

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



Displaying football skills at Sussex village.

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:

Monday, 7 September 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Sierra News
Monday, 7 September 2009

Taylor's Defence Contrasts Evidence of his Trial

By Kadrie Koroma

Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp, has disclosed last Wednesday, that the Appeals Chamber will hear final arguments on the appeal against the judgment that convicted the three Leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The RUF convicts were Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao.

Stephen made this statement during a press briefing held last Wednesday at the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) Headquarters, Freetown.

Stephen Rapp further disclosed that at the same time, in The Hague, the Defence

Phase of the trial of Charles Taylor will continue, with the direct examination of the accused.

He however said this week's appeals hearing will mark the end of both attorneys for the Prosecution and Defence

making arguments in the RUF case. He said when the judges of the Appeals Chamber *see page 2*

Special Court Chief Prosecutor gets new job

By Kadrie Koroma

Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Stephen Rapp informed Journalists on Tuesday, September 1 about his decision to resign as Special Court Prosecutor to enable him take up a new appointment in the US State Department in Washington.

He made this disclosure during

a press briefing at SLENA Office, Wallace Johnson Street, Freetown.

He said in July, he was nominated by President Barack Obama to be United States Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues. He said the nomination has now been confirmed by the US Senate and have given

to the UN Secretary General for his resignation from the Special Court Prosecution to be effective on Monday September 7, 2009. His new office will be in the US State Department, Washington which is the Office of the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. *see page 3*

Taylor's Defence Contrasts Evidence of his Trial

pronounce their final ruling several weeks from now, all judicial proceedings in Freetown will then be completed.

Special Court Prosecutor stated that at the hearing the Prosecution will present its arguments for rejecting the 96 grounds of appeal that have been filed by the three RUF accused, Sesay, Kallon and Gbao, against the Trial Chamber's judgments of conviction entered in February 2009 and the sentences of imprisonment pronounced in April 2008, the Prosecution, he said, will also be pursuing three grounds of appeal asking for additional determinations of criminal responsibility.

Stephen Rapp explained that in the trial of Charles Taylor, the Defence Phase of the case began on July 13, with the accused himself beginning his own testimony the following day, which he continued throughout the last seven weeks.

He said the trial process has reached the stage where Charles Taylor has the opportunity to respond to the charges against him. He added that the accused is presenting

a story that is very different from the evidence offered by the Prosecution.

Prosecutor Rapp said they called over 90 witnesses who appeared in person before the Court and testified about grave crimes committed against tens of thousands of innocent victims in Sierra Leone and provided the linkage evidence showing Taylor's responsibility for the Commission of these atrocities.

He said they have been waiting patiently while the

Special Court Chief Prosecutor gets new job
Mr. Rapp said for almost a decade now he has been working to see the administration of justice in serious crimes commencing first at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and then at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He said in his new position, he hoped to continue that work but this time on behalf of the US Government to assist countries in achieving accountability after the widespread Commission of violations of international humanitarian law with the objective to help prevent the recurrence of this

accused gives his own contrary version of events, and denies all the charges against him. "We are looking forward to questioning him on cross-examination in the coming weeks. When our turn comes to ask the questions, we will confront Charles Taylor with the full weight of our case," he added.

Talking about his own participation in the process Stephen Rapp, said it has been his greatest honour to serve as the Chief Prosecution of the

atrocities. He said he is now leaving the representation of the prosecution in Charles Taylor's Trial into the capable hands of his colleagues.

Mr. Rapp expressed gratitude to the people of Sierra and recounted his first days in Sierra Leone, which he said were very historical particularly the courage, the tolerance and the good will of Sierra Leoneans, despite their sufferings caused by the civil war, according to him Sierra Leoneans have been determined to re-build their communities and their country.

Special Court for Sierra Leone for nearly three years. He said during his tenure, he has overseen the prosecution of all the trials before the Special Court, where they secured convictions of the Leaders of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, the Civil Defence Forces and the trial level of the RUF, for atrocities committed during the civil war. He said he is proud to have been part of judicial proceedings that resulted in the first convictions

Stephen Rapp paid tribute to the victims who came forward to testify at the trials to give evidences about how they had been sustaining wounds and killings of relatives.

He said although the Prosecution have always stood for justice but victims who opted for as witnesses had truly made justice possible. He however said that when historians would write about the Special Court and the significant contribution it made would be the turning point in both regional and national history, as it could be recorded that victims of the worst crimes were not afraid

in history for the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a war crime, the first convictions for attacks on peace keepers as a violation of international humanitarian law, and the first convictions for sexual slavery and forced marriage as crimes against humanity. He added that he is also pleased to have seen through the presentation of the prosecution's case against Charles Taylor, the start of his defense evidence, and their preparation to meet the defense case.

to tell the world what happened to the people of Sierra Leone, and to hold those responsible to account.

The Chief Prosecutor recalled the wishes of President Dr. Ernest Bai Bureh Koroma when he said that the Special Court will live for posterity a "magnificent and imposing legacy", adding that as Prosecutor he hoped the legacy of the Special Court has increased the respect for the rule of law by all individuals, no matter how powerful are individuals and hence has contributed to the sustenance of peace and security for the people of Sierra Leone.

Awareness Times

Monday, 7 September 2009

Rebels Apologise to Sierra Leoneans

By Augustine Samba

The three recently convicted rebel leaders of the obsolete Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have apologized to Sierra Leoneans who lived through the war, lost loved ones and those who still bear the scars of the conflict as a result of the actions of the RUF.

Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao voiced out their remorse on Friday 4th September 2009 at the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Past Friday was the first time in many years that the three defunct RUF leaders were given the opportunity to speak during the hearings. They however, used the opportunity to comment on certain issues and even accused the prosecution team of the Special Court.

“The war brought untold tragedies to my country and as someone who was eventually the interim leader of the RUF, I want to

leader of the RUF, I want to apologize to the civilians who lived through the war and especially those who lost loved ones and who still bear the scars of the conflict as the result of the actions of the RUF,” said Issa Sesay .

He alleged that prior to his trial, the prosecutor offered him a deal to cooperate with them in order to serve only 12 years in jail. “The deal was that I should accept that I ordered RUF fighters to amputate civilians; I should accept that I was involved with raping women. I should accept that I agreed with others to kill civilians in Sierra Leone; I should agree that I was involved with burning,” he explained.

Issa Sesay said he kicked against the deal, as according to him, he was confident that civilians from all over the country would come forward to exonerate him.

“This is why civilians came from Kailahun, Kono, Bombali, Kenema, and Tonkolili District to defend me. I denied this deal because I know very well that I never ordered any RUF to amputate, rape, or kill civilians,” he emphasized. He disclosed

Court Prosecutors

further that he had over 300 witnesses that were ready to testify in his defence.

He alleged that most of the prosecution witnesses were ex-combatants released from the Pademba Road prisons with the help of the prosecution. He alleged further that the witnesses were given huge amounts of money. He continued that the alleged released ex-combatants hated him for his role in bringing peace to Sierra Leone, adding that they considered him a betrayer to the course of the RUF.

He pointed out that there were no incidences of rapes, amputation or

destructions in all his areas of command during the years he was manning those areas, adding that, he was always at the forefront of protecting civilians.

“My Lords, my defence case proves that wherever I was living there was law and order. Even the Prosecution witnesses said this. I lived in Pendembu, Kailahun from April to November 1998 and the prosecution did not bring any evidence of any wrongdoing to civilians in Pendembu and the areas around it,” he said, adding that same was recorded for Kono and Makeni. For Morris Kallon, he expressed hopes that justice would be done in his case in view of his appeal.

“My Lords, should you not,

however, uphold my Appeal, I pray for a lenient sentence in the hope that I will be given the opportunity to reconcile with my fellow Sierra Leoneans and continue to contribute to the peace process. The 6 years I have spent in detention have given me the opportunity to deeply reflect on my role in the conflict. As shown in the Statement of Good Conduct issued on my behalf by the Special Court Detention Center, I consider myself a reformed person,” he maintained. Similar sentiments were voiced out by Augustine Gbao. Both Issa Sesay and Augustine Gbao also made an appeal for them to be allowed to run their jail term sentences within Sierra Leone.

Concord Times
Monday, 7 September 2009

Human Rights and Reparations

By Silis Muhammad

We, Afro-descendants (so-called African-Americans), have been identified by the majority population as Negroes, Coloreds, and African-Americans, among other names. We are unlike other people of African descent, living today in different parts of the world, whose ancestors were not subjected to

slavery. They know their identity: they still have their mother tongue, culture, religion, and tribal kinship. We, Afro-descendants, do not. Other people of African descent can enjoy the protection and assistance of their national authorities, if they so choose. But we, Afro-descendants, cannot. We are rendered a

stateless people by the deprivation of these most precious human rights - the right to our mother tongue, culture and religion. We have only the UN to look to in hopes of protection. The UN is the designer of human rights. Is not the UN the protector of us?

We want restoration: Afro-descendants must be rejoined to the hu-



Silis Muhammad speaks to the United Nations

man families of the earth - families such as the Chinese, the Italians, and so on. We have been claimed by the countries in which we live and forced to live under them as 2nd class citizens. We know that we, Afro-descendants, are a unique nation of people unto ourselves. Our histories, our having been transported from Africa for the purpose of enslavement, our suffering the living lingering effects of plantation slavery - these things bond us together as a nation of people.

All the wise scientists, and you, in your hearts, will bear witness that we, Afro-descendants, are an an-

cient people who descended from Abraham. We were scattered through slavery, as was prophesied in the Bible, Genesis 15:13. We were stripped of our original identity, mother tongue, culture and religion. Today, still, we are denied these precious human rights that other nations enjoy. What can be done about our loss except the payment of reparations?

We have worked toward the goal of recognition and reparations for fifteen (15) years in the UN and international community. In the year 1997, the UN Sub-Commission gave the Working Group on Minorities a mandate

to examine the lingering effects of plantation slavery upon us. The UN Working Group on Minorities soon recognized that we have begun rejoining onto ourselves and our original cultures through the process of Ethnogenesis, and they officially acknowledged our self-chosen identity - Afro-descendants.

We call upon all bodies of the UN to recognize us. And we call upon all so-called African-Americans to do the right thing. Let us recognize ourselves: we are Afro-descendants, member of the human families - the peoples and nations of the earth. Our time is here, now.

Liberian Times

Thursday, 3 September 2009

Liberia: Taylor's family describes Stephen Rapp departure as disgraceful

By Michael Kpayili / Staff Writer

Former Bomi County Representative and Spokesman of the family of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has termed as disgraceful and slap in the face the premature exit of the Chief Prosecutor of the ongoing war-crimes trial of the former Liberian Leader in The Hague.

