

**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 Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Friday, 9 May 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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The News
Friday, 9 May 2008

Witness weeps at Taylor's trial



By Alphonsus Zeon in
The Hague

A prosecution witness at the trial of the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, broke down in the middle of her testimony in court on Wednesday as she gave a graphic description of yet more rebel atrocities.

The witness, known only

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Witness weeps at Taylor's trial

From front page
as TF1-028, there was no shortage in the cruel acts of the AFRC/RUF rebels in their dealings with civilians. When she began narrating how her two uncles were allegedly killed by rebels with machetes, tears streamed down her cheek.

"I saw my uncle lying down. He had been hacked on his neck... He was saying, 'God is great' ... Then I saw my other uncle ... My uncle was asking what his elder

brother had done when they hacked him... Then they hacked him across his face, saying that was the answer...[and] he died," she said.

She narrated another incident in which rebels beat up people in Karina town, and dropped a burning plastic on the body of her brother. The rebels allegedly raped small girls and killed people.

The witness said that in one instance, a boy was killed for simply taking

soap without permission, to wash. He was tied up on the orders of a rebel commander and "dragged like a goat" to the bush where, despite pleas that he would be taking his school leaving O level exams in the following year, they shot him dead.

Prosecution lawyer Shyamala Alagendra is expected to continue the direct examination of TF1-028.

Courtesy BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground

Awoko

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Enough has not been done to support amputees - *amputee's prexy*

By Ishmael Bayoh

The president for the amputees in Sierra Leone, Alhaji Jusu Jarka, has told Awoko that enough has not been done to support amputees in the country.

Alhaji Jarka said the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) dealing with reparations for the amputees had still not been

met despite raising series of concerns and awareness.

He remarked that the amputees would not be expected to continue begging after the recommendations of the TRC would have been fully met and after the reparations were done.

“The TRC report and recommendations were made some three years ago as we now focused on that as we expect that

government would take immediate steps to implement it. The new president has said during his state address that it would be their priorities to see that the reparations could be implemented as soon as possible,” he noted. He remarked that it was not their wish to be begging but that because of their present lack of independence they had been forced to.

Concord Times

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Njala Wins Moot Court Competition

Njala University College Wednesday emerged winner after defeating Fourah Bay College in the fourth national moot court competition organised by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) at the Special Court in Freetown.

The essence of the competition was to bring international humanitarian law to the forefront, so that Sierra Leoneans, especially students in tertiary institutions could understand it better.

SLRCS's secretary general Emmanuel H. Tommy said all tertiary institutions in the country have shown interest in understanding international humanitarian law adding that, "Sierra Leone have signed so many treaties in the world but not all have been looked into by past governments." He pointed out that it takes expertise to understand the international humanitarian law and called on students and lecturers in tertiary institutions to lay more emphasis on the IHL.

"The winners now have a responsibility of representing the country in the international moot court competition in Arusha, Tanzania in November this year," he said.

Presiding judge at the competition Justice George Gelega King commended participants for their efforts in presenting their case with regards to international humanitarian law.

He said the competition would help students who want to study law on how to present cases in court.

Awoko

Friday, 9 May 2008

Prison Watch raises concerns over prisons water shortage

By Abibatu Kamara

A non partisan and non profit making civil society advocator, Prison Watch- Sierra Leone, has raised serious concerns over water shortage at the Pademba Road, Moyamba and Pujehun prisons.

At a press briefing yesterday at their Mendis Street office the Programme Manager, Mambu Feika, said that in Pujehun, prisoners walked for more than half a mile especially during the dry season to fetch water.

He added that the water situation had unfolded an ugly situation wherein two prisoners at Pademba Road Prisons made an attempt to escape when they were left out to fetch water.

On countless occasions, Mr Feika stressed that water shortage had presented a very ugly situation beyond the critical level of control, noting that this was more acute at the Pademba Road Prisons.

The programme manager revealed that, "this situation has been sometimes alleviated by UNIOSIL". He noted that his organization drew government's attention to this very serious problem, stating that this situation if it continued held a very serious potential threat for prisoners and warders.

On hygiene and sanitation, Mr Feika disclosed that prisoners continued to live in extremely squalid and sanitary condition, noting that this was more sensitive at Pademba Road, Kenema, Kono and Pujehun Prisons.

At Pademba Road Prison, he pointed out that sanitary buckets used for urination and toileting were still in use and kept in the same cells with detainees. This, he cried, had very serious health implications.

Commenting on overcrowding, he noted that this was a very serious problem at the Pademba Road Prison, which continued to hold prisoners beyond the critical level of overcrowding (20% above the maximum capacity, which is 389 as at current capacity of above 1000 prisoners).

This, he stated, seriously undermined the security of the prison and had further complications for healthy living.

Mr Feika maintained that his organization viewed the current population capacity as inhuman and degrading to the dignity of all inmates.

This he said violated article 10 of the ICCPR which states that, "all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with dignity and respect for the inherent dignity of human persons".

On medical facilities, Mr Feika said there was a general lack of medical services and facilities in our prisons. Pademba road is the only exception to this. He said there were prisoners and medical staff complaining about insufficient drug supply.

BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Last year the United Nations Security Council agreed to set up a three-member panel of experts to probe into the 'hidden wealth' of the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who has been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 11 year conflict in Sierra Leone. According to the SCSL Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, experts are trying to uncover Mr. Taylor's wealth, which they claimed he had acquired from illegal blood diamond and timber trade in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. He said they have located three hundred and seventy five million dollars which is part of the accused wealth

Adolphus Williams met with the SCSL Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, and first questioned him about this discovery.

