

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday, April 08, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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WITNESS REVEALS AFRC ATROCITY

WOMAN RAPED IN CHURCH

By Mohamed Mansaray

The 7th prosecution witness in the trial of AFRC indictees, TF1-085 revealed yesterday that rebels raped women at Allen Town at a place the witness referred to as 'Mammy Dumbuya's church' sometime in 1999. "They raped and stabbed to death using bayonets all those who refused to be raped," she said.

Prosecution counsel, Melisa Paek led the witness
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Some judges of the Special Court

Witness' Ordeal With AFRC

in evidence at Court Room No. 2 New England in Freetown. The witness did not say how many women were raped in the church but she testified that some of them were around 14 years of age.

Giving her testimony in Krio from the witness protection box through an interpreter, she informed the court that she was also raped at Allen Town by the commander who abducted her.

"The Colonel who captured me tied me and gave me severe beating before she raped me," the witness told the court and added that she bled profusely and became unconscious after her ordeal. The witness further testified that she was forced by the Colonel to eat what she described as 'human heart' and named Darany and 'Gold Teeth' as commanders who were with them during their journey.

The witness further named indictee 55 as the overall commander during the journey and recalled that 55 gave orders for a baby to be buried alive in the hills around Allen Town for crying.

"55 said that the baby's cry would enable Kamajors to locate us easily," she quoted him as saying. "55 was standing on top of a stone when he was addressing us about the baby's issue," she testified and further quoted 55 as telling the mother to laugh after the child was buried alive. She told the court that she was given severe beating on the orders of 55 after she made an attempt to cook food. "The smoke was rising in the air and that will also enable ECOMOG jet to locate us and drop bombs," he quoted 55 as saying. The witness who said she was 19 years old described 55 as a huge and tall man who was carrying what she described as a powerful walking stick which he also used to kill people.

In her evidence in chief earlier, the witness told the court that she was abducted at Wellington following the invasion of the city during that period. The witness named one commander Jabbie (RUF) who was wearing a 2-Pac T-shirt and a black trousers and Colonel Gold Teeth as some of the rebels who harassed and

The Exclusive, Friday April 8, 2005.

Norman, A Taboo In Bo

By Our Correspondent

Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad are still disgruntled over the manner and way Chief Sam Hinga Norman was treated. A non-armed group called the Chief Sam Hinga Norman "Helpline Sierra Leone" (SHNHL-S/L), are advocating to the Special Court and the International community that Hinga Norman's arrest was unlawful, unjustifiable and should be freed.

Reports have reached this press that the Police, the Paramount Chief, the Resident Minister and the Provincial Secretary in Bo have refused to give freedom to youths who want to process commemorating

Hinga Norman's two years in unlawful detention.

The source further disclosed that in Bo town, Chief Sam Hinga Norman's name is a taboo, because if the police hear you talk about Hinga Norman, you see the other day behind bars.

The people of Bo are now engulfed in fear that their children who support the group will be arrested soon. The Local Unit Commander in Bo, Supt. Alfred Karrow Kamara, has categorically stated that who ever holds secret meetings or processes in the name of Chief Sam Hinga Norman will face the full penalty of

the law.

The source further added that the coming of the TRC and Special Court have not only sown seeds of hatred among different views in society, but also may be fanning another crisis.

Government authorities in Bo are refusing to grant the youths their democratic right to hold meetings even when these are not clandestine or subversive. Sources close to the Provincial Secretary's office have intimated this press that government plans to stifle whatever plans these youths are up to in support of Hinga Norman's release from the grips of the Special Court.

Cocorioko Website, <http://www.cocorioko.com>

AFRC indictees boycott trial at Special Court

Friday April 8, 2005

The three Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) indictees at Special Court have started a boycott of court proceedings. The three, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara, Alex Tamba Brima aka Guillit and Santigie Kanu aka 55 were not present in court when the session resumed after the Easter break.

The Defence lawyers representing the indictees told the court, the indictees informed them that they would not be coming to court; adding that they (the defence) had nothing to do with their absence from court. The Defence team explained further that even though they advised the indictees about the importance of their presence in court, they (indictees) still stressed in keeping away from the court.

The three AFRC indictees now join Augustine Gbao of the RUF and Hinga Norman of the CDF to boycott the court sessions. It will be recalled that Augustine Gbao of the RUF was the first indictee to refuse attending the court sessions. He was soon followed by Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon but through the intervention of their lawyers Issa and Kallon later on started attending court. Up to date Augustine Gbao is still adamant about his decision.

