigration Commissioner, Col. Chris Massaquoi said the deportees were sent to Zwedru to face further security screening and rehabilitation.
- The 22 Liberians including one female were convicted of crimes ranging from rape, drug abuse, assault, armed robbery, overstaying amongst others.

Violence Erupts in Nimba Again

(Daily Observer)

- [sic]Incidents of land disputes in some parts of Nimba County seem to be far from over as latest reports indicate another round of attacks. This time, the attacks took place on a farmland belonging to the Statutory Superintendent of Saclepea, David W. Queeglay. According to Mr. Queeglay, during the attack over 100 marauding armed men set ablaze his three rice barns and made away with an amount of L\$36,000 and several other valuables. The attackers, he claimed destroyed whatever they met in their path and looted several heads of cattle and then violently cut down most of the 12,000 rubber trees on the farm. When contacted, Nimba County Inspector, Thomas Suah acknowledged that the county authorities were aware of the incident. According to Inspector Suah, the office of the Superintendent Robert Kamei has already dispatched a team of joint security personnel to the disputed area to conduct an immediate investigation and bring the situation under control.

Egypt Offers Training For Nurses, Midwives

(The Informer, The News, Heritage)

- The Egyptian government has offered eight scholarships to five Liberian nurses and three midwives to undergo specialized advanced training at the Egyptian National Research Centre in Cairo. According to a statement from the Egyptian Embassy in Monrovia, the beneficiaries are expected to leave Liberia December 15, 2008 to undergo a 25-day intensive medical training in Cairo.
- The Egyptian Embassy hoped the training would build the capacity of the health practitioners so as to provide good health care to the people of Liberia. At the same time, the Embassy said five Liberian students are expected to depart Liberia soon for Egypt to undergo various disciplines including agriculture, commerce, among others.
- The students, the statement said, would spend four years in that country studying at various universities after which they would return home to contribute towards the development of their country. The Egyptian Embassy also mentioned that three Liberians are currently in Egypt undergoing training in peacekeeping.

Radio Summary

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

22 Liberian Deportees Back in the Country

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

UNMIL Releases New Human Rights Report

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Dedicates New Rape Court

(Also reported on Star Radio, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Popular Musician Accused of Atrocities Faces TRC Today

- Popular Liberian musician, Michael Davis alias Sundaygar Dearboy appeared before Liberia's Truth Commission(TRC) to explain his role in the country's decade-long conflict.
- The musician has been accused by several TRC witnesses of committing crimes such as rape and torture in Grand Bassa County while fighting with the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) during the civil conflict.
- Appearing before the TRC public hearings early this year, the commission's first witness, David Saweh linked the musician to the rape and subsequent death of his sister.

- Mr. Davies has however termed their testimonies as “baseless” accusing a Commissioner of the TRC of staged managing the testimonies against him a claim denied by the TRC.

Criminal Court “A” Hands Down Ruling in Angel Togba Murder Case

- Criminal Court “A” will today hand down ruling into a motion file to dismiss the case involving Hans Williams and his Fiancée Mardea Paykue who are accused of killing little Angel Togbah last year.
- Lawyers representing the accused filed a motion on grounds that the state has failed to produce medical report on the case before the indictment.
- The State however said there were no laws that required such documents to be filed before the indictment.

16 Dismissed AFL Soldiers Stage Protest

- 16 officers dismissed from the Armed Forces of Liberia have staged a peaceful protest demanding that they see President Sirleaf.
- The soldiers were dismissed in September this year for what Defense authorities termed as “Gross Insubordination”.
- Reports at the time said the “disenchanted” soldiers of the 23rd Infantry Battalion of the AFL protested their relocation their apartments to accommodate more than 500 of their colleagues who had graduated from the Sandi Ware military barracks at VOA.

Star Radio *(News monitored today at 9:00 am)*

President Sirleaf to Deliver Major Policy Statement Today

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf today delivered a major official policy statement on corruption in Liberia.
- In a live broadcast statement the President outlined policy measures the government has already instituted to fight corruption.