RAPP: Well, we found bank transactions in accounts that there in his personal name and were being used for his personal purposes. There's been a little bit of misinformation about this. We did find two accounts in the US in which there were \$5 billion of activity - \$5 billion US in activity - but a lot of it was money moving back and forth between the two accounts in order to maximise daily interest payments. But at least \$375 million we've identified as moving out of those accounts into other banks in the US and elsewhere around the world, and we're continuing a tracing exercise following those funds to the present to see how much is left. But we don't know at this stage how much is left. Given the circumstances we believe there are going to be some assets left here that could be available to be frozen by the UN and then eventually available if Taylor is convicted for reparations for Sierra Leonean victims but of course to the extent assets can be traced to Liberia and to public funds in Liberia, clearly there will be a right for Liberia to recover as well. If we can show money being used to buy arms going to Sierra Leone, money going to the Ukraine or something, that could help our case. That's why we've been looking at this for a long time. Additionally we have the right, if we obtain a conviction for the crime of pillage, to obtain a forfeiture order equal to the amount of property pillaged from Sierra Leonean victims. And we're presenting evidence about diamond pillage, there's a particular shipment that we're [indistinct] a number of evidence about was taken from Johnny Paul Koroma that was about 1,900 diamonds that we think have been valued at several million dollars. If we can prove in the end of the day that Taylor pillaged diamonds from Sierra Leone we can get a forfeiture order against him which could open money going back to [interrupted]

WILLIAMS: How are you going to prove that? How are you going to determine money from Liberia, money from Sierra Leone that formed part of Taylor's wealth? It sounds difficult, you know.

RAPP: Well it involves the tracing exercise, and at the end of the day what I'm hoping on, and when I meet with Liberian authorities I discuss - and with Sierra Leone authorities I discuss ways that we could share the gains, so to speak. At the end of the day it may be difficult to tell whether money in an account came from Sierra Leone diamonds or whether it came from Liberian timber. There may be a case to make in both situations, and the money's been moved around and some's been spent, and all of that. So I think in the end of the day there will be a need to work out a formula for distribution between the two countries. But the critical thing at this point is to locate the funds, because if we locate the funds we can get them frozen by the UN under the Security Council resolution.

WILLIAMS: So all what Taylor accumulated before, during and after the war are all classified illegal and should be confiscated?

RAPP: Well, Global Witness has done studies in this area about money taken from various sectors of the Liberian economy during Taylor's administration. They estimated it at least \$100 million a year during his six years as president. The strongest evidence was the timber products study, the concession study, that was done by the Liberian government in partnership with a number of foreign aid agencies that resulted in the end in the cancellation of all timber concessions in Liberia at that time. And that study I think came to the conclusion that at least 84 percent of the money gained from the timber industry during Taylor's administration ended up in Taylor's pocket, where it should have ended up in the treasury. And so that's something that's there, but there's certainly evidence of other diversions of ship flag of convenience money and [indistinct] other places where Taylor might have gotten to the treasury. But that's going to have to yet be proven. That's not directly relevant to us in Sierra Leone except to the extent that it can be shown that that's the source of this money we compete a competitive situation and certainly we have to recognise the Liberians have a claim to stolen assets, and you can't use stolen assets, stolen from the people of Liberia, to compensate people in Sierra Leone. So that's why at the end of the day I think there'll have to be a formula or an arrangement or a negotiation.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Rapp, let's make an assumption here. Assuming the Court does not find Mr. Taylor guilty, and now the Accused's assets are frozen, \$375 million located, is it not like we are putting the cart before the horse?

RAPP: Well we have to find the assets first in order to justify what we're doing in the Court, and so if at the end of the day we get a judgment for several million dollars which should go back to the people of Sierra Leone, it won't do us much good unless we've frozen the resources. The United Nations, under Security Council resolutions, has the right – indeed the Sanctions Committee is mandated with an order to freeze Taylor's assets, or to freeze the assets that are in the hands of third parties that came from Taylor. So that needs to be done in any case. And even if Taylor's acquitted, people in Liberia and others could have claims to get that money back based upon grounds other than war crimes. It's not just on war crimes that you can recover money. You could recover money because it's theft. You could recover it under a lawsuit saying that Taylor's men had committed a particular injury to you and it would be a whole different standard. Just because we would not succeed, others could succeed in the future. But it makes sense for everyone to work together to maximise the amount of assets that are located and frozen. Once that's done I think then we'll move forward to... (interrupted) share it.

WILLIAMS: And the Defence team agrees with you?

RAPP: Well, no, the Defence team obviously contests whether Taylor took money. To a large extent that's not directly relevant in the case. What's relevant in the case is whether he pillaged assets from Sierra Leone. They of course have pled 'not guilty' on that. We will have to prove that. The question of how much assets he has today, that will only become relevant to the Court once we have a conviction, if we get one, for that particular offence. Then the Court will have to determine whether an order should be entered that would allow us some of that money to be taken by the Court, sent to Sierra Leone, or it could be distributed to victims.

WILLIAMS: Let me use this opportunity to ask about the former Vice President and President of Liberia, Moses Blah. We got information that he will be testifying against Taylor in Court. So when is he appearing in Court?

RAPP: Well he'll appear after – there's a witness right now, there's a witness to follow witness 571. After 571 it's our anticipation that Mr. Blah would appear. He's already announced publicly that he is going to appear under his own name and waive anonymity. We're looking for that testimony, but it will depend entirely upon how long the previous witnesses take.

WILLIAMS: He was complaining about his health, so how is he now?

RAPP: Well he did indicate, of course, publicly – I don't want to discuss people's health if they haven't already, but he indicated that he has high blood pressure and that he needed to make sure that that problem is taken care of before he could travel, and that he would have a medical release from his doctor. That examination was conducted, that release was obtained, and we didn't want him to testify if there was any kind of risk to his health. So that issue is resolved, as were some security issues because of threats that had been made against him. And he's now been able to travel to The Hague and we look forward to his testimony.

WILLIAMS: Is he in The Hague?

RAPP: Yes. He has arrived.

WILLIAMS: And we are expecting him to take the witness stand next week?

RAPP: Next week, during the week of the 12th to the 16th of May.

BBC World Service Trust

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Witness weeps at Taylor trial

By Alphonsus Zeon in The Hague

A prosecution witness at the trial of the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, broke down in the middle of her testimony in court on Wednesday as she gave a graphic description of yet more rebel atrocities.

The witness, known only as TF1-028, said there was no shortage in the cruel acts of the AFRC/RUF rebels in their dealings with civilians. When she began narrating how her two uncles were allegedly killed by rebels with machetes, tears streamed down her cheek.

“I saw my uncle lying down. He had been hacked on his neck... He was saying, ‘God is great’ ... Then I saw my other uncle ... My uncle was asking what his elder brother had done when they hacked him... Then they hacked him across his face, saying that was the answer...[and] he died,” she said.

