

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

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

**as at:**

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Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.

If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact

Ibrahim Tommy

Ext 7248

MOBILE: 232 76-645914





# Norman complains to supporters



*By Ibrahim Seibureh*  
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"I was never served any indictment by the court, and I'm ready to go to court if the procedures are followed," Norman reportedly told Kaikai.  
Kaikai says Norman's detention and the way he is being treated is not

avored by his supporters.  
"This is not going down well with us and we believe Chief Norman is a hero because he fought loyally to defend this country," he stated.  
He explains that Norman is highly appreciative of the support demonstrated to his family and himself by Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora since his indictment by the Special Court in March 2003.  
Norman, a former National

Coordinator of the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) and erstwhile Internal Affairs Minister, is standing trial at the UN-backed Special Court as one among those bearing the "greatest responsibility" in crimes commissioned during Sierra Leone's civil conflict.

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Concord Times  
16 January 2005

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# The Washington Times

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## Truth challenges justice in Freetown

By Hans Nichols

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Published January 6, 2005

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - From the hills that rise above this capital, the daytime view is typical of West Africa. Shacks of mud, tin and sheets of canvas or plastic share the slope with the concrete compounds of the foreign-aid workers and ministerial class. Downtown, ambitious high-rises, built in the heady days of the post-colonial era 40-plus years ago loom over rotting wooden houses, brick churches and the occasional pastel mosque.

At night, when municipal power has been turned off and the cooking fires have burned out, much of the lower city is as black as any forest in the interior. The darkness is interrupted only by a yellow haze from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), where generators illuminate the compound of the United Nations court that holds the nine accused of "bearing the greatest responsibility" for a conflict that lasted 11 years, took 50,000 lives and shocked the world with its child warriors, amputations and cannibalism.

Many residents see the bright lights of the SCSL and wonder if the U.N. tribunal and all the foreign money spent on it are really the best way to heal their country's wounds and prevent it from sliding back into chaos.

Negative perceptions of the court persist for several reasons, not the least of which is a local press corps that brand it an agent of "white man's justice."

The country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has competed with the U.N. tribunal for funds and attention from the beginning, and considers the court a threat to national healing.

In a 5,000-word final report issued in early October and made widely available in November, the TRC all but condemned the SCSL, asking how special tribunals and truth commissions can work together in Sierra Leone or in neighboring countries. It accused the court of promoting instability throughout the region by running roughshod over the amnesty principles that underlie the TRC.

"The international community has signaled to combatants in future wars that peace agreements containing amnesty clauses ought not to be trusted and, in so doing, has undermined the legitimacy of such national and regional peace initiatives," the commission concluded.

With other West African countries enmeshed in violence or teetering on the brink of it, Sierra Leone's judicial experiment is being closely watched throughout the region and at The Hague and the United Nations and in Washington.

While officials at the SCSL have been able to share their expertise with U.N. judicial teams in Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the officers of the court are not entirely free to share their experience or impart advice.

For example, Robin Vincent, the court's registrar, was two hours from leaving for Baghdad to advise Iraqis on how to set up their war-crimes tribunal last January when U.S. Secretary-General Kofi Annan canceled the trip.

Mr. Annan was concerned about a U.N. employee's safety, but he also did not want to give the impression that the United Nations was sanctioning, in any way, the Iraqi court, Mr.

Vincent said. That apparently had to do with opposition among some members of the Security Council to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

For its part, the Bush administration wants to see the Freetown tribunal succeed, apparently hoping to demonstrate that the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague is not really necessary.

Supporters of the ICC have their own reasons for monitoring the successes and setbacks of the SCSL. They see the court as a valuable beta version, much like the international war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda (ICTR), and wonder what kind of legal legacy the SCSL in Freetown will leave for the ICC.

With each new version of international court, practical lessons are learned and lasting legal precedents are set, said Mr. Vincent, a veteran of the Rwandan tribunal. For example, the ICTR established that rape is "a crime against humanity," and its rules of evidence and procedure have been handed down to the Sierra Leone court, saving judicial resources and accelerating the trials.

Already, the Freetown tribunal has enshrined into international law that the recruitment of child soldiers and forced marriage are crimes against humanity, and the Sierra Leone precedent could be used in country-specific courts in Cambodia or East Timor, or by the ICC.

But not every lesson of an international court can be applied to the next country, especially if the meaning of that lesson is still in contention.

