

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Students from PedMal Academy visited the Special Court on Wednesday, 3 May 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**

Friday, 5 May 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion please contact
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Awareness Times
Friday, 5 May 2006

Former Kamajor Boss testifies at Special Court

By Saffia S. Kabba

As the proceedings against the former Civil Defence Forces (CDF) operatives

continue at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a one time senior member of the movement, Arthur Koroma,

has testified in defence of the his former comrades in arms. In his testimony, Mr. Arthur

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Former Kamajor Boss testifies at Special Court

From front page

Koroma stated among other things that the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) government, led by HE the President, Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, did show appreciation to the Kamajors for reinstating him and the SLPP back to power.

This he noted was symbolized through the issuance of certificates and medals to deserving former Kamajor fighters, by no less a person than the President himself.

He went on to state that the certificates were authenticated by the signature of the President, Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

One other area he said the SLPP government showed appreciation to the Kamajors was the efforts made to enable them go through the DDR process which saw a number of ex-Kamajor fighters being recruited into

the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), while others were given the opportunity of pursuing various trade and educational careers. He also informed the court that a huge amount of rice was given to the Kamajors for onward distribution among themselves.

On the accused persons, the witness explained that the first time he met Moinina Fofanah was at a village called Gendema, sometime around July 15 1997.

According to him, Moinina Fofanah was introduced to him as one of the associates of the initiators in Gendema. On his own role, the witness informed the court that he was at Gendema, when he was appointed to the position of Adjutant by Mr. Eddy Massalay, from whom he was taking all instructions.

Awoko

Friday, 5 May 2006

"Kabbah gave Kamajors rice and money" – SLPP PRO

By Betty Milton
Former Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) Eastern region, Arthur Koroma, has disclosed that President

Kabbah gave money and rice as a form of compensation to the Kamajors.

The Principal of a Vocational Institute in Kenema said at the Special Court yesterday

that at the end of the war, most Kamajors did not take part in the Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme as they were not in possession of arms or ammunition.

In that regard, the witness said, in order to console them President Kabbah gave them those items.

Mr. Kamara disclosed that the Government recognised the effort of the Kamajors and so at the end of the war, certificates were sent to the Administration of each district which they said were going to be given them together with medals though

the certifications were not done as proposed by the government.

Revealing certain disciplinary measures meted out on certain Kamajors who misbehaved, the witness said in Kenema ECOMOG troops became angry when they saw little children with guns.

Upon investigations, the witness said, they found out

that these guns were given to the children under the instructions of Eddie Massally. As a result Massally was arrested and subjected to severe beating.

Another victim, he stated, was K.B.K. Magona who went to a famous place in the township called Milton Margai where people retired in the evening to drink palm wine.

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Kabbah gave Kamajors rice and money

From Front Page

Mr. Magona went to the place and fired a shot in the air which the ECOMOG troops said should not be done, and for that he received severe punishment.

Answering questions from Victor Koope,

defence lawyer for Moinina Fofanah, the witness denied certain allegations made against Fofanah.

He said in no time did Moinina Fofanah, who was regarded as Director of War, plan, execute and strategise way of ending the war. He further maintained that most

of the fighting was planned by local chieftain Commanders.

Most of the attacks in various locations such as Tongo, SS Camps Blama, Sembaru, Dodu were never planned by Fofanah and the allegations made by certain witnesses were not true.

For Di People
Friday, 5 May 2006

SPECIAL COURT

MAY INDICT

PA KABBAH!



NORMA:war crimes

As Chief Prosecutor Desmond De Silva Clears The Way!

CREDIBLE INNER sources at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone has disclosed plans for the indictment of president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah come next year as the UN-backed Tribunal gains momentum following the eventful arrest and arraignment of Charles Taylor before the court.

by

JIA KANGBAI

The sources said the first obstacle for the onward indictment of president Kabbah may have been cleared following disclosure that the Chief Prosecutor of the war-crimes court, Desmond de Silva is resigning from his job in June this year.

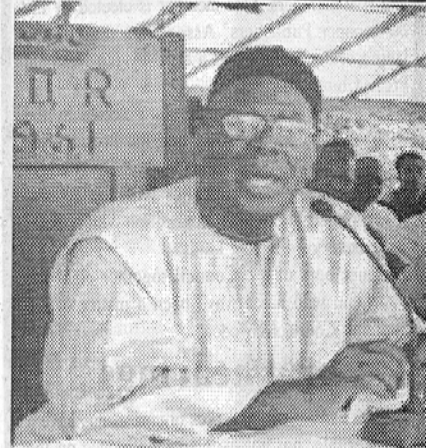
Although the Chief Prosecutor had hinted that he is resigning because he wanted to spend more time with his family as well as to return to London to continue his legal trade, sources say Desmond de Silva was pressurized into resigning from the UN-backed Special Court as his mere presence was blocking the prosecution of Kabbah.

Kabbah and the Chief Prosecutor for the Sierra Leone UN-backed Special Court have been long time bosom friends and both men practiced law in the same Inn in London, England in the early 70s before the former went to work in the United Nations in New York, USA. He also represented Chief Sam Hinga Norman during



SILVA:gone for good? the Treason Trial of 1967 set up by the AFRC regime of Andrew Juxon-Smith after the coup plot planned by Norman, Kabbah, Peter Tucker, Brigadier David

Continued Page 3



KABBAH:the Special Court to rule on Kabbah

KABBAH!

From Front Page

Lansana and Sir Albert Margai to stop the APC from power but it backfired.

British sources say both men (Kabbah and Desmond de Silva) were taught law by the same Law Professor in England. Late 2006, attempts by very senior opposition parliamentarian in Freetown to question the neutrality of da Silva in the day-to-day administration of the Special Court with specific reference to the Chief Prosecutor's allegiance to president Kabbah were nipped in the bud.