Mr. Sando Johnson says the outgoing Chief Prosecutor of the trial against Charles Taylor, Mr. Stephen Rapp and his cohorts have absolutely no case against Charles Taylor and as such, he is taking leave of the case in order to escape disgrace and shame. He said the international community has no proof to show that will support their allegation against Mr. Taylor. He categorized the Chief Prosecutor's role in the ongoing trial as a failed mission something which according to him has been masterminded by Mr. Rapp and his likes. Mr. Johnson raised these points during a telephone conversation when he was asked to response to Mr. Rapp's news conference in Monrovia.

The outgoing Chief Prosecutor of the ongoing Taylor's trial, Mr. Stephen Rapp at a news conference on Tuesday in Monrovia announced that he was quitting the prosecution team due to his new assignment as United States Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes affairs. According to Mr. Rapp, his nomination to the new assignment has now been confirmed by the U.S Senate.

Excerpts of Rapp's news conference: "At this important stage in the trial of Mr. Taylor, it is essential that Liberians and Sierra Leoneans continue to be fully informed of the proceedings in court. People must know that the trial continues in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. In July, I was nominated by President Barack Obama to be confirmed by the Senate and I have given notice to the United Nation Secretary-general that I will resign as Special Prosecutor on September 7. I will then immediately take up the new post, which is based in the U.S State Department in Washington in the office of Secretary Hilary Clinton". "I am going to use my position to lobby for sufficient funds for the smooth operations of the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor", Mr. Rapp noted.

Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is facing multiple charges of war-crime and crimes against humanity. He was accused of fueling the war in neighboring Sierra Leone which led to the deaths of thousands of civilians but Mr. Taylor has denied these allegations terming it as the work of his detractors.

Charlesytaylortrial.org

Friday, 4 September 2009

Stephen Rapp, Special Court Chief Prosecutor, Answers Your Questions – Part III

By Tracey Gurd Dear Readers,

Here is our final post in the three-part series of answers to your questions by Mr. Rapp. We'll look forward to your comments and reactions to the issues Mr. Rapp raises.

QUESTION:

Bnker asked: "would you be willing to prosecute presidents and former presidents of the US for war crimes as well?"

Aki asked: "You have now been appointed US Ambassador for War Crimes. My question is recently Chucky Taylor was sentenced to 97 years in prison by a United States court for torture carried out in Liberia. What are you going to do as Ambassador for war crimes to make sure that the C.I.A. operatives with the authority of the George W. Bush government who carried out torture against foreigners in Iraqi and Afghanistan are also brought to justice ? Further do you think it was selective justice for the Bush administration to allow the prosecution of Chuckie Taylor knowing that they sanctioned torture as a policy ?"

MR RAPP'S ANSWER: The Ambassador for war crimes isn't a prosecutor, but let me just say something about the ICC generally: the International Criminal Court is a court of secondary jurisdiction – it was founded on the concept "complementarity," which means that it leaves it to individual countries who have primary jurisdiction over the crimes to investigate alleged serious violations of international humanitarian law. It is only if the national system is unable or unwilling to investigate, and if appropriate, to prosecute, that the international court steps in to the situation and opens a case.

Regarding allegations that US personnel were involved in torture, these are now under investigation by a special prosecutor in the US Department of Justice. If the United States were a member of the ICC, that is the same thing that would be happening. The independent prosecutor is expected to follow the evidence where it leads. In America there is a tradition of effective prosecution without fear or favor. Powerful legislative leaders of both parties have been charged and convicted. An independent prosecutor took President Nixon to the US Supreme Court and obtained a unanimous ruling forcing the President to turn over taped conversations that led to his resignation to avoid impeachment from office. I think that we can comment that the new independent prosecutor and US judicial process will treat the present allegations appropriately.

QUESTION:

Harris K Johnson asked: "Why did you used Monrovia not freetown as a venue for your farewell press confrence?"

MR. RAPP'S ANSWER: I had an opportunity to go to Monrovia during the period of August 16 to 19t and I had made a number of appointments there and took the opportunity to meet the press and answer questions. I believe that will be the last time I will be in Monrovia while Prosecutor for the Special Court but certainly during the last week of my tenure in the Special Court I will hold a similar press conference on 1 September in Freetown—the city where the court is based and the capital of the country in whose name we act and for whose victims we seek justice.

QUESTION:

Timothy asked: "Mr. Rapp, you have often lobbied in the media that the SCSL is running short of funding. Therefore:

1. Who are the primary funders of the SCSL and what percentage of costs do they fund?
2. Will this shortfall of funding prevent the completion of the Charles Taylor trial?

3. If funding should run out, what procedurally would occur?"

Mr. RAPP'S ANSWER: In terms of funding there have been about 50 countries that have contributed funds. Unlike the Yugoslavia or Rwanda tribunals, which receive mandatory UN dues, the Special Court for Sierra Leone relies on voluntary contributions. Every year it is necessary to convince countries to make contributions. The largest donor has been the United States, contributing a little more than one third of the court's budget. The British government is second, and the Dutch government third, with each contributing about a sixth of the budget, and the Canadians about one-eighth. Large donations have been received from the German and Irish governments and from several Scandinavian countries. There have also been contributions from countries in Africa and Asia.

