

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



Defence Investigators photographed prior to departure. Photo: Defence 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:

Thursday, 6 November 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Awareness Times
Thursday, 6 November 2008

Special Court Clinches Zain Football Trophy

By Aruna Turay

The giant in mobile networking in Sierra Leone, Zain has concluded their annual organizational football tournament with the Special Court for Sierra Leone team emerging the champion.

The 'Zain Annual Football Tournament' Grande Finale was played at the Saint Edwards Secondary School's 'May Park' play grounds on Saturday 1st November 2008. The Special Court of Sierra Leone locked horns with the American Embassy but the former defeated the latter by 4 goals to 1, automatically allowing Special Court's team to clinch the trophy.

Saidu Turay of the Special Court made the debut score in the twentieth minute of the first half, shortly followed by the team's No.9 striker, Alpha Bangura, who ended up having two goals to his credit. Sahr Kamara of the same team scored the fourth goal that broke American Embassy team's back, who managed to secure a lone goal.

The occasion was graced by several distinguished personalities, including the American Ambassador to Sierra Leone, June Carter Perry.

It is an annual event organized by Zain to help cement corporate entity relationship in the country.

For di People

Thursday, 6 November 2008

ABOLISH

DEATH

PENALTY

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Officer in Sierra Leone, Mr Brima Sheriff has urged that the death penalty be abolished in the constitution of Sierra Leone.

**by MAMOUD S
BANGURA**

Sheriff said they have formally put their demand to the government so that the death penalty could be abolished in the country. He said they are preparing to rally around parliamentarians and government ministers to ensure the death penalty is abolished.

He said they are also calling on civil society to sensitize the ordinary people about the essence of abolishing the death penalty and that valuable citizens have lost their lives

over the years due to the death penalty and that it is indeed vital for the government to show willingness over the abolition of the death penalty. Sheriff said the social status of Sierra Leoneans must be reviewed so that other punishments are given to people committing serious crimes. He said death penalty in the country are mostly politicised and inasmuch as the country is thriving towards connecting itself to the international world, issues like the death penalty must be abolished in the consti-

itution of Sierra Leone.

He said AI is against impunity and those people committing dangerous crimes in the country. He said government must learn from the Special Court who try people for dangerous crimes but do not kill anyone found guilty but rather, provide other major punishments such as life imprisonment with hard labour. Sheriff therefore called on other stakeholders to join Amnesty in the campaign so that the death penalty could be abolished.

The Exclusive

Thursday, 6 November 2008

ACC Boss Talks On FOI

The Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Mr. Abdul Tejan Cole, has said the Anti-Corruption Commission fully supports the Freedom of Information (FOI) campaign as ac-

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ACC Boss Talks On FOI

From front page

According to him, "FOI promotes the work of the Commission."

Speaking to a cross section of civil society freedom of information activists who paid a courtesy on him at his Gloucester Street offices, Lawyer Tejan Cole said that the ACC has longed for "a collaborative approach in fighting corruption." The ACC boss went on to state: "we cannot do it alone and we would not carry out our mandate without other transparency mechanisms like the FOI law."

The ACC boss further stated that FOI borders on "broader issues of transparency and ac-

countability," which according to him, the ACC stands for and that in order to fight corruption, the people should be made to understand the ACC Act including other relevant issues.

"Only through a freedom of information law would the ACC accomplish its mandates," Tejan Cole maintained, adding that it is only through "robust" awareness raising and sensitization programmes would the people be informed about the content of the ACC Act 2008. "There have been many laws that the people don't know about and they have a right to know these laws," said he.

Tejan Cole further stated that the ACC has heard many complaints on the secret declaration of asset and many have said it violates the freedom of information campaign. To this, he lectured, "we hope the law would change and as a progression from a non asset declaration stage to this point, a reasonable compromise was needed to enhance a way forward for the passage of the Bill and a proper operating system,"

Earlier, the head of the civil society entourage, Mr. Emmanuel Saffa-Abdulai, Executive Director of Society for Democratic Initiatives (SDI), briefed the

Commissioner on the purpose of the visit. Thee visit, he said was intended to bring the ACC into the wider FOI campaign since, according to him, both institutions are working on the same issue of transparency. He reminded the Commissioner of his earlier comments on the Bill when he was President of the Bar Association.