Labour Ministry, American Bar Association Sign MOU

- The Labour Ministry and the American Bar Association’s sponsored-Africa Rule of Law Initiative have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Under the MOU, the American Bar Association would provide legal assistance to the Ministry.
- A Labour Ministry release said the two agreed to establish a framework to place an Attorney-at law in the ministry.
- The Attorney at-law will assist the ministry in the determination of Labour disputes in accordance with the country’s Labour laws.

The Weekly Observer (Kampala)

Wednesday, 3 December 2008

Uganda: It's Time for ICC to Walk the Talk

Ishaa Amiza Otto

"Justice delayed is justice denied". Should we be arguing whether or not to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes around the world, especially in Africa, or should we just bring them to justice in order to deter others from doing the same?

Several crimes against humanity have been committed and yet many more continue to occur under the watch of the super powers, human rights bodies and the international community, while the perpetrators enjoy blanket amnesty and because of political arguments for and against prosecution, get away with it.

It is not only a shame to the international community but total negligence on the part of the world to allow suspected criminals to enjoy freedoms at the expense of their victims' blood and their relatives' pain.

Ethnic cleansing, genocide and other crimes against humanity perpetrated by governments in power and rebels campaigning to bring them down, should never be ignored or condoned. Therefore it is only fair to have the suspects brought to account in a perceived neutral court, in this case, the International Criminal Court.

The creation of concentration camps or internally displaced peoples camps and the genocides committed in Rwanda, Serbia, Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, DRC, Sudan's Darfur, Liberia and Tibet, to mention but a few, under the watch of the UN and the other human rights bodies are unacceptable cannot go unchallenged.

In all these countries, three grave abuses of human rights and crimes against humanity have been registered: ethnic cleansing, forceful concentration of people into camps and the mass execution of innocent civilians which have run hand in hand with other war related crimes like rape and torture.

The International Court of Justice in The Hague, with its slow pace, has tried to bring to justice war criminals in former Yugoslavia and this saw the likes of Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic and some of their top generals hauled before the court.

Liberia's Charles Taylor is before this court while some of his aides are still at large. The Rwandan genocide trial in Arusha, Tanzania, besides attempting to prosecute some of the Hutu authors of the Rwandan genocide has still failed to bring to book many others still at large, not to mention the top leaders of the current regime headed by Gen. Paul Kagame who shouldn't have escaped prosecution either.

In my view, governments that deliberately failed to protect people under their protection or directly participated in the criminal acts should not escape this initiative if the victims of the numerous crimes are to receive justice and have confidence in the ICC. It will therefore only be convincing and fair that the individuals who oversaw the 20 years of genocide in Northern Uganda, committed both by LRA on the one hand and UPDF on the other, should face international justice.

It is imperative for the ICC to speed up its attempts to bring these criminals to book before they find ways of perpetuating their freedom and impunity. However, little has so far been done by the international community to move in that direction.

The attempts by government, civil society, the victims and the international community to end the 22-year civil war in Northern Uganda through the Juba peace talks should not be an excuse for the war criminals to escape justice. They must be prosecuted both in the local and international courts depending on the magnitude of crimes committed. The traditional justice systems/courts being advocated for can only handle domestic and usual crimes, not crimes against humanity!

I therefore urge the Chief ICC Prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, to push for the arrest and prosecution of Kony and his top commanders and I call upon all citizens of Uganda, both resident in the country and those living abroad, and also all peace loving people of the world to support this effort.

I further urge Mr Ocampo to include Gen. Museveni and his commanders on his prosecution list, because they either

watched while our people were being butchered or commanded the UPDF in the orchestration of some of the killings and the committing of other crimes against humanity during the 20 years of the LRA war in Northern Uganda. The Sudanese government of Gen. Omar El Bashir and his henchmen, together with the Darfurian rebels must also answer for crimes against humanity.

All peace loving friends of Uganda, within and without, should rally support for justice for the victims of war in northern Uganda to be done.

