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:

Wednesday, June 30, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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THE CRY FOR JUSTICE IN SIERRA LEONE

The Special Court, which started its sittings in Sierra Leone, has generated some misunderstanding, that should not be the case.

The fact that there are people among those indicted for war crimes who should not have been among the accused, as their supporters contend, should not make us miss the fact that there was need for a war crimes tribunal in a country where the greatest harm imaginable was perpetuated against innocent people, some of them infants.

Look at this beautiful and sweet baby. How would you have felt if she was your daughter or sister? The barbaric people who amputated her right hand certainly were not thinking about the strides that man had made in civilization. Ungodly, conscienceless, wicked, vile and unscrupulous they certainly were, to have looked at such an innocent infant and violently hacked off her right hand. It was the culture of impunity at its highest.

As a nation, we must know what happened. We must know why men made in the likeness of God, became so base and devilish that they perpetuated horrors that shocked even the Devil. We must also hold somebody accountable for these satanic acts against innocent people, at least as a deterrent against future perpetrators.

Therefore whatever mistakes are alleged to have been made when the treaty to set up this court was being signed, with regards to who should or should not enjoy indemnity, these should not detract from the fact that we needed a court like this war crimes tribunal to bring justice to our country. Justice at times is harsh and hard to bear, but there will never be sustainable peace in Sierra Leone or Liberia if the alleged crimes committed during the war are not made the subject of justice that should deliver a strong message to one and all that the days of impunity are over.

It is very easy to condemn a body like the court if one did not feel the horrors that became a painful way of life in Sierra Leone. He who feels it knows it. The blood of the countless thousands of innocent victims
slaughtered unnecessarily during the war are crying out from their graves for justice. We cannot afford to turn deaf ears to their cries.

Whatever the mistakes made about the Special court, let us stop behaving as if there was no need for justice in Sierra Leone. The demands for justice are compelling and should be met expeditiously. Cornelius Hamelberg of Leonenet is asking salient questions. Firstly, he asked that if the Special Court should not exist, who should try the likes of Charles Taylor? He has also intimated that people are condemning the Special Court without suggesting an alternative. We cannot selfishly think only of our own hurts and forget about the excruciating pain that thousands are walking around with in Sierra Leone.

Indeed, whenever we want to open our mouths and make puerile statements that there was no need for a war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone, let us look at the face of the poor, innocent angel pictured above. She was an innocent baby that did no wrong to man or beast; yet she was set upon, her innocent right hand placed on a chopping board and hacked off, for no reason other than the fact that those who have maimed her for life wielded power and control that were abused with impunity.
In our last issue, I promised to treat the commentary on the special court in PEEP of Friday, June 8 titled, “The Koribondo Final Solution” in this issue considering the kind of image the author has made of himself in the minds of serious minded Sierra Leoneans, I would have let sleeping dogs lie but for the need to put the records straight. You see, Richie, the author, is a man obsessed with anything that is either successful or in authority. He is completely obsessed with the mendic tribe simply because the mendes are enterprising and very serious in everything they do. You may not like the mendes but the fact remains that they have acumen in a lot of things including education where they have scored a number of firsts. The first provincial man to be a doctor. Lawyer, Engineer, you name it, was a mendic man. Similarly, the first provincial woman to be a lawyer, Doctor, etc, was a mendic and the list goes on. Check the university and other tertiary institutions today and you will find more mendes students than any other tribe. Please readers, I am not trying to be tribalistic. I am just laying the grounds for addressing some of the issues tribeless Gordon raised against the mendes in his Koribondo Final Solution.