She narrated another incident in which rebels beat up people in Karina town, and dropped a burning plastic on the body of her brother. The rebels allegedly raped small girls and killed people.

The witness said that in one instance, a boy was killed for simply taking soap without permission, to wash. He was tied up on the orders of a rebel commander and “dragged like a goat” to the bush where, despite pleas that he would be taking his school leaving O level exams in the following year, they shot him dead.

Prosecution lawyer Shyamala Alagendra is expected to continue the direct examination of TF1-028.

Courtesy BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground

The Trial of Charles Taylor website

www.charlestaylortrial.org

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Taylor's Former Vice President, Moses Blah, to Testify Next Week

The press and outreach office of the Special Court has just announced that former Liberian Vice President Moses Blah is now scheduled to take the witness stand next Tuesday, depending on how long the previous witness takes. Blah served as Charles Taylor's vice president and was Taylor's immediate successor as Liberian president when Taylor left Liberia for exile in Nigeria in August 2003.

Blah will be led in evidence by Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court, Stephen Rapp. It will be the first time that Rapp has led a witness in the Taylor trial.

The court distributed the following summary of topics about which Blah may testify:

The witness may provide evidence in relation to the following:

Personal background information.

Training received by the Accused and Foday Sankoh in Libya in the late 1980's, the Accused authority at that time.

Creation of the NPFL, the composition and command structure of the NPFL from the late 1980's onward, the Accused's control over the NPFL.

Creation of SBUs in the NPFL and the RUF, reasons for using children in the NPFL and RUF.

NPFL headquarters and base camps in Liberia from the late 1980's onward.

Relationship between the Accused and the leader of Libya and the President of Burkina Faso from the late 1980's onward.

Libyan assistance to the Accused and to Foday Sankoh from the late 1980's onward, including providing money to the Accused and providing weapons and ammunition or facilitating the Accused's ability to obtain arms and ammunition.

Assistance of the President of Burkina Faso to the Accused from the late 1980's onward, including but not limited to providing arms and ammunition to the Accused, procedure by which such assistance provided.

Storage of arms and ammunition in Liberia.

Relationship between the Accused and leaders of the AFRC/RUF, including but not limited to Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie and Issa Sesay, and Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the AFRC/RUF Junta.

Assistance provided by the Accused to the RUF, including but not limited to arms and ammunition, training in Liberia, providing Liberian personnel subordinate to the Accused to fight with the RUF in Sierra Leone, providing guest houses and Liberian escorts in Liberia.

Command structure of the fighters in Sierra Leone in the early to mid 1990's, including the command structure of subordinates of the Accused facilitating the movement of fighters into Sierra Leone.

Crimes against Sierra Leonean civilians committed by Liberian subordinates of the

Accused in the early to mid 1990's, including but not limited to killing civilians and looting, the Accused reaction to these crimes.

Travel of AFRC/RUF leaders, including but not limited to Foday Sankoh, Sam

Bockarie, Issa Sesay, Johnny Paul Koroma, to Liberia to meet with the Accused and/or his subordinates.

Communications within the NPFL in Liberia regarding activities of the NPFL and RUF, and regarding crimes being committed in Sierra Leone.

The Accused's control over the Liberian armed forces, police, special units after he became President in 1997, command structure among those forces.

The involvement of the AFRC/RUF in supporting the Accused against the LURD and ULIMO.

Circumstance surrounding the killing of Sam Bockarie in Liberia by personnel subordinate to the Accused, including but not limited to the reason for the killing.

Circumstances surrounding the killing of Johnny Paul Koroma, the leader of the

AFRC/RUF Junta government, in Liberia by personnel subordinate to the Accused.

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Reuters

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Court chases \$375 mln from Liberian Taylor's banks

By Katrina Manson

FREETOWN, May 8 (Reuters) - Prosecutors for Sierra Leone's war crimes court are trying to track down \$375 million they say vanished from two U.S. bank accounts held by former Liberian President Charles Taylor when he was forced from power in 2003.

But lawyers defending the former warlord against charges of fomenting civil war in Sierra Leone to obtain diamonds challenged prosecutors to produce evidence that Taylor had salted away state funds for his personal use.

Taylor is on trial before a U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone set up to try those most responsible for that country's 1991-2002 civil war, in which drug-taking rebels killed, raped and hacked limbs off terrified villagers.

Taylor denies all charges and has requested donor funds to pay his lawyers because he says he is broke.

The Special Court's chief prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, said a London law firm working with the court had found records of two bank accounts in Taylor's name at Citi bank in New York.

"These accounts were closed and a total of \$375 million was transferred from them over time into other bank accounts in the U.S. and elsewhere," Rapp told Reuters in an interview this week.

The accounts were closed in December 2003, four months after Taylor stepped down as President and went into exile, he said.

"The amount of money is truly remarkable ... It seems at least 80 percent of the revenues of Liberia -- from timber, ship money, customs, other things -- ends up in Taylor's own private accounts," Rapp said.

"Customs receipts would be delivered to him at the end of the day. There are examples of paying nearly \$2 million into the government treasury in the morning and that same afternoon that same exact figure -- \$1,999,975 -- going into Taylor's account."

"PUT UP OR SHUT UP"

Taylor's lawyers challenged prosecutors to produce evidence.

"To date we have not seen a shred of evidence to support the fact that former President Charles Taylor has salted away millions whilst he was in power," Courtenay Griffiths, Charles Taylor's lead defence lawyer told Reuters in the Netherlands.

"We say they ought to put up or shut up on this issue.

"There is no charge on the indictment relating to him stashing money away overseas. Finding the money is totally irrelevant to the indictment. The sole relevance of finding that money would be to contradict his assertion that he is indigent and that the court should pay for his defence," Griffiths said.

Taylor, who escaped from a U.S. jail where he was being held on embezzlement charges in 1985, emerged victorious from the first phase of Liberia's 14-year civil war and was elected president in 1997, only for rebels to force him out in 2003.

The trial is being held in the Hague for fear of destabilising West Africa. Last month a former fighter told the court he had killed men, women and babies on Taylor's orders and had eaten the heart of a former rebel leader.

