

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:

Tuesday, 7 March 2006

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Awoko
7 March 2006

Witness tells court

Issa was like a second god

By Betty Milton
The prosecution witness TF1-113 in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) trial yesterday said that the first accused, Issa Sesay was seen to her more like a second god in terms of command structure.

The witness, who was responding to questions posed to her during cross examination by Defence Counsel Mr. Wayne Jordash on behalf of Issa

Sesay, further stressed that she did not know whether there was an Area Commander in Kailahun during her stay. She disclosed that she only knew Mr. Sesay who was the commander and that he issued passes to civilians who wanted to go and trade goods.

Mr. Jordash further asked the witness whether she was aware of some amount of money given by Sam

Bockarie for Bondo initiation, the witness denied knowledge of the money. She stressed that she would not say anything about the Bondo Society as the Court was not the right place for

such conversation and that if the lawyer wanted to discuss such issues he should call a 'Soweh' [a head of in the Bondo Society].

The witness admitted that

between 1997 and 2000 there was a base in Kailahun meant only for RUF where they used to take children, adult as well as women for training. She said she could

not tell when the base ceased operations but that it was there till after the intervention. Some of the children were referred to as the Small Boys Unit (SBU) and they were used to

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Issa was like a second god

From Front Page
fight along side the RUF, while the Small Girls Unit (SGU) was used for domestic chores.

During their stay in Kailahun, the civilians used to work for the rebels in the RUF farm and these people were released during the

day after their work and the next day they would be taken to G5 Office before they were taken to work.

Civilians, the witness said, were forced to work in farms owned by rebels.

TF1-113 further maintained that whenever they had their goods to sell,

they would hand them over to the rebels after which they would sell the products and gave the money to the owners of the wares. These monies, the witness stressed, were used to buy medicine for civilians and also to buy food for the commanders.

Concord Times

7 March 2006

“RUF operated free schools, hospitals in Kailahun”

... Witness testifies

Story: Tanu Jalloh

Prosecution witness TF1-113 during cross-examination by Wayne Jordash, defence counsel for the first accused, Issa Sesay Monday told Special Court Trial Chamber I that the

Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels operated free schools and hospitals in Kailahun town.

“Between 1998 and 1999 the RUF, under Sam Bockarie and Issa

Cont. page 3

“RUF operated free schools, hospitals in Kailahun”

From page 1

Sesay, supplied medical facilities and ran cost-free hospitals including treatments for residents of Kailahun. They also operated free schools and children moved about freely to and from school. I had even sent my two children to those schools,” she disclosed adding that people were also allowed to farm freely without been asked on whose lands they have farmed.

“Issa Sesay was like a god. He is the only overall commander I knew then and he held that position till the end of the war. His

wife had about five girls as young as 15 who helped her do all the domestic work,” she further revealed.

The witness said children, women and men were trained at such bases as Bunumbu in the Bombali section in Kailahun in 1997. “Training in the Kailahun district started in 1997 following the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) coup and continued till after the intervention. I was in Kailahun when people were been taken to that base to be trained.”

At Special Court...

RUF trial resumes

*By Tom E. Tommy &
Saffia S. Kabba*

The trial of the RUF detainees at the Special Court for Sierra Leone continued yesterday with prosecution witness TF1 – 113 who stated his testimony last week, making more revelations.

In her testimony, she said disclosed that General Issa Sesay was the commander of the rebel movement up to the time the war was officially declared over. According to her, she was captured by rebels in Pendembu in 1991,

and taken to a place called Nlyadeboima.

She stated that during her stay at the town between 1997 and 2002, she saw children being trained as rebel fighters at the RUF training base in Kailahun District.

She also stated that women and adult males were also targeted for training by the rebels. Small girls under 15 years of age, according to the

witness, were used by the RUF forces for domestic works. After the overthrow of President Kabbah, the witness said RUF commanders went around telling people that the war was over.

She also testified that the civilians trapped behind rebel lines were forced to provide food and medicine for the rebels. *Cont: page 2*

RUF trial resumes

From front page

The witness went on to testify that forced labour was the other of the day in all RUF controlled territories.

She also pointed out in her testimony that no civilian was at liberty to carry out any serious

action.

farming activity, adding that even if they do, they do not have absolute control over such farms. The witness said General Issa Sesay was considered by the rebels as their god, adding that Issa Sesay had total control over his men.

