

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Monday, 6 March 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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“Maskita’, Issa, Gbao killed 67 in Kailahun”

...Prosecution witness testifies

Story: Tanu Jalloh

Prosecution witness TF1-113 during cross examination by lead counsel, Wayne Jordash for the first RUF accused, Issa Sesay, Friday told Special Court Trial Chamber I that she saw Sam

Bockarie alias ‘Maskita’ shoot and kill eighth men suspected of been Kamajors while two other corpses lay beside him at the center square of Kailahun town.

“Issa Sesay and Augustine Gbao were present when the first ten of

the 67 men, suspected of been Kamajors, were killed by Maskita. They later joined Maskita in the vehicle and drove off to Bwedu. Maskita, before they left gave command for Joe Kallon to kill the

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“Maskita’, Issa, Gbao killed 67 in Kailahun”

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remaining of the suspected Kamajors,” the witness narrated.

She said following the influx of people (non-residents) to Kailahun town

from other places as a result of the intervention in 1998, Maskita had ordered the screening of men for Kamajors.

“Maskita had insisted that all new comers into Kailahun, especially men,

be properly screened and those suspected to be Kamajors weeded out for execution,” she explained.

Hearings continue today at the Special Court’s Trial Chamber I.

Witness reveals Issa Sesay had child bodyguards

Story: Tanu Jalloh

TF1-113 testifying as Prosecution witness in the seventh session of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) trial at the Special Court, Friday revealed Issa Hassan Sesay had child bodyguards while in the jungle during the war but denied knowing any of their names.

"Issa Sesay took children called SBU (Small Boy Unit) as his bodyguards. They were very fearless and were quick to disgrace and strip someone naked. One could not go closer to them or anywhere near Issa Sesay lest they could take care of you," she said and claimed that Issa Sesay was present when sixty-seven men, **suspected** of been Kamajors, were **summarily** executed in Kailahun.

Responding, defence counsel for Issa Sesay as first accused in the RUF trial, Wayne Jordash put it to the witness that she is telling lies. He made reference to

paragraph six of page 16980 of the witness' 2005 November 5th proofing note to deduce what he said were inconsistencies.

"Witness I want to put to you that your testimonies are fabricated lies against Issa Sesay. Your first statement misses out completely that Issa Sesay ever present at all in Kailahun during the said killings," defence counsel argued and continued, "It is my submission that you are telling lies because you received over Le 1million from the Witness and Victims Protection Unit of this court."

He further suggested to the witness, "the Le 650, 000 you received as transport and Le427, 000 as medical allowances were part of your motivation to come here and testify. Did you pay your way to Freetown to tell the truth?"

The witness denied ever receiving any such huge sum of

Cont. page 3

Witness reveals Issa Sesay had child bodyguards

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money from the witness Protection Unit. Rather, the witness said she gets whatever allowances in bits.

"I have took an oath with the Holy Q'uran so I cannot

tell lies. Besides I am a businesswoman and can take care of myself," she told the court.

Hearings continue today at the Special Court's Trial Chamber 1 presided over by Justice Pierre Boutet.

Obasanjo Must Act Now on Taylor

WHEN LIBERIA'S newly elected president visits Abuja on Friday, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo should announce that Nigeria will promptly surrender Charles Taylor to face trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Campaign Against Impunity said on Thursday.

President Obasanjo's meeting with Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on 3 March will follow his reported talks last Sunday in Lagos with former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

"President Obasanjo has an opportunity to demonstrate Nigeria's commitment to the rule of law in West Africa," said Shina Lorenikan, director of programmes for the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, a Nigerian organization that is part of the Campaign Against Impunity. "When he meets with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President Obasanjo should announce he will surrender Taylor to face trial for his alleged crimes."

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up in 2002 to try those most responsible for war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's armed conflict. Charles Taylor has been accused of 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Special Court. The crimes include killings, mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, sexual slavery, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, abduction, and the use of forced labour by armed opposition groups.

In 2003 Charles Taylor left Liberia for Nigeria. Nigeria acted with the support of the United States, the African Union and other actors in the international community in taking Taylor in as a temporary measure to secure a peaceful transition in Liberia.

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Obasanjo must act now on Taylor

From Page 4

Nigeria President Olusegun Obasanjo has thus far been reluctant to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court. He has indicated, however, that he would consider surrendering Charles Taylor upon request from a duly-elected Liberian government.

"President Obasanjo should act now and do the right thing by surrendering Charles Taylor to the Special Court," said Voke Ighorodje, secretary of the

Nigerian Coalition for the International Criminal Court, an organization that is part of the Campaign.

The Campaign stressed that Charles Taylor's trial must take place in accordance with international law and international standards for fair trial. "The Special Court will not be around for much longer," said David Anyaele, executive director of Amputees Rehabilitation Foundation, a Nigerian organization that is part of the Campaign. "This valuable opportunity to bring justice

to the victims must not be squandered."