Needless to say, the commission's final conclusions, and all those politically charged criticisms, were not well-received at the SCSL in Freetown.

David Crane, the court's chief prosecutor, said, "The Sierra Leone model is the right model. A plus B equals C.

"Truth plus justice equals sustainable peace."

But at Sierra Leone's TRC, a countervailing view has emerged. Truth and justice might not be compatible values, say the commissioners, and the court's dogged pursuit of justice has had a chilling effect on its pursuit of "social truth."

The breakdown in relations between the SCSL and the TRC has its origins in the prosecution's boldest decision.

Unlike the special courts in Yugoslavia and Rwanda, Freetown prosecutors decided from the start to charge every faction involved in the war, even the winners. That led Mr. Crane to indict Sam Hinga Norman, leader of the pro-government Civil Defense Forces (CDF), a former defense minister and a hero to many Sierra Leoneans, who credit him with beating back the rebels.

Last summer, the TRC decided that it wanted Mr. Norman, who sits in the SCSL dock, to give public testimony and tell his side of the war story, giving him the same opportunity as the president, lower-level rebel leaders and indeed the entire population.

Fearful that such testimony could be self-incriminating or could lead to political violence on the streets, the special court refused to allow Mr. Norman to make a public statement.

"It was a professional decision that has had some blowback," said Mr. Crane, chief prosecutor of the SCSL, who sees both the people of Sierra Leone and the international community as his constituencies.

"It's a pity this issue will characterize the relationship between" the U.N. court and the TRC, said Mr. Vincent, who tried unsuccessfully to broker a compromise allowing Mr. Norman to speak. "To a certain extent, [the TRC] shunned us."

But Mr. Vincent said there is another reason for bad relations between the court and the commission. "What caused the difficulty for us is that they were funded by voluntary contributions. There was a little bit of a feeling of competition."

One of the authors of the TRC report put it more bluntly: "They got what? Over \$90 million. We had a budget around \$6 million."

Not that there has been no common ground between the U.N. special court and Sierra Leone's TRC. In its final report, the truth commission concluded that the CDF was responsible for 6 percent of the war crimes, including most of the cannibalism.

That was corroborated, in part, during November testimony in the CDF trial, where a witness gave evidence about the cannibalistic initiation ceremony of the CDF.

Even without the competing agendas and different constituencies of the TRC and the U.N. court, providing justice after a messy civil war is difficult. For the court, it's been made more so because those most responsible for the conflict are either dead or at large.

Foday Sankoh, the brutal rebel leader, died in custody. Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie, Mr. Sankoh's field commander, was shot in the face while trying to cross into Ivory Coast from Liberia, though it took some time to verify the identify of his corpse. The whereabouts of Johnny Paul Koroma, the other key rebel leader, is unknown and a subject of wild speculation. U.N. investigators seem to think he was killed in Liberia, or is living in its jungle, but Koroma "sightings" at local nightclubs occur nearly every weekend, and his family lives here in Freetown in obvious prosperity.

And Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president whom many blame for instigating the Sierra Leone conflict, lives as an exile in Nigeria, out of the court's reach. "Without those four, the court has lost a lot of its reason for being," said Andrew Koroma, owner and news director of several Sierra Leone radio stations.

The most ominous warning in the TRC's final report does not even concern the U.N. court -- though if it goes unheeded, all the foreign personnel at the SCSL may have to flee Sierra Leone.

The TRC report warns that the fundamental cause of conflict -- bad governance -- has not been addressed, and suggests chaos might be just around the corner. Or, as Johnny Paul Koroma put it: "The police haven't been paid in two months, man. They are twitchy."

Just how damning the commission's report will be to the overall legacy of the SCSL is an open question. "It's just another document," said Zainab Bangura, a one-time presidential candidate who now runs the National Accountability Group, a Sierra Leone nongovernmental organization.

She faults her countrymen for not learning more from the court and welcoming its experts. "The African tradition is, when someone is new in your neighborhood, you stop by and welcome them, and give them some food. We haven't done that."

If violence returns to Freetown -- as it did five years ago, despite the presence of 6,000 U.N. peacekeepers -- the decision to hold the trials in the country, once heralded as one of the most significant features of the U.N. special court, could appear rather foolish in retrospect.