Now back to PEEP. First of all let us look at the professional aspect of the story. I think PEEP has been in this business for some time now and therefore should know that in reporting court proceedings, one merely reports what the witnesses say without adding one’s own views or observations or one’s own interpretation of the case. Even a cursory look at the article in question will leave one in no doubt about the author’s contempt for both the court and the mendie tribe. He just made Chief Norman’s case as an excuse for venting his contempt and obsession for the mendies. Look at this, “Let us put this as succinctly and plainly as possible. Hinga Norman’s status as a mendie War-Lord does not absolve him from complicity in crimes committed against civilians by the CDF if truth be told. We are getting a little tired of this mendie exclusionism a relentless drive to hold power by whatever means necessary. Total contempt for the view of other regions and other groups, ruthless and cynical manipulation of the organs of state in the interests of “ONE PARTY (SLPP) ONE PEOPLE (The Mendes)” Can anyone in his or her proper mind describe the role played by the kamajors in bringing back democracy and helping to end the civil war? „a relentless drive to hold power by whatever means is necessary” or “total contempt for the view of other regions?” or for that matter “mende exclusionism?”

Agreed, atrocities might have been committed by the kamajors against rebels or rebel collaborators and may be a few innocent civilians suspected of being rebels or collaborators. But can Richie tell me one armed group involved in the Sierra Leone civil war which did not commit any atrocity? Or can he tell me one thing which the kamajors did which ECOMOG or the Sierra Leone Army did not do? Why use the kamajors to vilify the mendie tribe? Could it be because you have no tribe in Sierra Leone? I have just been reminded that you have a tribe in Nigeria. Is that the reason why you want to import the tribal fracas you have in Nigeria to this country? Sorry pal, the people of this country will not buy it.

What beats me is the fact that PEEP bases its argument on the evidence of what it called “a secret witness dubbed TFZ-157” who, according to PEEP, “stepped forward to shut the MENDE war chieftain’s aura of sanctity and to expose what his CDF so-called hero’s of democracy reportedly did in Norman’s own home town of Koribondo in February 1998.”

What PEEP deliberately left out was the fact that the so-called secret witness was in fact a rebel collaborator who was left on dry land after the removal of the AFRC rebel/soldier coalition in February 1998.

In his ignorance, some say intellectual dishonesty, the author went further to say, “Let’s get one fact clear, by February 1998, ECOMOG had dislodged the AFRC from Freetown and was in operation to clear them out from the other major population centers. Therefore there was no pressing military necessity for CDF to attack Koribondo.”

While it is true that ECOMOG, some loyal SLAs, SSD and kamajors had cleared Freetown by first week end of February 1998, it is not true that there was no pressing military necessity for the CDF to attack koribondo because Koribondo was a brigade headquarter of the AFRC rebel/soldier coalition forces. It was in Koribondo where many villagers accused of being kamajors or kamajor collaborators by the likes of PEEP’s secret witnesses were killed in cold blood by the rebel.

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soldier coalition. So contrary to PEEP, Koribondo in fact, was enemy territory. It was the kamajors that overran the rebel brigade. So if in the process rebel remnants or collaborators were maltreated, it is unfortunate but that was war. It was in the same way kamajors and their sympathizers were maltreated by the rebel/soldier coalition when their unit was overrun near koribondo. It is a lie that ECOMOG was in the process of clearing the rest of the country of rebels. General Khobe needed fifteen thousand troops to do the job but he never got them, so he stayed put. The kamajors cleared the East and the South.

It is unfortunate that both PEEP and Crane do not understand how the war was fought. You see, when the rebel/soldier coalition forces entered town, all those who had any dealings with kamajors were killed. For example, women who cooked for them or young men who carried their arms and ammunition were killed. Similarly, when kamajors took any town or village from the rebel/soldier coalition, all those who were seen associating with the rebel/soldier coalition were killed. And that explains why SARAH BINKOLO, SARAH LAMIN Al CHIEF KELFALA and LAHAI BASSIE were killed. But the way PEEP presented the case was as if the kamajors were just blood thirsty and were killing people for killing sake. Agreed, that way, both the kamajors, rebel/soldier coalition forces and ECOMOG might have killed people who perhaps were forced to do things by the opposing side and that was interpreted as being collaborators, but that was war.

