

**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:

Wednesday, 8 August 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The Peep!

Wednesday, 8 August 2007

THE SPECIAL COURT WILL INDICT THOSE WHO STEAL PEOPLES VOTE

and President Kabbah may bear the 'greatest responsibility'

SPECIAL COURT TO INDICT THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE ELECTION PROCESS

The Special Court for Sierra Leone could try anyone who attempts to disrupt the elections process, a reliable source has said.

charges for those who attempt mass violence

The Special Court official, who declined to be named - "there is no need to mention my name at this point" - told our editor O.R. Awonor-Gordon that the agreement establishing the hybrid court entitled the Prosecutor to bring charges against anyone who attempted to derail the democratic process.

"If this involves violence and loss of life there would be a clear violation of international law" our Special Court source explained.

mandate from both U.N and State of Sierra Leone

He said the Special Court's mandate - agreed upon by both the United Nations Security Council and the government of Sierra Leone, gave them the powers to detain and try such persons.

Our source said it was 'immaterial' that the SLPP government has signed the Special Court Agreement. "The agreement was between the government of Sierra Leone and the U.N Security Council".

"It was not between one political party and the U.N".

greatest responsibility

"The Special Court Agreement is part of Sierra Leonean law and obviously would be applied if international humanitarian law was breached."

He added that a battalion of U.N peacekeepers were on hand to protect court and staff in event of any untoward violence during elections. "However this is only a hypothetical situation... we don't foresee any need to deploy them".

sentenced

2 CDF ex-combatants will be sentenced soon. 3 AFRC men, including Brigadier Ibrahim '55' Bazy, who announced a 'coup' on January 6, 1999 - were sentenced to between 45-50 years in jail for violations of international law.



those with 'greatest responsibility' face trial

By Lansana Gberie

In the heat of intense electoral campaigning in Sierra Leone, the verdicts Thursday by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trials of two Civil Defence Force (CDF) defendants, Allieu Konewa and Moinina Fofana, risk being ignored as a sideshow. But the gross cynicism and the insult to the sensibility of many people - and not just Sierra Leoneans - that the trials, not to mention the verdicts, represent need to be analysed to be believed.

This is how Reuters reported the verdicts:

"Sierra Leone's U.N.-backed Special Court convicted two former leaders of a pro-government militia on Thursday of war crimes including murder but acquitted them of crimes against humanity. The pair were leaders of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), which fought for President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah during a 1991-2002 civil war. Kabbah is due to stand down after August 11 elections in which his deputy is standing as his chosen successor. Sam Hinga Norman, Kabbah's former interior minister and head of the feared Kamajor traditional hunters who dominated the CDF, had also been on trial on the same charges but died in detention in February from heart failure after a routine operation. The verdict was a split decision. Justice Rosolu John Bankole Thompson, the only Sierra Leonean on the three-judge panel, wished to acquit Allieu Kondewa, who prosecutors said was the Kamajors' "High Priest," and Moinina Fofana, of all charges. The prosecution said Kamajor fighters had paraded severed heads and eaten their victims' roasted flesh and intestines. But the judgment, read in court by Cameroonian judge Benjamin Mutanga Itoe, noted that "The CDF and Kamajors fought for the restoration of democracy," reflecting the complexity of the case."

Let's ignore for a moment the Court's pointy-headed prosecutor's (and of course Reuters') vulgar obsession with mythical cannibalism - the charges were never proven in court, and the verdicts do not mention them. Fofana was convicted on four counts comprising war crimes and Kondewa of five counts, including war crimes and other violations of international law. But in a curious twist, the Court threw out the sensational charges of terrorism. It also found - another variation on the same theme - that charges relating to CDF attacks against a civilian population, a requirement for all crimes against humanity, were baseless. The Court issued not guilty findings on those charges. Kondewa, suggestively called "the High Priest" of the Kamajors by the Prosecutors, was convicted on another charge of recruitment of child soldiers - even though he never appeared in battle, and recruited and led no one. If this sounds confusing, that's because it truly is. For the records, the Presiding Judge was an often clueless and insipid Cameroonian named Itoe, who even ventured the opinion that Fofana should have been convicted of another charge. (Itoe, of course, reminds one of another bumbling Cameroonian international civil servant: Jacques Booh Booh, who, as the UN representative in Rwanda at the height of the genocide, was busy furnishing his house in Kigali with luxury items even as extremists planned and proceeded with killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people). In the coming months, there should be some focus on these \$240,000 a year (tax free) judges. Also for the records - if only for the records - the lone Sierra Leonean judge on the cases, Bankole-Thompson, who is in position to more fully appreciate the sacrifices of the CDF fighters and their role in saving the nation and hundreds of thousands of people from the deprecations of murderous criminals (the Revolutionary United Front and rogue soldiers), sought to free the CDF defendants on all charges.

