

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



School children from the Cockerill Preparatory School visited the Special Court on Wednesday.

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:

Thursday, 8 February 2007

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

Local News

Welcoming Hinga Norman and Co / *Positive Change* Page 3

Promoting Children's Right / *New Vision* Page 4

International News

Taylor's Head Lawyer in Monrovia, Claims Violation / *Star Radio (Liberia)* Page 5

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / *UNMIL* Pages 6-8

Justice Ministry Moves to Abolish "Sassywood" / *Star Radio (Liberia)* Page 9

Positive Change

Thursday, 8 February 2007

From The Editor's Desk

Welcoming Hinga Norman and Co

We in the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), are elated by the recent declaration of all nine detainees at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, for our party, ahead of the crucially important Presidential and Parliamentary Elections on Saturday, July 28, 2007.

We are not in any way surprised at such a move, because it goes without saying that any well meaning and sober minded Sierra Leonean would want to join force with us, to give the worried so-called Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), a good beating at the polls.

We knew such a move was going to be taken, and were waiting patiently for it to materialize. It was on Thursday, 11th January, 2007, that the indictees finally came up with a jointly signed press release from their cells, declaring their support for the PMDC and damning the SLPP.

A portion of the said press release reads: "That like us, we urge our supporters, sympathizers, friends, relations and well-wishers to support the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which is the only Political Party we jointly and individually believe in, to save our country, Sierra Leone, and bring peace, reconciliation, unity, love and stability to our nation".

Indeed, the PMDC is the only God-sent party that has what it takes to move this country from its current state of backwardness and bankruptcy, to a height all of us would be proud of. The decision by the Special Court Detainees: Sam Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofana, and Alieu Musa Kondowa (all of the former Kamajomovement), Issa Hassan Sesay, Augustine Gbow and Morris Kallon (all of the former RUF); and Tamba Brima, Ibrahim Bazy

Kamara and Santigie Bobor Kanu (all of the former AFRC), is a clear indication that the PMDC is perceived by many who are deprived and suppressed in particular, as being the only party that has come to redeem this country from the slavery it has been subjected to by the SLPP. Their decision has no doubt placed the SLPP in a badly disadvantaged position, especially so when it continues to emerge that the growing popularity of the PMDC is both unprecedented and un-

We are not going to quarrel with that because they have the right to their opinions (either sensible or foolish), but the question is 'what are the likes of Victor Reider (who reportedly recruited the dreaded RUF former rebel leader, Late Foday Saybana Sankoh, who now happens to be the Publicity Secretary or better put official Spokesman of the ruling SLPP), Eldred Collins (former Spokesman of the RUF) and Alieu Kamara alias Territorial Integrity (former Spokesman of the infamous AFRC junta), doing in the SLPP.

stoppable. Little wonder that when the press release was first published by this medium (which coincidentally happens to be the official mouthpiece of the PMDC), some elements of the SLPP, confused and bemused, went on alternative mediums claiming rather foolishly that Hinga Norman had denied knowledge of the said press release.

We are also informed that some desperate SLPP members are going round the country, Freetown not ex-



cluded, telling people that the PMDC is without class, since our hands are open to all sorts of people. We are not going to quarrel with that because they have the right to their opinions (either sensible or foolish), but the question is 'what are the likes of Victor Reider (who reportedly recruited the dreaded RUF former rebel leader, Late Foday Saybana Sankoh, who now happens to be the Publicity Secretary or better put official Spokesman of the ruling SLPP), Eldred Collins (former Spokesman of the RUF) and Alieu Kamara alias Territorial Integrity (former Spokesman of the infamous AFRC junta), doing in the SLPP.

The writings are on the wall that the PMDC is a melting pot and a haven for all Sierra Leoneans who are keen to seeing the development of our beloved country. We are ready to work with all classes of Sierra Leoneans; and we will keep our doors wide open to receive all well meaning Sierra Leoneans who are convinced that positive change, and not continuity of the same old bullshit, is what this country needs at this crucial period in our history.

On the basis of that, we wholeheartedly welcome Chief Sam Hinga Norman and his colleagues, in the ranks of the PMDC. They can be rest assured that they have made the right decision. It's not about them, or about us, but about the future of the country.

New Vision

Thursday, 8 February 2007

Promoting Children's Right

What is surprising to many people in this country is, why is it that the UN convention on the rights of the child is still not ratified by the Sierra Leone Parliament? Indeed children have certain inalienable rights that Governments that are really interested in development should not fail to recognize, as children are often referred to as "the future leaders of tomorrow." It is difficult to see a vested interest in ignoring the passing of the bill that promotes the rights of the child.

Whatever the case may be Sierra Leone is one of the countries that is supposed to be at the vanguard of any enactment and implementation of laws in favour of children's rights for several reasons. In the first place this country has a very poor standing on the UNDP Human Development index that annually the standard of living in various countries of the world.