But with the apprehension and official arraignment at the Special Court of the former president of Liberia Charles Ghankay Taylor, pressure appears to be mounting on the UN-backed war crimes tribunal for a fair and just trial for people already indicted and facing war crimes charges

Spectator
Friday, 5 May 2006

“President Kabbah requested for Special Court” ..Gabbidon

By Abu Whyte Fofanah

Club (ANC) in the Institute of Management (IPAM) on organised a symposium on the
The Accountability Now Public Administration and Thursday, 4 May 2006

continued page 2

“President Kabbah requested for Special Court” ...Gabbidon

from front page

topic “The Role of the office of the prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone with particular reference to its mandate to prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Accountability Now Club (ANC) Cyrus J.A Lusaine stated that the ANC is to act as legacy for the Special Court in Sierra Leone. The remarks added that the ANC is a creation of the outreach section of the Special Court, the aim is to tap the talents and energies of students in the promotion of peace through out-reach on the Special Court, Human Rights, and International Law.

During his statement, the guest speaker of the occasion Dr. Christopher Staker pointed out that the Special Court in Sierra Leone is to serve the people of the country and the Security Council. He maintained that the court is mandated to prosecute those that bear the greatest crime.

The Australian born prosecutor added that the court believes on the rule of law.

The chairman of the occasion Mr. Francis Gabbidon stated that it was President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah that

requested for the Special Court to be established in Sierra Leone.

“The court was not impose to the Sierra Leone government but it was a request by a letter written by the President,” he emphasized.

A video tape was played to demonstrate how the former war Lord Charles Taylor was arrested and surrendered to the Special Court of Sierra Leone. Questions were posed on the security aspect of the country. The Chairman of the occasion Mr. Gabbidon said the Sierra Leone Army is fully ready to defend the country since restructuring is taking place in the Army now.

Other participants raised the issue of compensations of accused persons if arê not found guilty of the offences alleged against them. The prosecutor stated that there would be no compensation if an accused person is discharge from the court.

He concluded that the Special Court would not be able to provide security for the country but there are United Nations security personnel in the neighbouring country of Liberia, they I will take control of any security threats apart from the Sierra Leone Police and the Army in the country.

New Vision
Friday, 5 May 2006

Freedom Awaits Hinga Norman



President Kabbah

By A
Correspondent

When all the evidence from both prosecutors, the defense lawyers as well as the witnesses are scrutinized by the jurors and the full bench of the Special Court, the chances of the former leader of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) Kamajor, Chief Sam Hinga

Norman getting a long-term prison sentence will be very slim.

It is being speculated in some quarters that the possibility exists for the Kamajor boss to walk out of the court a free man, or only incur light prison sentences. The crucial question that hangs in the air is that should Chief Norman



Hinga Norman
be held responsible for some of the worse massacres that
Contd Page 5

Freedom Awaits Hinga Norman

dampened the image of the CDF for which he is being held responsible?

What cannot be hidden in the ongoing trial of the CDF-Kamajor leadership is that they were acting on the direct orders of the government of President

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. It was an emergency situation wherein most of the excesses of the Kamajors were supposedly targeted at the RUF rebels and their collaborators. And interestingly the West African Peace Keeping Force

If Charles Taylor was Poisoned?

A traditional proverb has it that someone who slaughter cows and animals will always be afraid not to sleep too much incase he gets slaughtered by an assassin. This is the situation in which ex-Liberian President and warlord finds

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If Charles Taylor was Poisoned?

himself. There is no joke about it, Charles Taylor fears for his life incase he is poisoned out of foul-play by an assassin.

But why should Taylor be afraid of death when he has personally engineered the deaths of so many innocent lives, due to his greed for political power and money. Why should Taylor be scared to go 6 feet down when the circumstances that led to the UNDP compound massacre in Sinkor Monrovia, the Carter's Camp, Firestone massacre, the Paynesville massacre and the Lutheran Church, Sinkor massacre are unforgettable events that are always blamed on either the late President Samuel K. Doe or him-rebel leader Charles Taylor?

At his debut trial at the Special Court early last month the ex-warlord expressed concern of being poisoned by an unknown assassin. Taylor cited the examples of the late Foday Sankoh of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and Slobodan Milosovic, the ex-dictator of Yugoslavia, who was blamed for war crimes and the disappearances of thousands of his political opponents.

Both war crimes indictees died in their prison cells at varying times in Freetown and the Hague. Foday Sankoh died after a protracted period of illness in the Freetown Special Court cells, while Milosovic apparently died after suffering a stroke at the cells of the International Court of justice in the Hague, the Netherlands.

The fears harboured by Charlie, which has claimed wide support, is that there have been a lot of advancements in the world of medical technology to the extent that there are both real medicinal drugs and poisonous drugs. Lethal injection, for instance, a method widely applied in the United States to kill prisoners that are condemned to death can destroy life at any prescribed time meant to kill the convict.

That is to say if the convict is to die for

6 months, 6 days or 1 minute or 10 seconds after being injected with the drug, there will be neither a minus nor a plus to the time set. The crux of the matter is that a prisoner usually has no choice in the kinds of food and drinks that are being offered him or her. At some prisons in the developed countries every food or drink that is being offered the prisoner is first of all being tasted by a designated prison guard to ensure fair play and honesty.

What has always remain an intrigue is that Sankoh and Milosovic were both sent to jail in healthy conditions. Both Sankoh and Milosovic may have given farewell to life through mob justices, but the necessity to apply the rule of law and the respect for human rights does not always permit this type of episode. Even Taylor could have been lifted up ever since by mob justice if his foes could lay hands on him.

As a result of concerns for the law, it is expected that Charles Taylor and his likes for example the French man, Musawi, who has been implicated for complicity with the perpetrators of the September 11th, 2001 bombing sprees in the USA are going through fair and transparent justice so that they will be fully abreast of how they violated the laws.

We are of the view that the Special Court will take the necessary measures, so that the safety of the indictees are guaranteed. That doctors of eminence will be assigned to them to grant them medical attention in case of illness and that there is no climate of suspicion and mistrust on foods and drinks that are offered to them. We are quite aware of the role of the UN-backed Special Court to execute transparent justice and the rule of law in the cases of all the indictees, this will show to the outside world that indeed the court is a place to rectify the excesses of the detained warlords and not a place to repeat the same mistake of taking the law into own hands.

