PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Tuesday, April 13, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday. If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact Ibrahim Tommy

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SIERRA LEONE SPECIAL COURT TO RECEIVE EXCEPTIONAL FUNDING FROM UN AFTER ALL: KOFI ANNAN TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR THE TRIBUNAL

Tuesday April 13, 2004

The cash-strapped Sierra Leone Special Court will be out of the financial doldrums soon, at least until the end of December. The United Nations General Assembly has stated that it would authorize UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan to "enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $16.7 million to supplement the financial resources for the court for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004."

The move which the Assembly described as an "exceptional measure", will ensure that the court does not fold up as a result of financial constraints and will likely keep the court floating when it hopefully starts the trials of war crimes suspects in the months ahead.

In addition, "The Secretary General, in concert with the Management Committee, would be requested to redouble efforts to raise voluntary contributions for the court and report at the fifty-ninth session on the progress in that respect." The Assembly also planned that "any regular budget funds appropriated for the tribunal would be refunded to the United Nations upon liquidation of the court, should sufficient voluntary contributions be received."

The Assembly also plans, as a matter of urgency, to appeal to member states "to make voluntary contributions in support of the court and to honour existing pledges."
Next, the Assembly turned to the report of the Fifth Committee entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005" (document A/58/573/Add.1).

By the terms of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 10 of that report on the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General, as an exceptional measure, to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $16.7 million to supplement the financial resources for the Court for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004. Any regular budget funds appropriated for the tribunal would be refunded to the United Nations upon liquidation of the Court, should sufficient voluntary contributions be received.

The Secretary-General, in concert with the Management Committee, would be requested to redouble efforts to raise voluntary contributions for the Court and report at the fifty-ninth session on the progress made in that respect. As a matter of urgency, the Assembly would also appeal to Member States to make voluntary contributions in support of the Court and to honour existing pledges.

Noting that the Court is expected to complete its work by the end of 2005, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to invite the Court to adopt a completion strategy. The Management Committee would be requested to review the structure of the Court with a view to minimizing the cost of completing its work, without adversely affecting the implementation of the legal agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone.

That text was adopted without a vote, as was the draft decision contained in paragraph 11 of the same report, by which the Assembly would decide to postpone consideration of financing of the Capital Master Plan to the second part of its resumed session in May, requesting the Secretary-General to submit during that time all outstanding reports on the matter.

Following that, the Assembly took up the report of the Fifth Committee entitled "Human resources management" (document A/58/750) to take action on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 9 of that report...
MONROVIA, 12 Apr 2004 (IRIN) - Liberia's transitional leader, Gyude Bryant said on Monday that his government wanted former Liberian president Charles Taylor to remain in exile in Nigeria until it handed over to a new elected administration in October 2005.

"This transitional government will not request that Taylor be removed from Nigeria. His presence there is part of the peace process", Bryant told a news conference at the Executive Mansion in the capital Monrovia.

However, Bryant warned: "If Taylor's behaviour in Nigeria derails this peace process, it is a different matter".

He recalled that Nigeria had agreed to grant Taylor asylum because the disgraced leader's continued presence in Liberia was perceived as an obstacle to peace.

Taylor has been living in Calabar in southeastern Nigeria since 11 August last year, when rebel attacks on Monrovia and mounting international pressure forced him to step down and leave the country.

A week later Liberia's three warring factions signed a peace agreement that ended 14 years of near constant civil war.

Bryant, a former businessman, became Chairman of a broad-based transitional government charged with leading Liberia back to constitutional rule in October.

The Nigerian government has so far refused to turn the former Liberian president over for trial for war crimes by a UN-backed special court in Sierra Leone. Taylor is wanted there for his role in supporting a brutal rebel movement in Sierra Leone during the 1990s.

However, President Olusegun Obasanjo has said that he would be prepared to send Taylor back home for trial in Liberia, should the Liberian government press charges against him and demand his return.

[ENDS]
Liberia-Nigeria: Exiled Taylor Deserted By Followers As Hard Times Bite

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UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

April 8, 2004
Posted to the web April 8, 2004

Calabar

When former Liberian President Charles Taylor arrived in Nigeria in August 2003 to begin life in exile, it was with great fanfare.

