

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:

Tuesday, March 08, 2005

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Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248
MOBILE: 232 76 645 914

Concord Times, Tuesday March 8, 2005.

Special Court commenced AFRC trail

By Abdul Karim Kuyuma

Special Court Monday commenced the long awaited trial of erstwhile Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) war crimes indictees.

Those standing trial are Alex Lamba Briama aka Guillit, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu (55).

Special Court Prosecutor, David Crane said the AFRC used women as sex slaves and gave military training to young men and women to prepare them for combat.

"The attacks included unlawful killing, physical and sexual violence against men, women and

children, abduction of and looting and destruction of civilian property," he said.

"The prosecution submits that if you listen closely during the

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Special Court commenced trail

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their testimonies, you can almost hear the screaming, the rattle of gun fire, and the crying of infants being thrown into fires," Crain stated and added

that during Operation No Living Thing AFRC and their RUF allies amputated three civilians and ordered them to go to Tejan Kabbah to provide them with new limbs.

AFRC/RUF ATROCITIES RECALLED

By James B. Sawyer

The United Nations backed Special Court yesterday commenced trial of former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and Revolutionary United Front indictees at the Special Court house No. 2.

Seventeen charges were preferred against the three accused persons, Alex Tamba Brima (Gullit), Ibrahim Bazy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Sanu alias 555.

Presiding Judge, Theresa Doherty, informed the crowded court that the three accused per-

sons are standing trial for committing heinous crimes against humanity during the rule of the AFRC RUF military junta that lasted from 1997-1998.

Assisted by Judges Lussick and Julian Sebutinde, the presiding judge assured the court that fair play and justice would be dispensed to the accused persons. In his inaugural address to the court, the Chief Prosecutor, David Crane, reiterated that the prosecution would ensure beyond all reasonable doubts to prove that the accused persons are guilty of the various charges

preferred against them.

He stated that charges such as murder, rape, sexual slavery, arson, child recruitment and looting among others are all crimes against humanity that were committed by the accused persons.

David Crane recalled how Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the AFRC staged a coup against the legitimate government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and later invited the RUF rebels of the late Foday Sankoh to form a government and in the process, killing and maiming innocent citizens.

The Chief Prosecutor added

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that after the coup in 1997, Ibrahim Bazy Kamara was appointed Liaison Officer of the AFRC in which capacity he commanded forces in Koinadugu District, Northern Sierra Leone.

He further disclosed that in 1999, AFRC RUF forces over-

AFRC/RUF ATROCITIES RECALLED

ran Freetown and Ibrahim Bazy Kamara was appointed General Commander in charge of AFRC RUF forces.

He also revealed that Alex Tamba Brima and his men took over State House and ordered his men to kill state security operatives then deployed

there.

He informed the court that an estimated 5,000 men, women and children were raped and killed in the process and that the Holy Trinity Church on Kissy Road was also destroyed by fire. At the Robala Mosque at Kissy, AFRC RUF rebels also killed

hundreds of civilians who had sought refuge inside the mosque while fifteen toddlers, whose mothers had earlier been slaughtered were shot by the AFRC/RUF fighters for unnecessarily crying aloud. The court was adjourned to today.



S Leone war crimes trial starts

Three members of Sierra Leone's former military government have gone on trial, accused of committing crimes against humanity during the civil war.

Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu deny allegations of murder, rape, sexual slavery and recruiting child soldiers.

The UN-backed court says they were prominent members of the junta which seized power following a coup in 1997.

Many thousands of people were killed, raped and mutilated in the 10-year war.

In their opening address, prosecutors said the evidence they would present would "show pain, agony, suffering, sorrow and grief beyond human description, understanding and reason."

They said the trial would hear evidence from young men who had their hands cut off, women who were gang-raped and children forced to become soldiers.

"In a decade of painful and horrific warfare, their intense criminal actions over a relatively short period of time took the suffering to a new dimension and traumatised an entire nation," said Chief Prosecutor David Crane of the three defendants.

Exile

Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the junta, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, has also been charged, but his whereabouts are not known.

There were reports two years ago that he had been killed in neighbouring Liberia, but they were never confirmed.



Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is also wanted by the court for allegedly backing Sierra Leone's RUF rebels.