"We have come today to formally present you and the Commission the

final draft bill that we hope to take to Parliament for comments and suggestions," Mr. Abdulai said while reminding the Commissioner that the campaign is five years old and that the best time to pass the bill is now.

Speaking further, the vibrant youth FOI campaigner said, "the civil society organizations working on FOI campaign believes in transparency and accountability and implores the Com-

mission to work with a broader civil society network."

Mr. Abdulai presented the ACC Commissioner with a draft of the Bill together with two handbooks simplifying the Bill and providing a reader friendly resources on the freedom of information concept.

The two books are titled: "knowing about Freedom of Information" and "How Freedom of Information would aid the work of Parliament"

The New Citizen
Thursday, 6 November 2008

Amnesty Advocates For Abolition Of Death Penalty

By Issa Mansaray

Amnesty International Sierra Leone on Tuesday 4th November, 2008 organized a one-day symposium at the British Council Hall, Tower Hill in Freetown on the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the need to abolish the death penalty in Sierra Leone.

In his statement, His Excellency the German Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Rolf Saligman, recalled that the first European

country that abolished the death penalty was Finland in 1825 to be followed later by other European countries like the Netherlands.

Ambassador Saligman also revealed that after the Second World War many European countries abolished the death penalty adding that about fifty European countries have so far abolished the death penalty highlighting that about five to six countries including China and America still uphold the practice.

According to the German envoy,

"I am happy that the EU is lobbying assiduously against the abolition of the death penalty as most death penalties can be attributed to revenge, coups and political impasses. Furthermore, I want to stress that the European Union is proud that some of its member countries have abolished the death penalty."

Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance Director, Melron Nicol-Wilson said the existence of the death penalty does

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Amnesty Advocates For Abolition Of Death Penalty

From page 1

not prevent killings by perpetrators affirming that Sierra Leone must join other countries in abolishing the death penalty but that a lot of advocacy needs to be

done regarding abolishing the death penalty.

Director of Amnesty International, Sierra Leone Chapter, Brima A. Sheriff dilated on the importance of the symposium with re-

gards to strategic planning of his organization in relation to issues of death penalty enlightening that the symposium would also serve as a bench mark or ad-

vocacy tool to engage stakeholders, community people and the media about the need to abolish the death penalty.

"In 2007, Amnesty International adopted a policy re-

lating to economic policy and cultural rights of community people with a pilot phase that started with maternal mortality in Sierra Leone," he concluded.

BBC World Service Trust

Wednesday, 5 November 2008

Report from The Hague

An insider witness, a former fighter of Charles Taylor's rebel organization, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL, trained in Gborplay, Nimba County in 1990, has taken the stand against rebel boss in The Hague. To protect the personal security of the witness, the court has granted him permission to testify with screen, and the voice and image of the witness are distorted beyond recognition. Joseph Cheeseman reports.

CHEESEMAN: The insider witness, only identified as TF1-579, has told the Judges of the Special Court his former commander, Oliver Varney, facilitated the invasion of Sierra Leone along with the then-leader of the Revolutionary United Front, Foday Sankoh, from Bomi Hill in Liberia in 1991.

The witness, testifying in Liberian English, said before the arrival of Mr. Foday Sankoh in Bomi Hill for the Sierra Leone invasion, Mr. Charles Taylor sent a radio message to Oliver Varney and ordered him to give Mr. Sankoh all necessary assistance to insure success in the invasion of Sierra Leone.

The Prosecution insider witness recalled a warning that Mr. Sankoh gave to both Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters the night before the invasion of neighbouring Sierra Leone.

WITNESS: I remember that he was telling Oliver that this revolution that we are here to launch, I do not want any looting. I do not want my citizens to be harassed. That is what I heard him say.

KOUMJIAM: Did Sankoh indicate how he would get the men and equipment to do this invasion?

WITNESS: Yes, Sankoh said his men were trained at Nama and that most of them were Liberians at that time, and the supplies were given to him by Mr. Taylor and that every support for that movement came from Mr. Taylor.

CHEESEMAN: The witness also testified to the capture and execution of his former commander Oliver Varney on the orders of Mr. Taylor after the NPFL lost Bomi Hill to the Liberian rebel group ULIMO, which was opposed to Mr. Taylor. The witness, who said he's a member of the Gio Ethnic group in Liberia, told the Court Oliver Varney was accused of selling Bomi Hill to ULIMO. Mr. Taylor's lawyer, Morris Anyah jumped to his feet and objected to the mention of Oliver Varney's execution by the witness. Mr. Anyah challenged the relevance of the evidence to the indictment against Mr. Taylor.