As he flew into the capital Abuja on a warm 11 August night, the red carpet was rolled out for him, for the last time. Four African presidents - Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, Ghana's John Kufuor, Mozambique's Joaquim Chissano and South Africa's Thabo Mbeki - were on hand to welcome him.

Taylor arrived with a large entourage. Dozens of family members and close aides accompanied him to Abuja and onwards the same night to Calabar, on Nigeria's southeast coast, his agreed place of exile.

Days beforehand a series of special flights from the Liberian capital Monrovia had brought in a couple of luxury cars, household goods and hundreds of hangers-on who fled with the disgraced president as rebels besieged the capital Monrovia.

However, barely six months later, life has taken a lonely, perhaps bleak turn for Taylor.

Close aides said most of his entourage had deserted him, heading back to Liberia or dispersing within Nigeria in search of better fortunes.

"More than 70 percent of the people who came to Nigeria with Taylor have since left him and gone back to Liberia," said Vaani Paasawe, who was Taylor's official spokesman in Liberia.

Paasawe, who fled with Taylor to Calabar, told IRIN "Out of 23 personal security details Taylor brought with him, 15 have left because he's not been able to pay them".
The United Nations-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone had dashed any thoughts that Taylor would have a peaceful exile in Nigeria by indicting him for war crimes two months before he left Liberia.

Taylor is accused of being the main supporter of rebels who were guilty of horrific atrocities against unarmed civilians during Sierra Leone’s decade-long civil war that began in 1991.

He is also believed to have amassed fortunes from funnelling guns to the Sierra Leone rebels and dealing in blood diamonds mined in rebel-held areas of the country.

In March the UN Security Council passed a resolution freezing all assets, including "money and property of the exiled leader, key members of his family and inner circle" on the grounds they could be used to undermine the current peace process in Liberia.

But Paasawe dismissed suggestions that Taylor had millions of dollars stashed away in foreign bank accounts. He said the only identifiable asset of the former president and warlord was a farm in Liberia.

Paasawe said the international community may mistake assets of the Liberia Trust Company - which he points out belong to Liberia - for the personal property of Taylor.

The Liberia Trust Company manages the Liberian ship registry which since 1948 Liberia has provided a flag-of-convenience for merchant ships around the world. Taylor’s opponents accuse the former president of having used revenues from the ship registry as his own personal cash.

Paasawe recalled that before leaving Liberia, Taylor threw down a challenge that any wealth traceable to him anywhere outside the country should be confiscated. "He still stands by that challenge," Paasawe added.

Other Taylor aides and Nigerian government officials in Calabar, spoke of the financial decline evident at the two government guest houses overlooking a river, where Taylor and his entourage live.

"Things are really bad here, not just for us, Taylor’s dependants, but also for the man himself," one aide of the former Liberian leader told IRIN on condition of anonymity.

He said even the defence Taylor has mounted against his indictment by the war crimes tribunal in Freetown, Sierra Leone was in jeopardy because "he hasn’t been able to pay his lawyers".

The number of people visible within the Taylor compound has dwindled rapidly in recent weeks. Residents in Calabar said that the crowds that milled around there when he first arrived were no longer present.

However, armed Nigerian policemen and plainclothes security officers maintain a strict watch around the Taylor residence in view of fears that mercenaries might try to abduct him to claim the bounty placed on his head by the United States.

A close aide of Donald Duke, the governor of Cross River State where Calabar is situated, told IRIN the government has been picking up most of Taylor’s bills for household expenses. But he said this was being done out of "the desire to be a good host" and not because Taylor was broke.

Taylor himself has only twice been seen outside his compound. On
both occasions he was sighted passing through the airport on his way to meetings with Obasanjo. The Nigerian president has warned him severely on two separate occasions not to continue meddling in the affairs of Liberia.

Sources close to Taylor said the former Liberian head of state spent most of his time indoors, playing table tennis to keep fit, making phone calls and watching television.

According to Paasawe, Taylor is putting "a brave face" on his misfortunes in order to cheer up his remaining dependants who look up to him for signs of hope.

