

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



PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Wednesday, 5 July 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awoko

Wednesday, 5 July 2006

Alleged American spy released

By Abibatu D. Kamara

Michael Chemidlin, an American, Felix Rogers and Collins Kamara, both Sierra Leoneans, who were facing trial at the Freetown Court No1 on three-count charges of “engaging in a purpose prejudicial to the interest of Sierra Leone contrary to law, conspiracy and spying” were yesterday acquitted

and discharged by Magistrate Sam Margai.

The three had been on trial for the past two months.

Defence lawyer Momoh Fofanah raised preliminary objections that the offences the accused were charged with were not in existence in law. He added that, “conspiracy in law is exhaustive and the crimes under conspiracy are fraud, pervasion, etc.. There is no

law prohibiting people from taking photographs of the Special Court. The court is free for every one”.

Lawyer Fofanah defined conspiracy as an agreement between two or more people to commit a crime or to do unlawful act by unlawful means, adding that the prosecution needed to show proof that the “Special Court is a prohibited place”.

Independent Observer
Wednesday, 5 July 2006

Margai Orders American, Two Others To Go Home

Michael Chemildline, the American national accused together with two others Felix Rogers and Collins Kamara, both

Sierra Leoneans, of illegally taking photos of the Special Court Complex and later taken to court on espionage related

charges yesterday regained their freedom when Magistrate Sam Margai acquit and discharge them. Sometime last month,

Magistrate Adrian Fisher discharged them for want of prosecution but they were few days later re-arrested and had fresh

charges brought against them. The trial was closely monitored by the American embassy in Freetown.

Magistrate Margai ruled yesterday that there is no notice anywhere around the court that forbids photographs being taken. And secondly, the charges for which they

were on trial is not in the constitution of Sierra Leone. He then declared the charges null and void and ordered the accused to leave the dock and go home.

By
Isatu
Gbla

For di People
Wednesday, 5 July 2006

Liberians demand war crimes court

SOME 5,000 protesters carrying symbolic burial caskets are expected to demonstrate in the Liberian capital, calling for a war crimes court.

They want something similar to the UN-backed court in neighbouring Sierra Leone which prosecutes those responsible for the now-ended war.

Exiled ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is among those facing trial.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is visiting Monrovia where he is meeting President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

The BBC's Rennie Ledgerhood in Monrovia says the prospect of a war crimes court looks remote as the peace remains fragile and there are fears that it could undermine security.

Meanwhile, the government is seeking the lifting of UN diamond sanctions on Liberia and the extension of the mandate for the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

The UN Security Council last month lifted the timber embargo on Liberia for 90 days, but kept the diamonds ban pending certification that the stones are not used to

finance conflict. Diamonds fuelled the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in recent years.



JOHNSON-SIRLEAF: Liberia's president

Associated Press

Tuesday, 4 July 2006

Protesters greet U.N.'s Annan in Liberia

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) -- Hundreds of protesters demanding a war-crimes tribunal for



Liberia carried fake coffins through the capital's streets Tuesday during a visit by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the west African nation.

Annan met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who became Africa's first-ever elected female head of state in January, marking the end of a transitional period following Liberia's 1989-2003 civil war. Annan also addressed the legislature. Annan didn't meet with the several hundred marchers.

"United Nations, we want those who committed heinous crimes against humanity in Liberia to be brought to justice through the establishment of a war crimes court," read one of the banners held by marchers.

About 300,000 of Liberia's 3 million people are believed to have died in the war, including large numbers of civilians targeted by marauding and often drugged fighters from all warring sides. The U.N. still has a 15,000-troop peacekeeping force in the country.

Ex-President Charles Taylor, a one-time warlord whose attacks began the war, awaits trial at the U.N. tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands, on war crimes charges stemming from his alleged support of rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Liberia's war ended when Taylor, then president, fled into exile as rebels attacked the capital, Monrovia.

Liberia has started a South Africa-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which researched 34 years of human rights violations against blacks under apartheid.

But Liberia has no tribunal to prosecute crimes committed here and demonstrators demanded Monday that one be arranged.

Annan, meanwhile, addressed Liberia's newly elected lawmakers, including notorious former fighters and Taylor's ex-wife.

Annan called on the legislators to "turn diversities into strength and planning into consensus." But he cautioned change "will not happen overnight."

