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:
Monday 10 February, 2003

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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SEQUEL TO JOHNNY PAUL'S ESCAPE
TWO SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS SUSPENDED

Two senior police officers have been suspended from duty in the wake of the ongoing investigations into the disappearance of the leader of the People's Liberation Party (PLP), Johnny Paul Korona. A release from police headquarters confirmed last Friday that Detective Inspector, the public is due course.

Police investigating the January 13 attack on the military engineers base at Wellington had gone to Johnny Paul Korona's Johannesburg to effect the arrest of suspects of the attack, including Johnny Paul on January 13, 2003. Some of the suspects were arrested but Johnny Paul Korona and others escaped.

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Police Commissioner denies link with Johnny Paul

BY MOHAMED ISSA
Acting Deputy Inspector General of Police, Brima Acha Kamara has categorically denied rumours doing the round that he orchestrated the escape of wanted Johnny Paul Koroma, Leader of the Peoples Liberation Party (PLP) and his allies.

"I have never exchanged a call with Johnny Paul nor have I ever visited him," the Deputy D.O. maintained in an exclusive interview with with the reporter at Police head-quarters, George Street in Freetown.

He denied playing any role to facilitate Johnny Paul Koroma's escape, and neither does he have any family ties with the latter.

Commenting on his role during the AFRC junta rule, Commissioner Acha Kamara said he was merely performing a duty and that his posting to Kono during that period was purely a police routine, on the instruction of the

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Police Commissioner

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then Inspector General of Police, Teddy Williams and not by Johnny Paul as it was rumoured.

"I love this country like any other patriotic Sierra Leonean, but detractors are always bent on vilifying hard working people," he noted.

According to him, politics and policing are two different issues, and that his role in the on going investigation on Johnny Paul and others is part of his police duty.

He said he was the only senior police officer close to the I.G., Keith Biddle when the escape drama took place, and played a significant role in bringing the situation under control.
It was a coup...

10 witnesses to nail Johnny Paul & Co.

BY IBRAHIMA KARIM-SIE
As police investigation continues into the shooting incident at the military depot at Wellington, east of Freetown, the subsequent raid on the residence of PLP leader, Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma, reports reaching Standard Times have stated that indeed the Wellington attack was a prelude to a coup d'état, allegedly masterminded by the PLP leader.

Police sources say more than sixty suspects are currently in detention for their alleged involvement in the Wellington attack.

Among those are people now identified as state witnesses numbering over ten for a possible court action.

Among the star witnesses for

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the State is former member of the AFRC junta, Komba Nyama who is said to have blown the lid off the subversive act.

In his statement to the police, Nyama said he was among a group of men that boarded a poda poda van from Juba to Wellington on the night of the attack.

He could not however state who were in the poda poda van and how many of them were in it.

Another suspect likely to testify in the matter is a Pa Mornoh Mansaray, residing at Devil Hole on the outskirts of Freetown. He is said to be a father-in-law of another suspect Abdulai Sesay alias Rambo. Police sources say his wife of Rambo, Kadie had leaked the coup plan to her father, Pa Mansaray who in turn had advised her son-in-law to keep away from the diabolical act.

10 witnesses to nail Johnny Paul

Johnny Paul... was it a coup?
When President Kabbah once pointed out that the North should apologize to the other regions of Sierra Leone for the terrible death and destruction suffered by the people of that country, some people who hail from that region seem to regard the President’s statement as a personal attack. I for one, as a former Managing Editor of The States Newspaper published, edited, the other thinking and Nationalistic Head of State, Ahmad Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to apologize to the Northerners for such a statement. But it is now becoming clearer and clearer that there are some malcontents, disinterested, and power thirsty bunch of criminals such as the likes of Johnny Paul Koroma that is dragging us and shame to the international community.

The respect of life of the people is more important than any personal vendetta or the anger of one. Johnny Paul, a former chief minister and a prominent member of the Koroma’s administration, may right thinking Sierra Leoneans will know that the former Jumia Boss has hurt the country and will never be happy to help the North. But he might presently be engaged in helping others.

Koroma’s assertion, that the country needed them and that he might presently be engaged in helping the North, will be welcome in the Lagos government, but was also offered the enviable chance of contesting as a Presidential candidate and ultimately given a seat in the respectable Legislature. What does this man really want?
Johnny Paul In The North

From page one

in searching for Johnny Paul Koroma, Sierra Leoneans do not need to go to London, or Canada, or Liberia, or Ivory Coast. The man is right here in Sierra Leone in the Northern Province. What we need is to ask our Northern brothers to help identify the fugitive Member of Parliament’s location, his refuge. Yes, there is the widely accepted African belief that when a man seeks refuge in his homeland, he should not be reported.

We are living in a post-conflict country, and Johnny Paul Koroma was one of the key factors responsible for this conflict. In such a situation, this is a need for all Sierra Leoneans to be patriotic. Peace for Sierra Leone is not necessarily peace for Tejan Kabbah. Bringing more problems for Sierra Leone so as to drag President Kabbah and his government out of power is neither the solution.

