

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, November 05, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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We ate human flesh in Kenema



Norman, former Kamajor coordinator on trial

Ex-Kamajor reveals at Special Court

By Abu Whyte Fofanah

Special Court witness TF 2-021 said he and his colleague Kamajors ate human flesh in

Kenema.

During cross-examination by defence council Lawyer Bubakie Jabbie, the witness

stated that the 'Abondoh' ceremony was initiated at 'Bompeh Taby' in 1998.

'I was not included at first, only old

Kamajors were involved until when they later took us to the cemetery before we became members of the Abondoh.

At Masiaka, I shot a

woman dead when I saw her running close to me after my colleague Kamajor had been killed by bullets.' During the cross-examination, by lawyer Jabbie, the witness said he reported that he shot

a woman dead. "Commandant Jarman told me that I should be careful when I am at the warfront, I was just thinking that before I die I should kill," TF2-021 stated.

"At Kenema,

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We hate human beings

From front page

Karmoh Brima gave us instructions that when we set free B.S. Massaquoi, we should kill all young men and women in the town because they were all collaborators, or else bullets would kill us."

The witness further stated that they entered Kenema with heavy firing. Some rebels fled and others hid themselves with their weapons. "Some rebels had combat, I took them to be enemies. We made a house-to-house

search for police officers and those that we set eyes on we killed and ate."

Another defence council lawyer Yada Williams asked what "Abondoh" means. The witness said "Abondoh means when you are at the war front as you sweat, the medicine (charm) enters your body, and you become perfect".

The witness stated that the restrictions were; "not to step on banana skin, touch nut-oil and have sexual intercourse".

"Before I became a

Kamajor, I was captured by RUF in Gbendembu Kailahun district and later re-captured by the Kamajors and initiated in the Kamajo society known as "Yamortor," the Special court witness stated. TF 2-021 said when he was with the rebels, he only carried loads for the rebel and did not carry a gun. "I was trained by C.O Mohamed, but was not given a gun to fight."

Testimony continues.



AfricaFOCUS

Ex-Combatant Reveals That They Ate Human Flesh During the War

The Independent (Freetown)

NEWS

November 4, 2004

Posted to the web November 4, 2004

By Abu Whyte Fofanah
Freetown

Trials continue at the Special Court for war crimes in Sierra Leone with startling revelations been made.

A witness whose name was withheld and dubbed TF 2-021 revealed on Wednesday at the court in Freetown, the capital that he and his colleague "Kamajor" fighters (the pro-government militia) ate human flesh in Kenema, the eastern administrative headquarter of Sierra Leone, during the war..

During cross-examination by defense lawyer Bubuakei Jabbie, the witness stated that the 'Avondoh' ceremony was initiated at a place called 'Bompeh Taby' in 1998.

'I was not included at first, only old Kamajors were involved until when they later took us to the cemetery before we became members of the Avondoh.

At Masiaka, (47 miles from the Freetown) I shot a woman dead when I saw her running close to me after my colleague Kamajor had been killed by bullets."

During cross-examination by lawyer Jabbie, the witness said he reported that he shot a woman dead. "Commandant Jarman told me that I should be careful when I am at the warfront, I was just thinking that before I die I should kill," TF2-021 stated.

"At Kenema, Karmoh Brima gave us instructions that when we set free of B.S. Massaquoi, we should kill all young men and women in the town because they are all collaborators, or else bullets will kill us."

The witness further stated that they entered Kenema with heavy firing. Some rebels fled and others hid themselves with their weapons. "Some rebels had combat (military uniforms) , I took them to be enemies. We made a house-to-house search of cops and those that we set eyes on we killed and ate", he said.

Another defense lawyer Yada Williams asked what "Avondoh" means. The witness said, "Avondoh means when you are at the war front as you sweat, the medicine (charm) enters your body, and you become perfect".

The witness stated that the restrictions were; "not to step on banana skin, touch nut-oil and have sexual intercourse".