An immediate question that came to mind was why the Court decided to issue these verdicts at this time. The CDF issue is a highly charged political problem: in the recent weeks, an enterprising political figure has been going around the country trying to incite former CDF members against the current Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) government and presidential candidate, leading to serious incidents of violence. The Court must be aware of this, but instead they chose to set aside their case against RUF detainees and pass guilty verdicts on the CDF personnel. This is obviously a very twisted and inchoate political decision, and the Court must bear full responsibility if there is a nasty fall-out. And by the way, when will this Special Court business end? The Court was set up in 2002 with a mandate to

Preliminary Response

In the heat of intense electoral campaigning in Sierra Leone, the verdicts Thursday by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the trials of two Civil Defence Force (CDF) defendants, Allieu Konewa and Moinina Fofana, risk being ignored as a sideshow. But the gross cynicism and the insult to the sensibility of many people - and not just Sierra Leoneans - that the trials, not to mention the verdicts, represent need to be analysed to be believed

go on for three years. But even as verdicts are passed five years into its operation, the Chief Prosecutor is scheming to prolong the Court's duration. One hears that the prosecutor is preparing to appeal against the acquittals of three military leaders (of the notorious Armed Forces Ruling Council junta), who were, among others, accused of forcing women into marriage, "in a move that he hopes will help bring convictions on similar charges at the International Criminal Court." The Court on 20 June had found Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, sexual slavery and conscripting child soldiers. But the trial judges said they saw no need to treat forced marriage as a crime separate from sexual slavery (it is obviously, also to this lay man, a distinction without a difference), and threw out the prosecutor's charges. All three men have been given

long sentences, which they undoubtedly deserve. But now Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp wants to appeal against this decision, which he described 'formulistic' (a linguistic curiosity). This is obviously stretching cynicism too far.

The government that colluded in setting up this self-perpetuating behemoth must really look at itself in shame. What in the world were they thinking when they asked for this? Any government that comes to power after the 11 August elections must take as a matter of national priority the closure of this Court in Sierra Leone. The only worthy case before it is that involving former Liberian President Charles Taylor, and the old rogue is being tried in The Hague. Sierra Leone long passed that transitional post-war phase, and an instrument for transitional justice - which this Court claimed it is - has no place in the current political schema.

New Vision

Wednesday, 8 August 2007

Liberian Refugees Tortured In Detention

By Alpha Amadu Bah

Some of the 41 Liberian Refugees who were recently freed by a Freetown Magistrate Court on charges of riotous conduct at the office of UNHCR on Aberdeen Road in Freetown, have claimed, they were tortured whilst in detention at the Congo Cross Police Station and at the Pademba Road Prisons in Freetown.

Chairperson of the female refugees, Saudatu Fahnbulleh disclosed that the police made an indiscriminate arrest in which she became a victim.

"I was arrested at the office of the UNHCR by the police, beaten up and thrown into a police vehicle," Saudatu Fahnbulleh said, adding that "I went unconscious and later when I regained consciousness, I realized myself in a congested and dirty cell at the Congo Cross Police Station".

She explained about her then physical status at the time of arrest, noting that she was in her third month of pregnancy when she was beaten up by the police and detained at the police station for about five days. "I started bleeding whilst at the cell with no

medical attention" Saudatu lamented adding that "I lost my gold chain at the police station which the police could not account for".

She went on to explain that whilst at the Pademba Road Prisons for 17 days, she was stripped naked and was branded a rebel. "I still continued to bleed at the Pademba Road," Saudatu explained adding that the bleeding led to the abortion of her pregnancy. She said since they were acquitted and discharged in court, the UNHCR has abandon them completely.

