

**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 at:**

Friday, 7 September 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217

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Standard Times
Friday, 7 September 2007

ONS warns against security threat

BY EDWARD MARAH

The National Coordinator of National Security Brig. Rtd. Kellie Hassan Conteh has said in Freetown that the Office of National Security (ONS) will not sit idly by allowing few unpatriotic elements to destabilize the security of the state.

Addressing some media practitioners at State House on Tuesday 4th September 2007, Brig. Rtd. Kellie Conteh expressed his dissatisfaction over some newspapers publications which he referred to as inciting, and threat to national security and development.

He stated that some media houses are habitually attacking the UN family in the country, and other

stakeholders in the election process. ONS Coordinator lamented on the prevailing negative media reports that undermine the peace and economic development of the country.

He reminded that the country has just gone through difficult time of 10-year civil war which the United Nation played a leading role to end the war.

Brigadier Rtd. Kellie Conteh said that Sierra Leone on transformation from war to peace and development that needs to be processed with patriotism. "We will not allow anybody to take us back from the stress we are about to overcome," said the ONS Coordinator. He warned those media houses

that in the habit of promoting tribalism, regionalism and inciting one group against the other to stop publishing such articles. The retired military officer however, commended majority of the media houses for reporting accurately the electoral process in educating the public on national issues. He also acknowledged the role of the media in nation building and pledged the ONS' continuous collaboration with the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ).

President of SLAJ Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo welcomed the SLAJ/ONS partnership in addressing issues of national concern, adding that SLAJ remains committed to a peaceful and non-violence election.

European Union

Thursday, 6 September 2007

FINANCING OF SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

In a resolution on the Special Court for Sierra Leone, set up to try those responsible for war crimes in that country, Parliament urges the international community to ensure that funding for the court does not run out, particularly ahead of the crucial trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

The court was established by an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996, notably war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The trial against Charles Taylor - indicted on 17 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, mutilation, rape, sexual slavery and the recruitment of child soldiers - is seen as a test case. However, his trial has been adjourned until 7 January 2008 - and the court is likely to exhaust its funding by October 2007.

Precedent-setting role of the special court

In its resolution, adopted by 69 votes to 0 with one abstention, Parliament describes the court as "a precedent-setting development in international law, as it is the first tribunal to indict a sitting African head of state for war crimes and crimes against humanity". It points out that "the fight against impunity is one of the cornerstones of the Union's human rights policy, and the international community bears responsibility for supporting it in order to promote the effectiveness of the accountability mechanisms put in place".

The inability to bring the trial of Charles Taylor to a conclusion would, say MEPs, undermine the establishment of a lasting peace in the region and also prejudice the development of international criminal justice.

Financial contributions needed urgently from all states

The court currently receives financial support from the EU through the EIDHR. In addition, EU Member States, especially the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have contributed consistently.

Parliament urges "all States, including EU Member States, to contribute further to the operations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone in order to ensure that the Special Court can take its work to a successful conclusion". It also asks the European Commission "to provide continuing funding for the Special Court in the forthcoming national programmes with Sierra Leone" and "calls on the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with the UN Security Council, to explore all the possible financial ways to enable the Special Court to complete its crucial functions".

The Inquirer (Monrovia)

Thursday, 6 September 2007

JPC on Taylor's Witnesses Issue

By C. Winnie Saywah
Monrovia

The trial of the former President, Charles Taylor in The Hague has been postponed to January 7 next year due to a motion filed by his new Defense Council, but Mr. Augustine Toe says he differs with one of the conditions stated in the motion concerning potential witnesses' unwillingness to testify due to the prevailing United Nations travel ban and assets freeze scheme.

The new defense team hired to represent the interest of former President Taylor in a motion seeking for continuance/postponement of the case for an additional four months giving three reasons and one reason was that they were encountering difficulties in getting Liberians who are willing to testify on behalf of Mr. Taylor for fear that they might be put on the UN travel ban list or their assets might be seized.

The National Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Toe said the idea of placing travel ban on some Liberians does not mean that in exceptional cases as such, indulgence can not be provided by the United Nations and the Liberian government.

