

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Security on duty.

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

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Special Court for Sierra Leone
Press and Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Sierra Leone, 5 June 2006

Defence Opens Case in AFRC Accused Trial

The Defence opened its case today in the trial of three alleged former leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu each face a 14-count indictment alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

In an opening statement which lasted for just under an hour, Prof. Geert-Jan Knoops, Lead Counsel for Third Accused Kanu, laid out the Defence case on behalf of all three defendants. This was followed by opening statements on factual points from Lead Counsel for First and Second Accused.

The trial, which is being held before the Special Court's Trial Chamber II, began on 7 March 2005. The Prosecution concluded its case on 21 November 2005 after calling 59 witnesses.

In December 2005, counsel for the Defence filed Motions for Judgment of Acquittal on behalf of all three accused. Those motions were dismissed by the Trial Chamber on 31 March 2006, clearing the way for the start of the Defence case.

Following the opening statement, the Court began hearing evidence from the First Accused, Alex Tamba Brima, who is testifying in his own defence.

The AFRC trial is the second Special Court trial in which the Defence has opened its case. Defence counsel opened their case in the trial of three alleged CDF leaders on 19 January 2006.

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

Awoko

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Sweden ready to jail Taylor

By Winston

Ojukutu-Macauley

The Swedish Parliament has finally passed into law regulations to allow for the imprisonment of the former Liberian Leader Charles Ghankay Taylor.

The former Liberian Head Of State is facing an eleven count charge of crimes against humanity and serious violations of International Criminal law at the Freetown based Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Court President had asked the Netherlands to make available their facilities to try Mr Taylor.

The Netherlands had said they were ready to provide their facilities for the trial but on the

Former
Liberian Leader
Charles
Ghankay Taylor



condition that a third country would agree to jail Mr Taylor if he was convicted for the war crimes charges he faced.

This decision by the Swedish Parliament, could therefore remove a major obstacle for the trial to go on.

However a Swedish

foreign ministry spokeswoman Nina Ersman said her country "had not officially decided whether it would accept a request to take Taylor in." It is expected that the final approval for such a venture will have to come from the government.

This development came two days after Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf asked

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Sweden ready to jail Taylor

From Front Page

for a "distance trial" for Mr Taylor.

Speaking to journalists

last week while visiting London, Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said "for peace and stability in the Mano River

Basin the International community must make sure Charles Taylor is put on trial outside the region"

Awoko

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

AFRC defence case resumes

By Betty Milton

The defence for the three members of the Armed Force Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Special Court indictees: Alex Tamba Brima aka Gullit, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu aka 55, yesterday opened their case.

In the opening of their case, Professor Knoops on behalf of the three indictees stated that the defence would elicit military expert to show that there was a total neglect of the Army since 1961 to 1996, and as a result of the neglect, there were no morale, command and control and therefore no hopeful future for the Army.

The indictees, he stated, could not be charged for crimes committed by other people as they did not enter into an agreement with any individual to perpetrate crimes.

The defence case, the Professor went on, would adduce evidence that the three indictees did not play superior role during the war.

The accused, the lawyer said, were marginalized by other members of the forces after they [accused] tried to escape.

He maintained that in 1998 and 1999 Makeni Town was

under the control of the RUF and not SLAs, as some of the witnesses would prove in their evidence.

He stated that members of the AFRC did not carry out the widespread looting and burning of civilians', as claimed.

In opening the defence case of the third accused, Santigie Borbor Kanu, the Professor stated that the first wife of the accused was killed as a result of bombardment at Aberdeen.

The third accused, he went on, never functioned as a commander and that others might have misused his name.

In the case of the first accused, Gullit, lawyer Kojo Graham stated that as the accused would be testifying in his own defence "this is a great day for the accused ... today will be a monumental relieve as it is a moment of truth. Though the day was long coming but yet it is here at last."

Lawyer Graham said when the Prosecution opened their case on 14 March 2005, David Crane, the Chief Prosecutor, stated that they would prove that the three accused were responsible for the charges against them. The

Prosecution which presented 59 witnesses, the lawyer said, had failed to prove their case.