He is in exile in Nigeria after resigning as part of a deal to end Liberia's civil war.

Last week, Mr Crane announced that he would be stepping down in July for family reasons.

Unlike the war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone is based where the alleged crimes occurred and draws on both national and international law.

New York Times, World Briefing
8 March 2005

AFRICA

SIERRA LEONE: WAR COURT OPENS JUNTA TRIAL Prosecutors for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is supported by the United Nations, opened their case against members of a military junta that held power in the civil war that killed and maimed thousands of people. The defendants, Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu, were top members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council that seized power in 1997 and allied itself with the Revolutionary United Front, the rebel group that made the hacking off of limbs its trademark act. Charges include murder, rape, maiming, sexual slavery and conscripting child soldiers. Two other groups of defendants - rebel commanders and leaders of a government-allied militia - are already on trial at the court, which opened last June. (AP)



Alerting Humanitarians to Emergencies

SIERRA LEONE: Third war crimes trial starts, AFRC leaders in dock

07 Mar 2005 18:01:14 GMT

Source: IRIN

FREETOWN, 7 March (IRIN) - Three leaders from a military junta accused of causing "pain and agony beyond human description" during Sierra Leone's civil war, stood in the dock on Monday as the country's third and final war crimes trial got underway.

Prosecutors said the three defendants -- Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Santigie Borbor Kanu -- were all part of the governing body of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) which overthrew elected president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in 1997 midway through the war and ruled for just 10 months.

During their reign and after their fall from power, the AFRC group of disgruntled soldiers joined forces with the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The alliance culminated in "Operation No Living Thing", a devastating attack on the capital in 1999 which turned the city into an "oozing grave".

"(They) swept down from the hills around Freetown and in a few weeks showed the world what this sad conflict really had degenerated into -- the rape, mutilation, maiming and murder of innocent civilians; the burning of their homes; the enslavement of the weak, women and children mostly," David Crane, the chief prosecutor, told the court in his opening statement.

"The targets of these attacks were civilians and (they) were conducted to terrorise that population but also used to punish the population for failing to provide sufficient support to the AFRC/RUF or for allegedly providing support to the government or pro-government forces," Crane added.

The AFRC trial is the last to open at Sierra Leone's Special Court, which is the first international tribunal to sit UN-appointed foreign judges alongside local ones in the country where the atrocities took place.

The court aims to punish those bearing the "greatest responsibility" for the brutal war crimes, but some of the top suspects have managed to escape its clutches.

These include Johnny Paul Koroma, the AFRC leader who went into hiding two years ago as well as the two men at the top of the RUF, Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie, who are now dead.

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor, indicted for war crimes in Sierra Leone, is living in exile in Nigeria and has yet to be handed over.

For some Sierra Leoneans, these high-profile absences have diminished the relevance of the trials. Others want justice, even if it is not perfect.

On Monday as proceedings began in the court's second chamber, the prosecution promised to provide a wave of witnesses who would testify to atrocities committed or ordered directly by the three AFRC defendants.

One young man would tell about being captured and taken to a rebel base at a primary school, Crane said.

"One by one they were ordered to extend their hands and one by one their hands were severed with an axe.... The cuts were not clean, he will testify, and it took four blows before his hand fell to the ground, four long blows," he told the panel of three judges, headed by Teresa Doherty of Northern Ireland.

Women would describe horrific gang rape, with sticks being inserted into their vaginas until they bled and bayonets being stabbed into their buttocks. Children would recount how the initials AFRC were carved onto their chests with a razor blade, Crane said.

The three defendants from the military junta, who have spent more than a year in detention, have been charged with 14 counts of crimes against humanity. They deny the charges.

Analysts expect the AFRC trial to wrap up later this year, but the two trials taking place in the Special Court's first chamber are expected to continue into 2006.

The first trial against the leaders of the pro-government Civil Defence Force (CDF), including former interior minister Sam Hinga Norman, began last June. The second trial against the RUF hierarchy opened in July.