The JPC boss said the political cry by Taylor's defense team is in no way an hindrance to the resumption of the trial noting that the lead Defense Council of the accused, Countenay Griffiths, in a press conference held in Monrovia recently, did not name any of the identified witnesses who are willing to testify for fear that the travel ban could possibly entrap them. He stated that the council requested a dispensation for such individuals but it was not granted.

Director Toe said human rights cannot be practised in vacuum therefore the process must be given a chance and; in as much as the JPC is campaigning against the culture of impunity, it is also concerned about the grave charges of war crime hanging on a former leader and citizen of Liberia.

He further stated, "but there are also fundamental rules regulating prison cells or else there should be no prisons. We were opportuned to visit The Hague but all attempts to talk to Mr. Taylor in person were thwarted; however, we were directed to his defense council."

Speaking on Charles Taylor's current condition, Director Toe disclosed that the former Liberian President's physical health is excellent

Director Toe along with other human rights activists, journalists and other interested international parties traveled, to The Hague lately to witness the August 20 court session of the accused. He told reporters yesterday that following the adjournment of the trial; all sources contacted on the well-being of Mr. Taylor said the reports of Mr. Taylor's ill condition circulated in Liberia were untrue.

He revealed that Mr. Taylor is given a meal allowance; eats what he wants and prepares his own food. This he added is based on security reasons. The JPC boss further stated that Mr. Taylor's immediate family members are allowed to visit him and that he is provided adequate office space.

He said Taylor is still relevant to citizens in and out of Liberia and many people, out of reasons best known to themselves, brew tension and sometimes confusion; adding that these negative reports even led the JPC to take keen interest in witnessing all the trials of Mr. Taylor.

The JPC boss said the commission intends to remain in constant contact with its international partners, officials of the Special Court and the defense office of Mr. Taylor so as to inform the Liberian people at all times about the proceedings of the trial when it begins next year.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Thursday, 6 September 2007

72 Witnesses to Testify Against Taylor

By George J. Borteh

It has been established in Monrovia that about 72 witnesses produced by the prosecution in the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor by the Special Court of Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague, Netherlands are prepared to testify against him.

The witnesses accordingly, have been drawn into several categories including amputees from the Sierra Leonean civil conflict.

The Executive Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, (JPC), Cllr. Augustine Toe, made the disclosure yesterday during a press conference held at the National Catholic Secretariat in Monrovia.

Cllr. Toe, who has just returned from The Hague where he had gone to acquaint himself with the trial of Mr. Taylor, said the 72 witnesses will be transported taken to The Hague before the start of the trial which has been scheduled for January 7, 2008.

On June 4th, 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone unsealed an indictment for the ex Liberian President for War Crimes and Crimes against humanity. Mr. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to all 11 counts of the charges.

His new defense team headed by Jamaican-born-British lawyer, Cllr. Courtenay Griffiths, filed a motion seeking for postponement of the case for four months to allow him to adequately prepare, a petition which presiding Judge Julia Sebutinde granted.

Cllr. Toe said the defense lawyers informed the court in their motion that potential witnesses for their client (Taylor), are unwilling to testify because of the prevailing travel ban and asset freeze imposed on them by the UN Security Council.

But under Security Council resolution, the United Nations will relax the travel ban for those wanting to go to The Hague to testify in the trial.

Meanwhile, the JPC boss disclosed further that while in The Hague, sources told him that Mr. Taylor has been well taken care of by authorities of the Special Court.

"We spoke to officials of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, to people from the defense team of Mr. Taylor; we spoke to representatives of other Human Rights organizations concerning reports in Liberia that the rights of Mr. Taylor are being abused/violated as a detainee," he noted.

He added that Mr. Taylor's lead counsel, Cllr. Griffiths, at a press conference held on August 20, 2007 following adjournment of the trial in The Hague, intimated that his client has been well taken care of in prison.

"Today, Mr. Taylor eats what he wants. Mr. Taylor is given meal allowance, he prepares his own food; not that the Special Court does not employ a cook for Mr. Taylor," said Cllr. Toe.

He added that family members of the former Liberian leader are permitted to visit him, noting that more resources including office spaces in both The Hague and in Monrovia are provided.