Standard Times
Friday, 5 May 2006

"Charles Taylor may be poisoned at the Special Court or in The Hague"

...Lawyer Hassan Kamara

BY SAIDU KAMARA

Mr. Hassan Abu Saybana Kamara is a Sierra Leonean international lawyer based in Washington D.C.

Lawyer Kamara was former student union president at FBC for the period 1971-73, and hails from Tonkolili district.

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FROM PAGE 1

He is currently a member of the Special Court list of qualified lawyers to be appointed to defend Charles Taylor.

Below are excerpts of an exclusive interview with Lawyer Kamara on his arrival in Freetown.

Standard Times: How to contact you, in view of the provocative nature of this interview by anybody who may want to contact you?

Hassan Kamara: Presently I am residing at Cape Sierra Hotel or you can e-mail me on Saybana@yahoo.com or call me on mobile number 076-74-64-18.

ST: Charles Taylor said he feared for his life and the safety of his family; what is your take on the issue of the safety of Charles Taylor and his family?

HK: President Taylor's fear for his health and the health of his family is well founded; it is a fear that is literally deadly serious. As horrendous as it is, the poisoning of prisoners is a fact of life in prisons the world over and more so in the East and West where knowledge of drugs and their potencies is advanced. The President of Liberia, His Excellency Charles Taylor is most likely going to be poisoned while detained at the Special Court or The Hague. Whether he remains in detention here at the Special Court or he is transferred to the ICC in The Hague, President Taylor will continue to be ex-

posed to attempts on his life, psychological destabilization and mental poisoning. Lest we forget, very recently the specter of poisoning reared its satanic head when the President of the former Yugoslavia, the late Slobodan Milosovich head when the President of Palestine, Yassir Arafat died... In both Western and Eastern countries alike many prisoner suicides and deaths have been suspected as covered-up murders committed by a number of culprits including the deceased prisoner's inmates acting in cohorts with prison guards and other prison authorities. Many suspicious deaths of little-known prisoners go unnoticed and uninvestigated.

President Taylor's fear for his life has been proven to be well-founded.

Given the methods used by Continental European and North American police, fire marshals and other governmental security forces and methods used by foreign forces in Sierra Leone during the war period, one could infer to a substantial degree of certainty that the recent explosion at the Special Court close to President Taylor's cell was either an assassination attempt or a continuing assignation attempt. If the latter is the case, it was meant to "break him", a term frequently used by law enforcement personnel to refer to the psychological destabilization of a prisoner by instilling fear and shock in him.

The explosion was also meant to unhinge him psychologically and render him mentally disoriented. The trauma of that suspect explosion will proximately cause President Taylor a feeling of hopelessness, extreme fear, confusion and suicidal ideation; President Taylor who prior to his illegal arrest will now beings to develop psychosomatic illness which more likely than not will develop into psychical illness an ultimately death. The security of President Taylor in the Special Court jail has been breached. Although President Taylor has demanded that he be transferred to another cell, transferring him to another cell at the SCSL will not improve his security, as it is the entire SCSL security system that has been compromised. The Special Court is under a legal and ethical obligation to investigate the explosion as an assassination attempt.

ST: How are prisoners poisoned?

HK: The poisoning of prisoners is perpetrated by the police, prison authorities, the military, fellow prisoners and private individuals. Poisoning is carried out in many uncanny ways difficult to detect or even suspect and because poisoning is usually carried out in a conspiracy involving governmental officers (police and prison authorities) it is even more difficult to investigate. Unsuspecting and non-consenting prisoners are surreptitiously drugged with harmful drugs and medication. In some cases poisoning is in the form of denial of medication and intentional over medication leaving the prisoner in excruciating pain. A wide range of drugs (some with legitimate clinical uses) are used to poison prisoners; these drugs include mood-altering drugs, insomnia-inducing drugs, suicide-including drugs and outright heart-stopping fatal drugs. The use of a drug popularly called the "truth serum" (sodium pentothal) on prisoners common. There has even been talk of partial and selective memory-erasing drugs.

To say the poisoning of prisoners is prohibited by law would be understatement of the ages. The poisoning of prisoners in any manner is an abominable criminal act that violates a number of the prisoners in any manner is an under international law instruments, state constitutions and case law. In some cases the poisoning of prisoners is plain and simple murder. The truth serum, for example violates among others, the prisoner's right to the privacy of his thoughts and his right to attorney-client confidentiality. In the case of President Taylor, there must be in Continentals Europe (Britain is intentionally excluded), North America and Africa, powerful senior politicians, uppermost-echelon government officials, and senior corporate executives, not forgetting swindlers who are presently losing a lot of sleep in fear of President Taylor issuing subpoenas for the testify as witnesses in his trial. Their careers and their personal lives would be devastated. One could therefore infer that there are many powerfully individuals the world over who would want President Taylor

dead or mentally incapacitated before his trial concludes.

ST: Are you an authority on prisons?

HK: No. However, in my capacity as defense counsel, I have visited accused defendants a total of over three hundred times in various incarceration facilities including; state government prisons, corporate correctional facilities, half-way houses, juvenile detention facilities and juvenile group homes. I have also read quite a bit about prison life in various countries.

ST: You continue to address Charles Taylor as the President of Liberia, His Excellency Charles Taylor; why don't you simply call him what he now is, the former President of Liberia.

HK: The present de facto and de jure political leadership in Liberia is recognized by the international community and must be respected by all. The fact still remains that His Excellency Charles Taylor was hounded out of the presidency of Liberia, forced into exile and subsequently illegally arrested and jailed by a racist international criminal conspiracy. President Taylor's removal was an assault on the constitutional right of the people of Liberia to freely choose their political leaders; it was a mockery of the sovereignty of the Republic of Liberia. It was also illegal under international law. I am gravely disturbed to see an African Head of State in handcuffs. President Taylor was elected by a wide-majority of Liberians in an open, free and fair election that was monitored by the international community including eminent international statesmen of the gravitas of Jimmy Carter, a former President of the United States, International law was meant to replace the law of the jungle. In this case the law of the jungle was the basis for the politically motivated indictment, the forcible removal of President Taylor from his rightful presidency, his exile, his illegal arrest and illegal imprisonment at the Special Court.