The Campaign Against Impunity is a coalition of some 300 African and international civil society groups that was formed to press for Charles Taylor's surrender to the Special Court. Nigerian partners in the campaign held a press conference on Thursday, 2nd March in Lagos to urge for President Obasanjo to surrender Taylor.

Voice of America

3 March 2006

Nigerian President Is Under Pressure To Turn Over Former Liberian President Charles Taylor To The UN Backed Court In Sierra Leone

By Howard Lesser

Washington

03 March 2006

A coalition of 300 African and civil society groups is urging Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo to hand over former Liberian president Charles Taylor promptly to a UN-backed court in Sierra Leone. Thursday's announcement by the Campaign Against Impunity was issued one day before the arrival of Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in Abuja for talks with the Nigerian leader. Taylor has been charged by the UN-sponsored court in Sierra Leone with 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

President Obasanjo has rejected calls to turn him over to the Freetown court but has said he would consider surrendering him to a duly elected Liberian government. Shaoli Sarkar, who researches Sierra Leone issues for the Washington office of the Coalition for International Justice, says President Sirleaf does not consider discussion of Taylor's handover a top priority for her country, which is struggling to recover from a 14-year civil war. Nevertheless, Sarkar tells Voice of America reporter Howard Lesser she hopes the subject will be raised during talks in Abuja:

"President Sirleaf has been very, very open to discussing the idea about Taylor. Her message, which I think is that 'Look, there are basic things that need to be fixed throughout Liberia, and I need the money to do that. And I don't want to feel constrained that this issue of Taylor is going to prevent me from receiving funds.'" Researcher Sarkar says the reason that more than 300 African groups in the Coalition Against Impunity are seeking to bring Taylor to justice in Sierra Leone is that they are concerned that President Obasanjo may be helping Taylor elude answering for war crimes he allegedly committed by arming Sierra Leone rebels and financing an illicit weapons market through the sale of "blood diamonds."

"What's at stake here," says Sarkar, "is that the mandate for the Special Court for Sierra Leone is through December of 2006, and funding is not secured for more than this year. So the need to bring Taylor in front of the Court as soon as possible is very important. And the more that West African government officials, people in the international community can continue to say, 'Yes, it's very important to bring Taylor to justice, but it's more important to take care of these other things first,' may be very problematic because the question that's not being asked and should be asked is: If the mandate of the Special Court expires, what happens to Taylor at that point?"

Reuters

3 March 2006

LAGOS (Reuters) - Liberia's new president arrived in Nigeria on Friday as campaigners put pressure on the two countries to hand over her exiled predecessor Charles Taylor to face war crimes charges.

Former Liberian president Taylor has been in exile in Nigeria since 2003 as part of a peace agreement that ended 14 years of civil war in Liberia. He faces war crimes charges in a U.N.-backed court in Sierra Leone.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who assumed office in January as Africa's first elected woman president, is due to meet President Olusegun Obasanjo on Friday and give a lecture on "The Hope and Promise of Liberia" on Saturday.

The Campaign Against Impunity, a coalition of 300 human rights groups, renewed its call on Obasanjo to hand over Taylor to the tribunal, which accuses him of killings, mutilations and rape during more than a decade of conflict in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone.

The group wrote to Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist, in January urging her to ensure that Taylor was brought to trial.

"When he meets with President Ellen Sirleaf, President Obasanjo should announce he will surrender Taylor to face trial for his alleged crimes," Shina Loremikan, director of programmes at the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, which is part of the coalition, said in a statement.

NO CHANGE

Obasanjo met Taylor briefly in Lagos last week, but no details were revealed.

Nigeria has insisted that it would only hand the ex-warlord over to an elected Liberian government if it asked for him, but would not send him to a third country.

"That position has not changed," Obasanjo's spokeswoman Remi Oyo said on Friday.

Johnson-Sirleaf said shortly after assuming power in January she was tired of talking about Taylor and urged Liberians to focus on rebuilding their wrecked country.

Taylor faces 17 war crimes charges in the International Criminal Court probing Sierra Leone's war, which stemmed from Liberia's own civil war that started in 1989 when Taylor, then a rebel, invaded the country. The war killed an estimated 250,000 people.

About 50,000 more died in Sierra Leone, where Taylor is accused of supplying guns to rebel fighters in return for rough diamonds taken from the border area between the two countries.

"The special court will not be around for much longer. This valuable opportunity to bring justice to the victims must not be squandered," said David Anyaele of the Amputees Rehabilitation Foundation, another member of the coalition.

BBC

4 March 2006

Taylor off agenda at Abuja talks

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia has met Nigerian counterpart Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja, during her first visit there since her election.

A Nigerian spokeswoman said the two had discussed investments, but not the fate of ex-Liberian leader Charles Taylor.