Otherwise, "the man is down and out," he said.
Liberia: Armed Factions Want Fighters Trained Immediately After They Disarm

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks
NEWS
April 12, 2004
Posted to the web April 12, 2004
Monrovia

A new row has broken out between Liberia's three armed factions and the United Nations over how the disarmament of their estimated 40,000 to 50,000 fighters will be carried out, just as the programme is about to restart.

Senior officials of Liberia's three warring factions jointly complained on Sunday that the UN-supervised disarmament programme, due to begin on Thursday, would not provide adequate skills training for former combatants before they were sent back into the community.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has always viewed the provision of such training as a long-term project to be undertaken over a period of several months.

However, all three armed factions said on Sunday that their combatants should receive vocational training in the disarmament camps before being sent back to their home communities if they were to put down their guns for good.

General Roland Duo a senior commander of the armed forces loyal to former president Charles Taylor, said: "While we welcome the disarmament on Thursday, the UN and others must ensure that our fighters are well-taken care of and registered for vocational and skills training. With this, they would not focus their minds on returning to war."

Duo and his counterparts in the LURD and MODEL rebel movements claimed that under current plans, disarmed fighters would be discharged from the four cantonment centres after just seven days.

This was not enough time to provide basic vocational skills training so that former gunmen could work as carpenters, electricians or mechanics, they stressed.

The factional representatives met with the National Disarmament Commission on Sunday to discuss their complaints.
Duo said the fighters should be provided with vocational training before being sent back to their home communities.

Joe Wylie, a senior official of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel movement agreed. He stressed that disarmament was not just about taking the guns away from former fighters after 14 years of civil war, but about reintegrating them into their communities and equipping them to rebuild their lives.

"LURD is prepared to disarm anytime, but the rehabilitation of our fighters should be a principal point of consideration for the international community."

Boi Bleaju Boi, the military commander of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), said: "We all want to disarm now to make Liberia gun-free. The only problem is that we are sensing the rehabilitation of fighters in cantonment centres should be done. This was a promise made by the UN and they should fulfil it."

Margaret Novicki, the spokeswoman for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), said on Monday that training would be provided after demobilisation, but she stressed that the former fighters would not be abandoned and forgotten once they had handed in their weapons.

'Disarmament is a long programme... the cantonment sites are not where they get training but where they get counselling medical treatment, an ID card and where they will be asked about what kind of training they might like," she told IRIN.

Charles Achodo, programme and political adviser on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR), attributed the latest complaints by the armed factions to a misunderstanding of how the process will work.

"Vocational training will take place in the community, based on preferences indicated by individuals while they were in the cantonments camp," Achodo told IRIN.

"Rather than keep them [the former combatants] demobilised and separated from society we are going to shorten that period as much as possible to speed up reintegration, to speed up rehabilitation," he explained.

The UN disarmament expert said a trust fund of US$ 11 million had already been made available for this process.

However Achodo said $5 million of this money would be used in this first phase of the disarmament programme. He appealed donors to honour their funding pledges, warning that otherwise the DDRR programme would run out money after just two months.

UNMIL made a false start to disarmament in December and some of Liberia's poorly disciplined gunmen have grown restless during the four-month wait for the programme to restart.
The French aid agencies Medecins du Monde (MDM) and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) told IRIN that their offices in Gbarnga, 150 km northeast of Monrovia, had been looted by disgruntled LURD fighters last week.

LURD fighters went on the rampage in Gbarnga on Thursday and Friday, claiming that the leadership of the rebel movement had abandoned them.

They fired their guns at random, beat up civilians and looted several properties in the town.

"A group of 15-20 young LURD rebels entered into the MDM compound and started to completely loot the compound in the presence of the three MDM expatriate staff. Essential and sensitive materials had been taken way.

The compound was completely ransacked," said Blandine Contamin, the general coordinator of Medecins Du Monde in Liberia.

She continued: "MDM expatriates had been personally searched and threatened by LURD rebels, and ordered to lie down on the ground during the looting". The staff were safely evacuated to Monrovia the same day, she added.

The head of L’Action Contre La Faim in Liberia, Jacquemart Karine, said a group of five fighters stormed the ACF premises in Gbarnga and took away its Very High Frequency (VHF) radio equipment - its only communication link with the main ACF office in Monrovia.