"Before I became a Kamajor, I was captured by the Revolutionary United Front in Gbendembu, Kailahun District (southeast of the country) and later re-captured by the Kamajors and initiated in the Kamajor society

known as "Yamortor," the Special Court witness stated.

TF 2-021 said when he was with the rebels, he only carried loads for the rebels and did not carry a gun. "I was trained by Commanding Officer Mohamed, but I was not given a gun to fight."

Testimonies continue.

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THE EXCLUSIVE

Vol 2 No. 2169

Friday November 5, 2004

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ECOMOG Supplied Arms To Kamajors

By Joseph Turay at The Special Court

Witness for the prosecution
at the special court code name

TF 2-021 who completed his
revelation yesterday to the

court further revealed that ECOMOG had supplied them (the Kamajors) with arms and ammunition to fight their enemies, the AFRC/

RUF junta.

The former combatant who
was being cross examined by

the Dutch born lawyer for the
Civil Defence Force (CDF)
Contd. page 2

ECOMOG Supplied Arms To Kamajors

From front page

explained to the court that he had fought alongside ECOMOG forces on two occasions against the rebel forces.

Witness said he first fought alongside with ECOMOG forces in the town of Daru. The second time he said was in Freetown during the January 6 1999 invasion during which they pushed the AFRC/RUF junta forces out

from the capital. Witness added that whenever they fought battles with their enemies, the Kamajors would always be at the forefront while their helpers (ECOMOG) would be in the rear.

When asked by defence counsel, Michael Pestman, whether they had been receiving other supports from Ecomog, witness admitted that they had been receiving

vehicles but that these logistic support passed through their Kamajor commanders who most times told them that Ecomog had been given them support to fight.

TF 2-021 concluded by admitting that Ecomog forces were giving them stolen and looted properties to carry for them but denied that he does not know an Ecomog officer named Khobe neither was he under the command of Ecomog forces.

See page 7

Kamajor Initiator Named At Special Court

By Edward B Kargbo

During cross examination by Defence Council, Yada Williams, the Prosecution Witness, code named TF2201, yesterday revealed at the Special Court, certain names of people whom he alleged, had separate group of fighters under their command.

The witness, who said he was both a member of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), told the court that there were various types of Kamajor

groups initiated members who were absolutely under the command of the leaders of those groups.



told the court that he knew four different types of Kamajor groups which were control and headed by one Karmoh Brima, Alieu Kondewa (the second accused), Mamie Munda and one Karmoh Muniru respectively. He said the Kamajors were a

Kamajor Initiator Named At Special Court

From front page

force, which had several laws that no member should breach. TF2201 further revealed that they were not allowed to eat oil or step on a banana peel after they were initiated, and that they should see no dead body talk to or have any affair with a woman whenever they were about to go to the battlefield. He told the court that when they were in the bush, he

joined one Kamajor group called Yamotor. He said they used to go out and hunt for human beings, killed them and eat their flesh. He added that they sometimes captured people and burn them alive with tyres.

TF2201 also told the court that when they were deployed in "Base Zero" they smoke marijuana and sniff cocaine when-

ever they were about to go on the offensive. When asked about most of his statement made by him to the prosecutors on diverse dates, the witness denied making most of the statements, but agreed that he was interviewed on those diverse dates and according to him he swas perhaps misinterpreted by the statement takers.

Witness back-pedals

BY THEOPHILUS GBENOR
Prosecution Witness TFE 011
serving in the ongoing CDF
the Special Court for Sierra
one has denied portions of the
statements said to have been con-

ained from him by the prosecu-
tion on January 13, 2003 and Feb-
ruary 4, 2003 respectively.
The eighteen-year-old witness
is said to have been conscripted
into the ranks of the RUF and was

later captured and initiated into the
Kamajor society, where he commit-
ted heinous crimes and also saw
crimes being committed against
peaceful citizens including police
officers by top Kamajor fighters.