The court has recently been challenged with its cash flow, either because sufficient pledges had not been made or contributions were arriving late. But in August funding came from the Canadian, British and Irish governments. It is expected that in September funding will arrive from Germany and the US that will carry the court into 2010, to a date very close to the completion of testimony in the Taylor trial. Additional resources will be required to complete the argument and deliberation phases of the trial and the appeal that is anticipated. Efforts will be underway to make sure that those funds are available. In my new role as a US Ambassador at Large, I expect to work closely with Special Court officials and with other national donors on efforts to ensure adequate funding for an expeditious completion of the work of the court.

It is critical that the Special Court have the funding to complete the Taylor trial and possible appeal. Many may have seen a headline several months ago where I was quoted saying that Taylor could free if we ran out of funds. This resulted from my answering the question as to why as a prosecutor I spend so much time raising funds, to which I had responded, "I could have the best evidence in the world and the strongest advocates in court, but if we ran out of funds and we couldn't finish trial, an accused could go free."

From a practical standpoint, those of us in the prosecution would fight tooth and nail to prevent anyone from being released on the grounds that the court was out of funds. At the same time we would be doing everything we could to get the money in to cover the expenses. But certainly at the same time the defense would be trying to achieve provisional release for the accused, claiming the unfairness of jailing someone that the court did not have the present means to try. We don't want to face that day which is one of the reasons as prosecutor I have spent so much effort to prevent that day from arriving. Thankfully we haven't faced it, and I'm confident knowing the people in the court and knowing the commitment of the donor states that that day will never arrive, but will require constant work.

QUESTION:

Zobon asked: "why no screening facility was establish for this trial in Liberia like what was done in Sierra Leone?"

MR. RAPP'S ANSWER: In Sierra Leone we have a court building where our trials take place, with security and television monitors, and people in Freetown can watch the proceedings from the gallery through the glass or look at the television monitors. People can even watch a video feed of the Taylor trial broadcast from The Hague into the courtroom gallery in Freetown.. We don't have a facility like that in Monrovia, nor have we had the donations that would have allowed the court's outreach section to secure and equip one.

It is also important to note that most people don't have the time to sit and watch trials day after day after day. What they really want to hear is the important testimony and that's why the approach that the outreach section has taken since the beginning of the Sierra Leone court has been to prepare videos and to take those videos out around the country and to provide for their screening. This often involves bringing a generator and fuel to run the projector and persons to answer questions, but outreach has done the same kind of thing in Liberia with the assistance of civil society. We have also encouraged the funding of organizations like the BBC World Service Trust to ensure that there are reporters from the region covering the Taylor trial in The Hague, who can prepare programs with actual testimony that can be broadcast by radio which is the medium which has the greatest penetration in Liberia and Sierra Leone. I have already mentioned the great information on the charlestaylortrial.org which is often reprinted in newspapers. The actual transcripts are available on the court website www.sc-sl.org, and I am pleased to see that some newspapers have also reprinted these in their daily editions. So a lot is being done to bring news of trial back

to region, and we may have received almost as much local coverage as would have occurred if the trial had been in Freetown.

QUESTION:

T-Bone asked: “Tejan Kabbah and Sani Abacha took that fatal decision to use military force . The Nigerian troops bombarded populated areas with cluster bombs in violation of “ International“ Laws ; Nigerian troops gang raped women in towns (Lunsar , Makeni and port Loko) to name a few ; Nigerian troops looted everything ; Nigerian troops looted the diamond fields ; Nigerian troops summarily executed thousands of people . All this was done , in the name , and with the blessing of Kabbah .

The question now becomes :

why is Kabbah still a free man ?

Why is that no Nigerian general has been arrested ?”

MR. RAPP’S ANSWER: If one looks at the Truth and Reconciliation report in Sierra Leone you’ll see an accounting of the incidents and the groups that might be responsible for those incidents and leading the list with thousands of violations is the RUF. Second is the AFRC, and third is the CDF. Down the list is the number of alleged violations by the Sierra Leone army prior to the coup of May 1997 and then further down the list are alleged violations of ECOMOG forces, followed by a group such as Executive Outcomes, that was employed by the government for a period of time for security reasons prior to the failed peace in Abidjan in November 1996.

The mandate of the court was to deal with the most significant crimes and with those bearing the greatest responsibility for those crimes, and certainly if you look at that report which was independently done, you will see that it was elements of those first three groups that were the greatest violators. We were criticized for prosecuting leaders of the CDF, but certainly as one sees the number of violations that occurred there, it was our responsibility to do so. If we had not done that, the question would have been “why only one side, when the other committed so many violations as well” In the end, CDF leaders were convicted, and those convictions were upheld. The crimes however weren’t as widespread as those committed by the leaders of the AFRC or RUF, and their sentences were shorter, but there were certainly responsible for widespread and systematic crimes. But we did not prosecute others whose crimes did not reach this level, and that it is a reason why the alleged offences that the questioner cites weren’t part of our indictments.

QUESTION:

Helen asked: “Why was Mr Taylor the one person you Westerners picked on when obviously many other leaders had much more involvement with the RUF, and Comojors than he ever had? Are these leaders being protected because they are powerful or close allies of the powerful?”