ANYAH: It is not in any way relevant to the conflicts in Sierra Leone. The incident is said to have happened between 1991 and 1992, an internal incident during the conflict in Liberia occurring some five years before the indictment period. How does this help Your Honours decide the issues that are relevant to the case, save for portraying our client as somebody who executes people? That's all this evidence goes to show that Mr. Taylor allegedly ordered somebody to be executed on Liberian soil during the conflict in Liberia.

CHEESEMAN: Prosecution lawyer Nicholas Koumjiam said the testimony on Oliver Varney's execution was relevant to their case against Mr. Taylor.

KOUMJIAM: Your Honour, the evidence is relevant if it goes to show the proof of what the Prosecution case is. Mr. Taylor's control over the RUF, similar to his control over the NPFL, part of that was his power to execute anyone who did not obey his orders, anyone who didn't carry out what he felt – do the job that he wanted them to do. This is part of how he maintained the control of the RUF and the other forces that he influenced in Sierra Leone.

CHEESEMAN: After consulting her colleagues, Justice Teresa Doherty ruled that the Court would permit the testimonies on Oliver Varney's execution. She said the relevance of the evidence will be determined by the Judges.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: We note provisions of Rule 93(A) that evidence of a consistent pattern of conduct, etc. may be admissible in the interests of justice. The probative value or otherwise of such evidence is a matter to be assessed at the end of the evidence and we allow this line of the evidence.

CHEESEMAN: The witness said after the death of Oliver Varney, he was assigned to Benjamin Yeaten in Gbarnga as a bodyguard. He told the Judges Mr. Taylor gave a house to the then RUF Leader, Foday Sankoh on Sugar Hill in Gbarnga, Bong County. The witness also said he was later assigned to the RUF during the leadership of Sam Bockarie. He testified to taking arms and ammunition from Monrovia to Buedu in Sierra Leone with Zigzah Marzah, Daniel Tamba alias Jungle, and Sampson Weh.

Witness TF1-579 said RUF's diamonds were shared into three parts: The first part the witness said went to Mr. Taylor, the second part went RUF Commanders and third part was kept with Mr. Taylor for Foday Sankoh who was then in detention.

Charlestaylortrial.org

Wednesday, 5 November 2008

Court Resumes After Lunch-Break: Witness TF1-579 Continues in Private Session

3:00pm: Court resumed after lunch break and prosecution witness TF1-579 continued his testimony but in private session. Prosecution counsel Nicholas Koumjian asked the witness to tell the court what Bockarie told him about diamonds that were mined by the RUF. The witness explained that Bockarie told him he always divided the diamonds into three portions. One portion he said was given to Taylor for the purchase of arms and ammunition for the RUF, the second portion he said was distributed among the various RUF commanders and the third portion he was kept to be handed to Sankoh upon his release from prison.

At this point, prosecution counsel made an application for the court to go into private session because the next set of questions will expose the witness's identity if raised in public. Court went into private session for the remaining period of the proceedings.

[Macleans.ca/blogs](http://blog.macleans.ca)

Thursday, 6 November 2008

<http://blog.macleans.ca>

War Criminals Old and New

All things considered, Helmut Oberlander, the 84-year-old veteran of a Second World War Nazi killing squad who has just been stripped of his Canadian citizenship and ordered deported, is extraordinarily lucky to have lived this long.

As a child, he first survived Stalin's state-manufactured famine that killed more than two million Ukrainians in 1932 and 1933. Ethnic Germans such as Oberlander living in the Soviet Union were targeted during Stalin's purges of 1937 and 1938, but Oberlander survived these as well. The odds against his long life grew even longer the moment Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Stalin deported hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans to Kazakhstan and Siberia, where many were worked to death. Oberlander avoided this. He also avoided the fate of the more than 25 million Soviet soldiers and civilians who died fighting the invading Germans, or under their devastating occupation. Instead, he was drafted by the German army in 1941 and put to work as an interpreter for an Einsatzkommando mobile killing squad, a subgroup of the Einsatzgruppen task forces that murdered hundreds of thousands of thousands of Jews, Gypsies, and Soviet political commissars – usually by shooting the victims into mass graves. Oberlander's unit was also issued a poison gas van.