IRIN news

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We Are The World

Renewed Pressure for Taylor Surrender; EU Member States Press Button On Nigeria

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

February 28, 2005

Posted to the web February 28, 2005

The European Parliament passed a resolution calling on the European Union and its member states to take immediate action to ensure former Liberian President Charles Taylor's appearance before the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court indicted Charles Taylor on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in contributing to the death, rape, abduction, and mutilation of thousands of civilians during Sierra Leone's civil war from 1991 to 2002.

Forced from power in August 2003, the former Liberian president is currently in exile in Nigeria.

There have been frantic efforts by the international community to try to prevail on Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to hand over Taylor to the war crime court for prosecution.

But Obasanjo has rejected all such pleas, saying Taylor accepted Nigeria's offer of asylum for the sake of peace in Liberia.

The European Union and its member states should press for Nigeria to hand over former Liberian President Charles Taylor to the U.N. backed court for war crimes in Sierra Leone, Human Rights Watch said.

"Today's European Parliament resolution calling for Taylor to be turned over to the Special Court is a welcome step," said Richard Dicker, Director of the International Justice Program at Human Rights Watch.

"The EU and its member states should press Nigeria to surrender Taylor. They should also support a Security Council resolution doing the same. Taylor's continued presence in Nigeria not only undermines the principle that crimes against humanity in Africa should not go unpunished, but it also poses a risk to stability in West Africa," Human Rights Watch said.

There are a number of allegations that Taylor remains in frequent contact with members of his former government, and that he also may be supporting an insurgency aimed at Guinea composed of fighters loyal to him.

These include combatants from the former Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, the Liberian Anti-Terrorist Unit and Special Security Service, and numerous Guinean dissidents.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone began operating in Freetown in July 2003 and is expected to function on a short time frame, approximately three years. It is funded primarily by voluntary contributions and has faced significant difficulties in raising adequate funds to operate.

"Taylor has been indicted for heinous crimes committed during the conflict in Sierra Leone, and he could continue to threaten stability in West Africa," said Dicker. "With the court's clock ticking, he should not be allowed to evade justice any longer." The European Parliament resolution calls on the European Union and its member states "to build international pressure in order to bring about Charles Taylor's extradition." The resolution notes that EU member states have contributed more than \$30 million to support the functioning of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and that the European Union has contributed 800,000 Euro to support the special Court's work.

The resolution also calls on Nigeria to turn Taylor over to the court, for the United Nations to work toward this objective, and for the U.N. Security Council to urgently take up this issue.

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Europe ups pressure for Taylor to be prosecuted

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International pressure for Charles Taylor to answer to war crimes accusations has been increased after the European Parliament resolution calling on the EU and its member states to take immediate action to ensure the former Liberian president appeared the Sp in Sierra Leone.

The Special Court indicted Charles Taylor, who is living in exile in Nigeria, on 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in contributing to the death, rape, abduction, and mutilation of thousands of civilians during Sierra Leone's civil war from 1991 to 2002. **The Monitor**. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has rejected calls to hand over Taylor to the war crime court.

Thursday, March 9, 2005

Editorial

Crane's Resignation and the Special Court

The reason (family) advanced by the chief prosecutor for his surprised resignation from Special Court is illogical to say the least.

David Crane arrived in Sierra Leone with gusto and lots of enthusiasm to prosecute those deemed to bear the greatest responsibility for the decade long war and carnage in this our beloved country.

Those opposed to the setting up of the Special Court saw Crane as one red-blooded Yankee in a clear show of American arrogance, especially when he publicly declared that all those indicted 'will never see the light of day'.

Crane started his work by indicting 10 people, including former president of Liberia Charles Taylor, ex-coordinator Civil Defence Force, (CDF) Chief Hinga Norman, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leader Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

J.P Koroma and Taylor escaped Crane's dragnet, while Foday Sankoh died before the start of the trials. Taylor then became Crane's obsession because having him prosecuted here will give the court the necessary profile that they think the court deserves to make it more meaningful in the eyes of Sierra Leoneans and the International Community. Who would bell the cat; prise Taylor away from his refugee status in Nigeria to stand trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone?

David Crane exhausted all means available both diplomatic and political to see Taylor stand trial. The highest point of Crane's efforts to net Taylor was the issuance of a warrant for his arrest while he was in Ghana on a state visit at the invitation of leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Crane's request was rebuffed which became arguably his lowest point in his duty as chief prosecutor at the Special Court.