"The position of Public Liaison Office 1 (PLO1) which was given to the accused was merely a sign of appreciation for the role his father [Gullit] played in the Army," he said

On the attack on Karene, the lawyer said that the Imam which was alleged to have been killed by AFRC was not true as he "is currently preaching the Koran my and client never commanded and control the attack on Karene".

He said after the announcement that the AFRC had been removed from power; it was the Kamajors who went looting Lebanese shops.

In his statement, Andrew Daniels, lawyer for the second indictee Brima Bazzy Kamara, said his client "is an innocent victim of political circumstances".

The Prosecution, he said, sought to indict the accused because he was a member of the SLA and also a member of the AFRC which overthrown the legitimate government. The Prosecution, he went on, was attempting to dress the accused as scapegoat.

New Vision

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

“Sankoh Was Treated More Than Me”

By Mohamed Kallon

Vice President Solomon Ekuma Berewa last Saturday revealed to hundreds of teachers who had committed their support for his leadership and other party supporters that despite being an elected vice president, he was less treated than the former RUF leader and Special Court Indictee, late Foday Saybana Sankoh.

Foday Sankoh, Vice President explained, until his arrest and detention after the May 8, 2000 incident, was head of the Precious Mineral Resources Commission created by the Lome Peace Accord, a position he said, was equivalent to that

Reveals V.P. Berewa



of the Vice President, and that he was only answerable to the President.

“Until his demise, Foday Sankoh enjoyed every facility

Cont. Page 5

“Sankoh Was Treated More Than Me”

from the government,” V.P. Berewa further disclosed, stating among other things, accommodation, food, medical and security, something he did not enjoyed. The only thing he said Foday Sankoh lacked, was power over the government because he was not constitutionally elected like him. As architect of the Lome Peace

Accord, Vice President Berewa further stated that the only thing he knew Sankoh wanted during the peace process was gold, diamond and power, which he said, the former rebel leader readily accepted in exchange for peace, adding Sankoh has earlier refused other proposals.

Spectator

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Defence opens case in AFRC accused trial

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In an opening statement which lasted for just under an hour, Prof. Geert-Jan Knoops, lead counsel for Third Accused Kanu, laid out the defence case on behalf of all three defendants. This was followed by opening statements on factual points from lead counsel for first and second accused. The trial, which is being held before the Special Court's trial chamber II,

began on 7th March 2005. The prosecution concluded its case on 21 November 2005 after calling 59 witnesses. In December 2005, counsel for the defence filed motions for judgment of Acquittal on behalf of all three accused. Those motions were dismissed by the trial chamber on 31 March 2006, clearing the way for the opening

statement, the court began hearing evidence from the first accused, Alex Tamba Brima, who is testifying in his own defence.

The AFRC trial is the second Special Court trial in which the defence has opened its case.

Defence counsel opened their case in the trial of three alleged CDF leaders on January 2006.

Sierra News
Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Sweden accepts Charles Taylor

Reports reaching this press indicate that the Swedish Parliament has ratified a bill to accept the former warlord Charles Taylor as prisoner in Sweden if he is tried and found guilty by the Special Court of Sierra Leone for crimes committed against the people of Sierra Leone.

The reports say this decision is subject to the approval of the Government of Sweden.



It could be recalled that on the transfer of the former war lord to Sierra Leone by the government of Liberia following his arrest by the Nigerian authorities on an attempted escape, a request was made to the Security Council for the trial of Charles Taylor to be transferred to the Hague so as to give respite to the sub region.

In fact in a recent visit to Britain by the Liberian leader, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, she reiterated her previous call for the trial of Charles Taylor to be transferred to The Hague so as to rid the entire re-

gion of what she referred to a "nightmare."

The ball is now in the court of the Security Council as to whether the trial will be transferred to The Hague now that Sweden is prepared to host him as a prisoner.