MR. RAPP’S ANSWER: It was for his intentional involvement with the actual tactics used by the RUF, the campaign of terror against the civilian population, that caused him to be indicted. It began even before the temporal jurisdiction of the court when at the beginning of the war in Sierra Leone in March 1991, Taylor’s Liberians outnumbered the RUF by a factor of four to one, and they were initially committing worse atrocities in Sierra Leone than was the RUF. Taylor’s former Vice President Moses Blah has testified that Sankoh actually came to Taylor in Gbanga in 1991 and asked “why are you doing this?” and Taylor’s response was “war is not buttering bread” – basically saying, “Foday, get used to it.” According to our evidence he was directly involved in the way in which this conflict was fought. There may have been others who provided arms because they had an interest in one side or the other winning, but they weren’t deeply involved in the tactics used in the conflict and they didn’t have the long-running involvement that caused a human rights group to publish a report about the horrors in Sierra Leone or the region being ‘Taylor made.’ Simply put the evidence of his involvement was so great, indeed so exceptional for the leader of a neighboring country, and involved such horrendous atrocities that it cried out for international prosecution.

QUESTION:

Harris K. Johnson asked: "Do you care to know where Mr. Taylor sold BLOOD DIAMONDS as alleged by you? If yes, what will you do about it?"

MR. RAPP'S ANSWER: What we have talked about is what we have presented in the case, that diamonds were delivered to Taylor and that he did use various intermediaries to get money from those diamonds and to obtain arms in exchange for them that were used in the conflict. That has been part of our evidence to date. Other things may be developed in the process of cross-examination. Our case involves proving his responsibility for the crimes in Sierra Leone and the question of where resources may have gone would be useful later on to determine where money might be obtained to provide compensation to victims. But that will only occur if he is convicted and after a conviction.

AllAfrican.com

Thursday, 3 September 2009

Sierra Leone: Border Dispute - Time for Ecowas to Intervene

Lansana Gberie

Once again, the source of an African conflict can be traced back to unsustainable demarcations of territories arbitrarily drawn by colonial powers and the resulting civil war, argues Lansana Gberie in this week's Pambazuka News.

Drawing on interviews as well as personal experience of the Guinea-Sierra Leone border dispute, Gberie focuses on issues such as how the discovery of diamonds escalated the border conflict and proposes a set of steps needed - mainly through the involvement of ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States) - to see the dispute brought to an end.

A necessary and mutually applauded security measure taken by Guinean forces during Sierra Leone's brutal rebel war has escalated into a border dispute which threatens the stability of both states. But while the issue - the Yenga dispute - is often cast in romantic and highly inflammatory terms by Sierra Leonean poets, so-called civil society activists and journalists, the entire story is steeped in bathos. Before the war, Yenga was a tiny impoverished fishing village of fewer than 100 people and 10 old shacks. But it is strategically placed among a system (albeit largely undeveloped) of inter-connected waterways tied to the large Moa river and formed by the convergence of three other rivers emanating from Guinea, the Mellacourie, Fourecaria and Bereira. Much of this area, extending far into northern Sierra Leone and including Rio Pongas and Rio Nunez in Guinea was once known collectively as Mellacourie.

Until its recent notoriety, hardly anyone emerging into Yenga from the humungous grassed and potholed road would take any particular notice; the more important places were Kailahun, Koindu, Bomaru and Sienga on the Sierra Leonean side and Guekecdou and Forecariah on the Guinean side. It was a sleepy fishing hamlet, separated from Guinea by the Moa river. However, this cartographic factor was purely fictive for the people living on both sides of the river: movement from Sierra Leone into Guinea and vice versa was unrestrained by border guards, and people on either side of the river maintained families on both sides.

Believe it or not, this was exactly the vision of the colonial powers, Britain and France, when they demarcated the area between the two competing empires. The new political and geographical reality was only expressed in the two dozen or so beacons planted by the Europeans, over them flying two flags at the close of the 19th century. They rudely separated the Kissy people and even separated families living in the area, forcing them into states they never bargained for. The border demarcation wasn't exactly as perfunctory as the carving out of Uganda, given as a birthday gift to Britain's Queen Victoria by an English adventurer marauding through East Africa, but the logic was the same: there was scant consideration for the Africans living in these places and of course no concern about the future viability of the hastily created states. It is mainly for this reason that Amos Sawyer has made the important suggestion, as of yet not taken up elsewhere, that more concrete steps should be taken towards a political union of all three Mano river basin states (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia).

So why do people in the poverty-stricken and militarily disabled Sierra Leone and Guinea, who just recently emerged from brutal wars (with Guinea still crippled by political instability) speak about this strip of land as though they want to ignite another violent conflict in the region? There is obviously a need for a serious reality check.

BBC Online

Sunday, 6 September 2009

Liberia lays war victims to rest

By Jonathan Paye-Layleh
BBC News, Liberia

The bones and skulls of hundreds of people killed in one of Liberia's worst war-time massacres have been buried. Victims were residents of Kolokpai village, in central Liberia, as well as displaced people who had sought refuge there in September 1994.

The killings were blamed on rival rebel groups that overran the nearby main provincial town of Gbarnga.

The burial, in a mass grave, was organised by a women's group following the discovery of the remains.



The killers used guns and machetes, witnesses said

In 1994, Gbarnga - 40km (25 miles) south of Kolokpai - was headquarters of the NFPL rebel movement of Charles Taylor, who later became president.

Eyewitnesses and survivors blamed the killings on the groups that invaded his headquarters, although there is no official version of events.

The bones and skulls were taken in wheelbarrows from a cocoa farm to be buried in a mass grave.

Village grieves

Grief-stricken people including church leaders and farmers stood with their hands folded as the remains were dropped into the 10ft (3m) pit late on Saturday.