Frankly speaking, I used to have respect for Gordon’s intellect, though he misuses it but the way he handled the story under review with the vilification of the mendes as a tribe, has brought him too low in my estimation. What does the mendie tribe have to do with atrocities committed by the CDF? Why didn’t he condemn all the Nigerian tribes that made up their ECOMOG contingent or all the tribes that made up the Sierra Leone rebel/soldier coalition since all of them committed atrocities call them war crimes in the war? Or has anyone ever vilified the yorubas tribe for the misdeeds of Richie Gordon? No, because he is just a misfit what the krios call “bad korpor” among the yorubas. Well actually, I pity Gordon, when he is up there, his thinking becomes distorted and his reasoning blurred, poor fellow!
UN helicopter crashes in Sierra Leone; all 24 aboard killed

(AP)

30 June 2004

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - A UN helicopter crashed in flames on a remote hillside in Sierra Leone, killing all 24 peacekeepers, aid workers and others aboard, UN officials said.

The passengers aboard the Russian-made Mi-8 that crashed on Tuesday included 14 Pakistani peacekeepers and a Pakistani police officer, as well as travelers from several African countries, according to a passenger manifest made available to The Associated Press said.

The Russian crew was among the victims, UN mission spokeswoman Sharon McPherson said.

Authorities offered no immediate explanation for the accident, which left the wreckage in flames on a hill.

The United Nations has about 11,800 peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, overseeing the country’s peace accord, which followed a vicious 1991-2002 civil war.

Fighting stopped by 2002, and there have been no known attacks on UN officials since.

The helicopter took off Tuesday from the Sierra Leone capital of Freetown with 21 passengers and three crew, said Daniel Adekera, another UN spokesman.

Its ultimate destination was the western city of Kailahun, after a stop in Yengema, near some of the main diamond fields in mineral-rich Sierra Leone.

Ground crews lost radio contact, and sent out a search crew within seven minutes, Adekera said.

The chopper crashed just southeast of Yengema in a remote bush area, UN and Sierra Leone aviation officials said.

A farmer near the village of Massabendu Junction, in the area of the crash, told The Associated Press that he had watched the flight’s last seconds.

"I saw this aircraft coming down and it hit a tree and it burst into flames," Komba Missa said. "I was scared, and I ran into town to tell
the police chiefs and others."

UN recovery teams used a second helicopter to reach the area of the crash, UN associate spokesman Marie Okabe said in New York.

They spotted the wreckage, still in flames more than an hour later, from the air, UN officials said. The searchers, after landing and walking three kilometers (1.5 miles) to the crash site, found no survivors.

Helicopters are the main method of transport cross-country in Sierra Leone, where sound roads are few. The white-painted UN helicopters lift off frequently from a helipad in the UN missions headquarters in Freetown, ferrying peacekeepers, relief workers and supplies.

In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's office said the United Nations had opened an investigation into the crash.

"The secretary-general extends his deep condolences to the families and governments of those who have perished in this tragedy," a statement released by Annan's office said.

"He once again pays tribute to the men and women who have lost their lives in the name of peace in this and other important peacekeeping operations."

An official familiar with the flight, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The AP that the manifest for the flight included 14 Pakistani peacekeepers and one Pakistani civilian police officer.

Others on the manifest were a UN volunteer from Ghana, three Sierra Leone citizens, a Tanzanian and a Ugandan.

In New York, the aid group International Rescue Committee confirmed that two of its staff members were among the victims. Alan Mukuru, 35, a Ugandan, was director of the IRC's aid programs in Sierra Leone, and Tanzanian Bahati Barongo, 37, was an administrative adviser based in Freetown, a statement said.

Passenger manifests in Africa frequently are incomplete and incorrect, and there was no confirmation that the manifest was correct for the flight.

Thirty-one countries have peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, including Britain, the country's former colonial ruler, according to the mission's Web site.

The UN Security Council approved the UN mission in October 1999. Until Tuesday, a total of 137 UN personnel had died in Sierra Leone, including many killed in attacks during fighting.

In 2001, another Mi-8 used by the United Nations crashed in Sierra Leone, killing eight people.