How much choice the 17-year-old Oberlander had in his assignment is debatable. Many Ukrainians willingly collaborated with and fought for the Germans, whom they initially saw as liberators from a regime that had intentionally starved so many of them to death. More fought against them, recognizing Nazi Germany as a regime of unmatched genocidal brutality. There is no evidence that Oberlander ever killed anyone himself. The Federal Court judge who upheld his deportation order concluded that hiding his past involvement in a Nazi death squad deprived Oberlander of the right to Canadian citizenship.

It is possible if not probable that Oberlander would have died had he refused orders to join the Einsatzkommando unit, swallowed by the yawning furnace that was the Eastern Front. And maybe there are times when dying is the only honourable thing to do, although others might pause to contemplate how they would react in similar circumstances. Perhaps, 65 years later, Oberlander is finally facing something approximating the justice he deserves. Still, I can't think about Oberlander without considering the fate of another alleged war criminal living in Canada.

Since writing last year about Charles Taylor, the former Liberian warlord and president who is now on trial in The Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity, I've been looking into the lives of several associates of Taylor who are now in Canada. One, whom I'm not yet in a position to name, stands out. He was one of Taylor's regional commanders in the early 1990s and controlled much of Taylor's illegal timber exports from the port city of Buchanan. He earned a particularly infamous reputation for sadism.

"This man killed a thousand. He used to nail people to lumber," a reliable source who knew him at the time told me. "It was the normal thing they'd do: they'd see a girl and a guy, and they'd take the girl and kill the guy."

The commander left Liberia in the 1990s and eventually arrived in Canada by way of Burkina Faso and Germany. He now lives, apparently unmolested by authorities, in Toronto. A Liberian woman living in Canada who was told that this commander was also in the country physically shook when she heard the news, according to my source. The commander had allegedly killed most of her family with a knife.

It is possible that 50 years from now justice will come looking for this man, as it has for Helmut Oberlander. West African mass murderers were never as careful record keepers as the Nazis, but maybe someone will be able to compile a case against him just the same. In the meantime, the former warlord is settling down. He recently got married to a Caribbean woman in a bustling evangelical church. He says he has found Christ and is born again.

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries 4 November 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Controversy brews over Royalty from Acelormittal - Nimbaians Raise Alarm

(The Inquirer, The News, Daily Observer)

- Citizens and youths of Nimba County have expressed unhappiness over the uncertainty that is said to be hanging over their US\$1.5 million Acelormittal royalty intended for the development of the county.
- Acelormittal signed a concession agreement with the government of Liberia in which the company has committed itself to provide US\$3 million to three of the counties where it would be operating.
- The three counties are Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Addressing a news conference yesterday in Monrovia, Mr. Ranny Gbatu, Nimba Youth Representative said the county's Senior Senator Prince Johnson quoted President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as expressing fear that if the people of Nimba are permitted to take control of the US\$1.5million, the citizens would purchase arms and ammunitions to start another round of war instead of using the money for the development of the county.
- According to Mr. Gbatu, the Senator's revelation was contained in a statement he delivered at a well-attended Nimba citizens meeting held recently in Tappita.

IMF On Liberia's Economy

(The Analyst, The News, The Inquirer, The Parrot)

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says economic activities in Liberia remain buoyant despite the impact of higher international food and fuel prices. According to Mr. Robert Powell, head of the IMF delegation that visited the country recently, the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of around seven percent in 2008 is expected to be driven by higher production of rice and local timber, as well as in construction services. Mr. Powell said, "Inflation has increased, but is expected to return to single digit by the end of 2009. Performance under the IMF-sponsored program has been strong."
- The IMF delegation commended the Executive and Legislature for their continued commitment to strengthening public financial management, as well as Liberia's effort to improve governance and combat corruption. Addressing a news conference prior to their departure from the country during the weekend, the IMF delegation said continued support from donors to Liberia is important for making the recently established anti-corruption commission fully operational.

President Sirleaf Donates LD\$186,000 to Lofa Students at UL

(The Informer, National Chronicle, Heritage)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has contributed LD\$186,000 Liberian dollars to the Lofa County University Students Association (LUSA) as part payment to settle tuition arrears owed the University of Liberia by the students.
- Making the contribution Monday on behalf of the President on the campus of the University, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics at the Ministry of State, Mr. Varney Sirleaf, said President Johnson Sirleaf was gratified by the development role played by Lofa citizens through the University.

