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:

Wednesday 12 – Friday 14 February 2003

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
# Local News

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why Attack The Limbas?</td>
<td><em>The New Storm</em></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witchhunt Intimidation</td>
<td><em>Midweek Spark</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berewa, Ernest Koroma Condemn Johnny Paul</td>
<td><em>The New Citizen</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…Johnny Paul Hibernates in Kambia</td>
<td><em>Christian Science Monitor</em></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Court Prosecutor Visits Port Loko</td>
<td><em>Standard Times</em></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLP Asked Johnny Paul to Surrender</td>
<td><em>The Democrat</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Salone Lawyers for Special Court Named</td>
<td><em>Independent Observer</em></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not All War Criminal Will Be Prosecuted</td>
<td><em>Concord Times</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…Security Checkpoints on BO-Freetown Highway</td>
<td><em>Independent Observer</em></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Johnny Paul Face the Special Court?</td>
<td><em>The Exclusive</em></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Paul Around Samuel Town</td>
<td><em>The Pool</em></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribunal in Africa May Serve As Model for Trial of Hussein</td>
<td><em>Wall Street Journal</em></td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leonean Kamajors Fighting with Lurd</td>
<td><em>Leonet</em></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberians Flee New Fighting</td>
<td><em>Reuters</em></td>
<td>17-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opinion

Why Attack The Limbas

I have been following with great interest investigations into the shooting incident at Wellington on the 12th January and the search and arrest of the former James Butler and leader of the Peter and Abraham Party (PAP), Hon. Johnson Paul Korema. Together with other well meaning Sierra Leoneans, I was very curious to know the outcome of the investigations so that appropriate measures could be taken against these individuals.

It is not a secret that the days of violence are not over. Whatever everybody should now be thinking of is what role each and every individual play in the development of the nation.

As Sierra Leoneans we patiently waiting the outcome of the police investigations, the Secretary General of the Civil Society Movement, Chief Fahnbulleh Fortes who wrote a statement on the 98.1 FM station that the people of this nation should work together for the betterment of the nation.

I believe the statement that was made by the Secretary General of the Civil Society Movement was well said.

It is now time to speak out for the Limbas in Freetown who have been targeted by the Limbas in the Western Area. These people have been living in the Western Area for many years and they have contributed to the development of the Western Area.

I believe that the Civil Society Movement should not be seen as a voice of the minority. It should be seen as a voice that represents the interests of all people in this nation.

The Limbas in Freetown should be seen as a voice that represents the interests of all people in this nation. They should not be seen as a voice of the minority. They should be seen as a voice of the majority.

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Witchhunt!
Intimidation!

Recently, the opposition party in parliament, the All Peoples Congress Party accused the government of the indiscriminate witch hunting and arrest of its citizens. From the look of things, it was clear that the accusation was a direct reference to the incidents of shooting and subsequent raids of people deemed to be connected with the shooting incidents which so far, has been unsatisfactorily explained as a Coup D'Etat. These developments no doubt sparked off a general feeling of apprehension sending cold shivers down the spine of most business people.

With Johnny Paul out of the scene, the Crystalball has been extensively focusing on the events behind the headlines, as to what will become of the whole saga.

Among the pictures picked up by its lenses, is the campaign of harassment and intimidation being mounted against anyone deemed to be a close ally of the former Junta leader.

Among the latest discovery is Bai Sesay who is now on the run for his dear life. Said to be the former Junta leader's errand boy, Bai is seen to be in hot pursuit by particularly members of the Juba Community who knew his 'ins and outs' with Johnny Paul.

Though it is not yet clear whether these developments are the initiative of government sympathizers, there have been wide spread suspicions of government's hand in this wide chase of Johnny Paul's people.
BEREWA, ERNEST KOROMA CONDEMN
JOHNNY PAUL

The Vice-President Solomon Berewa has condemned the act of the Peace Liberation Party Leader, Johnny Paul Koroma from escaping in the country. Vice President Solomon Berewa said that the setting up of the Special Court should not threaten people to create panic so that the peace the country is now enjoying should be put at stake.