Cocorioko Website

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Chief Hinga Norman is Very Much Alive

The family of former Regent Chief and leader of the Sierra Leone Civil Defence Forces, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, wishes to inform the public that rumours circulating in Freetown this morning that the chief has passed away are entirely false. It is also not true that the chief's health condition at present, though serious, is life threatening as previously reported. Mr. Norman has been examined by competent medical authorities and both the family and Mr. Norman's legal advisers are clearly aware of the extent of his illness which is related to injuries he incurred during his arrest and transfer to Bonthe Island on 10 March 2003 on orders from the so-called special court for Sierra Leone.

The family is also aware that a decision to transfer Mr. Norman to a medical facility outside Sierra Leone for medical treatment has been made although his destination is as yet unknown. While the family appreciates the widespread public interest in Mr. Norman's health and welfare, they kindly appeal to friends and supporters as well as news media to refrain from initiating or perpetuating rumours which are bound to cause panic or undue hardship on the family, the general public as well as Mr. Norman himself.

It is regrettable that the telephone situation at the Detention Center is still too unreliable and restrictive for direct outside communications with Chief Norman. However, we assure the public, friends and well wishers that should there be any significant development in the health and well-being of Chief Norman, the public will be duly informed.

We are also informed that following a meeting between Counsel for Mr. Norman, Dr. Bubuakei Jabbi, and Principal Defender, Vincent O. Nmehielle, an official statement regarding Mr. Norman's health and well-being will be issued shortly. Further inquiries can be directed to Dr. Jabbi or Mr. Nmehielle in Freetown.

News 24.com

Monday, 5 June 2006

Court to rule on guns for timber

Stephanie van den Berg

The Hague - A Dutch court is set to hand down its judgement on Wednesday on Guus Kouwenhoven, a businessman accused of war crimes over allegedly trading guns for timber in war-torn Liberia.

Kouwenhoven, also known as Mr Gus, is charged with war crimes for delivering guns which the militias of Liberian warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor used to commit atrocities against civilians.

The 63-year-old businessman is also accused of breaking the United Nations arms embargo against Liberia. Prosecutors have demanded a 20-year prison sentence and a fine of €450 000.

According to the prosecution Kouwenhoven smuggled guns into the country in exchange for lucrative timber concessions for his logging companies OTC and RTC. These weapons were subsequently used by Taylor's troops during the bloody 14-year civil war.

According to the indictment, Kouwenhoven's logging company OTC also had militias of its own which were sent to fight rebels opposing Taylor.

Taylor faces charges

Taylor fled Liberia in 2003 after he stepped down to give a UN-brokered peace process a chance to stop the bloodshed. He is currently in the custody of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, where he faces charges stemming from atrocities committed there.

In April, the former president pleaded not guilty to charges of sponsoring and aiding rebel groups who perpetrated murder, sexual slavery, mutilation and conscription of child soldiers in Sierra Leone.

Close ally

During his trial prosecutors cited correspondence found in Kouwenhoven's homes to show that the Dutch trader was a close ally of Taylor.

The Dutch businessman wrote to Taylor: "in everything I do I think of you...I need you to succeed as that is my survival too".

"The accused knew what was going on, he had influence and was implicated in the day-to-day running" of the Taylor regime, prosecutor John Lucas concluded.

Kouwenhoven has always denied the charges and used his last words in court at the end of his three-week trial to profess his innocence.

"I never saw weapons on a ship in the port of Buchanan (where OTC had its offices). I was never present when arms were handed out. I was never present at military meetings with Taylor. I never encouraged OTC personnel to go to the front lines," Kouwenhoven told the court.

His lawyers have demanded his acquittal and tried to cast Kouwenhoven as someone who had become "crushed between the different forces working to remove the regime of Charles Taylor".

African News Dimension

Monday, 5 June 2006

The leader has asserted that handing over of Taylor offends Africa

Judge Desmond De Silva, Former chief judge of the international court on Sierra Leone said the trial of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor will not take place this year, before the court.