- Mr. Sirleaf assured the University students that the President will respond positively to all promises made by her in Lofa County during a cabinet retreat early this year in Voinjama. Receiving the contribution, the President of the Association, Mr. J. Lavela Massaquoi, thanked the President and said the people of Lofa through the University students, will continue to remain supportive of the development initiatives of Government. Mr. Lavela lauded the Liberian leader for the progress towards improving the education sector of the country.

Ireland Gives 8 Million Euros to Country

(Heritage)

- The Government of Ireland has committed approximately 8 million euros (US\$10m, 257.600) towards Liberia's reconstruction. The amount to be delivered in stages, covering a two-year period, is to benefit the country's health and security sectors. According to an Executive Mansion release, the country representative for Irish Aid, Grainne O'Neil, made the disclosure over the weekend, following a meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at
- the Foreign Ministry in Monrovia. Of the amount, 4 million euros will be provided to support Liberia's health sector, while an additional 2 million euros will be provided for 2008 and another 2 million euros in 2009. The Irish Aid country representative further informed the Liberian leader that 1 million United States dollars will be allocated to assist the recently organized Emergency Response Unit (ERU) of the Liberia National Police.
- Madam O'Neill, who was accompanied by Health Minister Walter Gwenigale, emphasized her government's desire towards strengthening its partnership with Liberia. President Johnson Sirleaf, in response, commended the Irish Government for its support and expressed satisfaction that the Irish Government has demonstrated that the road between cash and commitment can be shortened.

Stakeholders Raise Eyebrows about Elections' Bill

(The Inquirer)

- Stakeholders in the democratic process want President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to recall the National Legislators from their Agricultural Break to deliberate on a three pending draft bills that the National Elections Commission (NEC) has submitted to the August Body. The stakeholders comprising of political parties, civil society, religious and disabled communities, women organizations and youth groups made the pronouncement at a joint public consultation when each group delivered a position statement to the NEC requesting that the NEC forward the communication to the President of Liberia.
- Currently, the NEC has submitted an Act seeking the repeal of certain towns and cities due to what the NEC calls overlapping of administrative powers. Included in the Bills is to set a new population threshold for the various counties and the NEC wants to amend certain portions of the Constitution which includes the term of office for both the Executive and Legislative branches of government.

Liberian Journalist Returns with Award...Calls For Support To The Media

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

- A Liberian journalist, Jonathan Paye-Layleh, ending a week-long visit to the United Kingdom, has asked Members of the British Parliament to push for more assistance for journalists in Africa if they want to see good journalism prevail and flourish in struggling countries like Liberia.
- Mr. Paye-Layleh made the call in the House of Parliament when he presented to Speaker Michael Martin and Members of the lawmaking body three copies of the book published in memory of the late investigative Gambian journalist, Deyda Hydara. Hydara was gunned down in 2004 at his home in Bangul, minutes after he had returned home from work.
- The Liberian journalist's presentation of the books and his call was part of his response after receiving the Speaker Abott Award for Bravery in Journalism presented by British Speaker Michael Martin. A copy of the book was each presented also to the Parliamentary Press Galley and the Human Rights Group in the Parliament.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

Nimba Citizens Debate over Royalty from Acelormittal

(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Ireland Contributes Eight Million Euros towards Liberia's Reconstruction

IMF Delegation gives positive signals about Liberia's Economy

(Also reported on Sky FM, Truth FM and ELBC)

Lofa University Students get LD\$186,000 to settle tuition arrears

(Also reported on Truth FM, ELBC, Sky FM,)

BBC Online

Thursday, 6 November 2008

UN fears over warrant for Bashir



Omar al-Bashir is accused over attacks on civilians in Darfur. Indicting President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan over alleged war crimes in Darfur could put peacekeepers at risk, a senior UN official has warned.

Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Edmond Mulet also said an arrest warrant against Mr Bashir could derail Sudan's north-south peace deal.

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor sought a warrant against President Bashir in July.

Mr Bashir rejects the allegations and has lobbied to delay the investigation.

Judges have asked ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo to provide more evidence before they decide whether to issue a warrant.

The UN estimates that up to 2.7 million people have been forced from their homes and some 300,000 have died during the five-year conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region.