Cocorioko Website

Tuesday, 4 July 2006

LIBERIAN DEMONSTRATORS CALL FOR WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL



*Kofi Annan : Will he grant Liberians their wish for a tribunal ?
Liberians think that there will be no proper closure to the war without justice*

Though the newly-established government of Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is kicking against it, the generality of Liberians would like to see those who bear the greatest responsibility for the war and carnage in their country to be punished, as is being done in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

This was made known in Monrovia today when civil groups and Liberian citizens stormed the streets to demand a tribunal in protests timed to coincide with the visit of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan .

The protests dispelled the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf government's spin that Liberians just want to move on and do not support the idea of a war crimes tribunal. But without the blessing of the government, many Liberians resident in the U.S. fear that the war crimes tribunal may in fact not become a reality, thereby denying the people the justice they require.

Mr. Annan, who is accompanied by his wife and top UN officials landed in Monrovia yesterday on a Jordanian flight after a short visit in Freetown, Sierra Leone . He was given a splendid welcome at the Roberts International Airport where he was received by Vice-President Joseph Boakai and leading government personalities , Paramount Chiefs, tribal elders , civil servants and traditional dancers.

Today , Mr. Annan addressed the 52nd joint session of the Liberian Senate and Legislature under the watchful eyes of some Liberian senators , including House Speaker, Mr. Edwin Snowe , who are under a UN travel ban for their roles in the Liberian crisis. They heard the UN Chief say : "The Government needs to consolidate its authority throughout the country, and work to meet conditions that will allow sanctions to be lifted . Liberia needs to restore economic growth and gain the confidence of donors. And Liberia needs to remain at peace with itself and all its neighbors," The Liberian government is pushing for the sanctions on diamonds to be lifted, as has been done to the timber trade.

Though no announcement was made about the lifting of the ban, Mr. Annan assured Liberians : "The United Nations will work with you as you seek to ensure gainful employment, especially for young people, and access to basic services, health and education – all absolute prerequisites for any functioning society and for sustaining the peace you have worked so hard to achieve"

IRIN

Tuesday, 4 July 2006

UN chief defends Europe-based Taylor trial

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, while on a visit to Sierra Leone, defended the decision to move the high-profile trial of ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor to facilities in Europe.

A UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone indicted Taylor for war crimes in that country's ten year civil war, including supplying weapons in return for so-called "blood diamonds".

Taylor was arrested on the Nigeria/Cameroon border in March and hauled to the Special Court facility in Freetown. But court and UN officials concerned that his presence in Sierra Leone could pose a threat to regional security opted to shift his trial to facilities in The Hague, Netherlands.

Annan on Monday defended that decision, saying: "We wanted Taylor to be tried in an environment which is free from the sort of tensions and conflict we see in this region."

According to Annan, a West Africa Taylor trial could destabilise fragile peace in the sub-region where a number of countries including Sierra Leone and Liberia are recovering from years of brutal civil war.

"Taylor was based in Liberia, Taylor was active within the sub region and there was a judgment it is best to try him in a place away from this sub-region," Annan said.

If Taylor is found guilty on any of seven indictments, the UK government has offered to jail the charismatic former president and rebel leader in a British prison.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 July 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Stable West Africa, long-term global support key to Liberia's success: Annan

By Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, July 4, 2006 (AFP) - The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan urged the international community Tuesday to stay in the war-scarred country for as long as possible fearing cracks in the fragile Liberia peace. "For the international community, it is imperative that it stay with Liberia in the long term," he said. "Too many times, we have witnessed the same weaknesses in international responses to post-conflict situations -- in the shortage of funds, in the lack of international coordination, in the tendency for international actors to leave too hurriedly." "This can reverse hard-won results and weaken the attempts we are making to build solid societies," Annan told Liberia's parliament.

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Liberians demand war crimes court

Some 5,000 protesters carrying symbolic burial caskets are expected to demonstrate in the Liberian capital, calling for a war crimes court. They want something similar to the UN-backed court in neighbouring Sierra Leone which prosecutes those responsible for the now-ended war. Exiled ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor is among those facing trial. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is visiting Monrovia where he is meeting President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The BBC's Rennie Ledgerhood in Monrovia says the prospect of a war crimes court looks remote as the peace remains fragile and there are fears that it could undermine security.