That is the only way to save this world from any future heinous crimes. Let's support the ICC for justice to prevail.

Ishaa Amiza Otto, The author is a Member of Parliament representing Oyam South

Agence France Presses

Thursday, 5 December 2008

Ugandan rebel Kony balked at deal over Taylor, Bemba arrests: MP

KAMPALA (AFP) — Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony has cited the arrest of former Liberian president Charles Taylor and ex-Congolese rebel chief Jean-Pierre Bemba as reasons for not signing a peace deal at the weekend.

The elusive Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader failed to meet a government delegation in southern Sudan on Saturday to sign a final peace agreement with Uganda to end a two-decade old conflict in the country's north.

"This time he raised the question of Bemba and Taylor and his argument was that they put themselves in a position where they could be picked," said Jimmy Akena, a lawmaker from Uganda's northern region who met Kony.

Though he declined to meet government envoys, Kony did however hold talks with cultural and religious leaders near his jungle hideout on the Democratic Republic of Congo-Sudan border.

He has repeatedly refused to sign the agreement concluded in April on the grounds that he faces outstanding arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court (ICC) over alleged war crimes.

"Bemba got into a peace process, went through elections and soon thereafter he was picked. Charles Taylor got into some agreement and then after, he was picked. So Kony was saying he doesn't want to be picked in the same way. He thinks he needs to be in a position where he can defend himself," Akena told AFP.

Taylor was arrested in 2006 in Nigeria and is being tried before the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, while Bemba has been charged for war crimes before the ICC after his arrest in May.

The Uganda government delegation had travelled to a southern Sudan jungle town of Ri-Kwangba over the weekend in the hope that Kony would sign the deal already inked by Kampala.

Kony's LRA is accused of having raped and mutilated civilians, forcibly enlisting child soldiers and of massacring thousands during one of Africa's longest-running conflicts.

BBC Online

Friday, 5 December 2008

Go Mugabe or face arrest - Tutu

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe must resign or be sent to The Hague for the "gross violations" he has committed, Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said.

The Nobel Prize winner also told Dutch television that Mr Mugabe should be removed by force if he refuses to go.

On Thursday, Kenya's Prime Minister Raila Odinga said African governments should oust Zimbabwe's leader.

Archbishop Tutu said Mr Mugabe had ruined "a wonderful country", turning a "bread-basket" into a "basket case".

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has also repeated US calls for Mr Mugabe to go, saying a "sham election" has been followed by a "sham process of power-sharing talks".

Zimbabwe has declared a national emergency over the cholera outbreak, which has killed at least 565 people - the most deadly in the country's history.

See detailed map of cholera affected areas

Health workers say the collapse of the health systems and the water supply in the capital, Harare, are major reasons for the epidemic killing so many people.

Mr Mugabe and opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai agreed to share power in September to tackle the country's economic meltdown but they have been unable to agree on the allocation of cabinet posts.

The deadlocked agreement followed disputed elections, which both men claimed to have won.

Archbishop Tutu told the Dutch TV programme Nova: "I think now that the world must say: 'You have been responsible, with your cohorts... for gross violations, and you are going to face indictment in The Hague unless you step down.'"

Mr Tsvangirai says his supporters were the victims of a state-sponsored campaign of violence which left at least 200 dead and forced many thousands from their homes.

Referring to the cholera deaths, Ms Rice said:

"If this is not evidence to the international community to stand up for what is right, I don't know what would be. And frankly the nations of the region have to do it."

Africa leaders have generally refrained from criticising Mr Mugabe in public.

Although this is now starting to change, the BBC's Jonah Fisher in Johannesburg says there is no real sign that Mr Mugabe is about to be forced from power.

Mr Mugabe has meanwhile blamed Mr Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change for the power-sharing impasse.

"The MDC should say no if they do not want to be part of the inclusive government," he was quoted as saying by the state-owned Herald newspaper.

Both the South African and Mozambican authorities are on alert in case the cholera epidemic spreads outside Zimbabwe.