This country has one of the lowest literacy rates, and a high infant and maternal mortality rates in the world, all of which do not augur well for the survival and welfare of children considered as the corner stone of national development. Indeed compared to adults, children are weaker and depend on their parents and guardians to safeguard their rights and interests, including feeding accommodation, education, clothing and early upbringing.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Plan International (Sierra Leone) are two of the many international NGO's that have been playing pivotal roles in humanitarian actions in favour of children's welfare. Both UNICEF and Plan International, as well as several other NGOs such as Handicap International, World Vision, Action Aid have been collaborating with the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs to raise awareness about the need to cater to the welfare of children in this country.

What the Country Director of Plan International Mr. Samuel Paulos indicated at the British council in July 2004 during the launching of the child-friendly version of the UN convention on the Rights of the child is still as relevant today as before. He urged stakeholders of children affairs to put in place programmes that are geared towards alleviating child poverty. Education and providing skill training opportunities, are some of the means to cater to the welfare of children in this country.

Indeed some of the problems confronting children, besides poverty, include the trampling on their fundamental human rights. Some people have the impression that the place of the child is to be sent on errands and to do the household chores. In short, they regard children especially other people's children as instruments for domestic work.

In the words of Mr. Samuel Paulos, if one would pose the question, what is the meaning of a child in the typical African family, the response would be that the child in the African family is nothing but someone who should obey whatever norms that the society may have, such as being a symbol of prestige. He added that the true meaning, though unrealistic is that the African child should be seen and not heard.

"Now is the time to extricate the African child from some of these dogmas, and consider the child as a partner in development." Mr. Paulos maintained. Indeed during the decade-long civil war many children were obliged to become child soldiers against their will and were in some instances used as human shields at the warfront by their adult superiors. Many Sierra Leonean girl children were reduced to serving as "sex" objects for combatants willingly or against their will very often after being captured by dissidents.

Some of them were forced to be addicted to drugs, to violence and to kill, while even in normal times, stories abound of children being overworked and subjected to inhuman treatments such as market selling or working on the farms.

According to Article 7 of the convention on the Rights of the Child, "the child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right to a name, a nationality and the right to be cared for by the parents." Moreover children have the right to choose a religion of their choice and the fundamental right to education. One of the many outcomes of the rebel war has been the spate of lawlessness, violence and the increase in street children, all of which have left a heavy burden on Government and stakeholders in children affairs. It is indeed regrettable that many parents and guardians regards educating a child as a privileged not a right.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Wednesday, 7 February 2007

Taylor's head lawyer in Monrovia, claims violation

Written by Joey Kennedy

The legal defense team of former President Charles Taylor has complained about the monitoring of private conferences of Mr. Taylor and his lawyers in The Hague.

The lead counsel for Mr. Taylor told a news conference Wednesday, a camera has been mounted in the room where legal conferences are held for Mr. Taylor in The Hague.

Mr. Karim Khan alleged this is a violation of the rights and privacy of the detained former Liberian President and his defense team.

He said the defense team of Mr. Taylor has filed a formal complaint to the President of the UN-backed Special Court sitting in The Hague.

The defense team of the former Liberian leader says it needs adequate time, resources and facilities to ensure the effective defense of Mr. Taylor.

The defense team of Mr. Taylor also comprises former Liberian Justice Minister, Lavali Supuwood and Avi Singh, a member of the California Bar Association.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 7 February 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

02/07/2007 04:24:16

French EU employee "murdered" in Ivory Coast, Paris says

Paris_(dpa) _ A French employee of the European Union has been murdered in the capital of Ivory Coast, Abidjan, a spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said Wednesday. Jean-Baptiste Mattei gave no details of the killing, but said that the French consul in Abidjan was in contact with Ivorian authorities and European Commission officials. "An investigation has been opened to shed light on the circumstances of the murder," Mattei said.

AP 02/06/2007 17:46:03

Nations Pledge Not to Use Child Soldiers

By JENNY BARCHFIELD

PARIS _ African, Asian and South American nations where child fighters have been used in war endorsed a new international agreement Tuesday that commits them to stopping the practice and punishing those who recruit youngsters as combatants. Some nations hailed the text, which carries moral but no legal weight, as a breakthrough. But others said it may be no more than empty promises and that more than words are needed to rehabilitate children mentally and physically scarred by war. "We've lost a whole generation of children," said Liberia's deputy minister of education, Hawa Goll-Kotchi. "It's scary." Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Sudan and Somalia _ just some of the nations where children have been recruited

Local Media – Newspaper

"Majority Bloc" Threatens to Suspend Speaker and Deputy as Council of Churches Mediates in Legislative Saga

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

- The "majority" lawmakers in the House of Representatives meeting in Virginia have threatened to enforce the suspension of Speaker Edwin Snowe and his deputy, Togba Mulbah, if they fail to heed to a letter requesting their presence at the Unity Conference Center during a regular session on Thursday.

Liberian President Inaugurates UN Vocational Training Center

(The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst and National Chronicle)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has handed over to the Liberian authorities a newly-constructed vocational training center in Ganta, Nimba County, about 240 kilometers northeast of the capital, Monrovia.