Personally, I find it repugnant and nauseating to think that this very minute in the year of our Lord 2006 a democratically-elected Black African Head of State is sitting in chains in a cell right here on the soil from which just yesterday whites chained and shipped millions of Black Africans to slavery in Europe and North America.

Concord Times
Friday, 5 May 2006

Trying Charles Taylor: Justice Cannot Be Fully Achieved at The Hague

GUEST WRITER

By Alpha Sesay**

On March 29 2006, Charles Taylor was transferred to the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, making him the first former African leader to be brought to trial for alleged crimes committed during Sierra Leone's conflict.

Upon his arrival in Sierra Leone, the Special Court immediately requested the International Criminal Court and the Government of The Netherlands to host his trial at The Hague, fearing potential instability in the sub-region if he is tried in Sierra Leone. His trial would still be conducted by the Special Court, though at a different venue, distant from the victims of the war in Sierra Leone. The UN Security Council is set to discuss a resolution to that effect, permitting The Netherlands to host the trial. The United Kingdom and the United States have expressed support for such a resolution. It is suspected that Taylor's supporters might use his trial in Sierra Leone as a reason to cause unrest in Liberia. As important as these concerns might be, transferring Taylor to The Hague not only poses great challenges for the Special Court, but also undermines the entire rationale for having the Court in Sierra Leone in the first place.

The Special Court is a unique make-up of hybrid justice. Its statute blends domestic and international law. It sits in the country where the conflict took place, gives victims of the conflict access to the justice that they deserve, engages Sierra Leoneans in public interaction with the court and promises a meaningful legacy for the country. Taylor's transfer to The Hague negatively impacts all these objectives. It would deprive war victims of the justice that they deserve. In 2004, at the Victim's Commemoration Conferences organized by the Outreach Section of the Special Court, many victims said that they would regard the court as having been successful only if Taylor is tried. For many victims indeed, the most meaningful consolation they can get for their sufferings during the conflict is to see the person they consider as being responsible for their sufferings tried in their presence. This has been echoed by the Amputees and War Wounded Association in Sierra Leone, which declares that the opportunity to witness the trial of Taylor would go a long way to heal their wounds.

The victims are the Court's primary

constituency and providing some sense of justice and restitution to such victims is one of several important goals for the court. Conducting Taylor's trial in Sierra Leone will greatly satisfy this goal -- a major purpose for locating the court in Sierra Leone. Taking his trial to The Hague makes justice too distant for victims of the conflict. It will also impose undue difficulty for an already financially handicapped Court. Transferring witnesses, prosecutors, judges and defense counsels will be too expensive. The presence of the court in Sierra Leone has greatly enhanced civil society participation in the justice sector. This stands as one of the meaningful legacies that Sierra Leone can gain from the court's presence in the country. Journalists are able to report on trials first hand, thus informing the ordinary people about the court's proceedings. Victims are able to get a first hand view of how alleged perpetrators are made to answer for their acts. These are all things that Sierra Leoneans stand to lose if Taylor is transferred to The Hague. It might be too demanding for the court to facilitate the presence of such victims, local media and civil society coverage at The Hague. Sierra Leoneans would be deprived of what they truly deserve. The Court's outreach program has been doing tremendous work. They now face a harder task to extend the outreach to Liberia, to get Liberians to know how and why their Ex-President is being tried. These are already heavy tasks and taking Taylor to The Hague will make them all the more demanding. Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, especially war victims and

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Taylor's family, will only get second hand information of the proceedings. Many people do not have access to television and for those who do, electricity remains a problem. How would they be able to watch proceedings taking place in The Netherlands? If given second hand information, would they find the process credible?

If Taylor is moved to The Hague, there is the potential for Sierra Leoneans, particularly those sympathetic to Norman, to see this as unequal justice. Why does Norman sit in Sierra Leone while Taylor gets the plush confines of European jails and what will inevitably be seen as more European justice?

Security has always been a concern since the Court's inception. When guerrilla commanders were indicted, many people feared that their supporters would cause an uprising. When Chief Hinga Norman, former head of civil defense forces and a hero for many people, was indicted, security concerns arose. The Special Court requested the international tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia to provide temporary detention for him and to host his initial court appearance. These institutions refused and Norman's trial has been held in Sierra Leone ever since. Nothing has happened despite such early fears.

Now if The Hague refuses to host Taylor's trial, would he not be tried in Sierra Leone? Surely, he would. So why don't we just do that job now, increase security and peace keeping efforts in the region and share the numerous benefits of holding his trial in Sierra Leone. The cost of his trial at The Hague will be

enormous. So why not use that money to empower and deploy more peace keeping forces in the region? Because its proceedings are held out of Rwanda, the international tribunal for Rwanda has been criticized for having little or no impact on the Rwandan citizenry. This is exactly what the Special Court is meant to avoid. Taking Taylor's trial out of Sierra Leone will defeat this purpose.

It should be noted that Sierra Leone's "hybrid" feel of the court had already been seriously undermined by the Government of Sierra Leone's decision to name a British Deputy Prosecutor and Appellate Judge. Looking back on the foundations of the Court, those appointments were incredibly costly to the perception among Sierra Leoneans that this was truly a hybrid court. In seeing the long impact of an institutional shift away from what was originally promised, we see a precedent for how moving Taylor to The Hague might forever undermine Sierra Leoneans' sense of ownership over this process. There are compelling reasons for Taylor to be tried in Sierra Leone, in the presence of the numerous victims of the conflict and alongside the other people already being tried by the Court. He must however be given all fair trial guarantees. Coupled with increased security in the region, the process should be a smooth one that will be of good to all.