Sierra Leone's war pitted government forces against an insurgency fighting to gain control of the government and of diamond fields. Forceful military intervention by neighboring Guinea, Britain and the United Nations helped crush the rebels by 2002.
SIERRA LEONE: UN helicopter crashes killing 24

FREETOWN, 29 Jun 2004 (IRIN) - A Russian chartered MI-8 helicopter has crashed in eastern Sierra Leone killing all of the three-man crew and 21 passengers on board, UN officials said on Tuesday.

The helicopter left the Hastings airfield in Freetown at about 08:00 GMT on Tuesday for a "routine supply trip" to Yengema in Kono district, eastern Sierra Leone, acting United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone spokesperson Sheila Dallas told IRIN.

"We had a helicopter that flew overhead and saw the wreckage burning, and confirmed, yes, that our helicopter did go down," said Dallas.

UNAMSIL air operations centre lost radio contact with the flight at 09:17 GMT. Fifty minutes later, three UNAMSIL helicopters were dispatched on a search and rescue mission.

"The helicopter crashed into one of the granite mountains, in an area that was not accessible by helicopter or by vehicles," Dallas explained.

The military search team had to continue to the scene of the wreckage on foot. They confirmed that it was a UN helicopter burning and that none of the passengers or crew had survived, she said.

The cause of the crash remains unknown.

"We are trying to get the bodies out, and to pick up different parts of the helicopter so that we can have a thorough investigation to find out what really happened," said Dallas.

The dead are believed to include the three Russian crew members, some Pakistani Peacekeepers, a number of Sierra Leoneans and NGO workers.

Aid workers and UN peacekeeper personnel routinely use helicopters in the absence of good roads.

The New York head office of the United Nations said on Tuesday that it had opened a special investigation into the cause of the crash.

UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, issued his condolences to the families governments of the dead.

Over 11,000 peacekeepers from 31 countries remain in Sierra Leone, helping the restoration of peace in the country, which recently emerged from a brutal ten year civil war.

ENDS
UN Helicopter crashes killing 24

By Kelvin Lewis
A Russian chartered MI-8 helicopter with registration number UNQ-091 has crashed in the Eastern region of Sierra Leone killing its 3 man crew and 21 passengers. According to the acting United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) spokesman Shelia Dallas, the helicopter left the Hastings airfield this morning at about 8am on a "routine supply trip" to Yengema in the Kono district, Eastern Sierra Leone. At about 9.17a.m, the UNAMSIL Air Operations Centre lost radio contact with the helicopter.

From Front Page

The helicopter crashed into a granite mountain in an area that is not accessible by helicopter or by vehicles," Ms Dallas explained. "We had an helicopter that flew overhead and saw the wreckage burning, and confirmed yes that our helicopter did go down." She added. Another helicopter she explained went close by and dropped off some military personnel who walked to the scene and confirmed further that it was a UN helicopter burning. The UNAMSIL Spokeswoman said presently "we are trying to get the bodies out, and to pick up different parts of the helicopter so that we can have a thorough investigation to find out what really happened." The dead are believed to include the 3 Russian crew members some Pakistani Peacekeepers, a number of Sierra Leoneans and NGO workers. This is the second fatal crash of a UN helicopter in Sierra Leone. The first one took place in November 2001.

Inuxor charged with Reviving

Aweko

Wednesday June 30, 2004
Taylor could be tried on request

Freetown, Sierra Leone

29 June 2004 12:16

Former Liberian president Charles Taylor could be brought to trial in the near future if the government of Liberia issues a request, said United Nations officials visiting the Sierra Leone capital, Freetown, on Friday.

"There should be no impunity for people who have been alleged to have committed the sorts of crimes [listed in the] ... indictment issued against Taylor," said ambassador Emyr Jones Parry on a one-day stop in Freetown.

The head of the 14-member UN Security Council delegation touring West Africa added that any trial should not be allowed to threaten Liberia's young peace process.

"The timing of bringing anybody before the court is a mix both of the indictment and of the circumstances of the case," Parry said.