Rapp said he was working closely with the United Nations Sanctions Committee, which has the power to freeze Taylor's assets anywhere in the world, to accelerate the search for the cash, which could potentially be used to compensate war victims.

"The one thing we don't know is how much is left, so to speak, at the end of the rainbow," he said.

"But ... we would be very surprised if a substantial amount were not still out there in bank accounts, potentially in banking havens, countries with strong bank secrecy laws, and in the names of persons other than Mr Taylor," Rapp said.

Even if the funds were found and seized, Liberia and Sierra Leone would need to agree how to divide it up.

"There's two claims on the money, and Sierra Leone is not entitled to all of the money. Some gain-sharing should be worked out between the two countries," he said. (For full Reuters Africa coverage and to have your say on the top issues, visit: africa.reuters.com) (Additional reporting by Alexander Hudson in Amsterdam and Alphonso Toweh in Monrovia; writing by Alistair Thomson)

The Analyst (Liberia)
Thursday, 8 May 2008

TAYLOR'S \$5 BILLIONS

-Special Court's, GOL's New Headache

Prior to being forced into exile to Nigeria and on to face war-crime charges in The Hague, former President Charles Taylor had discounted reports with vehement denial that he has hoarded billions of U.S. dollars in foreign banks. He threw challenges at those who thought otherwise to disclose the banks in which those accounts were alleged to be set up. Now, the Special Court in Sierra Leone, which is prosecuting him, said it has discovered one of those accounts worth US \$5,000,000.00 plus 12 bags of diamond. Proof of discovery aside and with so many legitimate claimants to the booties, the question many are asking is, "Who benefits, how, and to what extent?" With J. Edwood Dennis of our staff, The Analyst Staff Writer has been looking at the new equity battle lines the discovery may draw amongst hitherto nodding partners.



Former President Charles Taylor

Observers in Monrovia say the discovery of Charles Taylor's five billion-dollar escrow account by the Special Court in Sierra Leone has triggered headaches that are likely to be difficult to go away.

The general fear amongst them is that the headaches may advance to cut new grounds of contention between the two war-devastated and cash-starved countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone, that have had rough diplomatic and security rides leading up to the civil wars of the 1990s that saw the worst ever war excesses on the continent.

New Headaches over discovery: who benefits, how, and by how much?

According to them, the discoveries do not only bring to the front burner the question of how much of the diamonds and the cash in the escrow account came from resources Taylor exploited during his reign of terror in Liberia and during his alleged support for the crusade of mayhem and death led by Foday Sarkor's RUF in Sierra Leone, but that it also highlights the question of reparation and goes beyond that to the details of who benefits, how, and to what extent?

"If indeed the money and diamonds were discovered, and I have no reason to doubt it because the Special Court can't lie on itself, then the next question that may

put Liberia at loggerhead with Sierra Leone at the expense of their new-found invigorated cooperation, solidarity and friendship, is how the booties will be redistributed," said secondary school Economics teacher Moses V. Weah of Gardnersville.

He said equity belonging to each country would be based on actual loot per cash ratios and the proven number and level of atrocities the victims have suffered.

"Now," he noted, "this is not something one will wait for Taylor to be convicted before studying. It is crucial and it may involve diplomatic and legal posturing since Liberia as well as Sierra Leone and even the Special Court need the money for on various claims."

Moses said Liberia and Sierra Leone were no doubt severely devastated in both human and infrastructural terms and will likely be making claims based on these factors.

In his view also, the Special Court, which is funded by voluntary contributions from interested states rather than through assessed contributions, will be seeking to get a sizable share to up its operation budget and compensate for deficits. It may be claiming bonus for investigating and netting discoveries, using its own scarce resources.

The European commission has generously supported the special court since 2003 in the amount of approximately €1.9 million. But its financial needs

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TAYLOR'S \$5 BILLIONS

are enormous for an institution that has no sure source of funding.

The *Analyst* research shows that in 2006, the commission donated €695,000 to the court for its Victims Justice and Legacy Project supporting the outreach section, the Witness and Victims Support Programme, the Audio Visual Programme, the Court Interpreters Training Programme and the Archives and Library Development Programme.

In 2007, the commission donated €600,000 to continue the activities of the Victims Justice and Legacy Project.

Following recommendations by an independent expert in April 2007, according to the research, the court's registry presented a completion budget to the management committee which covers operations from January 2007 to December 2009, as well as a budget for the liquidation process. The completion process began in 2007.

The completion budget shows expense projections of more than US \$33 billion for 2008 and more than US \$20 billion for 2009 for its Freetown and The Hague operations. It is these budgets that the court will likely be hard pressed to seek support funding.

"As the figures show, substantial reductions in costs will be achieved by the end of the Taylor hearings in The Hague, hence, the reduction of \$12,981,600 million between the 2008 and 2009 budgets," a Special Court report said.

On this note University of Liberia Political Science senior Juajay K. Davies, agreeing with Moses V. Weah, noted, "Even Liberia needs to join the search for Taylor's booties since it is now clear they exist. If money belonging to Taylor can be found in the U.S. of all countries given that country's rejection of Taylor's misrule and his alleged export of violence to neighboring countries, then there is more to be discovered. Most of what Taylor stacked away comes from timbers and mineral ripped from Liberia. So, the nation has much to do in the search and it cannot afford to stand on the side and watch others do the search."

He said if Liberia does not have the wherewithal to take part in the search, it should petition the Special Court for a joint search in which it will encourage Liberians connected directly with Taylor to provide intelligence information leading to the discovery of more funds and minerals.

"In that way, it will not be argued that Liberia will have to forgo some of its share to compensate for the cost of investigation. Who knows what disparity there will be in reporting future discoveries?" he wondered.

Like most observers questioned by this paper over the week, Juajay and Moses rejected suggestions that it is too early to think about such things as apportioning entitlements because Taylor is yet to be convicted.

The reason, according to them, is that the redistribution of stolen wealth and reparation for victims of war excesses in two countries, one claiming to be more victimized than the other, was a crucial question that will eventually crop up between the special court and the two governments should begin studying it at the point of discovery even as the search continues for more stolen money and minerals.

This brings the issue of reparation for potential non-state claimants, the victims, to the question of who benefits, by what yardstick beneficiaries will be determined since mayhem was committed by all sides in the Sierra Leonean conflict, and to what extent they will be benefited.