He said that the Special Court was meant to try those who were the greatest responsibility during the ten year rebel war of the war weary Sierra Leoneans.

Mr. Solomon Berewa said that since Sierra Leone was the last in the Human index report 2002, the economic, social and political will should be geared towards development programmes for the maintenance of peace and democracy.

The APC leader, Ernest Bai Koroma, in his brief speech said that he condemned the act of Johnny Paul Koroma and that his party was closely watching the strides being taken by the government.
Johnny Paul hibernates in Kambia

By Our Special Correspondent

When Johnny Paul Koroma announced in a radio interview after evading Police arrest couple of weeks ago that he was heading northwards, many people took his rantings with a pinch of salt. Well, clues and counter-clues followed by the police have not yielded any results despite their massive manhunt and increased security activities around Freetown and its environs.

Now, it is been revealed that the fugitive Peace and Liberation Party (PLP) leader, Member of Parliament and ex-AFRC junta leader may be hibernating in the northwestern district of Kambia. See back page

Johnny Paul

From page 1

Our sources quoting the Police, say that the story of Johnny Paul being in Kambia is gaining grounds as new leads point to that direction. He is believed to be backed by some of his core supporters, especially ex-AFRC activists and militants. The names of these individuals are not immediately known but are believed to be die-hard supporters to the ex-junta leader.

A police security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told our reporter that Johnny Paul may be surrounded by some ex-comrades and serving personnel from the lower ranks of the Sierra Leone Army. Their number, he said, may not be significant enough to pose a threat to the country's fragile peace.

He however cautioned that these dissidents may affect somehow disrupt the security situation if not dealt with immediately and decisively.

Johnny Paul himself has not disclosed his intention since going into hiding, but many believe he may well be trying to abort the upcoming Special Court for Sierra Leone which would be trying individuals believed to bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during the war.

Meanwhile, more security checkpoints have sprouted on the main highways between the northern regional capital of Makeni to Freetown. The search for Johnny Paul continues, but many observers are waiting to see whether the security forces would net their prized fugitive.
Special Court Prosecutor Visits Port Loko

The Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone David M. Crane provided residents of Port Loko last week, Tuesday with an update on his criminal investigations of those who bear the greatest responsibility, according to a press release from the office.

"We are working hard to put together our cases, and significant progress has been made since our arrival. I am pleased to announce that my team of investigators could complete their investigations by June of this year," said Crane.

The Prosecutor and his staff have been holding community meetings in various parts of the country since August of last year to solicit views on how he should undertake his mandate of prosecuting those who bear the greatest responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law committed during the country's decade-long civil war.

So far he has visited eleven out of Sierra Leone's twelve districts.

Later, the Prosecutor is scheduled to make the second in a series of diplomatic missions in support of his work. Traveling to Europe and North America, Crane will hold talks with senior government officials and human rights leaders regarding cooperation and coordination with his office. Additional trips are planned for late-February and throughout March.
PLP Asks
Johnny
Paul To
Surrender

By Solomon Forbes
The People and Liberation Party (PLP) Southern Region wants their fugitive leader, Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma, to surrender to police and prove his innocence.

Speaking to the Democrat in an interview last week, the party's Southern Region Chairman, Peter Mummy, condemned the use of force as a means of winning political power. "That is unacceptable," he said at their meetings and secretaries.

"I urge, Hon. Johnny Paul Koroma should surrender himself to authorities and go through the due process of the law. We also want government to protect our membership across the country against any form of harassment and intimidation."

"We joined the PLP to foster democracy and good governance and not to engage in any subversion activities," he added.
Five Sierra Leonean lawyers have been appointed to serve in the Special Court for Sierra Leone. This was disclosed by Mr. Robin Vincent Register of the Special Court. The five lawyers are M. Samba, who will serve as Human Rights Advisor, Office of the Prosecutor; Dr. Marcus Jones, former University lecturer will serve as Senior Trial Attorney, Office of the Prosecutor; Mr. Mohamed Bangura, as been appointed as Trial Attorney, Office of the Prosecutor; Mr. Nicolas Brown, will also serve as Trial Attorney, Office of the Prosecutor and Fatmata Claire Calton Hamilton, who will serve in the Office of the Registrar in the Defence Support Unit of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.
Not all war criminals will be prosecuted

...Berewa

By Regina Thomas

Vice president Solomon Berewa has said over the weekend and said in Freetown, north-west of the country, that committed criminals during the war that is, those who had committed crimes, must be arrested and brought to justice.