Even when all seemed lost at getting Taylor over to Sierra Leone, Crane never relented, but instead continued piling pressure on the United Nations and the International Community to get Nigeria's Obasanjo to hand over Taylor.

The European Union (EU) heard the cries of Crane and responded positively by issuing a unanimous statement calling for the handing over of Taylor to the Special Court, and that as long as Charles Taylor continues to be free the West African sub-region would remain under constant threat of war.

The statement from the EU was supposed to have placated the anger of Crane for the times his efforts at getting Taylor had been thwarted and in particular ECOWAS' cold shoulder at making sure Taylor is returned to Sierra Leone. It was also supposed to be a boost to his campaign and an added impetus to his avowed ambition of seeing Taylor in court for his alleged deeds.

It is logical therefore to have seen a renewed vigour and zest from Crane in furtherance of his job in ensuring a check on impunity in Sierra Leone. The EU is next in line to the United States in terms of international strength and power which translates that their support for the Special Court and peace in the sub-region in ensuring that Taylor stands trial will be considered carefully by those concerned. In fact, the talk is it is just a matter of time before Taylor is sent to Sierra Leone to face the music.

What Crane had wanted seems likely now to come to pass with the intervention of the EU. It therefore begs the question, why would Crane want to leave now? It is inconsistent with his pronounced enduring desire to prosecute Taylor and for peace in the sub-region.

Is Crane playing a game of political brinkmanship; that this time around words should be matched with deeds? Because there is a school of thought that believes Crane will stay his decision to leave the Special Court if Nigeria hands over Taylor on or before the 15th July, when his three-year mandate ends.

Or is it a sign of the times ahead of the court of which Crane does not intend to be a part of? Because, those especially who never wanted it in the first place are predicting the meltdown of the Special Court because, they say the court is a destabilising force in the country and lacks momentum; it costs a lot of money just to try nine people who arguably do not bear the greatest responsibility for the war in Sierra Leone. More serious is the fact that the majority of Sierra Leoneans do not want the Special Court, therefore they say, the SLPP government would be left with no choice but to listen to the voice of the people and take a conscious decision regarding the continued stay of the Special Court in Sierra Leone.

Whatever the reality of the unfolding situation, Crane has done little to help ease the riddles and doubts by his resignation.

Canberra Times (Australia) March 8, 2005 Tuesday

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Canberra Times (Australia)

March 8, 2005 Tuesday Final Edition

All Australians, no matter where, have a right to a fair trial

The Canberra Times

RECENT events in three high-profile criminal cases overseas have raised the question of whether, and how, Australia might seek to exert some influence over legal proceedings in another country. The 30-month prison sentence imposed on Abu Bakar Bashir by a Jakarta Court for 'committing an evil conspiracy' in relation to the Bali bombings has, quite understandably, drawn strong criticism from both sides of Federal politics and various sections of mainstream Australia. The Government has lodged a formal protest with its Indonesian counterparts, and has urged the prosecutors to take every effort to appeal against the leniency of the decision. At the same time, in the Denpasar District Court in Bali, Australian Schapelle Corby is being tried for the alleged importation of over 4kg of cannabis last October. If she is found guilty she may face the harshest form of sentence -the death penalty. Prime Minister John Howard has publicly stated his concerns regarding some aspects of the conduct of her trial, and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer is planning to meet with Ms Corby's lawyers in the coming days. On the other side of the world, Australian Peter Halloran, a former Victorian policeman and more recently war crimes investigator for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has been sentenced to 18 months' prison after being convicted of indecently assaulting a 13-year old girl. Despite his ill-health, the Sierra Leonean court has refused Mr Halloran bail pending his appeal, and he has been put in Freetown's notorious Pademba Road prison. Doubts have been expressed about the fairness of the trial, particularly in the light of the conflicting evidence that was presented, and Victorian Premier Steve Bracks has asked the Federal Government to provide whatever assistance it can to expedite his appeal. Each one of these cases does give rise to concern, particularly given their respective political connotations. In the case of Abu Bakar Bashir, his acquittal on six of the seven charges he faced has been deemed as a blow to the "war on terrorism". His conviction and sentence has, in effect, upset both his supporters -who believe his was a political trial initiated only because of pressure from the United States and Australia -and those who believe that his culpability for the tragedy at Bali and for other acts of terror was clear. The prosecution of Schapelle Corby involves what is allegedly the largest ever attempted importation of drugs in the area. There are questions as to the failure of the authorities to test vital evidence and the strident calls by the Prosecutor for the death penalty appear to be as much about law and order issues as they are about any notion of true justice. For Peter Halloran, the situation is even more complicated. Having been involved in the prosecution of Sierra Leoneans for their actions during the brutal civil war in that country since November 1996, he now finds himself incarcerated in the same prison as some of those whom he helped to convict. The work of the United Nations-backed Special Court, though very important, has raised many emotions within the country, and there are those who will find great delight in the fact that one of its officers is now a criminal under Sierra Leonean law. As worrying as these concerns may be, there is little that