However, one of the female refugees, Alice Lomeh said they were tortured when in detention and according to her, they are not cared for by UNHCR.

Another refugee, Sarrah Floma described the incident as "a complete human rights violation".

They however called on the international community and human rights organizations to intervene on their behalf.

The UNHCR had denied all the allegations and said "some of them are not recognized refugees".

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 7 August 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

AP 08/06/2007 18:24:59

Liberian Courts Battle Rape Scourge

RUKMINE CALLIMACHI

MONROVIA, Liberia _ Under an old foam mattress in one of this city's slums, Niome David keeps a dark memento _ the underwear her 9-year-old daughter was wearing the night she was raped. The mother refuses to wash out the blood stain, keeping it as proof of the brutality her child endured. In a nation inured to violence, the fact that she knew to preserve evidence is also, somehow, a sign of hope.

International Clips on West Africa

BBC Last Updated: Tuesday, 7 August 2007, 03:03 GMT 04:03 UK

Ivory Coast leader promises poll

By James Copnall, Abidjan

President Laurent Gbagbo says Ivory Coast can organize twice postponed elections by the end of the year. He was speaking in a televised address on the eve of the country's Independence Day holiday on Tuesday. Ivory Coast has been split in half since rebels seized the north nearly five years ago.

UN team probes Ivory Coast abuse allegations

BOUAKE, Ivory Coast, Aug 6, 2007 (AFP) - A joint mission by UN and Moroccan officials is probing allegations of sexual abuse by Moroccan peacekeepers in Ivory Coast, amid mixed feelings among local people about their behavior. A full probe has been launched both in Ivory Coast and at United Nations headquarters into the allegations, which centre on a 732-strong Moroccan contingent based in Bouake, the capital of the rebel zone of the country, split in half since a 2002 rebellion.

VOA 07 August 2007

New Political Party Enters Sierra Leone's Politics

By Naomi Schwarz, Bo, Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, where presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled for August 11, a brand new party has entered the political scene long dominated by the People's Party, or SLPP, and the All People's Congress, or APC. Naomi Schwarz visited the Bo region to see the impact of the new party. SLPP supporters chant for their party at a rally in Bo, Sierra Leone's second largest city and the commercial center of the diamond region.

Local Media – Newspaper

Police See no Links between Arm Seizures and Coup Plotters

(The Informer, National Chronicle, Heritage, New Democrat, The Forum, The Inquirer, Daily Observer, The Analyst and The News)

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia on Monday, Police Inspector Beatrice Munah Sieh as clarifying that the seizure of ammunitions in Gbarnga, Bong County has no links with any of the suspected coup plotters. The Police clarification follows speculations in the media that the ammunitions might have been smuggled into the country by the suspected coup plotters to subvert and overthrow the Government. The clarification could put to rest the conspiracy theories about the ammunitions.

Beninoise President to Visit Liberia Tuesday

(The Analyst)

- The President of Benin, Dr. Boni Yayi, is due to pay a two-day's State visit to Liberia today as guest of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. While in the Country, the visiting Beninoise President will hold discussions with a host of senior government officials and other international dignitaries, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss on bilateral issues between Liberia and Benin.

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

President of Benin Visits Liberia Today

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Government Prints Budget Act into Law

- In an interview, the Bureau of the Budget Director, Mr. Augustine Ngafuan said that the Government has printed into Law, the National Budget Act, giving it the legal authority to spend from the budget starting with the issuance of its first allotment to pay two months salaries to Government employees.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Joint Security Probes Truck Driver for Alleged Arm Smuggling

- Correspondents said that the Liberia National Police in Monrovia were investigating the driver of the vehicle allegedly used to smuggle ammunition to Liberia through Gbarnga, Bong County. The 19 bags of ammunition intercepted by Police during the weekend, included Rocket Propelled Grenade rounds.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Liberians Challenge UNMIL to Trace Origins of Weapon Trade

- Callers to Radio Veritas Topical Issues yesterday challenged the United Nations Mission in Liberia to go beyond mere probes of those suspected of trading arms in the Country and trace the origin of the arms they trade in. They also called on the Government security forces to work with UNMIL to ensure the arrest and prosecute those who smuggled the arms into Gbarnga.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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.