* The writer is an LLM Candidate in International Human Rights Law at the Center for Civil and Human Rights, University of Notre Dame, and is Former Director of the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Program

ited Kingdom and the States have expressed for such a resolution. respected that Taylor's might use his trial in one as a reason to cause unrest in Liberia.

United Nations

Thursday, 4 May 2006

Daily Press Briefing by the Offices of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General and the Spokesman for the President of the General Assembly

The following is a near-verbatim transcript of today's noon briefing by Marie Okabe, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General and Pragati Pascale, Spokesperson for the General Assembly President.

Briefing by Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General

-SNIP-

Question: One more. Was there any reference made by the Secretariat in the briefing on Sierra Leone today to search for finding a new home for Charles Taylor, if he's convicted?

Deputy Spokesman: You'd have to ask the Security Council members about the discussion on that.

Question: [Inaudible] the Secretary-General, who was leading that?

Deputy Spokesman: The Sierra Leone report, as we reported to you yesterday, is the first report under the post-peacekeeping operation. And it did make reference to the fact that, although things have stabilized on the security front there, it does mention that there was concern about the possibility of instability, because of the high profile prisoners at the Sierra Leone Special Court. But, that is the extent of that report, and the mandate of the representative there does not cover the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Question: So the Secretariat is not aware of any progress in finding a place for him to go?

Deputy Spokesman: I have not heard anything further, but please ask the Council members if that's something that came up amongst themselves.

-SNIP

African News Dimension

Friday, 5 May 2006.

Human Rights Watch Appeals for Charles Taylor Custody

JOHANNESBURG, 5 May 2006 (AND) – The international community should offer a jail cell to former Liberian President Charles Taylor if he is convicted of crimes against humanity, Human Rights Watch has said.

The group called on the European Union, the African countries of Mali, Benin and Swaziland, which have similar agreements to hold Rwandan genocide convicts, to consider taking Taylor.

Because of the high security risk, Taylor has been refused by Sweden and Austria.

Attention and lobbying has since returned to Africa where most countries that could be willing could face the problem of not having standard detention facilities.

“Countries should be lining to take Taylor, not backing out,” said Richard Dicker, the director of International Justice at HRW. Taylor faces wide-ranging charges of crime against humanity, including rapes, extra-judicial killings and the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

African News Dimension

Friday, 5 May 2006

LIBERIA: Government won't pay Taylor legal costs, says President

MONROVIA (AND-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, says her government has no intention in paying the legal defense fees of indicted Liberian President Charles Taylor who is facing prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

“This government has no intention and it is not require to do. Defense for Mr. Taylor will have to come from himself as well as the United Nations,” She said. The Liberian leader made these assertions today when she appeared on national radio on a phone in program called, “Conversation with the President.”

Addressing her self to concern as to whether her government is considering paying for the legal defense of the former Liberian leader, President Sirleaf said: "I think the misunderstanding came about because of certain conversation that was going on between the leaders of Africa but it got translated into a potential government's commitment in this regard with in the content of a decision that may be taken by the AU." “But let me be very clear, I got a letter from Mr. Taylor's lawyers who wrote me to ask for clarity but we responded to that very clearly and I think they accepted that and now understand this government's position,” she added.

The President's was addressing reports that early emanated from the government that it was consulting with other nations on the continent when it comes to paying for the legal defense of the former Liberian leader especially when he told the court that he is indigent to handle his legal fees.

Reuters

Thursday, 4 May 2006

Dutchman on trial in Netherlands for West African war crimes

This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

MONROVIA, - Some Liberians say he is a war criminal, others that he was just trying to make a living. One thing is certain: Dutch national Guus Kouwenhoven, still widely known in Liberia as 'Gus', was on excellent terms with Charles Taylor until the warlord-turned- president quit power in 2003. Kouwenhoven is currently being tried in the Dutch city of The Hague for war crimes and providing weapons to Taylor in violation of a United Nations ban on arms exports to Liberia. Ironically, the 63-year-old timber merchant may be the only person brought to justice for his role in the Liberian civil war as the peace deal that ended 14 years of on-off fighting failed to set up a tribunal. He faces life imprisonment if convicted.

Earlier this week, the trial saw a former brother-in-law of Taylor, Cindor Reeves, testify that Kouwenhoven was involved in arms deals and in devising war strategies to fend off rebels besieging Taylor's men. Reeves, disguised with a wig and make-up, said he was a middleman for arms shipments from Kouwenhoven's timber company to the plush Taylor residence in the capital Monrovia. But Kouwenhoven coolly stated he had never seen Reeves before in his life. Although the trial is receiving scant attention in the Dutch and Liberian media, it is unique in that it is the first time western prosecutors are trying a national for breaking a UN embargo.

The accused, who has a penchant for silk ties and gold-rimmed sunglasses, was arrested at a train station in the Netherlands last year following an investigation by Dutch police into his alleged activities as an arms smuggler in war-torn Liberia from 1999 to 2003.

His arrest was hailed as "a major blow against western profiteers who enrich themselves on the suffering of Africans" by the prosecutor of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, David Crane.

And environmental groups such as Green Advocates and the UK-based watchdog Global Witness said the case could mark "an important precedent" for international justice. Both non-governmental organizations were instrumental in exposing the shady dealings of Kouwenhoven.

"The world has now transcended the era of impunity where predatory business entrepreneurs are awarded unrestricted permits to leech on the blood of innocent poor inhabitants in the name of profits," environmental lawyer Alfred Brownell of Green Advocates said earlier this year.

> Now in its second week, the trial not only highlights the questionable role unscrupulous businessmen play in the world's conflict zones. It also underlines a nascent unwillingness of some western nations to turn a blind eye to sanction-breakers. "Internationally, the Dutch government wants to give a clear signal that the Netherlands is not a safe haven for war criminals or torturers," said a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office, Desiree Leppens, by telephone from The Hague.

The Netherlands began actively prosecuting international war criminals in 2003, partly as a result of the establishment of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. So far, courts have convicted two Afghans based in The Netherlands for war crimes and a Dutch national for supplying chemicals to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Born in September 1942, Kouwenhoven was raised in the port city of Rotterdam before heading to the Liberian capital Monrovia to import luxury cars and revamp a flashy five-star hotel at the edge of the city.