In his original statement, the wit-
ness, who said he had never at-
tended school, indicated that dur-
ing the height of the war, Johnny
Paul Koroma gave orders to Sav-

age, to execute a total of 45 peo-
ple, whose remains he said, were
saw by him in the district of Kono.
The witness further stated in his
original statement that after their
CONTINUED BACK PAGE

Witness back-pedals

FROM PAGE 1

initiation into the Kamajor
society, certificates were is-
sued to the graduates.
Furthermore, the witness
mentioned in his statement-
in-chief that no one was
forced to join the society.

During cross-examination
by the court appointed
counsel for Moinina
Fofanan, Michael Pestman,
the witness was asked
whether in fact he ever made
such statements to the pros-
ecution.

In his response, the wit-
ness answered in the nega-
tive arguing that he never
said such things in his origi-
nal statement.

This categorical denial of
crucial portions of the state-
ment by the witness took
many by surprise including
the trial judges, whom in
their anger remarked, "this
habit of contradicting
statements is degenerating
into a pattern, which is not
proving helpful to the pro-
ceedings."

For members of the gal-
lery, the fact that the wit-
ness' oral statements are in
contrast with what he ear-
lier told the prosecution, in-
dicated that the witness is
not credible and might only
be doing a paid up job.

Although, in the view of
the prosecution, the prob-
lem lies with the fact that the
witness is illiterate, observ-
ers are of a contrary opin-
ion, believing instead that
investigators (on short-term
contracts) did not in any
way do a good job, as apart
from the fact that they were
not familiar with the terrain
and language, there are also
indications that they were
more concerned with the fi-

nancial gains attached to
the job.

A good number of other
witnesses have taken this
path, blatantly denying
making statements purported
to have been obtained from
them.

Meanwhile, with the pre-
conceived notion by the
prosecution that all indicted
persons would be found
guilty and punished, it is
becoming clear that the
prosecution is not treating
the trials with the serious-
ness it deserves.

"This has been made
manifest by its choice of
witnesses, most of whom
are stark illiterate or are per-
sons who by all indications
are themselves indictable,"
observed a monitor of the
court.

"The other issue has to do
with its choice of prosecut-
ing counsels, most of whom
are only now having their
first baptism in actual trial
sessions," the monitor
added.

In a related development,
defence counsel, Michael
Pestman, has challenged
the geographical map of Si-
erra Leone tendered in evi-
dence by the prosecution,
arguing that it lacks the nec-
essary features reflecting
the facts about the country.

It remain to be seen how
the trial chamber will treat
witnesses whose oral testi-
monies are in contrast with
their original statements.

Standard Times

Friday November 5th

2004

"Allieu Kondewa's boys gave me drugs"- TF2-021

By Tamba Borbor
During his second day of cross-examination, witness TF2-021 has disclosed that he was first given drugs by the

'boys of Allieu Kondewa,' Kondewa who is the third accused of members of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) currently standing trial at the Trials Chamber

of the Special Court, has still not been able to make an appearance in Court since he and other indictees of the CDF denied attending the

Court's sittings. In furtherance with his testimony, the witness said that the incident of him been given drugs,

Contd. Page 2

Allieu Kondewa's boys gave me drugs

From Front Page

took place at Base Zero which was the Headquarters of the Kamajor Militia during the civil war. "I was given 'brown brown' by Papay Konde's boys," he informed the Court, noting that the drug did make him feel like crazy. When Defence Counsel for Moinina Fofanan-Bestman asked if it was ECOMOG that supplied weapons to them during the fighting to repel the junta from the city during the January 6th invasion of Freetown, the witness acknowledged that it was indeed ECOMOG that

provided them weapons through their CDF Commanders to pursue the battle. "ECOMOG provided ammunition also and trucks," TF2-021 explained, adding that he placed looted items in those trucks when Counsel Bestman questioned. Bestman also put it to the witness that he seems to be denying all the statements made to the investigators of the Special Court regarding the non-possession of the Kamajor certificate amongst other things confirmed by the witness in his previous statement to the investigators. "I did not tell

the investigators that I still don't have the Kamajor certificate with me," the witness maintained. Defence Counsel Bestman also questioned the witness if he did tell his Boss at the time he killed and burnt the Police Officer in Kenema, the Prosecution witness said that he did not, adding that he was not the only one that did such an act. However, the witness has completed giving testimony at the Court and the Presiding Judge- Benjamin Mutanga Itoe stated that whenever the Court needs him, he would be contacted again through the usual channels, through the Witness Protection Unit of the Court.