Australia can do to interfere in the domestic legal processes of Indonesia or Sierra Leone, even though each of these cases obviously affect Australian interests. A fundamental precept of international law is the "sovereign equality" of countries, meaning that one country cannot impose its own legal standards or procedures upon the legal system operating in another country. It could not be otherwise, or there would be no certainty as to the prevailing laws in any place. Of course, there are some international legal norms that are relevant to a fair trial. The International Criminal Court, for example, has established processes to ensure that these rights are protected even for those accused of the most heinous of crimes. In 2001, Germany obtained a decision by the International Court of Justice that the process by which two German nationals were convicted for murder by a court in Arizona was in breach of international law, since they had not been informed of their rights to consular access at the time of their arrest (the two Germans were executed anyway). More recently, Mexico obtained a similar finding in relation to 51 of its nationals currently on "death row" in the US. An assertion by Australia that any overseas trial involving its nationals has breached international law would require a political decision to institute proceedings in the International Court of Justice. This is not a realistic possibility even assuming that the jurisdictional roadblocks that would hamper this move could be overcome. Yet it is clear that Australia must take an interest in criminal trials that involve Australians in other countries. The Government must continue to ensure that consular assistance is provided to the greatest possible extent, and that, where there are any concerns about the fairness of the trial, every effort is taken to observe the process and make representations at the diplomatic level where appropriate. Sadly, this has not been the case in relation to the ongoing trial of David Hicks before a US Military Commission, where it is patently obvious that the standards of the process fall well short of the minimum standards that would apply in an Australian or American domestic criminal trial. Australia has an obligation to be vigilant and protect as much as possible the welfare of those of its nationals facing trial in other countries, though one must always remember that it is the laws of those countries that will apply. The concerns raised by the Abu Bakar Bashir, Corby, Halloran and Hicks cases are genuine and important. Every Australian is entitled to a fair trial and all necessary diplomatic means should be used to ensure that this is what takes place. Steven Freeland is Senior Lecturer in International Law, University of Western Sydney and has recently been appointed as a Visiting Professional at the International Criminal Court, The Hague.



It's not just a place on the map.

Assessing President Kabbah

The Independent (Freetown)

OPINION

February 7, 2005

Posted to the web March 7, 2005

By Sylvanus Koroma
Illinois, USA

Sierra Leoneans are asking the wrong question about President Kabbah.

They ask: Is Pa Kabbah a good man? But that is not the right question to ask of a Nation's head of State. The right question should be: Is President Kabbah a good leader? Or is he a leader at all? Is he competent as a Leader of the Nation? Some defend President Kabbah as a good man. Others vilify him. That is because they address the wrong question. Change the question and the citizens of Sierra Leone will be unanimous in their answer!

Suppose someone wants to fly from Mammy Yoko hotel to Lungi by helicopter. Let us say that he has an uncle who is very nice to him. That uncle never seems to lose his temper; he is very religious and very kind. Sometimes he could also be generous. He even appears selfless and prefers to live in peace with everyone. But he does not know how to fly helicopters. He has never piloted one before. Will that person entrust his life and that of his family to his 'nice' Uncle to fly him by helicopter over to Lungi?