This came in the statement of the judge in the Sierra Leonean capital Freetown carried by Pana news agency. The Leader of the Revolution, President of the Conference of Leaders and Head of States of Cen-Sad Community has asserted that what is being said about the handing over of Taylor to an international court for his trial is a serious precedent that offends Africa and damaging the credibility of Africa, the morals of Africa, which does not need for an international court to which an African president is sent for trial. In this context the leader said in this respect, at the inaugural session of the 8th session of the Conference of Leaders and Head of States of the Cen-Sad Community in Tripoli, Thursday. "We know that a civil war and a power struggle took place in sisterly Liberia, and that an elected president who is President Taylor was elected but a rebellion was staged against him, as we say that President Gbagbo was elected and a rebellion is staged against him, and the Chadian President was democratically elected and a rebellion was made against him, President al-Bashir was democratically elected, I mean seven millions gave him his votes in Darfur but a rebellion was made against him. Any how a rebellion was made against Taylor, and a civil war started. An elected president has the right to defend legitimacy, however, when matters exacerbated and pressure increased on Liberia, the Liberian President took an historic and brave decision to step down to his vice-president and went as a political exile in Nigeria. Our brother Obasanjo was overseeing this process. In exchange for the end of civil war Taylor steps down in exchange for peace in his country. Indeed by his stepping down civil war ended, elections were organized, and our sister Ellen Johnson won the elections. The case ended by such sacrifice from Taylor and by the confidence of the Liberian people in our sister Ellen. Later, we were surprised that Taylor was caught and it has been said that he would be extradited for an international trial. This action destroyed the credibility of Africa, the morals of Africa and seriously harmed Nigeria, and no longer a sanctuary. This thing should not have happened and not appropriate for Cen-Sad, for Africa, Liberia or Nigeria. Then, It is said he tried to flee and was arrested at the borders, I mean a fabricated process, an excuse that is far worse than the guilt. This is immoral, and I condemn it, this is a fact". The Leader added; " I have no connection with the policy of Taylor in Liberia which is of concern to the Liberian people, who decisively settled this issue. His policies is not of our concern, but this does not mean we are approving his policies, if he slaughtered people and launched a war, not at all, we are not speaking about that, we are speaking about something else, we are speaking in terms of principles. I mean a process decisively decided in this way, it should not be exploited and manipulated, other wise, there would be no safety, or sanctuary, and no longer credibility or morals. Then, all head of states would be subject to this destiny, this is a series precedent. Taylor should stay in Nigeria without trial and not to be extradited to any court, because there is no right to do this at all. This is nothing to do with his policies in Liberia. His policies in Liberia led to war, and led to his exit from Liberia, and led the Liberian people to select another president, this is something else. Taylor should return to Nigeria, and in the future would return to Liberia with peace, democratic work, peaceful work and through parties". The Leader stressed by saying; " Any person who commits a crime punishable by national law or humanitarian law, he should shoulder his responsibility, but we should not be in the auction or the international market. This offends Africa. This is an insult to every African President". Source : LJBC

The Nation (Nairobi)

Monday, 5 June 2006

Gaddafi Worried As Taylor Remains in Custody

By Chege Mbitiru / There And About

Politicians retool themselves as domestic and foreign political climate requires. Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi, has done a good job. His past though keeps getting in the way.

Twice in half a month, Colonel Gaddafi criticised Liberia's former President Charles Taylor's deportation from Nigeria. He also opposed Mr Taylor's possible trial at the International Criminal Court, at The Hague.

Col Gaddafi's latest pitch came on Thursday. Leaders of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States gathered in Tripoli. Present were leaders from Sudan, Chad, Egypt, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Tunisia.

It was an auspicious occasion for Col Gaddafi. The United States had just announced resumption of diplomatic relations with Libya since 1980. That means an end to US sanctions and good business for Libya, especially in the petroleum industry.

The country hosts the Sahel-Saharan community headquarters. Money in most member states habitually goes touring. Libyan largesse is, therefore, vital. Col Gaddafi's generosity is legendary. With good economic times around the corner, he is worth courting.