Liberia needs \$1 bln to rebuild power grid

COTONOU, July 4 (Reuters) - **Liberia** will need \$1 billion to rebuild a power network ruined by 14 years of civil war, experts from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said on Tuesday. The country's infrastructure was once the envy of the region but even the capital Monrovia has been without mains electricity or running water since a 2003 peace deal ended one of the most brutal conflicts in Africa's modern history.

International Clips on West Africa

Mongolia to send more peacekeepers to Sierra Leone

ULAN BATOR, Jul 4, 2006 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- Mongolia will send a second batch of over 200 peacekeepers to **Sierra Leone**, local media reported Tuesday. Authorities gave a send-off ceremony on Monday night for the peacekeepers who will soon leave for Freetown, capital of **Sierra Leone**, for a six-month peacekeeping mission.

Annan Visits War Crimes Court in Sierra Leone

Jul 03, 2006 (UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX)
 --Secretary-General Kofi Annan today met with United Nations officials and peacekeepers in Sierra Leone as well as with the president of the small West African country that the world body helped to nurse back to peace and stability after a disastrous and brutal civil war.

Local Media – Newspapers

UN Secretary-General Welcomed to Liberia

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, New Democrat, Heritage, National Chronicle and New Vision Liberian Express)

- Vice President Joseph Boakai and the Council of Traditional Chiefs yesterday heartily welcomed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to Liberia, by offering him kola nuts which symbolize peace.
- Council of Traditional Chiefs Chairman Zanzan Kawah told Mr. Annan that his visit had bolstered Liberians' hope in the lifting of the Security Council's sanctions, including the travel ban.
- The Secretary-General's itinerary includes a meeting with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and her cabinet at the Executive Mansion and an address of the session of the National Legislature.

President Constitutes University Board

(Daily Observer and The Inquirer)

- Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio told journalists in Monrovia yesterday that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had constituted a new Board of Trustees for the University of Liberia after she had dissolved the previous Board whose removal had been demanded by the university's faculty association.
- Mr. Badio said that the move to reconstitute the Board was in fulfillment of the President's desire to see a smooth learning atmosphere at the university.
- Those appointed to the Board are Dr. Emmet Dennis, Dr. Joseph Korto, Augustine Ngafuan, Dr. Henrique Tokpah, Mary Laurene Brown, Francis Hunter and Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh the University's current President.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

President Constitutes New Board of Trustees for University of Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

UN Secretary-General Annan Begins Visit to Liberia

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberian Envoy Says Annan's Visit Will Tell Liberia's Progress

- Appearing on a radio talk show in Monrovia yesterday, Liberia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nathaniel Barnes said that the visit to Liberia of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, would afford him the opportunity to see the progress which the UN has made to move Liberia toward democracy.
- Ambassador Barnes recounted that the UN played a credible role in bringing peace and stability to Liberia under the leadership of Secretary-General Annan, adding that the visit of Mr. Annan would inspire him to ably represent Liberia at the United Nations.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

State-Owned Water Supplier Poised to Restore Water to Monrovia

- In an interview yesterday, Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) Managing Director Humber Tulay announced that the corporation now has the capacity to pump 4.4 million gallons of water to Monrovia and its environs as opposed to its previous ability to pump 1.2 million gallons of water.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Civil Servants Ignore Call to Boycott Work on Annan's Visit

- According to separate teams of Radio Veritas reporters, the civil servants disregarded a call by the Civil Servants Association of Liberia for them to boycott work in the wake of UN Secretary-General's visit to Liberia.
- The reporters said that employees of some government ministries and agencies including the ministries of Education, Finance and Internal Affairs had reported to work on the day of the planned strike.
- The Civil Servants Association of Liberia's representative to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tugbe Tugbe said that even though the civil servants were being underpaid, there was a need to constructively engage the government than going on strike.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Court Jails Man for Life for Raping 9-Year-Old Girl

- Criminal Court Judge James Zota yesterday sentenced to life in prison Mr. Solomon Fallah for raping a 9-year-old girl after prosecuting lawyers filed a motion for him to rescind his earlier sentencing of 7 years. Lawyers representing the accused announced that they would appeal to the Supreme Court.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

IRIN

Monday, 3 July 2006

Africa: African Union launches people's court

BANJUL, 3 Jul 2006 (IRIN) - The African Union on Monday launched the continent's first court that gives states and people equal rights to challenge governments suspected of human rights violations or other infractions.