The hotel casino was a favorite drinking spot for cronies of then President Samuel Doe. "He tried to look legitimate by doing legitimate business, but he is criminal," a Liberian close to the case told IRIN on condition of anonymity.

But Kouwenhoven switched allegiances when then rebel leader Charles Taylor began to dominate the political scene and ultimately seized power in 1997 presidential elections. "If you do business in Africa, you have no choice but to be on good terms with those in power," Kouwenhoven said in an interview with a Dutch weekly two years ago.

Taylor was infamous for recruiting child soldiers and unleashing them high on drugs on civilians. At least 200,000 Liberians were killed during the civil war, and thousands of women and men were raped.

Kouwenhoven denies the allegations against him, saying he had no idea what was going on. But most Liberians say that was impossible. "You'd have had to have your head in the sand not to know what happened and what atrocious crimes were being committed," a western analyst told IRIN on condition of anonymity.

By 2000, the Dutchman headed several logging companies, including the largest timber firm in Liberia, the Oriental Timber Company (OTC), based in the port city of Buchanan.

Exploiting a territory the size of Belgium, OTC is accused of tapping into Liberia's vast natural forests to sponsor Taylor's war efforts.

Taylor traded diamonds to buy weapons and fuel war in neighboring Sierra Leone until a 1999 UN embargo on diamonds from Liberia and Sierra Leone threatened to deprive him of cash. He then shifted his attention to timber, once even referring to OTC as his 'pepper bush', a local term for gold mine.

Kouwenhoven was named and shamed when a UN team of experts reported that OTC provided logistical and financial support to Taylor. In 2001, the UN Security Council banned him from travelling.

Yet the port of Buchanan, overseen by Kouwenhoven, had already become a primary location for arms imports by sea, according to Global Witness. Witnesses told the court that Kouwenhoven helped ship truckloads of arms to Monrovia.

>

Kouwenhoven is also held responsible for managing an armed militia of 2,500 fighters who defended Taylor as rebel movements pounded Monrovia with mortar bombs. His lawyer has tried to discredit most witnesses, saying they were paid by the Dutch police to come forward and testify. However, insiders close to the case say Kouwenhoven is likely to be convicted because his company left a 'huge' paper trail of arms deals.

And now Kouwenhoven's friend Taylor may also stand trial in The Netherlands to face the UN-backed Special Court which has indicted him for fomenting civil war in Sierra Leone. Taylor was arrested in March after three years of exile in Nigeria. The tribunal has requested the trial not be held in West Africa, but a country willing to hold Taylor after his conviction has yet to be found.

The verdict on Kouwenhoven is expected in June.

Reuters

Thursday, 4 May 2006

SIERRA LEONE: Taylor prison location holding up trial

DAKAR, 4 May (IRIN) - Legal wrangling over which European country might house the indicted former Liberian president Charles Taylor should he be convicted by the International Criminal Court, means he is unlikely to be moved out of Freetown until at least next month, experts warned.

Taylor, whose charges include responsibility for murder, mass rape and sexual slavery, mutilation, and use of child soldiers in Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war, was arrested in late March.

Officials for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, citing regional concerns that Taylor is a potential security threat and that the trial could take many months and even years, requested immediately that the proceedings be transferred to the ICC in The Hague.

The Netherlands agreed to allow the Sierra Leonean Special Court to use ICC courtrooms, cells, and facilities in The Hague. But it dictated that the UN Security Council had to authorise the trial; that the ICC and the Sierra Leoneans agree on cost sharing; and that arrangements be made for the transfer of Taylor to another state once the trial is over.

A spokesperson for the ICC confirmed to IRIN on Thursday that the governing body of the ICC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone had reached an agreement on the use of ICC facilities, and on how to split the cost of the trial.

But "there is still no news on which country will take him after the trial", said Tessa Martens, a spokesperson for the Netherlands Foreign Ministry in The Hague.

Richard Dicker, head of the international justice programme at the NGO Human Rights Watch, warned that leaving Taylor in his cell in Freetown was "a bad thing for the people of West Africa".

"It's imperative that the international community step forward and offer up facilities to incarcerate Taylor if he's convicted at trial. It's disturbing given that Taylor is in effect recognised to pose a threat to the peace and security of West Africa that states have not been more forthcoming in offering up their prison facilities to house him," said Dicker.

Sweden, believed by some analysts to be the current frontrunner to house Taylor if he is convicted, will not reach a formal decision on the matter until some time in June.

Nina Ersman at the Swedish Foreign Ministry in Stockholm confirmed Sweden had been approached by the UN, and that the government last month submitted legislation to the Swedish parliament that would change Swedish laws to allow it to host an international war criminal, but that parliament would not meet on the matter until after 1 June.

"The appeal must be passed through the parliament as Sweden cannot in its present legal framework receive this person. The legislation still has to be passed and then there has to be a decision on the case. The request was put forward specifically because of the Charles Taylor case," said Ersman.

Ersman said it would be premature to say it has been decided that Sweden will offer to hold him. "I have a feeling the last hasn't been said on this," she added.

Another Scandinavian country, Finland, is also a possible venue, should Sweden not pass its legislation. "The name of Finland has been mentioned informally but no official request has been made yet," said Erja Tikka, spokesperson for the Finland Foreign Ministry. "Finland does have the right legislation for this," she added.

A Danish government official told IRIN that a prior UN request to Denmark to house Taylor had been rejected.

"Denmark is a country that has always promoted international law and the rule of law so it was a natural one to think of. We've also taken some people convicted in the Yugoslav tribunal, so there is a tradition of these kinds of cases. But Denmark does not have the facilities needed to house Charles Taylor," the official said.

US's daily, The New York Times, reported on Friday that Austria was also asked to provide a prison by the UN but declined. Austrian government spokespeople were not available for comment.

Charles Taylor, a US and Liberian citizen, broke out of an American jail in 1985, where he was being held on charges of stealing US \$1 million from the Liberian government.