Cllr. Toe who did not have an opportunity to talk with Mr. Taylor during his visit to The Hague, stressed that the JPC will remain in constant contact with its international partners, officials of the Special Court and the defense team of Mr. Taylor.

He assured that the Commission will do everything necessary to inform the Liberian public on proceedings of the trial when it begins next year as well as the well being of Mr. Taylor. Cllr. Toe said his trip to The Hague, was facilitated by a partner, Misereor of Germany.

Associated Press

Friday, 7 September 2007

Ex-Liberian Leader's Son Charged Again

MIAMI (AP) — A federal grand jury on Thursday added charges of torture against the son of former Liberian president Charles Taylor for crimes allegedly committed in that West African country while his father was in power.

Charles McArthur Emmanuel, also known as Chuckie Taylor, was charged with one count of torture last year and now faces four more torture counts, as well as one new count each of conspiracy to torture, use of a firearm in a violent crime and conspiracy to use a firearm in a violent crime.

Documents released by the prosecution don't identify the additional victims, but say they were stabbed, cut, given electrical shocks, severely beaten with firearms and burned with molten plastic, lit cigarettes and an iron.

Emmanuel, who was born in Boston, is being prosecuted under a never-before-used 1994 law that makes it a crime for an American citizen to commit torture overseas. He was allegedly the head of the paramilitary Anti-Terrorist Unit in his father's government, and is accused of torturing and helping to torture people in Liberia between 1999 and 2003.

Telephone and e-mail messages left for Emmanuel's attorney, Miguel Caridad, were not immediately returned Thursday.

Emmanuel, 30, is being held without bail on the torture charges, which carry a potential life sentence; his trial is set for January 2008. He is also serving an 11-month sentence for falsifying his father's name on a passport application before arriving in March at Miami International Airport from Trinidad.

Emmanuel was born to an ex-girlfriend of Taylor's during his time as a college student in Boston.

His father Charles Taylor faces trial later this year before a special United Nations tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for allegedly overseeing the murder, rape and mutilation of thousands of people during neighboring Sierra Leone's bloody 10-year civil war.

Agence France Presse

Friday, 7 September 2007

Sierra Leonean's civil war amputees say have been let down

by Susan Njanji

JUI, Sierra Leone, Sept 7, 2007 (AFP) - With both hands hacked off in the Sierra Leone civil war, Mustapha Mansaray, 56, sits on the veranda of his house, counting by the day the time he has spent on that one wooden bench.

Glaring at a plastic jar filled with his pills, and a small basketful of cigarettes and boxes of matches, he is precise that he has spent exactly seven years and three days bound to that bench in this settlement 30 kilometres (20 miles) east of Freetown.

With no hands and one leg now paralysed, the former cocoa beans trader is now a pauper. From his little wares, he makes just about two dollars a day, for his family of eight children.

But the presidential election run-off due on Saturday has given him and thousands of other victims of Sierra Leone's gruesome 10-year civil war a fresh chance to ponder the future.

"I will be happy to have a government that shows concern about our most basic needs -- health and the children we can no longer take care of because of this," said Mansaray, lifting what remains of his two amputated limbs.

He is one of the thousands whose limbs were chopped off with machetes in cold blood by bands of marauding rebels during the country's 10-year civil war which ended in 2001, and is considered one of the most gruesome wars in modern history.

As the west African nation goes to the polls for the second round of voting to pick a new president to succeed President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the victims of the savage war are annoyed at the outgoing government for paying lip service to their plight.

The election pits against one another candidates of the only two political parties to have ruled this country -- the governing Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the opposition All People's Congress (APC).

The APC is promising change while the ruling party is grappling for a win to ensure continuity of the work it says it has already started.

The elections will be the first since a truth and reconciliation commission report (TRC) recommended reparations for the war victims. Many of the bereft war victims look likely to vote with their empty stomachs.

"We are the forgotten people by government ... cast aside," said Morlai Kamara, a double amputee at the nearby Grafton settlement.

Kadiatu Fofana, whose two legs were chopped off with an axe in the diamond-rich town of Koidu at a time she had a seven-month-old baby, bemoans the lack of help from the government.