"Let no one feel safe," he stressed. Though he did not call names, many people had in mind Sam "Mekisqito" Beacarker, the former battlefield commander of the Revolutionary United Front and President Charles Taylor of neighboring Liberia who was suspected of funding the RUF.

Berewa said that some people committed atrocities, but they do not bear the greatest responsibility for what happened in the country. Appar-ently, he meant that they were either influenced or coerced which put them but of the reference of those who bear the greatest responsibility.

Meanwhile, the Special Court prosecutor, David Crane, yet to produce a list of indicted persons to face the court.

Speaking in Port Loko recently, he said his work would finish in June. What will be the first accused? This is the question every one is asking today in Sierra Leone.
Security checkpoints set up in the Freetown-Bo highway last weekend were "just a normal routine," a senior police official told the Sierra Leone Web on Tuesday. While he acknowledged that the reason for the operation was related to the search for fugitive former junta leader Johnny P. Koroma and others wanted for crimes in connection with last month's armed attack on a military barracks, the official insisted the police had not received any intelligence report which would indicate further problems. "You know we are investigating certain people that are not large," he said.

One journalist who returned from a significant army checkpoint at Waterloo, Curiously, the soldiers were wearing green face paint.
Will Johnny Paul Face The Special Court?

Will Johnny Paul Face The Special Court

The Exclusive
Thursday, 13 February 2003
Johnny Paul
around
Samuel Town
By Sayok Kamara

Johnny Paul: Stop this hide and seek game

Fugitive Peace and Liberation Party leader, Honourable Johnny Paul Koroma is reported to be hibernating around Samuel Town, some five miles from Waterloo. The Pool can authoritatively reveal.

According to our investigations and sources around Waterloo, the former AFRC junta leader is hiding in a cave-like environment.

Investigations further disclosed that J.P. as he is popularly known is very much in contact with certain individuals within his party as well as the security forces almost on a regular basis. “He is reportedly using a different sim card in order to avoid being detected by intelligence officers that might be possibly monitoring such calls,” one source intimated.

The location is said to be forested and hilly with rocks and impossible to reach by transport, which according to sources could make it impossible for any lightly armed security force team to penetrate.

“The area is under intensive surveillance by his men who are innumerable. Since he came to this area we’ve been seeing different faces coming and going,” another source stated.

It could be recalled that three weeks ago, following his just controversial escape from police arrest, there was pandemonium at Waterloo, as parents were seen running helter-skelter to the various schools to retrieve their children.

Johnny Paul made his miraculous escape from the city when police investigations led to a search and arrest of certain elements believed to be suspects in the shooting incident at the Wellington Army Depot on 14 January at his residence on 18 January. In an apparent move to confuse any search attempts for him, he was on the BBC Focus on Africa stating that he was heading for the north.
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
February 12, 2003
Tribunal in Africa May Serve
As Model for Trial of Hussein
By JESS BRAVIN
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

If Saddam Hussein wonders what awaits him if U.S. forces conquer Iraq, he might look to judicial proceedings unfolding 4,000 miles from Baghdad in the African capital of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

There, in a bullet-ridden house that rebels once used to torture prisoners, a veteran Pentagon lawyer is reading indictments of the alleged instigators of mass killings, rapes and amputations that marked the country's civil war.

The charges will go before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a new type of war-crimes tribunal formed by agreement between the United Nations and the Freetown government.

The U.S. was deeply involved in creating the Sierra Leone court and plans to provide one third of its $64 million budget. U.S. officials say the court offers a model that could be used to try Mr. Hussein and his top aides for crimes against humanity that were allegedly committed during his 24-year dictatorship, including a genocidal campaign against the minority Kurds in 1987.