"This is no doubt a huge case for heart-searching and intensive study that should start forthwith," Juajay said.

The discovery

Stephen Rapp, who is the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, told a news conference in Monrovia last Thursday that the court has discovered US \$5 billion in Taylor's escrow account at the New York City Bank in the United States after court investigators followed a lead provided by documents they obtained.

He said the court also discovered 12 bags of diamond belonging to Mr. Taylor. He however did say whether the diamonds were discovered at the same bank. He neither gave the size of the bags nor the volume of the diamonds but noted that the diamonds were valued at US \$12 million.

The discovery surprised many who believed Liberia and its leadership, under Taylor, were so bankrupt that it was impossible to restore at least to the nation's capital basic social services such as tap water, electricity, and improved health and education facilities.

But analysts say that is not all that the discovery is likely to do. They said it is most likely than not to bring under strain the "cordial relationship" currently existing between the Liberian government, on one hand, and the Special Court and the Sierra Leone government on the other hand.

Sierra Leone have said and the international community agreed, analysts recalled, that it suffered most in both human and material resources from the Taylor-backed RUF military misadventure on Sierra Leonean territory.

"For instance, there is a Special Court allegation that Taylor ran a gun-for-diamond smuggling ring inside Sierra Leone up to the military intervention of UNAMSIL and the end of that nation's civil war in 2002. How much of this argument will feature into the appropriation, if there will be any?" said one analyst.

According to him, all this has to be harmonized in the most equitable manner that takes into account the peace and solidarity spirit of the Mano River Union and the traditional peace between the governments and peoples of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This though, he said, is not to forget that rights groups and the U.S. government built a parallel case in Liberia's interest that Taylor exploited Liberia's mineral and timber resources to build escrow accounts across the world.

Claims and Taylor's Denial

A report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000) linked Taylor's presumed support for the RUF in Sierra Leone to his reckless exploitation and export of Liberia's forest resources, mainly timbers and logs.

"Liberia exported 13,251,996.47 FOB (USD) to China and 7,385,373.78 FOB (USD) to France. Other countries listed as importing timber from Liberia were Italy, Korea, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Germany, Indonesia, India, Netherlands, Thailand, Portugal, Tunisia, Holland, Britain, Senegal, Belgium and Ivory Coast," the report said.

It further revealed at the

Cont'd on page 10

TAYLOR'S \$5 BILLIONS

time that Swiss and Burkinabé banks were being used to hide funds embezzled by President Charles Taylor, who has at least one account in Burkina Faso established under his alias, Jean Pierre Somé.

"Liberian assets in Swiss banks are greater than either Nigeria or South Africa, totaling at least US\$3.8 billion," the report said.

Global Witness research and investigations in French sea ports in late March 2001 showed that Liberian timber was flooding into France.

"We are concerned over the possibility that the French government is putting commercial interests before the urgency of putting an end to this brutal conflict that has already claimed thousands of lives. Both France and China now have a responsibility to ensure to the international community that this is not the case," said Alex Yearsley of Global Witness when he made the right group's case before the Security Council of the United Nations.

Despite the fact that the UN has recognized the danger posed by misappropriated timber revenue and has linked logging companies to illegal arms imports and support for rebel groups in the past, the Security Council did not take decisive action and impose sanctions against the Liberian timber industry until early 2003.

"The logging industry and international networks of illegal weapons dealers and mercenaries are currently inseparable in Liberia. Unless the Liberian

government's access to these resources is stemmed, the instability caused by arms trafficking and Liberian-backed mercenaries in Cote d'Ivoire will continue and the threat of Liberian mercenary activities in Sierra Leone may soon be realized, bringing into doubt any future peace in the region," Global Witness said at the time.

But Taylor was not taking the accusation lying down. He rejected claims that he was stacking stolen moneys away, describing the Global Witness reports and testimonies at the United Nations as "preposterous".

Besides, he disputed a series of witnesses' allegations before the US Congressional Sub-Committee on Africa that besides siphoning the nation's into personal accounts, Taylor was abusing human rights and destabilizing the ECOWAS subregion.

In a lengthy letter dated 20 March to the Committee's chair Congressman Ed Royce, Taylor said the testimonies by Liberians and others misrepresented his good human rights record and were geared towards winning legal immigration status for Liberians in the US.

But the Congressional Subcommittee knew better, held its ground, and would press on to convince the Bush Administration to urge Taylor to step down as part of broader efforts to restore security and calm to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire.

Noted committee chairman Ed Royce at the time, "Taylor has ruined what remained of the Liberian economy after the seven-year war he waged. He and his cronies, the so-called 'Inner Circle,' control virtually all the nation's significant trade, as the United Nations recently reported. Liberia has been described as Charles Taylor,

Inc. This corporation is corrupt to its core... Taylor is a menace to West Africa. One of today's witnesses will state that Taylor's role has been to mastermind carnage in Sierra Leone for the sole purpose of controlling its diamond mines, from which he derives income to enrich himself and buy arms and ammunitions to continue his control over Liberia, and ultimately over the West Africa sub-region."

That should ring a bell, but the former Liberian spite-fire leader told the Liberia people at the time that the allegations were part of an international conspiracy against him and fired back at the independent investigators whom he simply referred to as "detractors".

"I challenge anyone to check all over the world and find any account belonging to Charles Taylor."

This is how the former Liberian president, now facing 11-count charges for war crimes and crimes against humanity, responded allegations that he has siphoned millions of dollars of public money into his personal accounts in foreign banks.

But that denial appears to have been laid bare last week when the Special Hybrid Court of Sierra Leone announced that it has discovered one of Taylor's escrow accounts at the Bank of New York in the U.S.

There has been no word from the bank up to press time last night, but observers say the news is likely to cause a big shakeup in the operations of the institution.

At a Thursday news conference held in the Outreach Secretariat of the Special Court in Monrovia, Special War Crime Court Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp said sensitive documents obtained links Mr. Taylor to two "separate accounts" in the City Bank in New York, USA and other countries.

Besides, the special court's chief prosecutor said, the diamonds it discovered is believed to have come from Sierra Leone during the attacks and controls of areas in that country by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of CPL Foday Sankoh.