Mr Taylor, who is living in exile in Nigeria, is wanted for war crimes by an international tribunal in Sierra Leone.

Nigeria has said it is willing to surrender him, but only if an elected Liberian government requests it.

This position was reiterated by Mr Obasanjo's spokeswoman after Saturday's talks.

"The prerogative of the return of former President Taylor remains that of the Liberian people and government," Remi Oyo told reporters.

No rush

President Johnson-Sirleaf said last month that prosecuting Mr Taylor was "secondary" to her agenda.

Mr Taylor, who has been in Nigeria since leaving power in 2003, is accused of backing the notorious RUF rebels in Sierra Leone's 1990s civil war.

Mr Taylor stood down as rebels threatened to seize the Liberia capital, Monrovia.

His departure into exile was part of a deal backed by African and Western powers.

The terms of the move have never been publicly spelled out.

But the BBC's Elizabeth Blunt in Abuja says they are believed to have included a comfortable home in Nigeria and a pledge that he would not be handed over for prosecution - a promise that so far has been honoured.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4775012.stm>

Cocorioko website

http://www.cocorioko.com/god_s_word

As the Queen of Africa rides high.....

BLOOD OF THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT VICTIMS CRY OUT FOR JUSTICE IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

By Leeroy Wilfred Kabs-Kanu

Monday March 6, 2006

Thou hast it all now, Madam Ellen Johnson -Sirleaf : Power , prestige, fame and history. Your name will ever bestride the golden pages of history because you were the first-ever African woman to gloriously ascend the summit of the political leadership of an African nation --And we love you for it. How well you deserve it ! ! !

You are a symbol of pride to African womanhood. In your life as a political aspirant, you stood for Truth, fair play, patriotism , courage , probity, honesty ..Yes, even in the face of all human frailties and imperfections and your election as President of the great nation of Liberia is just recompence from the Almighty for your sincerity of purpose and the goodness of your intentions for your fellow countrymen and women.

As we who love Liberia hail you and pray for you to succeed , by the grace of God, we want you to listen. We call on you to harken your ears .Just listen a little bit, Madam Sirleaf (Our Queen) and you will hear it. It is the voices of thousands of innocent souls crying out from their inglorious tombs. They are crying out for justice .From the hilly plains of Sierra Leone to the lush landscapes of Liberia, they are crying out from their graves. They are crying out because they want justice. They are crying out because they think they have died in vain .

Some people have called me me privately to appeal : " Ma mehn, leave this thing alone. Leave this Taylor thing alone ". But How can I ? How can I leave this thing alone when the cry for justice continues to deafen everybody's ears ? How can I leave this thing alone when the demands of justice have not been met ? How can I leave this thing alone when there can be no true forgiveness, no true reconciliation and no true peace without justice. When we fail to meet the demands of justice, we do not reconcile people. We put their bodies together but leave their minds and hearts unassuaged for tomorrow.

Charles Taylor and all those who brought human suffering to the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone for no reason , except their avaricious greed for power should not get away with it. They should be brought to justice so that the true breeze of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace would blow through the two lands once again.

Liberia needs a Truth and Reconciliation Committee but she also needs a Special Court to try the Charles Taylors, Prince Johnsons , Isaac Musas, and the like who taught the kids of Liberia to blow out the brains of innocent people for nothing; who instructed the precious jewels of Liberia that raping their own mothers and sisters, their own aunts and cousins, their own neighbours and townmates , was the way to go to let some greedy persons achieve power in the country.

The cry of the innocents will not go away . It will continue .It will abuse our restful pillows at night. When we wake up in the morning, we will hear it. When you go out in the day , we will

hear it. When we return home in the evening , we will hear it. The human Blood is precious. You don't spill it just like that and you expect to be left alone and all the pain, all the passions and all the agonies to go away.

If anybody thinks they can rebuild Liberia and Sierra Leone without meeting the demand of justice, they must think again. You do not plait a beautiful hairstyle over a head full of lice. The lice will continue to ravage the head and one day there will be an explosion of pain and agony. You have to get rid of the lice first, then you can plait a brilliant hairstyle on that head and the more time that elapses thereafter, the merrier. God's Law demands justice. Christ died on the cross so the demands of justice and the penalty of sin would be paid.

If you think the pain in Liberia and Liberia will just go away like that without justice, read , read the article below : It is a very sad article. It is sad because it shows the pain that is festering in the land. You will cry when you read it, but that is the pain that is still rummaging the hearts of the people. That is the agony that victims in Liberia and Sierra Leone are struggling with .Read it and digest it, meditate on it and ponder : Should those who expiated such heartless and unmerciful bestiality and cruelty walk away free and live to perpetuate their impunity again ? If we do, we are no longer walking in the Light Of God. The Law of God demands justice. And without true justice, there can be no true reconciliation in the land.