The accounts of practically all those who have worked closely with President Kabbah state that he is a good man, as good as any individual can get. He is intelligent, kind, religious, a gentleman, and he likes to live in peace. He appears selfless. There is no hard evidence to show that he is corrupt. In short he is type of person one would like to have as an uncle, a friend, a neighbor, a pastor or in his case, an Imam.

But is he a good leader? Is he a leader at all? Better yet: As Head of State is he competent? The answer must be a definite and big NO! Sierra Leoneans should not dissipate their energy by attacking each other around the wrong issue. Among other things, a good leader is a good Judge of Character; He is pro-active and takes pre-emptive action; He Sees the "Big Picture"; He Exercises Control; He Gets Results; as the head of a country he must be fiercely Nationalistic. Let's use these to examine President Kabbah.

Pa Kabbah is not a good judge of character? Over and over again Pa Kabbah has seen it fit to publicly endorse and/or appoint people of questionable character. There are the S. B. Marahs, the J. B. Daudas, the Foday Sankohs, the Charles Taylors, who have all wrong footed H.E and made him look like a fool. There are the stories (never officially denied) of lost briefcases, of foreign investors who hoodwinked him for false helicopter equipment. The latest example of this inadequacy is Okere Adams.

Unable to handle crises

Second, Pa Kabbah only knows how to respond to crises in panic, not pre-empt them. He knew that the coup of 1997 was heading his way. But he could only lament afterwards that he knew of the plot before it actually happened (by this admission even he was exposing his weaknesses to the public, censoring his own leadership qualities - but he did not realize that). The same thing was repeated in 1999 as the rebels advanced, he accepted the line that all will be well until he had to flee the capital once again. Pa Kabbah also failed to see the loss of confidence by the people of Sierra Leone and in his government. He still cannot see that his legacy is already marred and that he is losing time to repair it. History will judge him harshly but does he realize this?

Third, Pa Kabbah does not exercise control. In fact he almost never takes responsibility for his governments and ministers actions. His statement during the recent elections went like this: I was not really interested in politics I only came home to retire and rest. Translation: Do not blame me, it is not my fault, I am only trying to help. Blame yourselves for choosing me. That is a statement of someone who does not take responsibility. Pa Kabbah's most glaring incompetence is that he fails to take charge, to control, to enforce his will. Pa Kabbah is not taking responsibility for corruption in the country either. He is hiding behind the Anti-Corruption Commission and nice sounding documents whilst he does nothing about it. Instead of suspending Okere Adams, he allows his Attorney General to detain a journalist who point out the double standards of his government in dealing with similar cases. Thus the ministers and other middle men get their way, the government rolls on, injustice prevails, Pa Kabbah claims innocence, all should be well. Why is it not? He seems to be constantly asking.

At this point let us reiterate once again. Pa Kabbah can be said to be a 'nice' man as any person can be. He could and should be allowed a little selfishness here and there as any normal person has. But that is beside the point. The nation does not need a perfect person. It needs a competent Leader as Head of State.

Inabilities

Fourth, One of Pa Kabbah's inabilities is to produce results. Pa Kabbah's resume before he ran for president in 1996, should have warned Sierra Leoneans that he is not an achiever. It showed no specific achievement in all his years at the United Nations. There were no citations for excellence or for specific programs and/or causes that he pioneered and championed. It read like a mere international civil servant who pushed his pen over the years. There have been no new citations for significant achievement either. Some say leaders are made, others say leaders are born. It is most likely a combination of both. Thus although some allege that he is typical of people that the United Nations produces, we cannot blame that International Bureaucratic juggernaut either. It is the same organization that produced a Dr. James Jonah!

In Sierra Leone Pa Kabbah will be known of his lack of results. Whether it is in the bridge to Lungi, or the War on Poverty, or the anti-corruption drive, Sierra Leoneans should not expect much. By the way, after the rebel war, the next war should have been The War Against Injustice not the war on poverty. Injustice and inequalities in society brought the war, and injustice brings poverty faster than probably any other factor in a nation, whether at a national and structural, or at the individual levels. This leads us to an important question. Pa Kabbah was re-elected because many people believed he was to be credited for bringing peace to the country. He claimed the credit for it in his campaign speeches. But did Pa Kabbah bring peace to Sierra Leone? Really? History will likely conclude no, especially after the failures that are becoming evident during his war-free tenure of office. The fact is peace came to Sierra Leone in spite of President Kabbah not because of him.