Adunro

Friday November 5th 2004



SITE WHERE MILITIA FIGHTERS
ALLEGEDLY USED TO EAT HUMAN
BEINGS DURING THE SIERRA LEONE
WAR NAMED BY SPECIAL COURT
WITNESS

Friday November 5, 2004

A Prosecution witness at the war crimes tribunal in Freetown has named the site where fighters of the Kamajor militia allegedly used to eat their victims during

the Sierra Leone war. Witness TF 2-021, who was a member of the militia, told the court on Tuesday that the Kamajors captured alleged collaborators and took them to the Yarmortoh base in Nyandeyama, Kenema, where they ate them.

The witness also named the Yarmotor squad as the alleged branch of the Kamajor fighters who allegedly caught the victims and carted them to the Yarmortoh base for consumption. "When we entered Kenema when we caught the collaborators, we would tie them, ask them questions. We would force them to tell us the truth and we will take them to the base which was the Yarmortoh base in Nyandeyama, Kenema. When the people were taken to the Yarmortoh base it was to eat them. We caught the people to take them to the base", the witness said.

The Prosecution witness said police officers were among the victims taken to the base. "We made a house-to-house search of cops and those we set eyes on we killed and ate."

Three members of the Kamajors, also known as the Civil Defence Force (CDF), are facing trial before the UN-supported Special Court for Sierra Leone for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. They are the former Deputy Minister of Defence who also served as Interior Minister, Chief Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondowa. However, all three men are presently boycotting the trial in protest against the Special Court procedure of not having witnesses testify openly but behind a canvass that conceals their identities for security purposes.

Sergeant quizzed over visit to accused colleague

By Ian Munro

November 5, 2004

Deep divisions have emerged among Victorian police over the force's response to sex abuse charges against former homicide chief Peter Halloran.

A serving officer, Sergeant Wayne Bastin, who paid a "welfare visit" to Sierra Leone, where Halloran is charged with offences against a 13-year-old schoolgirl, has been quizzed by the force's ethical standards department.

Sergeant Bastin said yesterday he was surprised at being asked to explain the trip, which was taken on his own time and at his own expense. He said he was disappointed at the lack of interest in Halloran's welfare.

A senior officer, who declined to be named, conceded the force was split over the case, but said there was nothing sinister in quizzing Sergeant Bastin.

The senior officer said force command should have been informed of the visit by a serving officer to support Halloran, who, he said, was warned of the risks of work in Africa.

Sergeant Bastin said of the interview: "It was not so much about how Peter was doing - they wanted to question me about my involvement in Sierra Leone.

"Someone was sending back reports we were trying to get him out of the country. I was asked to please explain. It was my own leave time. They wanted to know who financed (the trip)."

Sergeant Bastin, who, like Halloran, was a war crimes investigator in Sierra Leone, said he understood the difficulties the former homicide chief was facing in one of the world's least developed countries.

"It's riddled with disease... it's a very, very tough place to live. If one was in jail it would be even tougher and life expectancy would not be that great."

He said he had no doubt Halloran was not guilty. "He is an innocent man in a corrupt system." He said he was there to help arrange a lawyer and offer moral support.

Sergeant Bastin said 50 Victoria Police officers being sent overseas with international deployment groups could find themselves in a similar situation. Halloran is attached to the United Nations Special Court.

But the senior officer denied this, saying police seconded internationally remained attached to their original force. "(Halloran) has done a deal with the United Nations and got 12 months leave without pay (from Victoria). He was told of the inherent difficulties of going into the country and chose to do it," he said. "I believe (the ethical standards department) asked (Sergeant Bastin) why he went there. They needed to know whether he represented Victoria Police."