Also first accused of the CDF- Sam Hinga Norman followed suit and decided not to corporate with the court anymore and was later joined by Moinina Fofana and Allieu Kondewa. Defence Counsels for Moinina and Kondewa were also later able to convince their clients about the importance of being in court and they too discontinued their action and started attending court sessions. Meanwhile, the RUF trial is scheduled to resume today with a total of 25 witnesses lined up to testify during this session including one that is coming from out of the continent.

Samuel Kofi Woods Opens Up: An Exclusive Interview

Liberian Observer (Monrovia)

INTERVIEW

April 6, 2005

Rodney D. Sieh

Monrovia

Mr. Samuel Kofi Woods, the founding director of the foremost human rights organization in Liberia, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and currently the Regional Representative for the Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) managed on a shoestring budget to write and distribute to the international community reliable reports of abuses in the midst of a brutal civil war.

His work led to the liberation of more than fifty inmates at the Central Prison in Monrovia, many of whom were held without charges after arbitrary arrests. He has been a strong advocate for the citizens Grand Bassa and River Cess in the ongoing LAC saga.

In this exclusive interview with Daily Observer Editor-in-Chief, Rodney D. Sieh, Mr. Woods discusses among other things, his work, his vision for Liberia, the current state of corruption in Liberia as well as why he rejected a post in the National Transitional Government of Liberia and turned down a request to be running mate of George Oppong Weah in the upcoming presidential elections in Liberia.

Daily Observer: You had a lot of run-ins with Charles Taylor. Now that the tide has changed he's in exile and your work goes on. How does that make you feel?

I feel vindicated and reassured that the struggle for peace and justice will continue unabated. The work is however not over. Charles Taylor, his likes and other warlords must face justice. It is good for them and society alike. There must be finality. Taylor was indicted for crimes allegedly committed in Sierra Leone not Liberia. He and several others must answer for crimes allegedly committed against the Liberian People. We must confront the past and experience some form of closure as a nation. Taylor and others deserve due process and we must all advocate for same. Mere indictment is not enough. He must be given his day in court to defend his innocence. They all deserve due process and free and fair trials. They are alleged to have committed crimes and they are innocent until proven guilty. I will defend their rights to due process. My conviction is universal and it must seek to do what is right irrespective of who is involved. The work has just begun.



Annan says rights body harming UN

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has accused the UN Human Rights Commission of failing to uphold human rights and said a new, permanent body is needed.

Speaking in Geneva, Mr Annan said the commission was undermining the credibility of the entire UN.

Human rights groups say the body's member nations are too concerned with protecting their national interests.

Current members include Sudan, Zimbabwe, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia - all accused of rights abuses.

Unless we re-make our human rights machinery, we may be unable to renew public confidence in the United Nations itself
Kofi Annan

"We have reached a point at which the commission's declining credibility has cast a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system," Mr Annan said as he addressed the commission's annual six-week session at its Swiss headquarters.

"Unless we re-make our human rights machinery, we may be unable to renew public confidence in the United Nations itself," he said.

Greater status

As part of his programme of UN reforms, Mr Annan wants to create a smaller Human Rights Council, whose members must uphold the highest human rights standards.

Mr Annan said the UN needs the new council if it is to prevent appalling suffering occurring around the world.

He said the council must be more accountable and more representative.

It would, he explained, allow for a more comprehensive and objective approach, which, in turn, would produce more effective assistance.

"The main intergovernmental body concerned with human rights should have a status, authority and capability," Mr Annan said.

Sudan controversy

The commission was launched in 1946 to uphold human rights worldwide, and has 53 members.

Libya chaired the commission in 2003, despite opposition from the US and human rights groups.

In his annual address last year, Mr Annan warned that the conflict in Sudan's province of Darfur bore worrying similarities to the Rwandan genocide.

The commission had before it strong evidence of atrocities being committed in Darfur and of the Sudanese government's involvement in them, but no resolution was passed condemning Sudan.

Instead, Sudan was elected to the commission for another year.

There is talk of a resolution this year, but the countries drafting it include Sudan itself and Zimbabwe, also in the spotlight for human rights violations.

Activists also want the commission to condemn the US for its treatment of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan, and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Story from BBC NEWS:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4419333.stm>

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