Blunders

As president his role was the weakest. True, the country was in tatters, and the war was raging when he took over. The APC had wrecked the country in practically every way (in much the same way they are now wrecking their own party - but maybe that is their curse, they are not able to do good, not even for themselves).

However, he did not take pre-emptive action to prevent the 1997 coup. Then he made more and more blunders in his dealings with Charles Taylor, Foday Sankoh, the West Side boys. Under his stewardship, the war worsened. In reality Pa Kabbah was quite ineffective during the war.

The real heroes are:

1. God must be credited for answering the urgent and earnest prayers of the Sierra Leonean people.
2. The people themselves are heroes of their peace. The people withheld their support from the AFRC for over three months refusing to work with them. Many died in the fight for democracy. It was the people who demonstrated that May 2000 which finally brought Foday Sankoh down. Pa Kabbah's government had advised against the idea. Twenty-one citizens died in that struggle. The Kamajohs also did their part. Notwithstanding their mistakes, they contributed towards peace and the defeat of the rebels. Whilst on this subject, H.E. is making another colossal mistake in his handling of the Hinga Norman issue. It is a classic case of not pre-empting a situation that was developing right under his feet. How could he not have foreseen that the special court might try Hinga Norman for human rights violation? How could he not have prevented it or include some clause that would protect his minister of defense in the agreement that was hammered out with the United Nations? How can Pa Kabbah not see that he is indebted to Hinga Norman for his return to power? How can he not realize that wherever there is revolution over things as vital as his country's sovereignty, and stability, heroes have often been guilty of some abuse in the pursuit of war? How come he has abandoned Hinga Norman to the Special Court? At the same time, how is it that he has consistently ignored, downplayed and outright refuse to give his support to the need for Charles Taylor to account for his crimes? Is this not the worse sort of betrayal expected from a leader? Could Dr. Spencer and Abdul Akim have been victims of human rights violation, if their own rebellion was more than mutilating facts (distorting facts) in their propaganda war to render the AFRC ineffective via FM 98.1

Was not President Museveni of Uganda a former rebel leader for the right cause? Does not the Western world now commend him as a model African leader today? Did not J. J. Rawlings allegedly murder 5 judges in his zeal (wrongly I believe) and then went on to make Ghana what it is today. What soldiers like to be abandoned by their commander when push comes to shove?

Not all may agree with the author on this. Nevertheless, a lot of people can and should see that Hinga Norman certainly deserves better having risked his life to fight for freedom (even if he may have made mistakes doing it.) Some special dispensation should be considered in this case and it is entirely reasonable. Former President Siaka Stevens with all his faults did say some true words: One of them: It is Man who makes Laws, not Laws which make Men. President Kabbah is making a blunder and will live to regret this.

3. The list must also include the British government whose soldiers broke the proverbial back of the West Side boys. That sent a signal to them and the other rebels that greater international forces were slowly becoming more and more determined to quell the rebellion. It made the rebels more willing to negotiate.
4. The International Community, especially ECOWAS, and Nigeria in particular, did their part. They put enough pressure on Charles Taylor to stop his support for the rebels and nudge them towards peace.

Kabbah is flipflop

In this situation Pa Kabbah was quite a 'Flip Flopper' who needed to constantly be propped up by the likes of Dr. Jonah, Dr. Spencer, the FM 98.1 radio people, President Lansana Conte, President Obasanjo, the Religious people, Ambassador John Leigh, etc. etc. Now that some of these truly strong people are no longer around, he is being swallowed whole by the selfish and small minded people who surround him. There is one thing

however, honestly speaking, for which Pa Kabbah may be commended: He has apparently given priority to education in the country. Give the devil his due. The nation will probably reap some benefits for this in the future. Having said that, one wonders how much this credit is due to his personal drive, or to some of the fine officials that serve in that ministry.