Truth As A Principle

Koroma’s assertion that he is a victim of a witch hunt is not only an attempt to bring an enemy down. The fact that the man fled has proved beyond all reasonable doubts that he is guilty. The former junta man had claimed he is a Christian. He goes around proclaiming his belief in Jesus Christ, and he has given numerous sermons and testimonies to this belief but when he was faced with the truth, he did not trust in God’s power to free him from any accusation and trial, he did not believe in the power of Christ to save him, he believed instead in his Northern connections and in his grenade, so he fled to the North.

Now, we are asking the North to bring their Son, Cousin, Uncle, justice must be seen. Johnny Paul must come out or CORDON and SEARCH will soon be conducted to get him out by force.
The Wall Street Journal
10 February 2003

World Watch: Delegates Pick Judges for War-Crimes Court

UNITED NATIONS -- In a complex, weeklong election, delegates from nearly 90 countries chose the first judges for the International Criminal Court, the permanent war-crimes tribunal set to open this year despite U.S. opposition.

The 18 victors, who include the presidents of the current U.N. tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, were winnowed from a field of 43 through a procedure that apportioned seats by sex, region and legal expertise.

Backers said the voting system aimed to limit the backroom deals that characterize most U.N. elections.

The week ended, however, with the ICC’s most important office -- prosecutor -- still vacant. Weeks ago, delegates decided to postpone that vote until April, unable to agree on a candidate.

The ICC’s backers, including the European Union, Canada and Australia, say it will serve as a court of last resort for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide when national governments can’t or won’t act. But Washington fears the ICC could be used for political prosecutions of U.S. soldiers and policymakers.

In the election for judges, the top vote getters were two relatively obscure candidates, both temporary trial judges for the Yugoslavia tribunal: Maureen Harding Clark of Ireland and Fatoumata Dembele Diarra of Mali. A heavy favorite, Yugoslavia tribunal president Claude Jorda of France, was the last elected, late Friday after 33 rounds of balloting. Other elected judges include Canadian diplomat Philippe Kirsch, who headed a commission that laid groundwork for the ICC, and candidates from Bolivia, Brazil, Britain, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Latvia, Samoa, South Africa, South Korea and Trinidad and Tobago.

The winners will be inaugurated March 11 at the ICC’s seat in The Hague.

-- Jess Bravin
UN Wire
Monday, 10 February 2003

UN Wire: An Independent News Briefing About the UN

TERRORISM: U.N. Official Says Al-Qaeda Still Trading Blood Diamonds; More

Al-Qaeda continues to use "blood diamonds" culled from mines in Sierra Leone to fund its international operations, a senior official with the special U.N. court for the West African country told the Ottawa Citizen.

Chief prosecutor David Crane noted the connection between the sale of conflict diamonds, which comprise about 4 percent of the $7.8 billion annual diamond trade, and the al-Qaeda terrorist organization. "That connection is specific," he said. "They are moving diamonds as a commodity to launder their funds."

Crane questioned the international industry's commitment to the U.N. plan to create a certification system that would block the sale of conflict diamonds, saying the special U.N. court in Sierra Leone plans to indict those who profited through the illicit trade. "They're all interconnected. They all work together," he said. "They know each other. It's a common plan, a scheme, to move diamonds as a commodity, to do whatever they need trade it for cash, arms or to launder money," he said (Mike Blanchfield, Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 9).

U.S. Warns Of New Threats Of Al-Qaeda Attacks

The United States raised its official threat level Friday to Code Orange, the second-highest security alert, warning of fresh threats of attacks by al-Qaeda. A classified FBI bulletin obtained by Newsweek magazine said, "Our reporting strongly suggests that al-Qaeda has completed preparations for multiple attacks with spectaculars set for the United States and probably Saudi Arabia, and is delaying them until just before or just after a war begins with Iraq" (Wolff/Kaidman, Newsweek/MSNBC.com, Feb. 7).

Officials said the new intelligence warned about the possibility of attacks on synagogues, Jewish community centers, Jewish hospitals, youth groups, hotels and resorts, saying the situation is particularly alarming because of the unusually large number of reports that have come in over the past few days, a senior law enforcement official said (Iskoff/Kaidman, Newsweek/MSNBC.com, Feb. 7).

Relatives Of Bali Bombing Victims Join U.S. Class Action Lawsuit

Five Australian families related to victims of bombings in Bali last October and a sixth individual who was seriously injured are joining the relatives of about 900 victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack in a U.S. class action suit targeting financiers of al-Qaeda's terror campaigns -- including wealthy Saudi individuals, banks corporations and Islamic charities implicated in the financing of al-Qaeda.

"The objective is to bankrupt terrorism by exposing those who finance terror and stripping them of their assets," said U.S.-based attorney Richard Middleton, who is in Australia conducting interviews with victims' relatives. "We are well aware of banking transactions, a series of financial dealings that regularly occur between interests in the Middle East and those who not only fund but also promote worldwide terrorism, direct links to al-Qaeda and absolutely direct links to the Bali bombings," he said.

"The main thing is if we take $100 million off them that's $100 million less explosives they can use," said Dave Stewart, whose son was killed in the Bali attack (Agence France-Presse. Feb. 10).

AFP also reported today that two suspects in the Bali bomb attack said Australians were deliberately targeted because of Australia's role in East Timor and Afghanistan. One suspect named Australia and the United Kingdom as being close allies of the United States, which he blamed for the deaths of 200,000 innocent men, women and children in Afghanistan (Jack Taylor, AFP, Feb. 19).