The burial was organised by the group Young Women Organised for Sustainable Development.

Spokesman Grace Yeane said they decided to bury the bones after doing research in the town and then finding the remains.

"The story we heard was that lots of people have been coming and seeing the bones and promising that they would carry out a ceremony like this, but that was not happening," she said.

"So we have come to give a befitting burial to these people who are Liberians and our own people."

She called for the prosecution of those responsible for this and for other mass killings during Liberia's 14-year war.

"People believe in Liberia that bygones should be bygones, but let people be punished for these actions," she said.



"I believe that people who did these things should be punished... or else people will do the same in the future."

Michael Biddle, a businessman from Gbarnga, rode into Kolokpai by motorcycle to witness Saturday's ceremony and was touched by what he saw.

"To see skulls upon skulls, bones upon bones just exposed in this manner after 15 years, I try to reflect on other massacres that took place during the war," he said.

"The culture of impunity should stop. People should be made to pay the price for these kinds of things," he added.

Witnesses said the killers had used guns and machetes, beheading people who had been bundled into buildings.

Church services for those killed continued into Sunday morning. Religious leaders prayed for forgiveness and for the peace of the town and its people.

The Liberian war killed more than 250,000 people between 1989-2003, and ended with the stepping down of Charles Taylor as president.

The country's post-conflict truth and reconciliation commission has recommended prosecution for former heads of warring factions.


United Nations **Nations Unies**
 United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 4 September 2009

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

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian Ocean Shipping Company Admits Falsifying Oil Discharge Record Books

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A Liberian-incorporated shipping company pleaded guilty today in federal court in Trenton, N.J., to failing to keep accurate oily water discharge records and using falsified records to conceal the discharge at sea of untreated bilge from one of its cargo ships, the Justice Department announced. Dalnave Navigation Inc., a Liberian company with offices in Athens, Greece, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Peter G. Sheridan immediately after the guilty plea to pay a fine of \$1 million, the maximum fine allowable for the two counts to which the company pleaded guilty.

Pak terror suspect swallows sim-card in Liberia

Sep 04, 2009 (MENA News from Al-Bawaba via COMTEX) -- Monrovia (Liberia), Sep.4 (ANI): One of the six Pakistanis, who was trying to enter Liberia on 'fake' US passports but was arrested, swallowed his mobile phone sim- card while being apprehended. Liberian Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the men were nabbed at the international airport earlier this week while trying to sneak into the country. Samukai said the purpose of their intrusion was still not clear, but it is believed that they were planning to carry out serial terror attacks across the country. Samukai, however, did not disclose details about the detained men. He also refused to give information on what Liberian authorities believe the men were trying to do and where the men are being held or what charges they may face. He said one of the suspects removed his phone's SIM card and swallowed it as he was being arrested, PKonweb reported.

China's export to Liberia in June 2009

BEIJING, Sep 04, 2009 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- China's export to Liberia reached 230,572,000 US dollars in June 2009, and the export in January-June reached 705,116,000 US dollars, up 41.2 percent year on year. Following is a table showing China's export to Liberia from 2004 to June 2009, released by the General Administration of Customs: (Unit: 1,000 U.S. dollars) Current month Cumulative total % Change y-o-y

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE: Whether to criminalize child Labor

04 Sep 2009 14:17:52 GMT

Source: IRIN

LUNSAR, 4 September 2009 ([IRIN](#)) - The child rights act ratified in November 2008 in Sierra Leone criminalizes child labour, but some child rights experts say instead of prosecuting parents, the government should focus instead on getting children into school. "We don't want to penalize or criminalize poverty. Many of these parents have few options," said Annalisa Brusati, child and youth protection coordinator at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Sierra Leone. "The aim of the act is to reduce child labour, not to have everyone committing crimes. Parents need to be aware of how to make new choices," she said. Exploitative labour is defined in the act as work that deprives children of their health, education or development opportunities.

Stay out of polls, junta told

<http://www.news24.com>

Conakry - The international contact group for Guinea called on junta chief Moussa Dadis Camara not to involve himself in politics and stay out of the contest for president in elections due next January. "President Dadis Camara should remain on the sidelines. He will lose all credibility if he enters into the political arena," said Mohammed Ibn Chambas, the head of a regional bloc known as Ecowas, at the start of a meeting of the contact group in the Guinean capital Conakry. He called on Camara to "resist any temptation or any appeal" from "divisive" elements to participate in the presidential elections which are due to take place on January 31 and legislative elections scheduled for March. The contact group - which comprises the United Nations, European Union, African Union and Economic Community of West African States - has been at the forefront of efforts to return to civilian rule.

Local Media – Newspaper

Senate Rejects House's Concurrence Resolution on TRC Report

(New Democrat, The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- The Senate has reportedly rejected a concurrence resolution from the House of Representatives on a decision to seize all actions on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report till 2010.
- The Senate described the resolution as non-legislative and returned it to them.
- Reports say the Senate's decision is a slap in the face of the House of Representatives which has already approved the resolution.

House of Representatives Finally Passes Population Threshold Bill at 40,000

(The Inquirer, Daily Observer, Heritage, The Informer)

- The House of Representatives on Thursday concurred with the Senate on the passage of the "controversial" population threshold bill.
- The House concurred with the Senate to set the threshold at 40,000 per electoral constituency provided no County shall have less than two seats.
- The vote by the House is however pending a motion for reconsideration announced by Maryland Representative David Saydee which is seen as an apparent attempt to temporarily block the final passage of the bill.
- The bill has been stalled at the Legislature for over a year now.