Taylor left Liberia on August 11 for exile in Nigeria, where he has so far been protected from the jurisdiction of a UN-backed special court that has indicted him for war crimes in that country's decade-long civil war.

Perry said that any trial of Taylor would mark a third stage in Liberia's post-conflict recovery process after firstly stopping the fighting and secondly beginning a process of truth and reconciliation.

"I think we're getting towards that third stage in the case of Liberia," he said.

"The question therefore is when should Taylor be actually brought before the court," he said, adding that the conditions for that have been set out by the president of Nigeria.

"It's really a question of whether a request is made and how that should be dealt with," he added.

President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria has repeatedly said that his country will hand over Taylor to the special court if the Liberian government requests it.

So far Gyude Bryant has declined to make such a request for fear of destabilising a 10-month old peace process.

Parry said that of immediate concern is ensuring that the special court has sufficient funds to enable it to work.

In mid-March, the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, warned that the special court faced a $20-million budgetary shortfall.

Over the coming weeks the UN must decide how to end a peacekeeping mission that was once the largest in the world with 17 500 international troops. A deadline for a plan detailing the winding-down of that operation has been set for September 30.
At the end of March, the Security Council voted to extend the presence of peacekeeping forces in Sierra Leone by six months until June 2005 amid concerns that security in the country remains fragile. -- Irin
America split Over Taylor's asylum to deliver Taylor to the dock in Freetown. This is a matter of establishing legal accountability for the people of Sierra Leone.

Issuance: Obasanjo made it clear that he would only act under two conditions: first, that he not be criticized for giving asylum to Taylor; second, that no action would be taken to abduct Taylor from Nigeria if and when he arrived.

However, his earlier remarks, the chairman of the US House of Representatives Obama said, are not the same as the White House's in arguing that there was a very practical reason to have the Court "assure" that the issue of Taylor's asylum was brought to the Court's level to determine the question. This is a matter of establishing legal accountability for the people of Sierra Leone.
FREETOWN, Sierra Leone—last year, when a war crimes tribunal announced the indictment of former Liberian president Charles Taylor for ravaging the neighboring country of Sierra Leone—my country—it generated hope for lasting peace in West Africa. But international failure to enforce the indictment has deflated that hope, and Taylor remains a menace.

After fighting his way to power in Liberia, Taylor played a central role in Sierra Leone’s 11-year war through his support of brutal rebel movements. Taylor seized my country’s diamond fields, enriching himself and his henchmen. Together they exploited child soldiers, conducted mass amputations, and were responsible for the rape and mutilation of many women.

Sierra Leone requested that the United Nations help bring to justice those bearing “guilty responsibility” for such atrocities during the conflict, and a joint U.N. - Sierra Leonean tribunal was created. It came as no surprise when the Special Court for Sierra Leone issued a 17-count indictment against Taylor last year. Then people across West Africa waited to see whether the law could really topple someone so powerful.

Taylor had a history of breaking numerous peace accords and, when under pressure, of using peace negotiations as a stalling tactic to rearm and reorganize his forces. One year ago, rebels had Taylor’s forces surrounded. Once again he headed for peace talks. The indictment chased Taylor from the negotiating table, which lent instant credibility to the Liberian peace process. It finally led to international demands that Taylor leave power, and Liberia. But rather than deliver the desperate Taylor to face his indictment in Sierra Leone, diplomats orchestrated his escape to Nigeria.

Taylor agreed to behave. But for West Africans who have suffered for years at his hands, it has come as no surprise that he still seeks to regain power in Liberia, where he maintains links to armed supporters. To this end, he has fermented regional conflict, and the U.N. Security Council has been worried about his activities.

Nevertheless, Nigeria allowed Taylor to give a television interview in April, on the eve of a U.N. effort to relaunch Liberia’s disarmament program. Taylor reiterated his intention to return home, thereby offering hope to his armed supporters, some of whom rioted a few weeks later in the Liberia capital, Monrovia.