Spectator
7 March 2006

RUF rebels provided us free medical care

... Special Court witness

By Joseph Turay

The Prosecution witness for the Special Court code name TF1 113 has yesterday admitted in court that RUF rebels based in Kailahun District were providing them with free medical treatment in exchange for their produce.

The witness who was being cross examined by defence lawyer for Issa Sesay, Wayne Jordash explained to the court

that since 1998 unto 1999 the rebels based in Kailahun District under the command of the first accused Issa Sesay, had been recruiting children and later send them to school. The witness told the court that these children who were mostly under 15 years were also given free medical care and education. She further went on to narrate that inspite of these privilege accorded to the children, women and adults who

continued page 2

RUF rebels provided us free medical care

from front page

were being abducted were also being given military training in different RUF "bases;" the witness said citing that 5 underage girls who had been abducted by the rebels were also charged with the responsibility of doing domestic works under

the wife of Issa Sesay. The witness told the court that civilians were also being forced to work on RUF farms in exchange for food. He added that civilians, who were being taken from their homes in the morning, would also work on the farms until night hours.

TF1 113 went on to explain that the Rebels had been assisting them with travel pass which most times would facilitate their movement to sell their product. She revealed that kamajors were also attacking different towns and villages in the District, citing places like Geyama and Jehun.

Patriotic Vanguard website

7 March 2006

http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/article.php3?id_article=435

Special Court: Judges Deliberate on Kabbah Subpoena

By Gibril Koroma - Tuesday 7 March 2006.

Many Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad are now eagerly awaiting the decision of the judges of the Special Court over the subpoena by Chief Hinga Norman and Moinina Fofanah on President Kabbah to appear before the court.

Arguments and counter-arguments by the prosecution and the defence have been presented, it's now left entirely to the judges. Below is a point by point narration of events by a very reliable source in Freetown:

15 December - Fofana motion for issuance of subpoena.

16 December - Norman motion.

13 January - Prosecution response.

16 January - Norman reply (to prosecution response)

18 January - Fofana reply (to prosecution response)

17 January - Request by Attorney-General to intervene

18 January - Letter from the Attorney-General

19 January - Order that AG should present written arguments by January 26, and that defence should respond by 31 January.

23 January - Materials filed by the AG

26 January - Fofana response to AG

30 January - Norman response to AG

Oral arguments took place before Trial Chamber I on 14 February. The Defence, Prosecution and Attorney-General all took part.

It is now before the judges. There is no date scheduled for a decision. The most recent session of the CDF accused trial ended on the 23rd of January and now we are hearing testimony in the RUF accused case. The CDF accused case resumes on 2 May.

News 24

6 March 2006

http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,,2-11-1447_1893133,00.html

Taylor will know fate 'soon'

06/03/2006 22:05 - (SA)

Monrovia - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf returned on Monday from Nigeria, promising that the fate of former warlord Charles Taylor, wanted for war crimes, would "soon" be finalised by African leaders.

Sirleaf said: "The issue of Charles Taylor was discussed in Nigeria.

"The African leaders will work on finding a solution that will be acceptable to the international community, and that will soon be done."

A source in Sirleaf's office said that African leaders were consulting on the issue under the aegis of the African Union and that a decision was likely to be announced at the next AU summit in Banjul, Gambia, in July.

Support for rebels

Taylor was wanted at the international war crimes tribunal in neighbouring Sierra Leone to face charges of supporting the brutal rebels of that country's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the 1990s.

Sirleaf who had been on an official tour of Nigeria since Friday, had repeatedly said the Taylor issue was not her priority, despite pressure from the international community for him to face justice.

Remi Oyo, a spokesperson for Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, was quoted as saying that the two leaders had not discussed Taylor's fate, although Obasanjo had met Taylor, days before Sirleaf's visit.

UN-backed deal

Taylor had been living in Nigeria since August 2003 at Obasanjo's invitation as part of a United Nations-backed political process, which brought to an end Liberia's 14-year civil war and organised the election which ushered Sirleaf into power.

According to a source in the president's office, meanwhile, Sirleaf who was expected to proceed from Nigeria to Europe for a three-nation tour of Belgium, France and Switzerland, was now likely to travel in midweek.