Nevertheless, the bottom line is that Pa Kabbah does not produce results. To the end of his tenure, corruption will continue, poverty will reign, and injustice will plague the courts. He will have Old relics of the past in his government until they die or are too sick to continue in an advisory capacity. He will continue to scorn the views of the ordinary man on the street. He will not discern the seeds of truth, or the urgent, strident, and often shrill cries for change that the people are making often through the journalists, however chaotic that may sound. The saying is true "where there is smoke there is fire." But he does not see this, he will rather depend more and more on grand ideas, wonderful speeches, nice visions statements and program documents, and the clique of SLPP old timers who if they are not APC are acting in much the same way as their supposed opponents.

Fifth, Pa Kabbah also has trouble seeing the big picture. He is short sighted. As stated above his legacy is already tainted. From winning a landslide elections in 2002, he lost the capital to the opposition less than two years later. Let us take the case of Paul Kamara to illustrate this.

Pa Kabbah does not see that his theoretical vision for Sierra Leone and that of Paul Kamara, are actually one and the same: A free democratic and prospering nation. In temporary scheme of things Paul Kamara may seem to be a nuisance. But in the long range, in the big picture Paul

Kamara is working for change. He is even willing to suffer and sacrifice for the change that he is advocating for. Dr. Spencer who served as Pa Kabbahs trusted lieutenant, was himself also thrown into jail. President Kabbah himself still suffers under the cloud of doubt stemming from the conclusions of a Beoku-Betts Commission of Enquiry. That should caution him to not call evil what others with vested interest call evil.

So in the scheme of things, one can see that Paul Kamara could possibly become a hero in the future, possibly a key cabinet minister or even president himself. He may only be paying the price of his greatness now.

Did not many a great men spend time in Prison? Was not the black civil rights leader in America for example, Martin Luther King Junior,

Here is a challenge to president Kabbah:

1. Create suggestion boxes like the NPRC did all over town;
2. Ask the ministers and government officials to declare their assets when they assume and when they leave office;
3. Pass a protection of witnesses act so that informants are protected and if necessary their privacy is protected (and enforce it by the way);
4. Create a Freedom of Information Act;
5. Repeal and/or Amend the Libel Laws;

What is the alternative? Government and ministry officials will not see that they are the servants of the people not the other way around.

But this is a digression let us get back to Paul Kamara and the president's lack of big picture perspective.

Let us reiterate once again. A person can be a 'good' person, but a very ineffective leader or not a leader at all. It is a question of Character not personality. President Kabbah is absolutely unable to take Sierra Leone out of its mess, despite his very best intentions.

Last but certainly not the least, Pa Kabbah is not nationalistic enough! He does not demonstrate a burning passion to advance the cause of his country and his people. In fact it seems that international trends have more say in his policies than the concerns of the people. The people were frustrated again and again during the civil war. It seemed that foreigners were deciding the fate of the country. Pa Kabbah went to Peace Conferences and reversed everything that the people had recommended to him. The Jesse Jacksons, Eyademas, the American Ambassadors, etc. all had their field day. The people of Sierra Leone were largely ignored. Today, Parliament has ratified all kinds of international treaties.

But legislation that will really improve the country is slow to come by. The country is wide open to international lobbyists, from child advocates, to gay rights activists, to environmentalists etc. etc. The list is endless.

CONCLUSION: What should be done with President Kabbah then? Replace him of course! By a coup? Of course not? How? By taking advantage of the democratic privileges still available to the citizens of Sierra Leone. By pressuring him to resign and by calling for the holding early elections as soon as possible. By engaging in legitimate civil disobedience, demonstrations, writing articles, protest letters etc. by unions using their constitutional rights to go strike declaring that conditions do not exist to guarantee a reasonable welfare for their workers and especially in the light of the corrupt and opulent lifestyle of senior government officials.

The author holds no grudge for this likeable man that is Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. As an uncle, a neighbor, or an Imam he would do just fine. However, Sierra Leone as a nation does not have the luxury of time to see another failed leader serve out his time. The future of the nation's children is at stake. At least three generations have already been lost to the APC misrule, the war, other interruptions and Pa Kabbah's first term in office. What this author is advocating may sound radical. Sierra Leoneans must start asking the right questions to figure out the correct solution to the nation's problems. Is Pa Kabbah a competent leader? The kind that will move Sierra Leone forward out of its mess? Most Definitely NO!

This is a shorter version of an article that I submitted on the Web at Cocorioko edited by Hilton Fyle.

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