Col Gaddafi led the dignitaries in inaugurating the Sahel-Saharan Bank for Investment and Commerce. The bank has a share capital of 250 million euros (Sh23 billion). Libya's shareholding will definitely translate into policies. Hopefully, Col Gaddafi's lauded puritanical streak will stymie looting of treasuries.

The organisation named Col Gaddafi its chair. The colonel loves national groupings. After he led the overthrow of King Idris al-Sanousi in 1969, Col Gaddafi unsuccessfully pursued a variety of political mergers with Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Sudan. He spearheaded the Organisation of African Unity's metamorphosis into the African Union.

Col Gaddafi vowed to work to "extinguish fires" in Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and other troubled parts of the continent. "Those who are creating troubles and problems in Africa must be treated like criminals" - They divert attention from economic and social developments.

Sudan offered Col Gaddafi an excellent opportunity. Col Gaddafi said Sudan demanded troops from the Sahel-Saharan community be sent to Darfur. "We discussed that demand raised by Sudan and we agreed upon that demand."

Sending such a force would complicate United Nations and the African Union's efforts to end the conflict in Darfur. Col Gaddafi will undoubtedly push the deployment of the troops though. Their presence would fit in his apparent frame of mind. Col Gaddafi is on record expressing fears of Africa's re-colonisation through foreign peacekeepers. His outburst against Nigeria though is more

telling. He argued Nigeria handing over Mr Taylor for trial was wrong. Actually, President Olusegun Obasanjo only kept his word. He handed Mr Taylor over to Liberia's elected government.

What seems to anger Col Gaddafi is the possibility the ICC would get hold of Mr Taylor. The United Nations wants Mr Taylor moved from Sierra Leone for security reasons. Col Gaddafi further argues handing over Taylor to ICC would undermine Africa's credibility and harm Nigeria as a haven. It is hardly a budge of honour for a country to be a haven for the likes of Mr Taylor. Col Gaddafi said of Mr Taylor's possible trial at The Hague: "This also means that every (African) head of state could meet a similar fate-this sets a serious precedent." It is an argument Gaddafi presented Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to her face at a dinner in Tripoli mid-May.

The Libyan leader reminded Ms Sirleaf-Johnson that Mr Taylor is their mutual friend. The difference is, of course, that Ms Sirleaf-Johnson abandoned Mr Taylor when she realised the kind of a person he was: bloodthirsty for power and money at great expense to human life.

It just happens the ICC is investigating 51 Sudanese officials to ascertain if they committed crimes against humanity in Darfur. Investigators might go high up in Sudan's officialdom. Well, a Sahel-Saharan community force, during Col Gaddafi's watch, is a sure way of keeping at bay "re-colonisation".

A more plausible explanation for Col Gaddafi's anger is that in the witness box, Mr Taylor can throw a great deal of muck at the colonel's retooling. Mr Taylor is more than a graduate of Libya's once World Revolutionary Headquarters. He became head of state.

Revolutionaries are necessary. Otherwise, the human race would stagnate.

Col Gaddafi backed Mr Taylor with money and weapons. Mr Taylor's indictment by the court in Sierra Leone only mentions Col Gaddafi. It does not indict him. Smart prosecutors though can portray Mr Taylor as Col Gaddafi's emissary. For now that is a long shot, but plausible. Many African nations should be grateful for what they might accrue from the colonel's re-tooling. However, the Libyan leader should not camouflage possible consequences of his past as part of re-colonisation.

African News Dimension

Monday, 5 June 2006

Liberia : Former rebel group in favour of War Crimes Court

By Patrick Wrokpoh

Monrovia (AND) Liberia's biggest rebel movement, the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy, says it is not opposed to the establishment of a war crime court for Liberia.

The group's former Secretary General, Mr. Joe Gbala, today told the press that the former rebel movement welcomes the ideal for the establishment of a War Crimes Court for Liberia, but stressed that this must be done on what he said the former rebel movement described as "a clear note."

He said while the general position of the former rebel movement is that it welcomes the establishment of such a court in Liberia, it believes that this must be done in a proper manner, not designed to witch-hunt or target certain individuals.