"We are disturbed by the looting of our offices by angry LURD fighters who were demanding money from our radio operator", Karine said.

The Chief of Mission of the European Union in Liberia, Geoffrey Rudd strongly condemned these incidents: " We are totally dismayed by the behaviour of the fighters who made away with vital equipment..... this is a set back for both agencies and the EU".

Rudd said the EU office in Monrovia was reviewing the security situation in Gbarnga and warned that MDM and ACF would not return there unless UN peacekeepers stationed in the town could guarantee their security.

"We do not want to risk sending those agencies back unless it is safe to do so", Rudd said.
To Defer Unamsil's Final Withdrawal

Standard Times (Freetown)
OPINION
April 8, 2004
Posted to the web April 8, 2004

By Kamour Ndullu

Not long ago the United Nations Assessment Team regarding the final withdrawal of Unamsil troops, which was originally slated for the end of this year, were on an official visit to the country sometime this year, some local tabloids made it a point of duty to make a genuine assessment of our current security situation.

In the view of the editorials and some opinion columns who spoke on the issue, it was clearly spelt out that a final withdrawal of UNAMSIL from the country this coming December was virtually not feasible, as the country was not properly equipped or ready to maintain the peace and security that has been achieved to date.

Not long ago, following the return of the team, an agreement was reached between the United Nations and the Sierra leone government for the much talk about final withdrawal of UNAMSIL to be delayed for at least another six months.

United Nations was however very explicit on the issue of self-reliance as it still stresses the gradual drawdown of its troops even within the given period.

Additionally, a very salient reason was also given by the United Nations, that there are grave doubts and misgivings about the competence of this government to satisfactorily take over the entire security of this country in the event of their departure.

To some people who have been advocating the extension of Unamsil's stay therefore, the decision to delay the final withdrawal comes as a relief and that the government has another chance to assume its full responsibilities.

For some of us who have however been keenly monitoring events, the recommendation of the United Nations Assessment Team ought to be viewed otherwise, and not merely as a blessing for this country to continue to have United Nations peacekeepers.
Certainly, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone will definitely not last forever and in fact one would expect them to shift their focus as pressure mounts on them for intervention in other countries.

In my view, Sierra Leoneans do not actually need to rejoice at the delay of Unamsil's final withdrawal especially as the UN expressed the fear that we as a country cannot adequately handle our own security, which must have come about after a thorough assessment.

However, we are aware of the effort made in the recruitment and training of RSLAF and the Sierra Leone Police Force, but after so much expenditure has been lavished on the security apparatuses, one is left to wonder why this country still cannot take care of its own security mechanism.

For some of us who have been following developments, we are aware of the security sector review workshop that has been going on at State House under the auspices of the Office of National Security (ONS).

We are further aware of the fact that the group set to work from last July to August to review the nation's security mechanisms and come up with a formidable document that would serve as a national security policy.

Considering the time the group took to carry out its activities last year, one would have expected that it would have concluded its whole activities by the close of December of that same year, but this did not happen and was extend, according to our information, to February this year.

I am not sure whether the February 2004 deadline was met for the conclusion and finalization of the said document.

If this document has really not been finally compiled we would want to know the cause of the delay. This ought to be the concern of every Sierra Leonean and not merely the National Security Council with the honourable vice President, Mr. Solomon Berewa as the chairman.

We as a people deserve the right to know since security forms the bedrock on which every development takes place.

Not long ago work on the nation's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PSS) also started and are amazed at the velocity its activities have taken.

Already a draft document of PRPS is being presented to the public, when in my view ONS has not been able to do such.

What is most difficult to understand is that most of the people that have been involved with the ONS are again being involved in the PRSP.
The question therefore is why ONS with the some people have not being able to produce the desired results up till now?

I am sure the National Security Council provide an answer to this.
United Press International April 12, 2004 Monday

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LENGTH: 656 words

HEADLINE: FBI probes terror link to diamond trade

BYLINE: By SHAUN WATERMAN

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, April 12 (UPI)

BODY:
U.S. counter-terrorism agents have visited war-torn Liberia to investigate allegations of terrorist involvement in the West African diamond trade, according to the FBI.