Taking the podium and raising their right hands, 11 African legal experts pledged to "preserve, protect and defend" the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

The swearing-in ceremony took place at the end of a two-day summit of the AU, which was set up to debate continent-wide issues.

The African Court on Human and People's Rights, established on paper in 1998, will be based in the Tanzanian capital Arusha. It can apply and rule on any international treaty or law ratified by the state in question, including treaties that do not themselves refer violators to a court. States, AU organs, individuals and non-governmental organisations can all ask for rulings.

"This court will strengthen jurisprudence and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in the continent," AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Julia Joiner told IRIN.

"It means you have another level where states and people can seek recourse before the African Commission [on Human and People's Rights] and prosecutions can be made, not just judgments and resolutions," she said.

Impunity has taken center-stage recently in Africa. On Sunday, the AU requested that Senegal try former Chadian President Hissene Habre, who has been living in exile in Senegal since 1990. Habre has been charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture. He has avoided trial so far because of legal wrangling over jurisdiction.

In June, former Liberian President Charles Taylor was extradited from Sierra Leone to The Hague to answer to war crimes charges. The UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone retains jurisdiction. Officials in Liberia and Sierra Leone feared Taylor could destabilize the region if he were tried locally.

Africans in other countries who are keen to take the stand will have to wait until a second court, the African Court of Justice, is set up, said Joiner. That court then has to be merged with the People's Court before cases, such as those involving former rulers, will be heard.

Although the People's Court is nascent, Monday's ceremony provided a glimmer of hope at a summit marked by the defeat of a proposed charter on democracy and governance, which was debated and eventually refused by African heads of state.

The charter was supposed to make it easier for power to change hands through the ballot box.

Negotiations broke down when some African leaders refused to agree to a clause banning standing presidents from extending their term limits by changing their countries' constitutions.

Press Conference in Freetown by Secretary-General Kofi Annan (Excerpts)

Monday, 3 July 2006

SG: I am delighted to be in Sierra Leone to witness at first hand the progress your country continues to make in consolidating peace after the departure of UNAMSIL (UN Mission in Sierra Leone).

-SNIP-

As you know, the United Nations is helping to provide security and protection for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and we also assisted in bringing Mr. Charles Taylor to the Court.

I was able to visit the Court today and meet with the Prosecutor, the Judges and the Registrar. We had [a] very fruitful discussion and for me it was very moving because I was part of the early discussion when it was an idea on paper. So to visit it, functioning, as I did today was rewarding.

Mr. Taylor's trial should send the strong message around the continent, and around the world, that warlords in other parts of Africa, and the world, can not assume that they will get away with their crimes, and that impunity will not be allowed to stand.

I will now take your questions.

-SNIP-

Q: Sir, we've asked the listeners of UNAMSIL radio to send in questions to you and we have chosen one. Mr. Annan, UNAMSIL troops were withdrawn here because of the confidence in the national security. If so, why take Charles Taylor to the Hague?

SG: It's a good question. We wanted Taylor to be tried in an environment which is free from the sort of tensions and conflicts we see in this region. I referred, just about fifteen minutes ago, to a fragile security situation in the region. When we look at security in that particular context, I think we should focus only on what is happening in Freetown and what could happen in Freetown. Taylor was based in Liberia, Taylor was active in the sub-region and, there was a judgment that it is best to try him in a place away from the sub-region. The trial will be open, it will be public, and everybody will know what is going on. Taylor will be able to defend himself and will get the best lawyers that he can afford, and the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia and of the West African region will be fully aware of how the trial proceeds. I think if the price one has to pay was to ensure that we don't have additional tension in the region while he sits in jail and the trial goes on, I think it is worth it. So you avoid additional tension but you ensure that justice is done.

Press Conference in Monrovia by Secretary-General Kofi Annan (Excerpts)

Tuesday, 4 July 2006

SG: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to be in Liberia at this turning point in the history of the country. I am here to pay tribute to the resilience of the Liberian people and to witness at first hand the progress being made in rebuilding, and to consult the government on how the United Nations can best assist the country in consolidating peace and advancing the recovery process.