Taylor is being tried for alleged gun running and diamond smuggling in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Rapp hinted further that 84% of the money may have come from the sale of timbers and diamonds sold during the period of

supposed relationship with and support to the (RUF) in Sierra Leone as well as his misrule in Liberia.

Prosecutor Rapp told the news conference that, available reports indicated that Mr. Taylor's booties in other banks, including those in Liberia amounted to some US\$375,000.

He said the former president established those accounts under fictitious names, making it difficult to claim them without going through a tedious legal process.

According to him, they discovered that former President Taylor also has an account at the Liberia Bank for Development Investment (LBDI) here in Monrovia.

He said the court established the whereabouts of Mr. Taylor's account through the collection of hundreds of documents on information that pointed to the facts about the nine bags of diamonds and five billion dollars.

The Special Court chief prosecutor then disclosed that efforts would be exerted to retrieve and return the money and diamonds to Sierra Leone and Liberia to help compensate the victims of Taylor's war excesses and cruelty.

On whether the information concerning the discovery of billions of dollars in Taylor's accounts is true or not, Cllr. Laveli Supuwood one of his defense lawyers, reacted cautiously.

He told this paper in mobile phone chat that the most honorable thing the Special Court needs to do, if it is true that it found money belonging to Taylor, is to turn it over to the Liberian Government.

He questioned the essence of making the issue of Taylor's account a case because "he is not being tried for theft."

It is not clear whether the legal practitioner has forgotten about the alleged role Taylor's foreign assets played in the gun-running and "blood diamond smuggling," charges.

But even while he declined to dwell on the veracity of the issue concerning the discovery of Taylor's escrow account, he insisted that such money must be given to the people of Liberia.

Analysts and observers say this is being over-simplistic over a very serious matter and now agree that as reports of the discovery of Taylor's war booties filter in, the bottom line is for the Liberian and Sierra Leonean governments to begin deciding what form the victims' reparation and state equity will take once all Taylor's stolen moneys were discovered and reclaimed.

"But will they?" is the question many say will take on a life and form of its own during the months and years ahead.

Doe, said the bridge may not reach the end of the year if government fails to stop the scrapping and this may pose serious problem for residents therein.

He has accordingly appealed to the Liberian National Police to put in place a mechanism that will prevent scrap dealers from damaging the bridge further.

Reports gathered also said men believed to be scrap dealers are removing covers of drainages across the city. Reports say several covers of drainages have been removed by men said to be engaged in scrap dealing.

Our reporter who visited several places in the city observed that covers of man-holes on Gurley, Buchanan and Benson Streets and Vai Town on the Bushrod Island have been tempered with.

During his tour, our reporter observed that the removal of these covers has left the drainages opened, and thus poses threat to pedestrians and vehicles alike. This, in essence means pedestrians and vehicles using these routes are to be mindful so as not to fall in any.

At the same time, some Liberians spoken to have expressed disdain over the wave of concurrent removal of covers of drainages of man-holes.

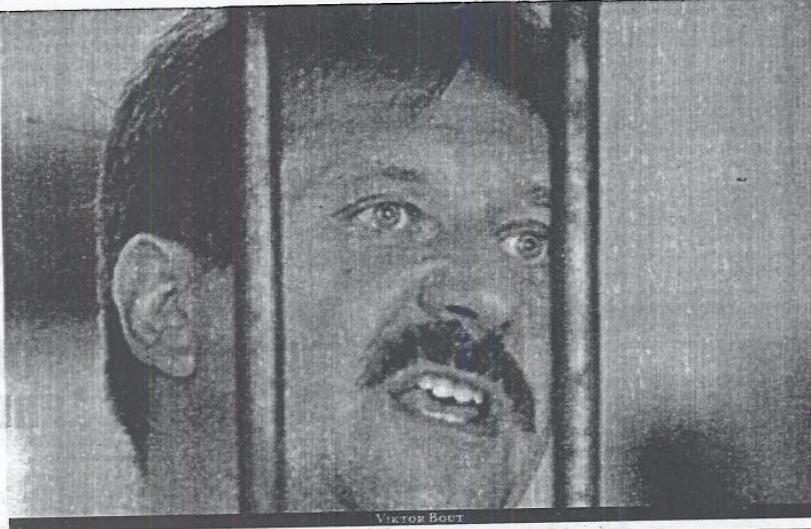
They told our reporter that the removal of covers of man-holes is results of incessant scrap dealing introduced by scrap buyers in the country.

A man only named as Francis said the removal of covers by unknown persons is bad, and described them (those removing the covers) as "people who don't want to see anything good happening in the country."

New Democrat (Liberia)
Thursday, 8 May 2008

US Indicts Ex-Taylor Weapons Supplier For Terrorism

Viktor Bout, listed on the UN assets freeze and travel ban for supplying weapons here during the reign of former President Charles Taylor, has been indicted by the US on terrorism charges. Associated Press: "Prosecutors at as a result of alleged trafficking in Liberia, Bout was in 2004 on the US government's Specially Designated Nationals list, prohibiting any transactions between individuals and Bout." Story: US officials on Tuesday announced they had charged alleged arms dealer Viktor Bout on counts of terrorism for seeking millions of dollars of weapons from Liberia's FARC rebels. Department of Justice officials unveiled the indictment against Bout, who has been held in a maximum-security prison outside Bangkok since his arrest by Thai authorities on March 6. Bout is known as the "Merchant of Death" for his alleged role in funnel-



Viktor Bout

ling weapons to some of the world's bloodiest conflicts, was nabbed by US agents in a Bangkok hotel and now faces life in jail if convicted on the US charges.

The indictment, which upgrades an earlier criminal complaint filed in March, specifically accuses Bout of conspiring to sell millions of dollars' worth of illegal arms to Colombian FARC rebels and of conspiracy to kill US nationals.

He has also been charged with conspiracy to kill US officers or employees and conspiracy to acquire and use an anti-aircraft missile.

"Viktor Bout has long been considered by the international community as one of the world's most prolific arms traffickers," New York Attorney General Michael Garcia said in a statement, announcing the indictment.