"We have had a rough standard of living," she said.

Thanks to foreign humanitarian aid agencies, including the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), she and hundreds of others have houses in 36 settlements dotted across the mineral-wealth country.

"The house I am living in was built by the NRC as part of their assistance to amputees. Yet our own government has not given us a cent since 1999. We hope things will get better with a new government. Perhaps they will take our case seriously," she said.

Kamara, who lost a child to illness because he could not afford medical fees, said "I pray that the new government's attitude to us will be different and that the TRC recommendations will be implemented."

Jusu Jarka, head of the Amputees Association, said the war victims met last month and agreed to give the new government an ultimatum to pay them out reparations as TRC recommended.

"We are especially angry with the government for failing to address our needs, but instead taking care of the needs of ex-combatants, some of them are the very perpetrators of the atrocities," said the 50-year-old former bank security officer.

But the victims who have been patient with the past regime, vow not to waste time with the new administration.

"We are giving them six months to implement the TRC recommendations, failure of which we will take to the streets," said Jarka.

Unisa Sesay, spokesman for National Commission for Social Action, an official social welfare organisation, said that reparations were set to begin.

"We would have launched the reparations programme already but because of the elections, there has been a delay," he told AFP.

In a 2005 white paper responding to the TRC recommendations, Sierra Leone pledged to timely pay out the damages subject to availability of funds.

For Chermot Sesay, 23, a one-time vocational technical college student in eastern Kenema where rebels hacked off both his legs in 1998, "the government instead of seeking our welfare, brought us the (warcrimes) Special Court."

"Even those charged by the court are living better than us -- better fed, better health," he said.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 6 September 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

There were no relevant stories on Liberia in the international media today.

International Clips on West Africa

AP 09/06/2007 08:44:21

Sierra Leone runoff due Saturday

By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - Sierra Leoneans choose a president this weekend, a crucial measure of the diamond-rich country's prospects for stability following a 10-year war, voting after a campaign that saw clashes among political rivals. Despite the clashes, the shadow of violence has largely faded and the election issues that resonated loudest were corruption and unemployment _ especially among restless youth who include ex-combatants and one-time child soldiers. Saturday's runoff pits opposition leader Ernest Bai Koroma, 54, against current Vice President Solomon Berewa, 69. In the initial voting on Aug. 11, the first presidential race since peacekeepers withdrew two years ago, both men fell short of winning the required 55 percent of the needed to avoid a second

Sierra Leone women want guaranteed seats after poor election showing

By Susan Njanji

FREETOWN, Sept 5, 2007 (AFP) - Women in Sierra Leone are seeking a Constitutionally guaranteed 30 percent quota in all political and public Offices after a poor showing at elections two weeks ago. They are incensed that despite having rigorously lobbied political parties, only 16 out of 112 lawmakers elected to the new parliament last month were women. But the seven political parties competing in the electoral race nominated only 64 women out of a total of 566 parliamentary candidates.

Sierra Leone's pre-election joint peace rally under threat

FREETOWN, Sept 6, 2007 (AFP) - A much-billed peace rally planned by Sierra Leone's rival parties for Thursday, ahead of a presidential election, hung in doubt after the opposition said it would boycott it due to unfulfilled demands. After days of violent inter-party clashes left dozens injured in the run-up to Saturday's conclusive round of voting, the opposition All People's Congress (APC) and ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) candidates signed a pact pledging violence-free elections.

Local Media – Newspaper

Armed Robbery Increases as Police and UNMIL Launch Operation

(Heritage, The News, New Vision, Liberian Express, New Democrat, The Analyst)

- The Liberian National Police (LNP) in collaboration with its partners has launched “Operation Moonlight” to combat crimes in the country.
- Deputy Inspector General for Operations, Col. Gayflor Tarpeh indicated that the operation would involve a large number of UNMIL military and police personnel as well as LNP officers.
- Colonel Tarpeh said the launch of the operations comes in the wake of the increase in armed robbery. Speaking during UNMIL weekly press briefing on Wednesday, the Deputy Inspector of the Police for Operations said the latest crime statistics for the month of August depicts a continuous rise in the number of armed robbery cases.