Halloran's trial, which has proceeded haphazardly, is to resume next week despite conflicting statements by the alleged victim, and two inquiries that cast doubt on investigations.

Police Association secretary Paul Mullett said he doubted Halloran would get a fair trial.

"The victim has recanted her statement," Mr Mullett said. "One would expect in the Australian judicial system in those circumstances a judge would seriously consider instructing a jury to acquit."

Mr Mullett said it was questionable whether Victoria Police had given Halloran the normal level of support. A spokesman for Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon said the force had been in contact with Halloran and "is continuing to closely monitor developments in Sierra Leone". The court is scheduled to sit twice a week, although proceedings are often abandoned without notice.

The Australian high commissioner to Ghana, Jon Richardson, travelled to Sierra Leone last week to urge authorities to expedite the trial.



ABC Online

The World Today - Australian detective in Sierra Leone accused of sexual abuse

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2004/s1234770.htm>]

The World Today - Thursday, 4 November , 2004 12:34:00

Reporter: Rachel Carbonell

ELEANOR HALL: Now to the controversial sex abuse case against an Australian detective in Sierra Leone.

Australia has stepped up diplomatic pressure on officials in the West African country over the trial of Peter Halloran. The charges against him of child sex abuse have attracted criticism from the outset, including claims that the alleged victim was induced to make the accusations and that witnesses have been bullied.

Now, as Rachel Carbonell reports, the Australian High Commissioner for Ghana has visited Sierra Leone to discuss the issue with government officials.

RACHEL CARBONELL: Peter Halloran is a senior Victorian police officer and former detective with the National Crime Authority.

He took leave from the Victorian force to work as an investigator for the United Nations-backed war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, where he's now on trial for sex charges involving a 13-year-old girl.

The National Forum for Human Rights in Sierra Leone has interviewed the girl and her family, and published a report alleging that the girl was offered inducements to make the accusations and her family bullied by the police and legal officials.

Australia's consul in Ghana has visited Sierra Leone several times to express concern about these allegations and to monitor the trial. But perhaps concerned the message wasn't getting through, the High Commissioner for Ghana, John Richardson, has now visited Sierra Leone to reiterate those concerns.

JOHN RICHARDSON: We've made it clear that we are watching very closely this process, and we've asked the authorities there at very high levels in Sierra Leone to investigate those allegations of pressure on witnesses and to make it very strongly known, make it very clearly known, that we and other governments and the international media, are watching this closely, and it will reflect on perceptions of how Sierra Leone is implementing the rule of law.

RACHEL CARBONELL: So you've essentially been applying some political pressure to authorities in Sierra Leone in the hope that the rest of the case, or the legal proceedings, proceed in a just way?

JOHN RICHARDSON: That's essentially it. We've made representations to try to ensure that Mr Halloran is treated fairly in accordance with local law.

RACHEL CARBONELL: Do Australian authorities have any particular wish in terms of how these concerns are dealt with?

JOHN RICHARDSON: Well, it's probably important for the Sierra Leone legal system that they do be investigated, that they are investigated, but I think our focus is more broadly on the Halloran trial itself, and the real question there would be whether certain actions affected the nature of the evidence and how material witnesses are being treated in the trial itself.

RACHEL CARBONELL: The case has been going on for more than a month now. Are you concerned about the delays, the ongoing delays?

JOHN RICHARDSON: It's a bit difficult to judge that, and to some extent one has to judge that in terms of local practice and the Sierra Leone legal system, and some of the delays, I was told, reflect some bottlenecks in the system.

And also the fact that the judge's wife was very sick, and sadly passed away the week before last, certainly may have complicated timing... so I think it's... whilst we did say we were a little concerned about some delays, I don't think they are necessarily serious at this stage.

RACHEL CARBONELL: The prosecution case is nearing an end. When it's finished, John Richardson says Peter Halloran's defence team may make an application to have the case dismissed or begin presenting its case.