- The Center which hosts a permanent skills training center and an internet café, was built by the Bangladeshi Contingent (BANBAT 10) through funding from UNMIL's Quick Impact Projects and with computers provided by the Ministry of Educations
- Speaking at the handover ceremony, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, said the project was a small but symbolic gesture of a much larger ambition to give Liberian youths hope for the future.
- President Ellen Johnson who inaugurated the center, praised the Bangladeshi Contingent for going beyond their call of duty to build a facility that will assist young people gain skills which will help them reach their potential in life.

UNMIL Boss Commissions NIBATT 10 Project

(The Inquirer, The News, The Analyst, and National Chronicle)

- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, on Tuesday commissioned a three-classroom block recently constructed by the Nigerian contingent (NIBATT-10) of UNMIL.
- The block which would be used by the St. Paul Day Care and Nursery School is valued at US\$5,950 and financed by members of NIBATT-10, whose tenure of duty in Liberia soon.
- Speaking at the commissioning ceremony, Mr. Doss lauded NIBATT-10 for their humanitarian gesture which led to the construction of the school.

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

Vote Counting Underway in Nimba County District By-Election

- Correspondents said that vote counting began in the Nimba County District #6 Legislative By-Election having witnessed an impressive turnout of voters at polling stations yesterday.
- Mr. Darius Dahn of the New Deal Movement, Moses Nowoan, an Independent, Evans Koah, Unity Party, Larry Yanquah, Liberty Party, Paul Tuazanmah, Liberia Action Party, Nowah Gondeh, National Patriotic Party and Peter Wonokeh, an Independent contested the poll.
- In the last by-election in Kakata, Margibi County, the opposition Congress for Democratic Change candidate emerged victorious while in another by-election in River Cess County, the Unity Party was declared the winner.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

House Speaker Calls Meeting of Lawmakers

- Legislative reporters said that members of the House of Representatives were expected to hold a "major Legislative meeting" at the Capitol Building today, Wednesday to find a way to resolve the leadership saga and other national issues.
- According to a release, House Speaker Edwin Snowe has called on his colleagues who are meeting at the Unity Conference Center to come to the meeting with a clear objective to find solution to the standoff.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Justice Ministry Officials Order Arrest of "Sassywood" Givers

- Justice Minister Frances Johnson-Morris yesterday instructed all County Attorneys to arrest and prosecute anyone caught in the practice of "Sassywood", a trial by ordeal which is practiced in the country.
- Speaking at a consultative workshop for County Attorneys organized by the Ministry, Minister Johnson-Morris said that "trial by ordeal" was illegal and unconstitutional, and challenged the County Attorneys to prosecute those behind the administering of "Sassywood" in contravention of the Law. Meanwhile, the Assistant Internal Affairs Minister for Legal Affairs Levi Banny called for a national campaign to eradicate the administration of "trial by ordeal", otherwise called "Sassywood" in the country as the practice was obsolete and needed a sensitization campaign to abolish it.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Deactivated Seaport Police Protest for Salary Arrears

- More than 300 deactivated officers of the Liberia Seaport Police yesterday protested for management of the National Port Authority (NPA) to pay them their outstanding salaries and benefits for 11 months.
- The group's spokesman alleged that they were redundant without due benefits during the restructuring process at the Liberia Seaport Police but the Ministry of Labour ruled that the NPA should pay them all the arrears due them but the Ministry was yet to do so.
- However, the Public Relations Manager of the NPA Maxwell Jalieba stated that even though the Labor Ministry ruled in favour of the aggrieved former employees, the case was lodged with the Labor Court which was yet to rule in the matter.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

House of Senate Restructures Standing Committees

- The Liberian Senate yesterday restructured the leadership of several Statutory and Standing Committees with Sinoe County Senator Mobutu Nyenpan heading the Committee on Information and Broadcasting, Bong County Senator Franklin Siakor for Public Works, Grand Kru County Senator Cletus Wotorson moved to Youth and Sports, Bong County Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor sent to Public and Autonomous Commission, Montserrado County Senator Hannah Brent became Chairperson of the Committee on Gender while Maryland County Senator John A. Ballot was moved to Planning and Economic Affairs.

(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.

Star Radio (Liberia)

Wednesday, 7 February 2007

Justice Ministry moves to abolish "sassywood"

Written by Wellington Geevon Smith

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has instructed County Attorneys to arrest and prosecute anyone caught in the practice of sassywood in the country.

Cllr. Frances Johnson-Morris told the County Attorneys that trial by ordeal is illegal and unconstitutional and undermines the rule of law.

The Justice Minister challenged the County Attorneys to bring to justice those behind the administering of sassy-wood in contravention of the rule of law.

Cllr. Johnson-Morris spoke at a one-day consultative workshop for County Attorneys organized by the ministry.

She urged the County Attorneys to be sincere and committed to strengthening the rule of law and human rights in the country.