Former Ruling Party Executives Split over Taiwan-Africa Forum

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer and New Democrat)

- The Legislative Caucus of the National Patriotic Party on Wednesday warned two officials of the party against traveling to Taiwan. The Caucus through two of its members, Representatives George Mulbah of Bong County and Saah Gbollie of Margibi County threatened to take legal action against the Party’s Secretary General and Chairman if necessary, to stop them from leaving the country to attend a meeting they claimed would be a violation of the one China Policy. The two lawmakers think the travel of John Whitfield and Theophilus Gould to Taiwan would undermine attempts to remove several partisans of the party from the UN travel ban list.

President Asks Dismissed Maritime Commissioner to Hang on

(The Informer and The Analyst)

- A week following the dismissal of John Morlu as Maritime Commissioner, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has asked that he hangs on to his post as Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs pending the appointment of a new Commissioner for the Bureau. The President a week ago carried out a reshuffle in government and named Counsellor John Stewart as Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime.
- She however withdrew the nomination of Stewart and subsequently dismissed him as Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs following reports that he was undergoing investigation on charges of financial improprieties and disbarment from the bar in Washington DC, the United States.

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

New Chinese Envoy to Liberia Presents Letter of Credence

- Presenting his Letter of Credence to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday, the new Chinese Ambassador to Liberia Zhou Yu Zhou said that China-Liberia ties have grown very rapidly since the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two Countries, noting that under the new democratic leadership of Liberia, President Sirleaf has made progress to promote peace and stability in Liberia especially in the area of national reconciliation, social and economic development.
- For her part, President Sirleaf indicated that Liberia recognizes the meaningful contribution that China has made and that Liberia respects the one-China Policy.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Government Discounts Claims by Alleged Coup Plotter

- A statement issued by the Government of Liberia described as “grossly distorted” claims by the former Armed Forces of Liberia Colonel Andrew Dorbor that he was forced to lie that some persons were plotting to overthrow the Government.
- The statement read by Information Minister Laurence Bropleh yesterday noted that Col. Dorbor was arrested in the Ivory Coast and brought to Liberia by a high Ivorian

official for negotiating the purchase of arms and ammunition in violation of the UN embargo and that during investigation conducted by the National Security Agency, Col. Dorbor voluntarily narrated how the coup was planned but appealed to the Agency to protect him against his co-conspirators fearing they could eliminate him.

- The statement also refuted Col. Dorbor's allegation that he was tortured while in detention, stating that the Government has never condoned torture of whatever kind in the conduct of such criminal investigation.
- Meanwhile, a prison watch group, the Prison Assistance Programme's Director of Community Empowerment and Victim Rehabilitation, Daniel Valentine called on the Government to investigate Col. Dorbor's allegation that he was tortured by both Liberian and Ivorian security forces as such allegation was grave and violated human rights.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Catholic Rights Group Says Assertions of Bad Taylor Treatment Untrue

- The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission National Director Augustine Toe said recent reports that former President Charles Taylor's rights were violated by the War Crimes Court in The Hague are false and thought the reports were being widespread to create unnecessary tension in Liberia.
- Addressing the news conference yesterday, Cllr. Toe stated that Mr. Taylor is being treated well in keeping with international human rights law to the extent that he has selected to prepare his own meals probably for security reasons.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Media Centre Children Desk Officer Lauds President Sirleaf

- The Coordinator of the Children Desk of the Liberia Christian Media Centre, Mr. Kendell Ander commended President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for ordering a stop to children selling in the streets during school hours.
- Addressing the news conference, Mr. Ander said that the President policy's statement is protective of Liberian children from abuse including internal child-trafficking and appealed to the President to go a step further by sending a Bill to the National Legislature that would criminalize child-trafficking.

(Also reported on Truth FM, Star and ELBC Radio)

Criminal Gang Allegedly Fired at a Police Patrol Vehicle

- Police sources told Radio Veritas yesterday that a criminal gang fired at the vehicle of a senior police officer while being chased after allegedly kidnapping someone from central Monrovia Wednesday evening. The security chased the gang up to the Paynesville area and later arrested two of the suspects.

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.