Mr. Gbala, who was a member of the rebel movement's delegation to several peace meetings and a close confidant of the group's leader Sekou Conneh, said members of the defunct rebel group are not against the establishment of the court in Liberia but want this to be done with out any malice for certain people.

He denied reports that the rebel movement had executed some generals in Charles Taylor's government.

He added, "The war we fought was not for vengeance. We fought to redeem the Liberian people who were suffering from social and economic vices. As a result of our efforts, the Liberian people and the country is now free, with the ushering in of a democratically elected government."

Monrovia Bureau

VOA News

Friday, 2 June 2006

Former Rwandan Radio Director Sentenced to Jail for War Crimes

A U.N. tribunal has sentenced a former Rwandan militia chief and media director to six years in prison for war crimes committed during the country's 1994 genocide.

Joseph Serugendo, formerly on the board of Rwanda's radio station, Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines, or RTML, had pleaded guilty to incitement to commit genocide.

The radio station's broadcasts have been singled out as a significant factor in the genocide, which left more than 800,000 people dead.

In a statement released Friday, the tribunal said the panel of judges who sentenced Serugendo recognized the severity of his crimes, but also took into account his guilty plea and his cooperation with the prosecution.

It said Serugendo's actions in court may encourage others to acknowledge their involvement in the genocide.

The tribunal also noted that Serugendo has recently been diagnosed with a fatal illness and is in fragile health.

Twenty-eight people have been tried since the court was established in Arusha, Tanzania. Twenty-seven trials are underway, and 14 detainees are waiting the start of their trials.

Earlier this week, Rwandan President Paul Kagame criticized the court, saying it is not trying enough cases, is employing people allegedly implicated in war crimes, and is spending too much money.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 5 June 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

Chattanooga Times Free Press (Tennessee) [Editorial] 06/05/2006

U.N. disgrace continues

The United Nations previously promised to prevent its aid workers from demanding sexual favours from desperate refugees in exchange for food and other supplies -- supplies paid for largely by the United States, United Nations' biggest financial backer. But a new report by Save the Children shows that promise was hot air. Girls as young as 8 are routinely being victimized in camps in the African nation of Liberia in exchange for aid, the study noted. Of 300 refugees interviewed, "all of the respondents clearly stated that they felt that the scale of the problem affected over half of the girls in their locations," according to the study. Considering the helpless plight of the young refugees, that is nothing short of abominable cruelty -- more so since the United Nations has known of similar abuses around the world for at least four years and has failed to rein in its workers. How long will the United States and the world tolerate the incompetence and even criminal acts of the United Nations?

Mail & Guardian Online 2 June 2006

Liberia's women fight back

Katharine Houreld

Sweat is running down Patricia Clark's face as she shouts at a crowd of hundreds of Liberians through a megaphone. "The law says, if you jump on a woman without her consent, that is rape. You will go to prison for 10 years. If you rape a child, you will get life. You die in prison; they bury you; they will chain you in your grave." The lawyer tucks her megaphone under one arm and brandishes a newspaper announcing the first life sentence passed on a man who raped a child. The crowd erupts in cheers.

BBC Monday, 5 June 2006, 12:02 GMT 13:02 UK

Prison for Liberian exam cheats

School pupils in Liberia have been threatened with a possible prison sentence if they cheat in their exams. All cheats will be prosecuted, says the body responsible for overseeing more than 64,000 secondary school pupils who are beginning their annual exams. The West African Examinations Council is determined to crack down after its previous exams were flawed by scams. Liberia is recovering from a long civil war and elected Africa's first female president late last year.

International Clips on West Africa

Two journalists sentenced to prison in Ivory Coast: report

ABIDJAN, June 3, 2006 (AFP) - The editor-in-chief and the publisher of an opposition newspaper in the Ivory Coast, Le Front, have been sentenced to three months in prison on charges of publishing a "false" article about a supporter of the country's current president, the newspaper reported Saturday. A court in Abidjan on Friday reached its verdict in the case against Le Front for publishing last February an article that accused Charles Ble Goude of receiving a sum equivalent to 380,000 euros (490,000 dollars) from the president of an association of coffee-cocoa producers, Henri Amoussou.