With the court sitting just two days a week – Tuesdays and Thursdays – the case may well continue for many weeks yet.

ELEANOR HALL: Rachel Carbonell reporting.

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<http://www.pambazuka.org/>

SIERRA LEONE: TRC REPORT REFLECTS EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WITH CONFLICT

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/TRCCF9SeptFINAL.pdf>

"We are the children of Sierra Leone. The war was targeted against us, our families and our communities. It was a brutal conflict, which we did nothing to cause, but we suffered terribly because of it. Every child in this country has a story to tell – a heartbreaking one.

Unfortunately only a handful of these stories have been told and made known to the world. The memories continue to weigh on our minds and hearts. We, the children of Sierra Leone, witnessed the worst possible human ruthlessness and terror. Children of this country were forced to fight for a cause we could not understand. We were drugged and made to kill and destroy our brothers and sisters and our mothers and fathers.

We were beaten, amputated and used as sex slaves. This was a wretched display of inhuman and immoral actions by those who were supposed to be protecting us. Our hands, which were meant to be used freely for play and schoolwork, were used instead, by force, to burn, kill and destroy.

We do not believe this is the end of our story. Rather, it is the beginning. We, who survived the war, are determined to go forward. We will look to a new future and we ourselves will help build the road to peace."

This is an extract from the first-ever version of a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' report intended specifically to be accessible by children. The report details the violations which occurred during the ten-year civil war in Sierra Leone, in which children were deliberately and systematically targeted. When the violence ended and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, the children of Sierra Leone were asked to participate. With UNICEF's help a version of the Commission's findings which children could understand has been produced. Children were involved in all stages of the inquiry – from creating some of the drawings in the report to framing its recommendations for peace-building. Special care was taken to protect them, as victims and as witnesses.

Mail this to a friend



November 5, 2004

US Lost Evidence of Saddam's Abuses

by Jim Lobe

Crucial evidence of alleged human rights abuses that could be used in upcoming trials of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his top aides has apparently been lost or damaged due to U.S. neglect, says a report released Thursday.

While charges continue to fly that U.S.-led coalition forces failed to secure stockpiles of arms and explosives after invading Iraq, weapons now turned against them in the violence-ridden occupied nation, U.S.-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) says Pentagon planners also did not protect potential evidence of massive rights abuses.

In a 41-page report, "Iraq: The State of the Evidence," the group charged that the failure to secure the evidence, particularly mass burial sites, has frustrated the efforts of families of thousands of relatives who were "disappeared" during Hussein's rule to recover records or remains.

"Given what's at stake here, the extent of this negligence is alarming," said Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of HRW's Middle East and North Africa Division.

"The U.S. and Iraqi authorities were aware that these documents and remains would be crucial to the prosecution of Saddam Hussein and other former officials, but they did little to safeguard them," she added in a statement.

The report comes at a time of some uncertainty about the fate of the Iraqi Special Tribunal (IST), the body created in December 2003 by the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to take up a range of crimes allegedly committed by the Iraqi ex-dictator, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

The IST's administrator, Salem Chalabi, was summarily fired by Iraq's interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi earlier this summer, apparently for political reasons. Allawi has called for expediting the planned trials of Hussein, who was captured last December, and some two dozen of his top aides.

In a second blow to the IST, the United Nations last month refused a request by Allawi and the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush to assist the tribunal in its work.

The world body declined because defendants who are convicted by the IST could face the death penalty and because, in the view of UN experts who have worked on war-crimes tribunals for Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, its procedures do not meet minimum international standards of justice.

The tribunal's founding statute, for example, allows for defendants' attorneys to be excluded from interrogations and even court appearances and also permits the admission of testimony obtained under coercion. HRW, as well as other independent human rights groups, have also called the tribunal "fundamentally flawed."

That Hussein and his henchmen ruled with exceptional brutality is widely accepted, although many of his victims fell in wartime – probably about one million Iraqis and Iranians during the bloody war the two Gulf powers waged between 1980 and 1988.