No official explanation was given for the change in her itinerary.

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 6 March 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC Monitoring Africa, 6 March 2006

Liberia: UN mission pledges to cooperate with government

The special representative of the UN secretary-general to Liberia [Allan Doss] has called on residents of Gbarpolu County [in western Liberia] to report to UNMIL [United Nations Mission in Liberia] weapons in their community. Mr. Allan Doss said he was pleased with developments in the county but stressed that [word indistinct] needs to be done.

Mr. Doss spoke on Thursday [2 March] when he visited the provincial city of Gbarpolu to meet with local authorities. His visit was also intended to assess the general conditions on the ground one year after UNMIL was deployed in the area. Mr. Doss encouraged the citizens to stop and report rape as there is no place for violence against anyone in the new Liberia.

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.

Taylor's fate to be known 'soon', Liberia's president pledges

MONROVIA, March 6, 2006 (AFP) - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has promised that the fate of former warlord Charles Taylor, wanted for war crimes, will "soon" be finalised by African leaders. A source in Sirleaf's office told AFP that African leaders were consulting on the issue under the aegis of the African Union and that a decision was likely to be announced at the next AU summit in Banjul, Gambia in July.

President Obasanjo Pledges Continued Support for Ecowas, Liberia

Abuja, Mar 06, 2006 (Nigeria First/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --President Olusegun Obasanjo has committed Nigeria to a long-term noble responsibility within the ECOWAS sub-region, with Liberia a major beneficiary.

03/06/2006 13:07:18

EU looking to offer more aid, investors to help rebuild Liberia

BRUSSELS, Belgium_European Union officials said Monday that the EU was looking to offer more aid to Liberia and lure European investors to help build key infrastructure there as part of stepped up reconstruction efforts. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso

told **Liberia's** new president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, that the EU was eager to play a stronger role.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivorian opposition re-structures ahead of October polls

ABIDJAN, March 6, 2006 (AFP) - One of Ivory Coast's main opposition parties, the Rally of Republicans (RDR) led by Alassane Ouattara, met at the weekend to take stock its position and plan ahead of elections later this year, the RDR said Monday.

VOA, Paris, 04 March 2006

Accused Kidnap Gang Leader Extradited to France

By Lisa Bryant

The alleged leader of a gang accused of torturing a Jewish man to death near Paris has been extradited to France from Ivory Coast. Youssouf Fofana extradition from Ivory Coast comes more than a week after French police were sent to the West African country to track him down. He fled there shortly after the death of Jewish telephone salesman, Ilan Halimi.

Local Media – Newspapers

Taylor Issue Left Out of Liberian and Nigerian Leaders Discussion

(The News and New Democrat)

- When Presidents Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Olusegun Obasanjo met in Nigeria over the weekend, the fate of exiled former Liberian leader Charles Taylor was never discussed and there were no plans to extradite him to face trial in Sierra Leone, Nigerian officials said. A diplomatic source in Lagos was quoted as saying that it was too early for the two leaders to reveal anything publicly and even if the issue was discussed they may not be ready to make it known.

Finance Minister on Drastic Reform

(New Democrat and Heritage)

- A press release issued in Monrovia yesterday said that Finance Minister Dr. Antoinette Sayeh warned employees of the ministry who differ with the current efforts to transform Liberia's economy, to seek employment elsewhere.

Small Arms Conference Opens in Monrovia Today

(Liberian Express)

- Under the auspices of the UNDP, a one-day conference of media executives to analyze the new critical responsibilities of the media in the rebuilding of Liberia without illicit arms opens at the Mamba Point Hotel in Monrovia today. Renowned Ghanaian journalist and former Information Minister Kojo Yankah will serve as chief facilitator.

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

President Avoids Public Comments on Taylor's Fate

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

United States Labour Delegation to Intervene in Firestone Workers Dispute

- According to journalists in Harbel, Firestone, an American Center for Labour Standards delegation arrived in Liberia to help negotiate an end to dispute over improved salaries and benefits between workers and management of the Firestone Rubber Plantations Company.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Finance Minister Issues Stern Warning to Custom Collectors

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Human Rights advocate wants President to be Decisive on Taylor Issue

- Human rights advocate Dempster Browne recently called on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to be firm on turning former President Charles Taylor over to the war crimes court in Sierra Leone.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

University Professor Urges Media to Exercise Fairness

- Addressing a Liberia Media Project-organized peace and culture festival in Gbarnga, Bong County recently, Cuttington University professor Joseph Guannue called on the media to exercise fairness in their work by using the Press Union of Liberia Code of Conduct as a guide.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.