Court Gives Government 72-Hour Ultimatum to Charge or Release Six Pakistanis "Terror Suspects"

(The Analyst, The News, The Informer)

- The presiding Judge of Criminal Court "C" has given Government a 72-hour ultimatum to charge or release six Pakistani nationals and their alleged Liberian accomplices from further detention on suspicion of international terrorism.

- The court's action followed habeas corpus petitions from various law firms in Monrovia filed for the alleged terror suspects and their co-conspirators.
- On Wednesday, the Ministry of National Defence says any attempt to release six Pakistanis arrested recently at the Robert International Airport (RIA) would pose security threat to the country.
- In an interview, Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the manner in which the Pakistanis entered the country has created serious security concerns.
- Minister Samukai disclosed that during the security screening at the RIA one of the Pakistanis took a sim card from his mobile phone and chewed it.

Foreign Ministry Terminates Services of 7 Employees

(The Informer, Heritage, Daily Observer, Public Agenda, The Inquirer)

- Barely a day after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs terminated the services of its Comptroller the Ministry has sacked seven "employees" within the Division of Passports and Visas who were not on the Government's payroll.
- According to a Foreign Ministry release, the action to dismiss the staff of the Passport division is aimed at restructuring the Division of Passports and Visas ahead of the launch of the new Biometric Liberian National Passport.

UNMIL Prepares For Phase Three Draw-down

(The Informer, Daily Observer)

- As the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) prepares to enter phase three of its draw-down programs, the Representative of the Military Advisory to the UN Secretary General, Lt. Col. J. A. Ataguba wants the Nigerian Contingent (NIGCON) to sustain the high professional standard and high reputation it has worked to earn in Liberia.
- Lt. Col. Ataguba who is on a spot assessment of the activities of the contingents under the auspices of UNMIL, made the charge at the headquarters of Sector A/NIGCON at camp Abuja, Star Base in Monrovia.
- He said he was impressed by the team spirit among the Nigerian troops as well as their willingness to carry out additional tasks without showing signs of distress.

Local Media – Star Radio (*culled from website today at 09:00 am*)

Senate Rejects House's Concurrence Resolution on TRC Report

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Population Threshold Bill Finally Passed

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Executive Mansion Sets Deadline for Assets Declaration

- The Executive Mansion has reportedly set December 30, 2009 as the deadline for its appointees to officially declare their assets.
- According to Information Minister Laurence Bropleh, the asset declaration is part of government's transparency process.
- Minister Bropleh said although some officials had initially declared their assets it had to be done in a structured manner.
- He said the new structure calls for members of the Executive to declare their assets under oath.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Associate Magistrate in Sex Scandal

- Reports from Sokopa, Nimba County say Associate Magistrate Joseph Domah is on the run after allegedly raping a sixty-year-old woman.
- The woman was held for allegedly kidnapping a three-year old child.
- Magistrate Domah is believed to have fled to neighbouring Guinea.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 10:00 am)***Government, Community Radios Sign Agreement**

- The Government of Liberia and the Association of Community Radios have signed an agreement valued at over US\$10,000.
- The money according to government is for the community radio stations across the country to help with the awareness of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).
- Information Minister Laurence Bropleh recounted the importance of the community radio stations in the absence of a rural communications network.
- The Association through its President William Quire thanked government for the initiative and promised that the money would be used for its sole purpose.

(Also reported on Radio Veritas, Sky F.M., Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Liberian Observer

Monday, 7 September 2009

500 Massacred Victims Reburied in Bong

By: Stephen Binda from Bong County



Several skulls of massacred victims displayed at Saturday's program

BONG COUNTY-- A communion burial of the 15-year-old remains of at least 500 victims of the 1994 Kpolokpala Town Massacre, took place in Jorquelleh District, Bong County, in central Liberia over the weekend.

The burial was organized and carried out by a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Young Women Organized for Sustainable Development (YWOSD), with support from an international institution, Urgent Action Fund-Africa International Cross-Cultural Exchange Institute.

The communion program brought together several survivors of the massacre as well as children of those who were exterminated by marauding armed men.

Speaking at the occasion, some of the survivors expressed regret and sadness over the gruesome killing of their relatives, friends and loved ones.

One of the survivors called the killings 'a great loss', saying 'the children of the dead would tell their stories to unborn generations.'

Another survivor of the massacre, John Kelakelen, recalled that on September 18, 1994, while residents of the town were going about their daily lives, it was observed that some strange men had entered the town.

Kelakelen said the residents later discovered that the strange men were rebels of the erstwhile Liberia Peace Council (LPC) led by George Boley.

He said the men did not use explosives, nor did they fire into the air to capture the area. Rather they concealed their weapons in the bushes at the time.

The residents of Kpolokpala were later accused of being supporters of Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The strange men explained that they were to be taken to Ganta, Nimba County, where they said Taylor was based at the time.

Kelakelen, who identified himself as pastor of the United Methodist Church in the area, recalled that as a result of the men's explanation, the residents felt safe.

It was at this point that the town people were made to assemble at the center of the town. After everyone had gathered, the strange men then introduced themselves as LPC rebels and not NPFL.

According to the pastor, at this stage, the men began to rain insults and death threats against the town's people, including women and children and the elderly who were by this time begging for pardon.