Later this month, top U.S. officials are expected to discuss how to address Baghdad's alleged crimes. Officials say that any decisions will be preliminary, hinging on whether there is an armed overthrow of Mr. Hussein, the shape of any future Baghdad regime, and the response of foreign governments. Some Bush administration officials favor sending the regime's leaders to U.S. military courts. Other options include an international criminal tribunal, trials held by a successor Iraqi government, and a nonjudicial "truth and reconciliation" commission.

But over the past year, U.S. officials have cited the ad hoc Sierra Leone court as a template for future war-crimes prosecutions overseas, instead of the decade-old U.N. tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and the permanent International Criminal Court supported by the European Union.

"It's the next generation of tribunals," says David Crane, a former U.S. Defense Department lawyer who was named as the Sierra Leone prosecutor in April 2002 by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan after intense lobbying by U.S. diplomats. The special court's design reflects U.S. frustration with the Rwanda and Yugoslavia tribunals, which remain years from concluding their work even as they each get $100 million annually from the U.N.

In contrast, the Sierra Leone court operates under a tight budget directly controlled by the U.S. and other donor countries, a three-year timetable and a limited mission. It will try only those with "greatest responsibility" for atrocities during the last half of the civil war -- a few dozen out of thousands or combatants.

The Sierra Leone court's rules are based on those of the U.N. Rwanda tribunal, which derive from the Nuremberg trials after World War II. Defendants will have rights similar to those in a U.S. courtroom -- presumption of innocence, free legal representation, subpoena power and the right to remain silent. However, a panel of trial judges, rather than a jury, will rule on guilt and impose sentences.

Unlike the ICC and the U.N. tribunals, which are based in The Hague, the special court sits where the crimes took place. The location offers a number of advantages: Witnesses and evidence won't have to be shipped to a
courtroom abroad, and the local population will be able to attend the trials, presumably increasing the proceedings' credibility. Unlike the ICC and the U.N. tribunals, which have no judges from the affected countries, the Sierra Leone court includes three judges appointed by the Freetown government, along with five named by Secretary-General Annan.

The court has also made a point of hiring Sierra Leoneans as lawyers and support staff, hoping to create the nucleus of a legal establishment trained in international standards of justice. And after the tribunal shuts down, its planned 12-acre complex, including a courtroom, jail and offices, will be given to the Sierra Leone government.

But the Freetown location has brought its share of problems. The court must operate amid the disorder of a failed state where stability rests on 16,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops. And Sierra Leone ranks last on the U.N. human-development-index, which measures such categories as health care, literacy and economic opportunity in 172 countries. In addition to poor telephone connections, unreliable electricity and a numbing lack of recreation for the court's foreign staff, the city also remains tense and dangerous. Some fear that violence could break out when indictments are handed up later this year, and court staff say they hear that al Qaeda operatives may be roaming Freetown, where weak law-enforcement makes money-laundering easy.

"There is a downside, and that's the security risk," says the court's president, Geoffrey Robertson, an Australian appointed by the Sierra Leone government. "I don't want to end up presiding over a court that's held on a British battleship off Freetown." (In his private legal practice, Mr. Robertson has represented Dow Jones & Co., publisher of The Wall Street Journal and the online Journal.)

Nevertheless, Mr. Robertson says the Sierra Leone model would work well in Iraq and that he has discussed the matter with U.S. diplomats. "In a postwar Baghdad or a Baghdad that had regime change from the inside, it would be an important first step to allow Iraq to develop a system of justice," he says.

Not all are convinced. "Sierra Leone is not Iraq," says David Scheffer, the Clinton administration's ambassador at large for war-crimes issues. "There's a real benefit to getting the top leadership out of Iraq and not have them percolating in Iraqi detention centers staffed by Americans," says Mr. Scheffer, who helped design the Sierra Leone court and has compiled dossiers on alleged war crimes by the Baghdad regime. "It could be so disruptive of building Iraqi democracy to have this hard-line element still kicking around in Iraq and generating dissension."