A small team of financial specialists from the FBI's counter-terrorism division left late last year to probe the shadowy trade in so-called conflict diamonds, Paul Cariker of the FBI told a Howard University symposium last week.

The outcome of the FBI's investigation remains unclear.

"The investigation is continuing," another counter-terrorism official told United Press International. "To my knowledge there's no smoking gun yet, no proof one way or the other."

Karl Wycoff, associate coordinator for press, policy, programs and plans at the U.S. State Department, told a congressional panel recently that he was not aware of any evidence to back up claims of an al-Qaida presence in West Africa.

The counter-terrorism official cautions that it will be difficult to run the story to ground. "The whole reason these guys might want to use diamonds is because it is hard to follow the trail. This stuff is fungible, there's lot of shady characters involved."

But in November last year, a report by congressional investigators found that the FBI and other law enforcement agencies weren't even trying to ascertain the scale of the problem.

"U.S. law enforcement agencies and specifically the FBI, which leads terrorist financing investigations, do not systematically collect and analyze data on alternative financing mechanisms," like cigarette smuggling, counterfeiting and illegal drugs, as well as gems and precious metals, wrote the General Accounting Office.

Last month, the investigators told a congressional panel that it was still unclear whether the government had a strategy for addressing the issue, or what it might be.

Allegations that al-Qaida and other terrorist groups were using diamonds to help finance their activities and move money around below the radar of law enforcement agencies on the lookout for suspicious banking transactions first surfaced shortly after Sept. 11.

http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=d958a5dd91c6ba1854d6c35c4acf883f&docnu...  4/13/2004
Washington Post journalist Douglas Farah wrote that after the bombing of two U.S. embassies in East Africa provoked the United States into cracking down on their conventional assets, al-Qaida operatives arrived in the strike-torn region and began buying up every stone they could get their hands on.

In part, the U.S. counter-terrorism official said, the decision to send the team to Liberia was driven by the traction Farah's reporting got in Congress. "Many people (in U.S. counter-terrorism agencies) are skeptical of Farah's claims, but he's made a convincing case, and gotten the attention of members of Congress," said the official.

The neglect of possible terrorist involvement in the diamond trade is just one of a host of ways in which the United States is ignoring Africa, which many fear will become the next theater in the global war on terror, according to Vance Serchuk, a researcher who studies U.S. foreign policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

"It's one of the parts of the world where the United States is uncomfortable," Serchuk told UPI, "the kind of place foreign service officials get posted before they get the job they really want.

"We just don't have the resources we need on the ground there," he concluded.

Serchuk says that one possible reason officials seem reluctant to give credence to the story is that it is yet another way in which U.S. intelligence failed to follow up on leads that might have helped stop the Sept. 11 plot.

"Let's face it," he said, "if (Farah's) right, it's another huge intel screw up."

Tuesday, Gen. Charles Wald, the Deputy Commander of EUCOM, the military command with responsibility for the region, will address a seminar at the institute.

He is expected to lay out details of EUCOM's new strategy for combating terrorism in Africa.

(Please send comments to homeland@upi.com.)

LOAD-DATE: April 13, 2004

Source: News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text)
Terms: fbi probes terror links to diamond trade (Edit Search)
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END U.N. INERTIA TO PREVENT MORE KILLING FIELDS

BODY:
Reminders are legion: It has been 10 years since 800,000 people were slaughtered in the genocide we title Rwanda. Needlessly.

And last year the cry went out for dispatch of international peacekeeping forces to stop the bloodletting in the Congo and Liberia.

Don’t forget the "safe-haven" killing fields of Srebrenica, where a small unit of U.N. peacekeepers from Holland looked on helplessly. And 54 years ago the United Nations cobbled together a response to Kim Il Sung’s invasion of South Korea: 4 million people -- soldiers and civilians -- died on both sides.

This is not effective peacekeeping.

Bound by inertia and mired in layers of time-wasting, life-destroying bureaucracy, the United Nations has for more than 50 years ignored the patently obvious: Deterrence of aggression and crimes against humanity requires rapid-reaction capability in the form of a sizable and permanent U.N. multinational peacekeeping force (essentially a standing U.N. army) -- as urged emphatically in 1992 by incumbent Secretary General Boutros-Ghali.