“When they said they were not NPFL men, we all began to cry for our lives while some began running into bushes as the men began to fire indiscriminately against them” Kelakelen told the *Daily Observer* over the weekend.

“We will kill all of you people here! You people are Charles Taylor’s men! You people are all rebels!” the reverend quoted the attackers as saying that day. He said the town’s people were severely tortured. Most of them had their hands tied behind their backs, a torture technique not uncommon among rebel groups.

The Methodist pastor said following torture, they were placed in various rooms, including women children and men, all of whose ages ranged 13 to 40.

He estimated the population of the town at roughly 700 then. He said other displaced people’s children, who had come from other nearby towns and villages, were also massacred by the LPC rebels.

Additionally, several structures were damaged in the town, residents said.

When asked how he survived the massacre, the pastor said he was ordered by the rebels to help bury the dead. He said it was while carrying out the burial that he managed to escape.

“I carried over 50 bodies on my head, one by one, into the bushes for burial until I ran away,” the pastor said.

Another survivor, Lorpu Kollie, said when captured by the rebels, she was commanded to cook the hearts of several of her dead neighbors, something, she said she did for fear of being killed also.

Having cooked the “food”, she was told by the rebels to taste it in order to ascertain that it was good enough for them to eat, and to ensure that she was not trying to poison them.

Kollie said she then took one of the cooked hearts and ate it in front of them for fear that if she refused, she would be killed.

She said since the incident, some community dwellers have disassociated themselves from her on grounds that she is a ‘human eater.’

However, the residents of the town of Kpolokpala have expressed thanks and appreciation to YWOSD for the level of support given them in ensuring that victims of the massacre were given a communion burial.

“We will forever remember YWOSD for the support given us as a town and people. May God bless them and the works of their hands” one resident told the *Daily Observer*.

They residents are calling on the government and humanitarian organizations in the country to help with the provision of safe drinking water and the construction of a clinic, toilets and other basic social services in the town.

Some of the residents who spoke to the *Daily Observer*, however, said that despite the destruction of lives and property, and despite the fact that the massacre was never mentioned during the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) proceedings, they have forgiven those who carried out the massacre.

“We have forgiven those men. We know that it done because of the war. But now, we do not want war any more in Liberia” another resident said.

“As a result of what happened here during the war, people are still afraid to return home. Right now, we are about 75 persons that live here,” another resident added.

Isaac Redd, Press Director at the House of Representatives, who also spoke at the occasion, said he is one of the three survivors of the massacre.

The Executive Director of YWOSD, Grace Yeanay, has assured the town's people of her organization's commitment to the rebuilding and development of Kpolokpala.

On behalf of her organization, she presented a cow and a goat as her organization's own way of mourning with residents of the town for the untimely death of their people.

The Communion service brought together several pastors from both Monrovia and Bong County, as well as the district representative in the National Legislature, George Mulbah.

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Voice of America
Friday, 4 September 2009

Tribunal Threatens DRC Over Delayed Transfer of Key Rwandan Suspect

By Alan Boswell
Nairobi

The international tribunal responsible for trying Rwandan genocide suspects is threatening to appeal to the United Nations Security Council for assistance if the Democratic Republic of Congo does not hand over a key suspected genocide perpetrator by next week. Congolese forces captured the indicted fugitive three weeks ago.

The spokesman for the United Nations-created International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Bocar Sy, told VOA that the refusal by Congolese authorities to extradite the prisoner may force the court to take the matter to the U.N.

"By next week if nothing is happening, the prosecutor will have to address the issue to the Security Council directly," he said. "But for now, we hope and he hopes that things will change and the guy will be transferred here soon."

According to the spokesman, the usual period between capture and extradition is three or four days. The only explanation the court has received for the delay is vague assertions that the prisoner is still being questioned in Kinshasa.

"Nobody knows absolutely why they are keeping him there," said Sy. "Officially, we don't know anything. We have said what we know, that is the guy is still there and whenever we call them they says, 'Guys, wait, we are still busy with him.'"

The suspected genocide perpetrator, Gregoire Ndahimana, was captured by Congolese forces in the North Kivu Province in eastern DRC. The fugitive had been hiding amid the Hutu rebel Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, known by its French initials of FDLR, many of whom were behind the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The international court based in Arusha, Tanzania, has categorized Ndahimana as a Category 1 suspect, meaning that he is one of the court's most-wanted. The former Rwandan mayor is accused of orchestrating the death of thousands of Tutsi living in his town, including 2,000 who were massacred when the church in which they had sought refuge was destroyed with the help of the parish priest.

The delay by the DRC has led some to speculate that the nation is hoping to leverage its new-found possession to negotiate an exchange for former Congolese rebel Laurent Nkunda, now in Rwandan custody.

It has also been speculated that the DRC is trying to cash in on the up to \$5 million reward that the U.S. offers under its "Rewards for Justice" program for information leading to the arrest of a number of key genocide suspects who remain at-large, of which Ndahimana was included.

The Congolese government's spokesman, Lambert Mende, sought to re-assure the international community that his transfer was imminent.

"His final destination is definitely Arusha, according to the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo," he said. "Maybe there is some delay with judicial actions to be taken, but definitely he is being sent very soon to Arusha, there is no doubt about it."

12 indictees of the international tribunal remain at-large, many of whom are suspected of also hiding with the FDLR in the eastern DRC.