-SNIP-

Q: Dr. Annan, when the former Liberian President Charles Taylor was arrested and transferred for war crimes prosecution, you hailed the move and said that it signalled a way that those responsible for atrocities or human rights violations in the West African sub-region would be held accountable. In Liberia, people are advocating for a war crimes court, like that of Sierra Leone. When do we expect this?

SG: Let me, first of all, say that the fight against impunity is not directed against individuals. It is directed against those who commit crimes. The impact of what happened with former President Taylor will be felt around the world -- not just in Liberia -- in Somalia, in Europe, and in Latin America. The message is that those who commit such crimes will be held to account, regardless of the position they held. You can be a head of state, you can be a common criminal, but you will, in the end, pay and the days when impunity was allowed to stand, are gone.

Here the government has made a choice. It has opted for a Truth and Reconciliation mechanism, which is also a mechanism South Africa used. And you have many ways to "skin a cat", as it were, and when you go through the kind of experience Liberia has gone through, there are several urgent tasks that one has to take into account: reconciliation, peace, and the need for justice, and how this is sequenced, and how you approach those three essential tasks. Some governments have chosen the road of truth and reconciliation in order to reconcile the country, in order to put the past behind them, and build on peace and stabilize the country. And so I am not going to second guess the government. If the government decides to take another road that is fine, but of course it has made a choice.

The international community decided to set up the Sierra Leonean court and pursue people who have committed international humanitarian crime and, of course, Taylor was caught in that net. It is a Sierra Leonean court that indicted him and he is now in The Hague awaiting trial and let the law take its course.

-SNIP-

Q: I am just seeking clarification on what you said already. You talked about the war crimes court and it is time that the government takes action. But today, a group of Liberians directly asked for your intervention in making sure that a court is set up in Liberia because they said if we leave this squarely with the Liberian government, some of the people who are in influential positions are those who committed the crimes in the past, so obviously they would not want to

push for the setting up of the court. How do you respond to their request? And the second thing I want you to clarify is, the sanctions on Liberia were imposed because you just said that proceeds were used to buy arms. After the leaving of Taylor, one issue that is still hanging is whether or not Mr. Taylor had money kept somewhere outside the country. In 2004, he wrote to you directly, waiving his right to confidentiality, that if there is any money kept somewhere in the world, it should be taken and sent back to Liberia. That letter was addressed to you. What have you found since that time?

SG: On the establishment of these tribunals, particularly in the case of Liberia or Sierra Leone, the UN deals with the government on these issues. In the case of Sierra Leone, we worked with the government of Sierra Leone to establish the Court. The Liberian government has decided to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and we are going to offer the help that we can in that process. They have not discussed with us the establishment of a criminal court, but that does not mean that the Liberian courts cannot prosecute individuals who have committed crimes. Basically, it depends on the terms of reference of the TRC, how it works and what dispensation it gives to people who have committed crimes in the past, after they have confessed. This is an issue for the government, once again, and if the government is to decide to go that route and needs the UN's assistance, we would look at it.

On the question regarding Taylor, the issue of sanctions is imposed by the Security Council and managed (by) the Council. It is not managed by the Secretary-General. I am not the one who freezes their accounts, who knows where the accounts are, who knows how much their accounts are, and has access to the money to return it to the country concerned. In the final analysis, it is the Security Council that deals with these things, so the letter was misdirected. It should not have come to me. It should have gone to the Council.

-SNIP-

Q: While it is true that many Liberians hailed the transfer of Mr. Taylor from Sierra Leone to The Hague because of some security concerns, there is an argument that people in West Africa, in Sierra Leone specifically where Mr. Taylor is supposed to have committed heinous crimes against, would not have access to the trial. Meaning they will not know what is happening in The Hague. Testimonies may not be made. What is the UN doing? In fact, today I heard from Human Rights Watch that they urge that the trial should be live or accessible to the people of West Africa. What is the UN doing to have this trial accessible to the people of West Africa?

SG: I don't know if many of you followed the work of the Yugoslav Tribunal in The Hague, when former President Milosovic was put on trial it was on television. The prosecution made its case on television; Milosovic made his case on television; and I suspect that we will have a similar procedure where the case of Taylor will be an open process and accessible to Sierra Leoneans, Liberians and the people of West Africa. But I believe you all understand why the trial was moved to The Hague. The least that can be done is to make sure that the trial is accessible by television and radio and that people can follow it and see him in the court accounting for his actions.