UN Daily News

6 March 2006

Convicted Croatian Serb ex-leader commits suicide before he was to testify at UN court

6 March - Following an investigation, Dutch authorities have confirmed suicide in the death of a former Croatian Serb leader who had been sentenced to 13 years in jail by a United Nations tribunal for his role in what it called a savage ethnic cleansing campaign in the early 1990s.

Milan Babic, who had testified in former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's case in 2002, was found dead in his cell yesterday afternoon in the UN Detention Unit in Scheveningen, the Netherlands, where he was preparing to testify in the trial of another Serb leader, Milan Martić, a UN spokesperson said today.

In June 2004, three justices of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), sitting in The Hague, sentenced Mr. Babic to even more time than the 11 years prosecutors requested following a plea bargain because of what they called the gravity of the crimes that had occurred in the Krajina region of Croatia from 1991 to 1992.

As part of a the bargain, Mr. Babic, then 48, had pleaded guilty to being a co-perpetrator in a joint criminal enterprise to forcibly and permanently remove Croats and other non-Serbs during his stint as president of the self-declared Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK).

Presiding Judge Alphons Orie of the Netherlands said Mr. Babic participated in a campaign of persecution that "involved the murder of more than 200 civilians, including women and elderly persons, the confinement and imprisonment of several hundred civilians in inhumane conditions, the forcible transfer or deportation of thousands of civilians, and the destruction of homes and public or private property."

He added: "The crime, which was characterized by ruthlessness and savagery and was committed with the intent to discriminate against non-Serb civilians, strongly impacted on victims and their relatives. Their suffering is still significant."

The Tribunal President, Judge Fausto Pocar, has ordered an internal inquiry into Mr. Babic's death.

BBC

6 March 2006

Darfur war crimes courts slammed

A top UN official has rejected Sudan's claims to be bringing to justice those accused of war crimes in Darfur.

Sudan set up special courts in Darfur to counter attempts to take Sudanese officials accused of atrocities to the world court in The Hague.

But Sima Samar said the cases she had seen either predated the Darfur conflict or did not involve those in positions of responsibility.

Some 2m people have fled their homes in Darfur in what the US says is genocide.

Sudan's government denies that it armed Arab militias to drive black Africans from their homes after two rebel groups took up arms three years ago.

Tougher peace force

On Friday, the African Union (AU) is due to announce whether it wants to hand over its peacekeeping role in Darfur to the United Nations.

There are some 7,000 AU troops in Darfur but the organisation lacks the money to pay for them to continue.

UN chief Kofi Annan has urged Western countries to take over but Sudan vigorously rejects the proposed move and has threatened to leave the pan-African body if it lets the UN take over.

Numerous international reports have blamed senior government figures for the violence that has killed at least 180,000 people.

None of those named have been detained and many still hold ministerial positions.

Ms Samar says that of the 29 people she was told had been tried by the Darfur courts, 15 army officers had been convicted of offences committed before the Darfur crisis started, while none of the other 14 held positions of responsibility.

She also said that arbitrary arrests and torture were continuing.

A special UN inquiry has given the International Criminal Court in The Hague the names of 51 potential suspects.

Last week, a senior British official has said he expects targeted sanctions, such as travel bans, to be imposed soon on about 10 Sudanese officials, accused of human rights abuses in Darfur. The proposed UN force would be bigger and have a tougher mandate than the existing AU peacekeeping mission.

Over the weekend, Sudan's foreign ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim said: "We may be forced to take the decision of pulling out of the African Union" if the AU decides to hand over the Darfur peace mission to the UN.

Divided rebels

Meanwhile, splits in one of the two rebel groups at peace talks in Nigeria have deepened.

A statement signed by 19 senior Sudan Liberation Army officials denounced SLA leader Abdel Wahed Mohamed el-Nur.

His leadership was already in doubt after the SLA congress elected a new leader last year.

AU officials say these splits are hampering the progress of the peace talks.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4779828.stm>

Published: 2006/03/06 16:46:42 GMT