He fled back to West Africa where he resurfaced in Libya, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, and launched a rebellion that cost more than 300,000 lives.

He has been indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The New York Times

Wednesday, 3 May 2006

Holding arms dealers accountable at home

By Marlise Simons

THE HAGUE- They became partners during some of the worst convulsions of West Africa: Charles Taylor, the warmongering former president of Liberia, and Guus van Kouwenhoven, a resident Dutch businessman and international lumber trader.

Taylor, who was arrested in March after three years on the run, is awaiting trial in an African cell, facing charges of heinous atrocities. But a very different trial of his former Dutch business associate has opened at a district court in The Hague.

Van Kouwenhoven, 63, is accused of smuggling shiploads of weapons into Liberia in violation of a UN embargo and of providing Taylor with bands of militia fighters from his own lumber companies.

The trial, held under a new mix of national and international law, is getting attention because it is the second time a Dutch court is prosecuting a Dutch businessman for being a party to human rights abuses on another continent.

Human rights lawyers say they hope the case signals a trend. In Europe's growing practice of domestic courts' taking on human rights abuses that happened far away, the accused have commonly been foreign military or political officials, rather than local businessmen. But in December, a Dutch court sentenced a Dutch businessman, Frans van Anraat, to 15 years in prison for selling chemicals to Saddam Hussein. The chemicals were used in poison gas weapons that killed Kurdish villagers.

Desiree Leppens, a prosecution spokesman, said the cases were a Dutch initiative but had been prompted in part by the presence in The Hague of the new International Criminal Court, which aims to prosecute grave human violations that took place after 2002. Soon after the court opened, its prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, said he hoped national jurisdictions would join him in investigating the "criminal business" of war.

"We want to demonstrate that our government is also willing to prosecute such crimes," Leppens said. "This is also becoming an international priority."

Van Kouwenhoven was arrested in 2005 while on a brief visit to the Netherlands from his home in France, apparently unaware that Dutch prosecutors were investigating his activities in Africa. He has pleaded not guilty and may face a sentence of life in prison.

His trial, which began April 24, is already offering a public glimpse of the network of collaborators and companies used by Taylor and his cohorts to organize and finance the havoc wreaked across West Africa. More than 300,000 people are believed to have died in the decade of conflicts ignited by the former strongman.

In the small courtroom in The Hague, prosecutors asserted that the Dutch businessman had become an important player in the Taylor network because he traded Liberia's valuable hardwood for weapons on the international market.

Van Kouwenhoven, who appeared in the first week of hearings, made light of his dealings with the former Liberian strongman. He said that he had indeed been part of a circle of businessmen "who had direct contact with Taylor," and had met with Taylor regularly.

"I wasn't his friend in the sense that I did not go swimming with him and never even ate at his home," he said.

But prosecutors painted a darker picture. They said the Dutchman, who at first ran a car import business, a hotel and a casino in Monrovia, got involved with Taylor in the 1990s and became the director of two large lumber companies. One of these, Oriental Timber, was the nation's largest. Operating under various names, it exported tons of Liberia's tropical hardwoods to places as far apart as France and China, using its own fleet of ships. Human rights groups have said that Taylor was part owner of the company.

As the timber ships returned, they brought back containers full of weapons and ammunition, unloading them during the night in the port of Buchanan, prosecutors said. They said the weapons had come from a variety of sources, including a Russian weapons dealer and a Serbian company.

Although the weapons shipments began earlier, van Kouwenhoven is being prosecuted for deliveries from 2001 to 2003, in violation of the UN arms embargo against Liberia. The United Nations issued a travel ban against him in 2001, identifying him as a weapons trafficker.

Cinder Reeves, an associate and relative of Taylor and the first man on the witness stand at The Hague, said in court that he was one of the people who took delivery of weapons at the timber company.

"They gave us documents to sign for delivery and a list of the weapons in the containers," said Reeves, whose nickname is Sunshine but who was darkly disguised with a black wig and glasses for security reasons. "I saw ammunition, grenades, rocket launchers," he told the court.

Prosecutors said that the two lumber companies run by van Kouwenhoven had sent hundreds of their own employees to participate in fighting for land and resources that spilled over into Guinea and Sierra Leone, killing and mutilating civilians. Militias from the two lumber companies "participated in slaughter among the Liberian population wherein nothing and no one was spared, not even babies," a prosecution statement said. It said that van Kouwenhoven had provided the weapons.

Because of those links with the militia, he has been charged with war crimes, the prosecution said.

Defense lawyers and judges have agreed that Taylor himself should be heard in the case. Dutch investigators, who have questioned witnesses in Africa and Asia, may return to Sierra Leone, where Taylor is awaiting trial in a cell of the Sierra Leone Special Court.

Both Liberia and Sierra Leone have asked that Taylor be transferred to The Hague to be tried on the premises of another international court, arguing that he poses a risk to the region's stability.

But the UN Security Council is still debating the terms of his transfer and it uncertain whether he will arrive in The Hague before the trial of the Dutch businessman ends later this month.

Leppens, the prosecution spokeswoman, said that Dutch investigators had received much assistance in the past from the Sierra Leone court and from Global Witness, a British group that investigates corruption and exploitation of natural resources. The investigators are now negotiating with Taylor's lawyers to have him testify via video link or to make a sworn statement in his cell. An answer is expected in the coming days.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 May 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Star Tribune 3 May 2006

A lifeline to Liberia, one book at a time; A St. Paul group is at the forefront of an effort to flood the African nation with textbooks.

Curt Brown, Staff Writer

Liberia's consul general led a delegation Tuesday into a basement warehouse in downtown St. Paul, helping launch a new drive to send thousands of textbooks to the western African nation recovering from years of civil war. "Everything has been completely wiped out from the university down to the kindergarten," said Alexander P. Gbayee, the Chicago-based Liberian diplomat. "These wonderful people are definitely doing something we need." Gbayee toured the headquarters of Books for Africa, a nonprofit group in St. Paul's Lower town area that has sent more than 13 million books to Africa since 1988.