Rwanda, Liberia and the Congo drive home the point that proactive U.N. planning will save more lives than delayed and inadequate ad hoc reactions.

Not to mention Iraq -- would Saddam Hussein have turned chemical weapons against thousands of his own people or resisted U.N. inspections for weapons of mass destruction in the face of possible action by such a peacekeeping force? We will never know.

What is required?

To be effective, a standing U.N. rapid-reaction peacekeeping force should include at least 200,000 combat troops (plus related support personnel) incorporating specialized weaponry and recognized high-capability units from participating nations. Combat forces contributed by U.N. member states would serve mandated terms on a rotating basis.

Following intensive language and communications training, these units would rehearse hypothetical U.N. peacekeeping missions. When requested by the Security Council, the
UNMPF would enter a disputed area with a clear **U.N.** mandate, announce its purpose, cite consequences of interference with its mission, and meet harassment or attack with immediate and compelling retaliation.

Its composition?

Ground forces: infantry, artillery, anti-aircraft and armored units.

Tactical air support: unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance, cruise missiles and other precision-guided weapons, attack helicopters, land- and/or carrier-based aircraft -- plus high-altitude protective combat air patrols.

Naval support: at least one major aircraft carrier (French or U.S.), an ancillary task group including attack submarines with cruise-missile capability, plus mine-sweepers (essential in liberation of Kuwait and occupation of Iraq) and anti-submarine warfare units.

Logistics: preloaded fast cargo ships; tactical and heavy-lift air transports and helicopters; plus naval-assault transports, oilers, and high-speed air-cushioned landing craft.

Only with farsighted preliminary planning can this **U.N.** multinational peacekeeping force be effective. From the start, the **U.N.** General Assembly will need to:

Agree that a sizable force-in-being is required for crisis intervention and to deter or combat both crimes against humanity and aggression.

Fund the force with proportional dues from all **U.N.** member states.

Create a command structure answerable to the Security Council, with written agreement from participating nations that UNMPF combat units will 1) be detached from jurisdiction of their respective national governments, and 2) be subject to orders from assigned **U.N.** military commanders.

Designate training areas and adopt appropriate training procedures.

Compose a mission statement clearly defining conditions for use of the UNMPF, establishing appropriate political and military guidelines for insertion.

Assembling a major **U.N.** multinational peacekeeping force requires national units from previously hostile blocs to work together toward common goals -- whether Indian with Pakistani or United States with North Korean.

Although funding and fielding the UNMPF would pose fiscal and organizational challenges, consider results of its absence over the past 54 years: vast and unnecessary destruction and the loss of more than 8 million lives.

Such **inertia** comes at an unbearable price.

**COLUMN:** Foreign Affairs

**LOAD-DATE:** April 12, 2004
All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

Edmund Burke

The United Nations in observing the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide has dedicated April 7 as a Special Day to remember a tragedy that need not have happened. Indeed available records and eye witness accounts have now confirmed that had the international community taken the necessary action, such mass killings would never have taken place in a world that had promised that never again would mankind be exposed to the kind of horror visited on Jews by their Nazi tormentors.

The words of British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke quoted above ring ever so truly and forcefully even on to this day and age and his observation is concretised by a number of thinkers who insist that the good who are by far in the majority in their failure to act decisively more often than not, allow evil, represented by a minority to have its way carving huge swathes of death, destruction and unbridled chaos.

UN Secretary General Dr Kofi Annan, the world’s top Civil Servant has added his voice too to the apologists who failed to take the appropriate action when the situation in Rwanda had not yet got out of control. As the then Chief Officer (Under-Secretary) responsible for Peace Keeping Operations, he too, has realised his part in somehow allowing the forces of evil to overwhelm the good. The role of Belgian and other peace keepers as they followed what they described as ‘their mandate’ highlighted once more the need for the UN to be properly informed about the situation on the ground. Prompt action would have prevented the Rwanda genocide.

The concluding paragraphs of a report by the human rights group Human Rights Watch express the need for the telling of the Rwanda story and to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the genocide has an update which reminds the world of the need to punish all those who perpetrated such bestiality on fellow human beings.