With the U.N.'s 17,500 troops all but gone and the remaining Pakistani soldiers leaving by the planeload, the questions about how international tribunals can coexist with truth commissions could quickly become academic.

"I don't know what is going to happen in this country," said Mrs. Bangura of the National Accountability Group. "Just keep your passports ready and know how to get to your embassy."

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## **BBC Focus on Africa**

### **5 January 2005**

LEAD-IN: ...on working conditions in the country. The action, which began on Monday, was called by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress to protest against working conditions and pay, among other grievances. Lansana Fofana's been following the events in Freetown, and sent this report.

FOFANA: The leadership of the Labour Congress the outcome of the dialogue with the president and government officials was successful so they have decided to suspend their stay at home action. Among their five-point demand, the government accepted 90% and promised to deal with the labour grievances in due course, according to Congress leaders. Festus Minah is the spokesperson for the Labour Congress.

MINAH: The issue of negotiation, there is no winner, neither a loser. Our submission to government all received their blessing, and I think very serious attention was given to them. For instance, the end-of-term benefit, originally it was 10 million leones, as you have got it, the government now have agreed to let it go up to 20 million leones. The second one is that on the allowances, I mean rent, medicare and transport, they were not ready to make anything like salary adjustment, but we subsumed it under the allowances which we believe was really very good.

FOFANA: Things are gradually getting back to normal. Banks and offices are open, and the central business district downtown is once again bustling. Hospital staff and other essential services have gone back to work, and transport vehicles are plying the roads. Though the strike action lasted for two days, its impact was greatly felt as everything grounded to a halt, from government revenue collection to private businesses, and the government was significantly embarrassed by this industrial action, the first since it came to office 8 years ago. Commenting on the decision of the labour leaders to call off their stay at home action, the Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations, Alpha Timbo earlier today that by the end of this month all the issues agreed upon would be dealt with thoroughly. He commended the labour leaders for taking what he described as a wise decision for calling off a strike that would otherwise have worsened the country's perilous post-conflict economy.



World Markets Analysis January 05, 2005

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World Markets Analysis

HEADLINE: General Strike Hits Sierra Leone

BYLINE: Christopher Melville

BODY:

Most shops and government offices in the capital, Freetown, were closed yesterday (4 January 2005) as part of a general strike called on Monday (3 January 2005) by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) in protest at the alleged failure of salaries to keep pace with the rising cost of living. The strike was widely observed across the city by SLLC members, despite claims by Labour Minister Alpha Timbo to have reached agreement with the organisation, which represents nearly all of Sierra Leone's unionised workers. The government's subsequent 20% reduction in the price of petroleum products, which met a central demand of the SLLC, appears not to have dampened the enthusiasm for strike action, which has already resulted in the cessation of activity at the Port of Freetown, Freetown-Lunghi International Airport, several newspaper offices, banks, supermarkets and several government departments.

Significance: Given the high level of unionisation amongst Sierra Leoneans working in the formal sector, a general strike of any duration is likely to have a significant operational impact for commercial activity and the provision of services, particularly in the capital, where most formal sector employment is located. However, the macro-economic effect of the strike will be limited, especially if, as expected, it comes to a swift conclusion without major concession by the government; this is how most recent industrial action has been concluded.

*Africa News January 5, 2005 Wednesday*

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Africa News

January 5, 2005 Wednesday

LENGTH: 459 words

HEADLINE: Sierra Leone;  
General Strike Called Off After Two Days As Government Agrees to Talk

BYLINE: UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

BODY:

Sierra Leone's main trade unions staged a two-day general strike this week to demand higher pay and better living conditions. The peaceful stoppage was called off on Tuesday night after the government conceded some of the strikers' demands and agreed to negotiate others.

These included a reduction in income tax and an increase in the minimum wage of 40,000 leones (US\$13) per month.

The current minimum wage is no longer enough to buy a 50 kg bag of the country's staple food rice. A bag of rice, generally considered the bare minimum needed to feed a family for a month, now costs 65,000 leones (\$25).

The strikers, who brought business in the capital Freetown to a virtual standstill, also demanded a reduction in the price of fuel. The government tried to head off the strike by slashing pump prices by 20 percent on the eve of the stoppage, which was called by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, the country's main trade union federation.

Paradoxically, many Sierra Leoneans greeted the general strike as a positive move in the country's return to normality after a brutal 10-year civil war which ended in 2001.