On the other hand, any kind of international court "is going to be very difficult to sell to the Iraqis" who suffered under Mr. Hussein because such tribunals won't impose death sentences, says Charles Forrest, chief executive of Indict, a U.S. government-funded group in London that advocates war-crimes prosecutions for Iraq.

Mr. Forrest has been working with Iraqi exile lawyers assembled by the State Department to help plan a post-Saddam justice system. Rather than involve the U.S. or the U.N., "they believe that Iraq should conduct these trials itself. It's a nationalistic, patriotic attitude that extends to all factions of Iraqis," he says. While Americans may be skeptical of the country's legal foundation, he says, "they say that Iraq is the birthplace of law, starting with the Code of Hammurabi."
LIBERIA: Sierra Leonean Kamajors fighting with LURD, government says

MONROVIA, 14 February (IRIN) - Liberia's government said on Thursday that former Kamajor militiamen from Sierra Leone were fighting alongside the rebel Liberians United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) in the western part of the country.

The Kamajor militias are traditional hunters who fought against Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during Sierra Leone's armed conflict (1991-2002). Liberian Justice Minister Lavela Koboi Johnson told reporters that the government had reliable reports - confirmed by fleeing civilians - about the presence of ex-Kamajor fighters within the LURD. He described them as "hired killers".

Fighting between LURD and loyalist troops has intensified in recent weeks, spreading to the coastal town of Robertsport, 78 km southwest of the capital, Monrovia. Civilians fleeing Robertsport, which is the capital of Grand Cape Mount County, have been arriving by canoe on the New Kru Town beach in Monrovia. They confirmed that LURD had captured Robertsport on Monday and abducted more than 100 residents, while many others were stranded in the town.

A group of 15 elders from nearby Bomi County reported to the government that heavily armed LURD rebels had abducted 25 civilians, mainly women and children, in the towns of Kley, Dewin and Cheesemanburg, where LURD and government troops have been fighting since early February.

The executive director of the Liberian Refugees, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Sam Brown, told IRIN on Thursday that the influx of internally displaced people (IDPs) as a result of the renewed fighting was increasing daily. The LRRRC had registered 25,000 IDPs by Thursday. Brown called on international humanitarian organizations to help Liberia to address "the alarming humanitarian crisis", saying the government could not handle the influx on its own.

[ENDS]

Copyright (c) UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2003
FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (Reuters) -- Thousands of Liberian refugees have fled into neighboring Sierra Leone to escape a fresh wave of fighting in their own country, a U.N. official said.

Mohamed Shekari, a military spokesman for the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone, said U.N. peacekeepers were on alert to prevent fighting at the border between the two West African countries from spilling over into Sierra Leone.

"Thousands of people are fleeing from Liberia through the eastern border and many of them are women and children," Shekari told reporters late on Friday.

"The U.N., in collaboration with the (U.N. refugee agency) UNHCR has been helping to evacuate the fleeing refugees by transporting them to refugee camps but this is done after the refugees have been screened by Sierra Leone's police and armed forces," he said.

Rebels fighting to oust Liberian President Charles Taylor captured the key coastal town of Robertsport this week, near the border with Sierra Leone, sending hundreds of panicked residents fleeing. Defense Minister Daniel Chea said on Thursday the army had later retaken control of the town.

Sierra Leone is itself recovering from a bloody 10-year civil war that ended in January last year, and the United Nations wants to make sure there is not put into danger by turmoil in Liberia.

The two countries have a history of intertwined conflicts and Taylor is under U.N. sanctions for fueling instability in Sierra Leone.

Taylor, a former warlord, emerged victorious after a brutal seven-year civil war in the 1990s and was elected president in 1997. Rebels calling themselves Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) launched an insurrection against him in 2000 and earlier this month came to within...
km (eight miles) of the outskirts of the capital, Monrovia.

Military sources said this week there were also clashes between government forces and LURD rebels in eastern Liberia, near the border with Ivory Coast, itself divided by a five-month civil war.

Liberian fighters, notorious for their brutality and lack of discipline, have joined rebel ranks in western Ivory Coast. Rebels say Ivorian troops have also hired Liberian mercenaries.