It is worth recalling that while the UN hesitated even as the massacres began on April 6, 1994, a number of countries pressed for the mandate of the UN to be clearly defined, taking into consideration the real situation on the ground. Calls for more troops to be sent to Rwanda to enforce the peace and halt the genocide were ignored as the big powers like the United States and others gambled away the lives of nearly a million people. Among the countries calling for a bigger and no-nonsense UN contingent was Nigeria.

Nigeria had experienced the horrors of internecine strife and has seen what evil minds are capable of doing as witnessed in Liberia and then Sierra Leone where a few evil men could control minds to create havoc, anarchy and tyranny. Nigeria, being a Third World country was ignored.

A similar fate was spared Sierra Leoneans when the RUF/AFRC coalition of evil seized power in 1997 and kicked out the Tejan Kabbah government. What saved Sierra Leoneans from a similar if not worse fate was the presence of the largely Nigerian ECOMOG forces whose presence provided the necessary checks to the planned excesses of the unrecognised regime headed by a cashiered major Johnny Paul Koroma.

It is on record that a number of plans were hatched to discredit ECOMOG and in particular Nigeria with junta sympathisers within and without the country mounting a vigorous campaign that should have seen the withdrawal of ECOMOG/Nigerian forces. It was during this period that several organisations sprouted up in the field of uncertainty and confusion, all aimed at having "a peaceful resolution of the conflict" but whose true aim was to see the pullout of Nigeria from Sierra Leone so that the junta killers could go to work on innocent and defenceless civilians unchallenged.

One could well imagine the slaughter houses that could have been established to punish civilians who had refused to co-operate with the junta. One could well imagine the number of excuses that could have been manufactured as various areas of the population were targeted for elimination using every ignoble and evil trick in the book - from accusations of receiving funds/instructions from the ousted Kabbah regime in Guinea.
through plotting to overthrow the junta to listening to broadcasts from the 98.1 FM radio station. The beasts would have had a field day slaughtering their chief enemy, the defenceless and innocent civilian population who had said "no way" to the bands of roving killers.

One school of thought is of the conviction that the Mabaylla massacre and the alleged June 2, 1997 "bombardment" by Nigerian forces that saw hundreds of civilians killed and gravely wounded could all have been a part of the junta's "Trojan Horse". Indeed when Nigerian troops attempted to move in to dislodge the junta in early 1998, residents of the capital reported seeing missiles hurled from barracks and positions occupied by the junta targeting populated areas thereby giving the impression that the Nigerians were engaged in the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians. The veracity of these claims, it is hoped, should be ascertained in court when the Special Court begins sittings in May.

Still on this theme, the overwhelming good forces in Sierra Leone represented by the international donor community must be in a position to help the majority of Sierra Leoneans to benefit from aid packages that are meant for them but which, given reports from the ground appear to swell the personal coffers of the few evil in government and the NGO community in Sierra Leone.

If the international community is really concerned about the plight of long-suffering Sierra Leoneans, then now is the time to act. Now is the time to give a fitting ultimatum to the few evil men and women who are strangling and depriving the rest of the population. They either account to the people or be given a quit/aid cut order.

Even as the international community pledges not to repeat the Rwanda mistake, it should also consider taking the right steps in bringing to heel the corrupt and uncaring in Sierra Leone who continue to rain misery and deprivation on the ordinary folks - a situation that is laying the foundations for another round of violence and political instability in Sierra Leone.

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http://www.sierraherald.com/rwanda_anniversary.htm

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BODY:
TEN YEARS ago this month, as genocide unfolded in Rwanda and 800,000 people were butchered in three months, the world bore silent and very distant witness to its own apathy. That indifference and inaction by the international community remains one of the most shameful episodes since the Holocaust. This was not a matter of lack of knowledge and awareness, or even of lack of capacity. Rather, it was a failure of collective conscience, of civic courage at the highest and most solemn levels of responsibility. What if a coalition of the willing had been prepared to move in with military force, but the United Nations Security Council was deadlocked? The worst act of domestic criminal behaviour by a government is large-scale killings of its own people; the worst act of international criminal behaviour is to attack another country. The history of the 20th century is in part a story of a twin-track approach to tame both impulses to armed criminality by states. Saddam Hussein's record of brutality was a taunting rebuke for the failure to achieve the first goal. His ouster and capture by unilateral force of arms was a challenge to the effort to outlaw and criminalise wars of choice. But what if the second is a response to the first: if a country is invaded in order to halt killings inside it by the "legitimate" government