No serious incidents were reported during the two days of industrial action, but taxis and buses stayed off the streets in Freetown and most government offices and shops were shut. Hospital workers and employees of the electricity and water company also walked out, but the police stayed on duty.

The city resumed normal life on Wednesday, with pedestrians packing its streets of ramshackle houses and taxis honking their horns in traffic jams.

The strike followed three months of fruitless talks between labour leaders and the government, but President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah intervened personally by meeting the trade unionists on Tuesday to discuss their demands.

Later the same day, Labour Congress President Mohamed Deen called off the strike, saying the government had agreed to raise the earnings threshold at which employees start to pay income tax from 10 million to 20 million leones (\$3,500 to \$7,500) per year and make other tax concessions.

Deen said the government had also agreed to set up a joint committee with the trade unions and employers' representatives "to come up with a meaningful and realistic minimum wage."

Another joint committee would review petrol and public transport prices, he added.

Three years after the civil war ended, Sierra Leone still ranked bottom of 177 countries listed in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2004 Human Development Index, despite its potentially lucrative deposits of diamonds, titanium and bauxite.

Three quarters of the country's five million population scrape by on an income of less than two US dollars per day.



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## Serbia minister rejects Hague bid

**The Serbian Justice Minister, Zoran Stojkovic, has ruled out arresting four Serbian generals wanted by the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague.**

But he expressed hopes that the generals would surrender voluntarily.

He also criticised another minister for saying that Serbia's reluctance to arrest the men was ruining the nation's chances to join the European Union.

The generals, whose names have not been revealed, were indicted in connection with atrocities in Kosovo in 1998-99.

"The talks [for surrender] are underway... and I expect everything to end to the benefit of the state and the suspects," Mr Stojkovic told Serbia's Blic newspaper.

"There will be no arrests or forced extradition to The Hague," the minister added.

He also criticised Human Rights Minister Rasim Ljajic for saying that the country can forget about EU membership and talks on becoming partners with Nato if it did not extradite war crimes indictees to The Hague soon.

"This kind of attitude can only make the generals more frightened just at the moment when a consensus is being established that the state, after they surrender, will completely stand behind them and do everything possible for them to stand trial in this country," Mr Stojanovic was quoted as saying by Serbia's B92 radio station.

The Hague tribunal is demanding, in particular, the transfer of Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic for crimes during the Bosnian war.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4147551.stm>

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## Ivorian president raises possibility of delay in general elections

ABIDJAN, Jan 5 (AFP) - Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo has for the first time raised the possibility of general elections being delayed in his country, saying that in such an event he would remain head of state to avoid a political void.

"No constitution in the world foresees a judicial void, none. Otherwise it was not written by people with a sane vision of their country," Gbagbo was quoted as saying Wednesday by the daily *Fraternite Matin*. "If at the end of October the elections are not held, I will remain president.

He said the holding of the vote hinges on the disarmament process in the divided country, in line with a two-year-old peace accord signed in Marcoussis, France and aimed at ending a civil war that grew out of a September 2002 bid by northern rebels to oust Gbagbo's government.

"The president remains in his post until his successor is sworn in," he added. "Read the constitution over again. Don't read just one article of it, read all of them."

"The people (rebels) must disarm," Gbagbo told *Fraternite Matin*. "If they do so, we will prepare the elections and go ahead with them."

The general elections in Ivory Coast are scheduled to take place in October but various political groups have begun to question whether they will actually take place in light of the tense situation in the country and the de-facto division between the north and south.

The west African country has since the 2002 uprising been divided between a mainly Christian south and a rebel-held Muslim majority north, with French and African troops under a UN umbrella maintaining a very fragile peace.

Long seen as a beacon of peace and stability in troubled west Africa, Ivory Coast experienced its first coup in December 1999 and has since been increasingly torn by ethnic hostilities, with northerners protesting against perceived discrimination by successive Abidjan governments.

Gbagbo, a former Socialist opposition leader who won the 2000 election, comes from the Bete ethnic group, which opposes a policy of giving the vote to long-term immigrants.

Under the Marcoussis accord, rebel and opposition leaders were brought into a transition government, but Gbagbo's foes have several times walked out, accusing the president and his supporters of stalling the peace process.

South African President Thabo Mbeki has been acting as mediator on behalf of the African Union in a bid to get both sides in Ivory Coast to conclude a new peace plan.