May God minister to your heart, Mrs. Sirleaf, our Queen, Our Pride. .

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 3 March 2006**

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

International Clips on Liberia**Liberian leader on tour of Nigeria, Europe**

MONROVIA, March 3, 2006 (AFP) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf left Monrovia on Friday for Nigeria, where her disgraced predecessor Charles Taylor lives in exile, officials said. Sirleaf will hold talks with her Nigerian counterpart, Olusegun Obasanjo, said a statement from her office, without giving details. A source in her office told AFP that discussions would focus on Taylor's extradition to a UN backed UN-backed special court in Sierra Leone, where he faces war crimes charges.

03/03/2006 06:33:45

Liberian woman arrested while attempting to sell her baby

Monrovia_ (dpa) _ A woman aged 25 was arrested in south-eastern Liberia Thursday while attempting to sell her baby, press reports said Friday. The radio station of the UN peacekeeping mission (UNMIL) said police made the arrest in Zwedru town, Grand Gedeh county as a prospective buyer was counting out the 3,500 Liberian dollars (70 dollars US) sought for the boy, aged one-and-a-half.

Liberia attains modest growth, tough challenges ahead: IMF

DAKAR, March 2, 2006 (AFP) - War-ravaged Liberia's economy attained a modest recovery last year but still faces tough challenges, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Thursday.

The IMF said Liberia's external debt accumulated over the past two decades was unsustainable but was cautious not to set out a precise timetable for debt relief for the west African country. "The Liberian economy continues its modest recovery led by mainly donor-related inflows and a gradual improvement in security in rural areas," Robert Powell, the IMF mission chief to Liberia, said in a statement at the end of a 14-day visit to the country.

International Clips on West Africa**Ivorian leader clears murder suspect's extradition to France**

PARIS, March 3, 2006 (AFP) - Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo has approved the extradition to France of a gang leader wanted for the kidnap and murder of a young Jewish man, Foreign Minister Mamadou Kone said Friday. It clears the way for Youssouf Fofana, 25, to be flown back Saturday. The French defence ministry said a military plane was due to leave Friday for the Ivorian capital Abidjan with three police officers to escort him. Gbagbo

signed the extradition order for Fofana late Thursday after a court in Abidjan approved the request by French authorities.

03/03/2006 06:11:33

French peacekeepers in Ivory Coast say Ivorian troops tried to provoke them

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast French peacekeepers in Ivory Coast have been insulted and threatened by Ivorian troops in an attempt to provoke an incident, a French army spokesman said Thursday.

"For three consecutive days, Ivorian troops showed aggressive behavior toward French soldiers with a clear intention to provoke," said French army spokesman Jean-Luc Cotard.

Local Media – Newspapers

President to Commission High Court Judges Today

(Daily Observer, The News, The Analyst, New Democrat and Heritage)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will today commission the newly confirmed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia Johnny Lewis and three Associate Justices, namely, Cllrs. Francis Korkpor, Emmanuel Wureh and Gladys Johnson, according to an Executive Mansion press release. The confirmation of Associate Justice-designate Kabineh Ja'neh to complete the Supreme Court Bench is being challenged by individuals and local organizations, which accused him of violating human rights when he served as executive member of the LURD rebel movement and Justice Minister in the recent transitional government.

Associate Justice Advocates for Independence of Supreme Court

(The Analyst)

- Appearing for confirmation hearing recently, Associate Justice Gladys Johnson called on the Executive and Legislative Branches of government to respect the independence of the Supreme Court for the good of the Liberian society.

Legislature Approves Rivercess County By-Election

(The Inquirer and Heritage)

- The National Elections Commission said in a press release yesterday that that it had received notification from the National Legislature to conduct by-election to fill the seat in the House of Representatives for Electoral District No.1 in Rivercess County. The NEC Board of Commissioners has scheduled the by-election for Saturday 13 May, the press release added.

Immigration Officers Face Extortion Probe

(New Democrat)

- The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) recently launched an investigation into numerous complaints of harassment and money extortion against travelers by a detachment of the BIN at the Roberts International Airport.

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

President to Commission High Court Judges Today

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Legislature Approves Rivercess County By-Election

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

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

Pressure Group Promises Support to Task Force on Rubber Plantations

- A citizens' welfare group, the Union of Guthrie Associations said yesterday that it would provide information to assist the Presidential Task Force on Rubber Plantations in its investigation at the Guthrie Rubber Plantation.

Refugees' Return Intensifies Says UNHCR

- The UN refugee agency UNHCR said in a press release yesterday that convoy movements of Liberian refugees taking advantage of the voluntary repatriation exercise had intensified.

UNICEF Provides Skills Training to Demobilized Child Soldiers

- Over 100 demobilized children, who associated with fighting forces recently graduated from the UNICEF-supported rehabilitation and skills training program in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County.

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