(a troubling appropriation and corruption of the word "legitimate")? For answers to both these painful dilemmas, study the report The Responsibility to Protect, produced by an independent international commission co-chaired by Gareth Evans. In writing the report we were strongly influenced by the dominant sentiment all over the world that, faced with a choice between "No more Rwanda" (no intervention) and "No more Kosovo" (intervention without UN authorisation), we must avoid another tragedy like Rwanda. In order to ground outside intervention in more widely shared international morality, the report changes "humanitarian intervention" into the "responsibility to protect," and pins that responsibility on state authorities and the UN Security Council. "Humanitarian intervention" was a persistent challenge in the 1990s: Somalia, Rwanda, Srebrenica, East Timor. The challenge has not gone away: the continuing tragedies of Liberia, Burundi, Congo and Sudan come readily to mind. It is easy to justify any war by calling it "humanitarian intervention" and labelling critics "anti-humanitarian." The Responsibility to Protect more accurately captures the sense of solidarity without borders from which external help should spring. We reconceptualise sovereignty as responsibility. In part this expressed what we heard from a cross-section of Africans. Governments are responsible for protecting the safety and lives of citizens, and accountable internationally and domestically for their acts of commission and omission. While the state has the primary responsibility to protect its citizens, the responsibility of the broader community of states is activated when a particular state is unwilling or unable to fulfil its responsibility to protect or is itself the perpetrator of crimes or atrocities. We sought to define thresholds when conscience-shocking atrocities are so grave that they

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clearly require armed international intervention. To enhance the prospects of broad agreement for intervention, the circumstances have to be narrow, the bar high, and the procedural and operational safeguards tight. Such thresholds are crossed when large-scale loss of life or ethnic cleansing is occurring or is about to occur. All military interventions must be subject to four further precautionary principles: right intention, last resort, proportional means and reasonable prospects. Intervention to protect humans occurs so that those condemned to die in fear may live in hope instead. The goal is not to wage war on a state in order to destroy it, but to protect victims of atrocities inside the state, to embed the protection in reconstituted institutions after the intervention (nation-building), and then to withdraw all foreign troops. Who has the right to authorise the use of deadly force on a massive scale? The UN is the only international authority that can override national sovereignty. As we learn yet again in Iraq, it is easier to wage war without UN blessing than it is to win the peace - but victory in war is pointless without a resulting secure peace. Thus the urgent task is not to evade or circumvent the UN, but to make it work better, to hold it in turn accountable for its responsibility to protect at the global level. If the UN fails in its duty, if it persists in being proof against occasions of the larger kind, if victims are let down yet again by the Security Council as in Rwanda, then others may well act rather than do nothing. Our ability and tools to act beyond our borders have increased tremendously and thereby increased demands and expectations "to do something". Rapid advances in medical technology have greatly expanded the range, accuracy and number of medical interventions. With enhanced capacity and increased tools have come more choices that have to be made, often involving philosophical, ethical, political and legal dilemmas. The idea of simply standing by and letting nature take its course has become less and less acceptable, to the point where in many countries today parents can be held criminally culpable for failure to exercise due diligence in refusing all available treatment for their children. Similarly, calls for military intervention happen. Living in a fantasy world is a luxury we can ill afford. In the real world, our choice is not between intervention and non-intervention. Rather, it is between ad hoc or rules-based, unilateral or multilateral, and consensual or deeply divisive intervention. The challenge is neither to deny the reality of intervention nor to denounce it, but to manage it for the better, so that all of us come out of it better, with our common humanity not diminished as in Rwanda, but enhanced as in East Timor. Ramesh Thakur, Senior Vice-Rector of the United Nations University and Assistant Secretary-General of the UN, was a Commissioner of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and one of its principal authors. This article is based on his address on March 26 at a memorial ceremony at the UN in New York, organised by the governments of Rwanda and Canada, to mark the 10th anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

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