As many as 100,000 more – mostly Iraqi soldiers – are believed to have been killed during the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

But the former leader's killing of real or suspected dissidents, including the murder of as many as 70,000 Kurds during the notorious Operation Anfal during the Iraq-Iran war and another 30,000 to 60,000 Shi'ites in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War, are also notorious.

Altogether, Hussein is believed to be responsible for the executions of as many as 250,000 civilians since his Ba'ath Party took power in 1968.

The documentary records of these abuses were left largely intact by Iraqi officials as U.S. and coalition forces made their way to Baghdad in March and April 2003. Since the invasion, more than 250 mass graves that hold the remains of thousands of victims have been identified throughout the country.

But HRW noted that in the weeks and months that followed the invasion, U.S. and coalition forces failed to prevent people from looting thousands of documents or to keep relatives of "disappeared" persons from digging up remains found in many of the grave sites.

Moreover, once seized with the problem of disappearing evidence, the coalition proved slow to secure the offices and deploy forensic experts to the graves in order to excavate, exhume and classify the remains, both to ensure that families could know the fate of their relatives and that the evidence obtained could be used in a court of law.

The situation has not much improved since Allawi's government took over last June, adds the report, which called on him to set up a joint Iraqi and international Commission for Missing Persons to establish effective procedures for securing what documentary and forensic evidence remains.

"The extent of the negligence with which key documentary and forensic evidence has been treated to date is surprising, given that the U.S.-led coalition and Iraqi authorities alike knew that trials of Hussein and key Ba'ath government officials would be important landmarks in Iraq's political recovery, that successful trials require solid evidence and that, as international experience has shown, preserving trial-ready evidence is a difficult task," the report said.

Still, it continued, "It is not too late to assume custody of millions of additional pieces of evidence [that] may prove critical in the proceedings of the upcoming trials."

(Inter Press Service)

Find this article at:

<http://www.antiwar.com/lobe/?articleid=3907>

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UN suspends aid operations after fighting breaks out in Côte d'Ivoire

4 November 2004 – In a major violation of the ceasefire in Côte d'Ivoire, Government forces today attacked positions held by the rebel Forces Nouvelles, prompting United Nations humanitarian agencies to suspend their aid operations across the country.

The attacks took place in Bouaké and Korhogo, where up to several dozen civilians may have been killed and wounded.

In a statement released by his spokesman, the Secretary-General, who briefed the Council this morning behind closed doors, urged President Laurent Gbagbo and all the Ivorian parties to immediately cease all hostilities and to take all possible actions to prevent further bloodshed.

He strongly called for the immediate resumption of dialogue so that the peace process can go forward, and reminded the parties that they must ensure the protection and safety of the civilian population as well as UN and other international personnel.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned that the fighting around the northern city of Bouaké threatened to cut off thousands of people from urgently needed relief aid. Tensions across Côte d'Ivoire have forced the UN to suspend its humanitarian operations throughout the country.

With Côte d'Ivoire still struggling to emerge from a two-year humanitarian crisis, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, warned that "a prolonged suspension of aid programmes would endanger thousands of lives."

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have halted their operations in the Bouaké area. WFP has not been able to deliver aid to people in need since the weekend because of roadblocks. There has been a sharp rise in the number of roadblocks near the "Zone de Confiance," an area separating rebel and government forces, around Bouaké in the past week.

Since the crisis began two years ago, the humanitarian situation in northern Côte d'Ivoire - once the economic engine of West Africa - has suffered from an absence of public administration and basic social services. Civilians in the north, cut off from commercial activities and social services, have been sinking further into poverty.

About 70 per cent of all professional health workers have not returned to work in the north, where at least one doctor has been forced to care for up to 200,000 people.

According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), some 700,000 students have been out of school since the beginning of the crisis, some because there are no teachers, others because their families are displaced or have become too poor to send them to school.

Poor funding of humanitarian operations in Côte d'Ivoire is exacerbating these conditions. The UN has received less than one-fifth of the \$61 million it needs to conduct emergency relief programmes in the country.