As usual in this region—where chronically short-sighted international policies foster instability, bloodshed and extreme poverty—a political decision has been made to ignore the law. The United Nations, the United States and other initial supporters of the Special Court for Sierra Leone promised to bring to justice the worst creators of our national nightmare. It was believed that doing so would instill greater respect for the rule of law throughout the region. Instead, West Africans have watched as Nigeria granted “asylum” to an indicted war criminal in clear contravention of its own asylum laws. They have listened as Secretary of State Collin Powell, in testimony before Congress in February, acknowledged the Bush administration’s blessing of Taylor’s illegal exile in Nigeria. And West African have waited in vain for U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to lead any support to efforts to bring Taylor before the U.N. backed court.

On May 31 the court’s appellate chamber ruled that Taylor must go to Sierra Leone to face the charges against him. His delivery would be a watershed event. It would remove from circulation the prime instigator of conflict in the region and send a resounding message through these troubled countries that leaders can and should be held accountable.

The converse is also true: If African leaders cannot be held responsible even for the worst crimes, then why should they fear being held responsible for more atrocities, let alone corruption and misgovernment?

Lawlessness has girded the humanitarian and development assistance sent to alleviate Africa’s suffering. When Charles Taylor arrives in court, accountability for him and justice for his victims will signal that the world is finally taking a long view of Africa need.
The News (Liberia)
29 June 2004

Human Rights Groups Back UN on Travel Ban and Freezing of Assets

Four human rights groups held a press conference yesterday to announce their support for the United Nations Security Council’s decision to maintain travel restrictions and an asset freeze on associates of former President Charles Taylor. The groups, the Association of Environmental Lawyers of Liberia, the Center for Democratic Empowerment, the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy, and Liberia Democracy Watch, called the Taylor associates shameless for declaring that they had done no wrong. The human rights advocates further argued that under international humanitarian law, individuals or groups whose activities undermine the collective security of a people may have their rights curtailed. The Analyst also covered the human rights advocates’ press conference on the front page.

In a related story in the News, Justice Minister Kabinah Ja’neh acknowledged in an interview with The News yesterday that the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) is studying UN Security Council resolutions 1521 and 1532—which provide for the travel restrictions and asset freezes—to determine if the resolutions conform to Liberian law. The News’s editorial supports the UN decision to impose restrictions on Taylor associates in the interest of security. But the editorial also states that the NTGL has a responsibility to ensure that its citizens’ rights are being protected by examining the Taylor associates’ charges that due process had not been afforded them. The Liberian Diaspora reported that 99 percent of respondents to a radio call-in program said that the United Nations Security Council should drop the travel ban and asset freeze imposed on former associates of Mr. Taylor.

THE TRIBUTE

Over 50,000 Ex-Combatants Disarmed

Since December, 51,000 ex-combatants have disarmed, according to the Executive Director of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Dr. Moses Jarbo, who talked about DDRR during a speech at the AME Zion Full Gospel Church on Sunday.
Karadzic arrest 'imminent'

Tuesday, June 29, 2004 Posted: 8:13 PM EDT (0013 GMT)

UNITED NATIONS (CNN) -- Chief U.N. war crimes prosecutor for the former Yugoslavia, Carla Del Ponte, says she is optimistic that former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic will be in custody by the end of the day Wednesday.

Asked why she thought they would be in custody soon, Del Ponte said Tuesday, "I cannot tell it now publicly -- let's obtain the arrest of Karadzic and afterward we will talk about what we have done, what we have learned."

For years, Karadzic was said to be at large somewhere in the Republika Srpska -- the Serb part of Bosnia-Hercegovina. There has been renewed pressure on Bosnia to hand over Karadzic.

Aides to Del Ponte say there have been new pressures placed on Serb officials in Bosnia who were recently convinced to give fresh evidence on mass graves for a report on the massacres in Srebrenica in July 1995.

Bosnia also is hoping to join NATO's Partnership for Peace -- a cooperative defense program with NATO.