Local Media - Newspapers

Defense Ministry Recruits College Students into New National Army

(The News, The Analyst, Heritage and The Informer)

- The Ministry of Defense in collaboration with the Security Sector Reform launched a massive recruitment exercise at various universities in the country to recruit students into the new Armed Forces of Liberia. The week-long recruitment exercises of university students which lasted from 29 May to 3 June targeted graduating seniors and ended at the University of Liberia.

Global Witness Wants Sanctions on Liberia Maintained

(The Analyst, New Democrat, National Chronicle and Liberian Express)

- A United Kingdom-based group, Global Witness, has called on the UN Security Council to ensure that the sanctions on Liberian timber and diamonds are maintained. They said the current Liberian government does not have control over the resources and that they could fall in the wrong hands of possible troublemakers.

High School Graduations to be Halted Until Examination Results Are Released

(The News and The Inquirer)

- The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Monrovia Office Head, Eli Lumei has called on Liberia's Ministry of Education to ensure that school authorities put a halt to high school graduation exercises until the Council releases the examinations results.
- Mr. Lumei told newsmen in Monrovia at the weekend that when graduations are held before the exam results are released the students would not value the WAEC certificates.

Catholic Lawyers Identify With Archbishop Francis

(The Inquirer and The Analyst)

- During a routine visit Friday, members of the Catholic Lawyers Association of Liberia presented a purse of US\$500 to Catholic Archbishop Michael Francis for his upkeep. The association said it was happy to identify with the Archbishop, taking into consideration that the Church would not be in the position to do everything.

New DEAL Movement Rejects Rivercess County By-Election Result

(The Analyst)

- The Democratic Alternative for Liberia (New DEAL) said it would reject the result of the run-off election in Rivercess County because it was a fraudulent one. The Party's Secretary-General Worlea Saywah Dunah said the Party was rejecting the result which was declared in favor of Unity Party's Elizabeth Williams because the process was characterized by undue influence from the Executive Branch of government.

Cabinet Reshuffle Imminent in Government

(The Informer)

- A major cabinet reshuffle is imminent in government following 150 days in office. Information Minister Johnny McClain, Transport Minister Jeremiah Sulunteh and Police Director Beatrice Munnah Sieh are said to be among those to be affected.

Christian Mission Launches New Radio Station

(National Chronicle)

- The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Mission in Liberia over the weekend launched a new radio station, Radio Advent (93.7 FM) with the Mission's President James M. Golay announcing that the station would not advertise tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, but will run educational and inspirational programmes.

Female Genital Mutilation Exposes Women to Risk Says WHO

(Heritage)

- A new study published by the World Health Organization has shown that women who have had female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are significantly more likely to experience difficulties during childbirth and that their babies are more likely to die as a result of the practice.

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

President Pledges Support to Council of Traditional Leaders

- Speaking at the close of a session for the National Traditional Council of Liberia in Gbarnga, Bong County over the weekend, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf assured members of the Council that the government would remain supportive of their activities because they play key roles to enhance peace and reconciliation in the country.

Lawmaker Warns Students against Examination Malpractices

- Senate Education Committee Chairman Gbarpolu County Senator Samuel Tormetie warned students and school administrators in the country to refrain from malpractices during the West African Examination. Senator Tormetie told journalists in an interview that there was a law prohibiting examination malpractices and that violators of such a law would be punished.

Liberia Commemorates World Environment Day Today

- In an interview with ELBS Radio Sunday, the Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Henry Williams announced that Liberia would join other countries to celebrate World Environment Day today, 5 June. The day was set aside in 1972 by the United Nations General Assembly to highlight issues of the environment.

Swedish University Sanctions Assessment Team Visits Liberia

- The head of the visiting Swedish university peace and conflict research delegation, Peter Williamston said that his team was in Liberia to assess the possibilities for the lifting of sanctions on the country. He told a news conference Saturday that the delegation was visiting Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone to see how the sanctions have helped to bring sanity to the three countries.

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