"With the unsealing of this indictment, we are one step closer to ensuring Bout has delivered his last load of high-powered weaponry," added the Drug Enforcement Administration acting administrator. Page 1

US Indicts

tor, Michele Leonhart.

Among the arms Bout was alleged to have agreed to supply to the Marxist rebel group – considered by Washington as a foreign terrorist organization – were surface-to-air missiles capable of bringing down helicopters and planes.

Bout is accused of conspiring between November 2007 and February 2008 to sell the weapons to the FARC, allegedly agreeing to the deal during a series of recorded telephone calls and emails with undercover agents posing as rebels.

The US government has actively supported Colombian efforts to tackle the FARC, which has been fighting the Colombian government since the mid-1960s and is one of the world's largest cocaine suppliers.

According to the indictment, Bout, accused of being an international weapons trafficker since the 1990s, used a fleet of cargo planes to transport weapons and military equipment to Africa,

New Democrat (Liberia)

Thursday, 8 May 2008

Stolen Billions, Poverty And Silence

Immediately after ascending to the presidency in 1997, Charles Taylor presented his bill to the world. He said he needed US\$3b to fund his declared economic development programs. When donors and the international community laughed at the idea, he defended his ministers for being corrupt, very corrupt, contending that they had to be because donors had refused to dump their money here.

Prosecutor Stephen Rapp: "We've certainly found evidence of hundreds of millions of dollars taken by Charles Taylor illegally in various banks at different times," chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme. "We have evidence of two accounts that were maintained in his name in the United States during his presidency..."

Thus it is emerging that, after all, Mr Taylor had more than US\$3b. His bank accounts at the City Bank in the US registered US\$5b. This means that Liberia's annual budget would have stood at a staggering US\$1b, since Taylor ruled for almost 5 years. Properly used, this country would have leaped from the scars of war into the orbit of development. With this, Mr Taylor would have been sitting pretty, not before the world to answer for crimes against humanity and the plunder of another country.

If this were a world of justice and fairness, then Taylor's promise that if any money belonging to him is found anywhere in the world should be "over to the Liberian people" would now be applied. But this cannot be done because the current government is not interested in such steps. Thus it has refused to freeze even Taylor's assets here, along with those of his loyalists.

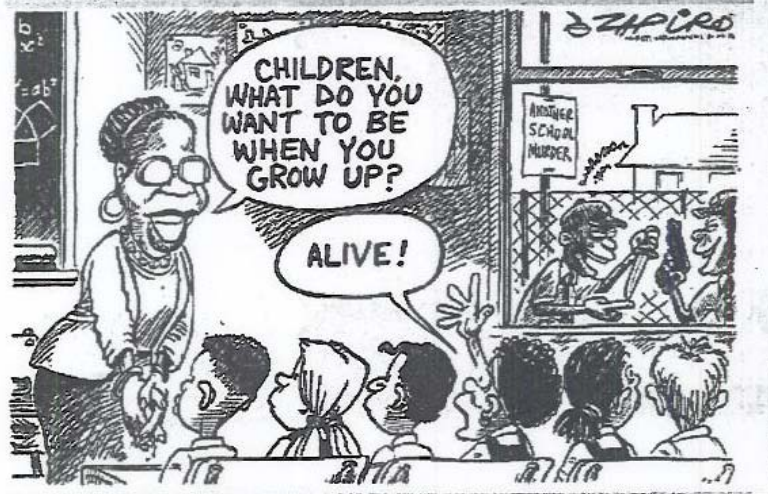
Liberia is not unique in how leaders steal en masse from an impoverished country. What is unique is that there is absolutely no interest on the part of any government to get the money back. Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo have acted differently by demanding and getting some of the money back. Here, it seems the case of he who is without sin must throw the first stone.

The decision not to freeze the assets is clear indication that the government disagrees with the international community on this step. Moreover, it would seem that the government has seen nothing wrong with the manner in which wealth was amassed, and what is not opposed can be adopted.

But the discovery that this country's ex-leader had US\$5b in the US (apart from the millions his cronies have stolen) is baffling. The current budget is less than US\$200m. Imagine a budget of US\$1b, quite possible since we now know for certain how much the former President had in just two of his bank accounts. It is possible he other accounts as well. If national leaders are allowed to plunder their countries and then spread hands to others, then those who give them money contribute to such mass theft and the consequences that follow, such as mass poverty and ignorance.

We believe that the government should be making overt efforts in assisting international lawyers seeking to retrieve such huge amounts. But its silence on these efforts send terrible signals that it does not care or that it opposes the efforts. After all, the money belongs to the Liberian people and Mr Taylor has made it clear, on record, that it should be returned to them once found. And once found, how such money is used should not be left to the government alone. Other international actors ought to be involved to ensure that those who need it most get it. This was applied to Nigeria's Sani Abacha's billions. We can learn from the Nigerians.

A promise is a promise. Although Mr Taylor is not known for keeping promises, it is possible he will keep this one, since he has little use for such amounts of money at this time.



Cocorioko website

Friday, 9 May 2008

Njala edges FBC in court moot contest

Written by Moses Kargbo

The Njala University College will be representing Sierra Leone in the November 2008 International Moot Court competition to be held in Arusha, Tanzania after defeating the defending champions, Fourah Bay College in this year's local contest.

The competition, organised by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) with the support of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, was held at the Trial Chamber II of the court at New England in Freetown.

The session, which focused on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for students in colleges and tertiary institutions across the country, seeks to popularise the subject to enable students understand and appreciate it. It also provides Sierra Leonean academics the opportunity to be recognised globally.

The two teams from Njala and FBC were locked in a fierce debate as each argued on a specific IHL-related case in a 30-minute presentation. After protracted arguments, a six-man jury gave their opinion and a subsequent verdict on whose presentation was the best. And the lot, this time, fell on Njala.

Justice George Gelega-King, President of the Special Court who presided over the session, commended the participants for their brilliant presentations, adding that the competition would help students who want to study law with the basic skills on how to present cases in court. He urged the winning team to reconsider studying law as non of them is a student of law.

This is the first time the Njala University College has peeped Fourah Bay College to the contest as the previous three contests had been won by the latter. The winning team of Emmanuel Sahr Joseph, Jestina Simbo and Emmanuel Kanga were commended for breaking the FBC monopoly in the contest.