At the recent NATO summit in Istanbul, Bosnia was reminded that it had not lived up to its obligation to cooperate with the war crimes tribunal -- a condition for joining NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Del Ponte has been saying in various forums over the past year that she was hopeful Karadzic would be arrested by the end of the year, and recently told journalists she was confident he would be arrested by the end of June 2004.

The International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and another U.N. Tribunal for War Crimes in Rwanda, are now under mandate from the U.N. Security Council to wrap up their work.

While there is no particular deadline for arrests to be made, investigations must be completed by the end of 2004 and trials must be completed by the end of 2008.

Del Ponte told the U.N. Security Council Tuesday that the tribunal was in a "dire budgetary and financial situation."

She also said the deadlines imposed by the council meant that "fugitives and their protective networks are trying to buy time until 2008 in hopes of evading justice, as they believe the time to be tried in The Hague will soon expire."
Karadzic is wanted for his role in Bosnia's war -- he has been twice indicted by the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Karadzic as well as another top war crimes suspect, former Bosnian Serb military leader General Ratko Mladic, are alleged to be directly responsible for the atrocities committed against the Bosnian Muslim population in Srebrenica.

Both Karadzic and Mladic are also charged with genocide and crimes against humanity for crimes perpetrated against the civilian population throughout Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, for the sniping campaign against civilians in Sarajevo, and for the taking of U.N.-peacekeepers as hostages and their use as human shields.

Del Ponte says there are a total of 20 fugitives from the war crimes tribunal including Karadzic, and 15 of the fugitives are thought to be in Serbia and Montenegro.

Next year will mark the 10th year that both Karadzic and Mladic have been on the run from the court.

Del Ponte told the council, "How long will it be tolerated that these leaders escape justice? How long will it be tolerated that they make a parody of both justice and the repeated commitment of the Security Council to have them arrested and tried?"

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War court jails Milosevic ally

Tuesday, June 29, 2004 Posted: 7:47 AM EDT (1147 GMT)

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) -- A U.N. war crimes tribunal on Tuesday sentenced Milan Babic, the wartime leader of Croatia's rebellious Serbs, to 13 years' imprisonment for inflaming an ethnic cleansing campaign of "ruthlessness and savagery."

Babic, 48, once one of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's closest allies, was convicted in January of one count of persecution for the seven-month campaign against non-Serbs in the self-proclaimed Croatian Republic of Krajina.

Hundreds of civilians were executed or murdered and about 80,000 non-Serbs, mostly Croats and a few Muslims, were expelled.

Babic pleaded guilty to the single count in a deal in which prosecutors dropped four other charges of murder, cruelty and the wanton destruction of villages during the war in Croatia, which began when the Serbs revolted after Croatia broke away from Yugoslavia in 1991.

The crimes fit into a wider scheme by the Serb political leadership to clear out roughly one-third of Croatia of its civilian population and create an ethnically pure Serbian state, the ruling said.

Babic was among the most influential figures of that policy, at the start of the 1991-1992 Croatian war, said the judgment, read out at the U.N. tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The tribunal has rendered 50 judgments since it was created in 1993 by the U.N. Security Council, mostly against soldiers, guards, midlevel military officers and a few commanders.

Babic is among the highest-ranking political figures to be convicted, along with former Bosnian Serb politician Biljana Plavsic, who is serving an 11-year sentence in Denmark.

"Babic does not deny the seriousness of the crimes," said Judge Alphons Orie in pronouncing the sentence. "The crimes were characterized by ruthlessness and savagery and had a severe impact on victims and their relatives. Their suffering is still significant."

The sentence was harsher than the 11-year recommendation by the prosecution, which Orie said "does not achieve the purpose of punishment, nor does it do justice."

'Shame and remorse'

The court gave credit to Babic, a former dentist and head of a prewar health clinic, for voluntarily
surrendering to the tribunal and testifying against Milosevic in what is considered the most important war crimes trial since World War II.

The Milosevic case moves into its second half next week with the opening of the defense.

Detailing some of the worst offenses, Orie criticized the plea agreement between the prosecution and the defense for understating Babic's influence in Krajina as the president and the military's commander in chief.