Liberian Refugees Receive UNHCR Delegate

By Do

May 03, 2006 (The Daily Observer/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The Liberian refugees residing in The Gambia on Wednesday 26th, Thursday 27th April, 2006 respectively received a delegation from the UNHCR Regional Office in Dakar at the Gambia Red Cross. The delegation was led by Mr. Ron Mponda, UNHCR Chief of Mission to The Gambia and Ms. Michelle Mendy, UNHCR Community Services Assistant. The delegation has come to The Gambia to speak and encourage Liberian refugees to voluntarily return to their various counties and help rebuild the country as more than 15 years of civil war has ended.

States News Service 29 April 2006

SPECIALIZED POLICE UNITS TAKING GREATER POST-CONFLICT ROLE IN UN MISSIONS

The following information was released by the United Nations:

Specialized police units, armored and made up of 125 officers from a single country, are increasingly being pushed by the United Nations as an efficient, cost-effective way of bridging the gap between the military component in UN missions and the often nascent, traumatized national police forces of post-conflict countries, senior officials said today. UN Police Adviser **Mark Kroecker** said the first time such units - known as Formed Police Units (FPUs) - were used was as part of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), but their success there and in other operations has led to calls for increasing deployment, including in a recent letter by the Secretary-General to the Security Council calling for three FPUs to help the operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

International Clips on West Africa

Youth unemployment threatens stability in Sierra Leone: Annan

UNITED NATIONS, May 3, 2006 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said Wednesday that youth unemployment in Sierra Leone threatens the stability there. Annan said in his first report on the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone that the overall security situation in the country has remained calm since the departure of the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL).

Three injured in ethnic violence in Ivory Coast

ABIDJAN, May 3, 2006 (AFP) - Three people were injured in gunfire when fresh violence broke out Wednesday among rival ethnic communities in a safety zone monitored by the United Nations in western Ivory Coast, peacekeepers said.

Local Media – Newspapers

At World Press Freedom Day Celebration, Journalist Criticizes Former Information Minister

(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer and The Analyst)

- At a journalists' forum in commemoration of World Press Freedom Day, University of Liberia Mass Communication Professor Joe Mulbah urged practitioners to take him to court if they thought he was guilty of any wrongdoing against the media while serving as Information Minister.
- His comments followed Liberian journalist Lyndon Ponnies protest of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) decision to select him as a panelist for the special edition of the Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum.
- Ponnies claimed it was inappropriate for Professor Mulbah to serve on the panel because he had trampled on the press while serving as Information Minister under a dictatorial regime. In its editorial to mark World Press Freedom Day, *Daily Observer* implored Liberian journalists to be more responsible.

Press Union Holds Annual Awards Night

(The News and The Inquirer)

- As part of the celebrations of World Press Freedom Day, the PUL yesterday held its Annual Awards Night with *The Inquirer* and Star Radio sweeping the awards.
- *The Inquirer* clinched the Best Newspaper for the second consecutive year, while the paper's Managing Editor Philip Wisseh and photographer Kennedy Zubah won the Journalist and Photo Journalist awards, respectively. Star Radio became Radio Station of the Year with its reporters Joey Kennedy and Bruce Boweh winning the Legislative and Judicial Reporters awards, respectively. The station's program "I Beg to Differ" was declared Talk Show of the Year. UNMIL Radio's Eva Flomo was chosen as Best Newscaster.

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

President of Liberia Earns LD\$96,000 per Year

- Speaking to journalists yesterday, Deputy Chief of Office Staff Walter Wisner said that the President of Liberia was earning an annual salary of LD\$96,000. He said the President also receives US\$10,000 as special and general monthly allowances.
- Mr. Wisner clarified that the President does not receive US\$20,000 per month as was reported in the media. He added that the US\$20,000 represents the total salary of the staff of the Office of the President, including Protocol Officers, Aide de Camps, Advisors and members of the Presidential Anti-Corruption Bureau.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

President Visits Ailing Lawmaker at UNMIL Hospital

- According to journalists covering the Executive Mansion, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday visited ailing Margibi County Representative Ansu Larkay at a hospital run by UNMIL in Monrovia. She thanked the UNMIL Jordanian doctors for the attention they give Representative Larkay and added that government wanted to fly him out of the country for further treatment.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Finance Minister Sacks Rural Customs Officers

- A Ministry of Finance statement issued in Monrovia yesterday said that Finance Minister Antoinette Sayeh had dismissed Customs Officers Joe Tedd, Warlie Kerbie and Joseph Gbollie for failing to account for revenues collected from a rural customs collectorate.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Health Ministry Appoints Task Force on National Eye Plan

- According to a press statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has appointed a Task Force dubbed Vision 2020 to finalize a draft of a National Eye Plan which will focus on blindness in Liberia.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Information Ministry Hampered by Lack of Logistics

- In his remarks at an event to mark World Press Freedom Day, Information Minister Johnny McClain said that his work at the Ministry was being impaired by the lack of logistics and funds. Minister McClain said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf assured him that the Ministry would get the needed support to function.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Journalist Boycotts World Press Freedom Day Event

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Lawmakers Say European Aid Has No impact on Ordinary Liberians

- Appearing on a local radio talk show yesterday, some lawmakers that attended a parliamentary workshop in Germany said that they told their European counterparts that ordinary Liberians have not felt the impact of the US\$520 million pledged at the New York donors' conference in 2004. Gbarpolu County Senator Daniel Nathan called on Governance Economic Management Action Program Steering Committee to conduct audit to determine the uses of the money.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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

Church Rights Group Launches Legal Aid Program

- According to a press statement issued in Monrovia, United Methodist Church Human Rights Monitor has launched a legal aid program following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with a local legal firm to provide services to the needy.

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

Student Leader Calls for Economic Crimes Court for Liberia

- University of Liberia Students Union Vice-President Darlington Smith called for the establishment of an economic crimes court in Liberia to prosecute those who embezzle public funds, adding that the move would deter newcomers to government services from stealing funds.

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.