The losing team of William Freeman, Victoria Davies and Alex Bull were equally applauded for putting up a brilliant showing.

Secretary-General of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, Emmanuel Tommy encouraged students and lecturers in colleges and tertiary institutions to lay more premium on International Humanitarian Law.

United Nations  **Nations Unies**

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
8 May 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

Operation Thunder Storm Succeeding against Criminals

(The Informer, The News)

- 'Operation Thunder Storm' is making impact as latest Police report shows a reduction in criminal activities in the last three weeks. 'Operation Thunder Storm' is a security network recently launched by the Liberia National Police in collaboration with UNMIL to combat armed robbery. Police Inspector General Munah Sieh told a regular news briefing Wednesday that nine cases of armed robbery were reported in the last three weeks as opposed to 47 cases reported across the country with Monrovia accounting for 40 of those cases in April alone.

UN Envoy Wants Greater Involvement of Women - To Advance Their Rights

(The News)

- [sic] The UN envoy to Liberia, Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, is calling for the advancement of women's rights in post-conflict Liberia.
- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) was speaking at the Monrovia City Hall at the start of a five-day National Women's Conference organized by the Liberian Government, with support from the United Nations family and other partners in the country, under the theme, "Advancing Women's Human Rights in Peace-building, Recovery and Development Processes in Liberia".
- SRSG Løj threw out a challenge to the organizers of the conference to take the message of women's empowerment and the advancement of women's rights to community level.
- "When discussing these issues, ensure that they are not only discussed with intellectual women in Monrovia; make sure that all women of Liberia are involved in these efforts," the UN envoy emphasized.

Police IG Eschews Vigilante Groups

(The Inquirer)

- [sic] The Inspector-General of the Liberia National Police (LNP), Beatrice Muna Sieh has warned community dwellers to put a halt to what they termed as "vigilante, or watch night team" since there is no need for such in the country.
- The Police boss observed that the physical appearance of some of those who claimed to be part of the vigilante team is even worse than the criminals, while others who claimed to be part of the team go on the rampage and hurt innocent people.
- Addressing the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) weekly briefing on Wednesday, Inspector Sieh explained that the Police have organized a community forum to joint work together as a team in combating crimes throughout the city and its environs. She added that the communities have registered with the various Police Stations throughout the city.
- The Police Inspector-General also praised President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for the level of support she has given to the Police to perform all if its duties, "even though, we still need more logistics to perform our job. Thank God for UNMIL that is also assisting us".

Radio Summary

Star Radio *(News culled today from website at 8:35 am)*

LDI Expresses Disappointment with President Sirleaf's Comments on Court's ruling

- The Liberia Democratic Institute says it is disappointed with President Sirleaf's comments on the Not Guilty verdict from the treason case.
- The LDI said comments by President Sirleaf that that Judge who handed down the Not Guilty verdict should go and sin no more is worrisome.
- LDI Executive Director, Dan Saryeh said the Liberian leader's statement has terrible implications.
- Mr. Saryeh said Madam Sirleaf's comments clearly indict the Judge of wrongly handling down the verdict.
- Meanwhile, the LDI boss called on government to pay reparation to General Charles Julu and retired Col. Andrew Dorbor for wrongfully detaining them.
- Mr. Saryeh also called on Justice Minister Phillip Banks to unconditionally withdraw his statement that Judge Peter Gbeneweleh's verdict was a show of incompetence.

Liberia hosts ECOWAS currency forum

- The regional body, ECOWAS says its monetary cooperation would promote and build the economy of member states.
- The interim head of the West Africa Monetary Agency said the single currency to be introduced would conform to the economy of the various states.
- Mr. Melvin Tucker said a policy called the Convergence Criteria has been introduced, which member states should meet.
- Mr. Tucker said the criteria include inflation rate and borrowing money from the central banks.
- He said the single currency which is expected to be introduced in 2009 would also help to boost trade and commerce in member states.
- Mr. Tucker spoke at the Government-ECOWAS/ West Africa Monetary Agency Joint Sensitization Seminar on the Monetary Cooperation in Monrovia.
- He said the sensitization seminar would take place in all ECOWAS states to inform citizens about the single currency.
- Mr. Tucker said the living standard of the people in the sub region is also being considered.

Dutch company to construct school in Buchanan

- A Netherlands based Insurance Company, National Academic, has begun the construction of a two story school building in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. The project is estimated at nearly US\$160,000.
- The Project Manager of National Academic, Benedict Reeves said the construction work on the school is expected to complete by the end of August this year.
- He said the thirty-classroom school when completed will accommodate six hundred students.
- The sponsor of the project, Mrs. Josephine Hermen Gbae said the construction of the school is to enhance the educational capacity of Liberian children.
- Mrs. Gbae said when children are educated they will be in a better position to contribute to the decision making and rebuilding process of the country.
- The school is being constructed to relocate students of the Buchanan Community School now called National Academic on Preston Street.

UK-based NGO to supply magnesium sulphate

- An NGO based in the United Kingdom says it would bring in the country more than two thousand capsules of magnesium sulphate.
- The head of Hope for Grace Kaindo told Star Radio the drugs would be used for maternity purposes.

- Madam Angela Gorman said the medicines would be shared among key hospitals including JFK, Redemption, ELWA and Rennie in Kakata, Margibi County.
- She said the magnesium sulphate was donated to her organization by a drugs producing factory in the United Kingdom.
- According to her, the shipment of the drugs to Liberia would cost four thousand United States dollars.
- Madam Gorman reaffirmed her organization's commitment to assist improve health care delivery in post-war Liberia.

Liberia, IRC sign MOU

- Government and the International Rescue Committee have signed a memorandum of understanding to improve technical education in Liberia.
- The MOU will improve the quality of technical vocational education at the Liberia Swedish Vocational Training Centre located in Nimba County.
- Under the two year agreement, the IRC's LEGACY program will provide technical and financial support for the trainings.
- The IRC will over US one hundred thousand dollars to refurbish the dormitory facilities and provide tools and equipment to train youths.
- In addition, the IRC will also facilitate the revision of existing curricula or develop new ones based on labour market need.
- Education Minister Joseph Korto signed for government while IRC Acting Country Director Elijah Okeyo signed for the IRC.

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