"The trial chamber does not accept that Babic's role in the joint criminal enterprise was as limited as the parties suggest it was," the judgment said. Although "Babic was not the prime mover, ... Babic chose to remain in power and provided significant support for the persecutions."

Babic remained quiet after sentencing, but during his plea hearing in January, he begged forgiveness of the Croatian people, saying that he felt "a deep sense of shame and remorse."

"The persecutions caused the murder or extermination of hundreds of Croat or other non-Serb civilians ... They also caused the routine and prolonged imprisonment of hundreds of Croat and other non-Serb civilians," said the judgment read by Orie.

By giving "ethnically inflammatory" speeches and funding the armed Serb rebellion, Babic laid the foundation for the conflict in Croatia, which Orie said is still suffering the consequences.

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UN war crimes tribunals warn Security Council many suspects remain at large

29 June 2004 – The United Nations war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are striving to complete all of their trials by the Security Council-imposed target date of 2008, but their prosecutors today warned that many indicted suspects remain at large.

During an open meeting of the Council, representatives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) said the failure of some Member States to pay their contributions had jeopardized their ability to meet their workload on schedule.

The two tribunals, set up by the UN to try people suspected of committing war crimes during the 1990s, have been told by the Council to do all they can to meet the completion strategy mapped out in previous Council resolutions.

That strategy calls for the tribunals to finish their investigations by the end of this year, complete all trials at the first instance by 2008 and wind up all their work by the end of 2010.

ICTY’s President, Judge Theodor Meron, told the Council today that the court is operating at full capacity and has amended some rules of evidence and procedure in a bid to meet its schedule.

The Council has previously suggested to both tribunals that they review their caseloads to decide which cases they should proceed with and which cases they should transfer to the domestic justice systems of appropriate countries.

But Judge Meron said he had doubts that the domestic courts of Croatia or Serbia and Montenegro could conduct "credible war crimes trials," citing concerns about the impartiality of some Croatian judges as one reason.

ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte criticized the failure of authorities in Serbia and Montenegro and in the Republika Srpska of Bosnia and Herzegovina to arrest the 20 indicted figures who remain at large.

These fugitives include former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, former Bosnian Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic and former Croatian Gen. Ante Gotovina.

Ms. Del Ponte said Croatian authorities had become more cooperative with the ICTY, and she expected them to locate General Gotovina soon and transfer him to the court's custody in The Hague.

But she said Serbia and Montenegro "has become a safe haven for fugitives," with at least 15 accused - including General Mladic - believed to be at large there. Belgrade has not cooperated with the Tribunal since December.

ICTR's President, Judge Erik Mose, said his court had lifted the number of judges who could hear cases and was building a fourth courtroom as it strived to meet the Council target of 2008.

But Judge Mose said some nations had not paid their dues and were thus threatening to undermine the ICTR's ability to meet the deadlines.

ICTR Prosecutor Hassan Jallow said 15 suspects remain at large, with many located in the eastern part of the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

He said the court faced real challenges in staying on schedule, pointing out that the number of people remaining to be tried by the ICTR between now and 2008 is greater than the number whose cases have been completed.
But he said the ICTR had introduced several administrative and procedural reforms to make it more flexible and efficient at handling cases, including those with multiple defendants.

During the debate that followed, Council delegates stressed the importance of encouraging neighbouring States to cooperate with the two tribunals to hand over suspects and take on some of the caseload in their domestic courts.

Some delegates also suggested that while the Council's completion strategy was designed to ensure the tribunals did not operate indefinitely, it was not meant to impose unbreakable cut-off dates.
The World Today - Saddam Hussein to face trial in Iraq

[This is the print version of story http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2004/s1143677.htm]

The World Today - Wednesday, 30 June , 2004 12:10:00

Reporter: Alison Caldwell

ELEANOR HALL: Iraqis have welcomed the news that later today, in Baghdad, their country will gain legal custody of the former president Saddam Hussein. While the former dictator will remain under US guard, Iraq's interim government will have legal custody of him and 11 of his closest associates.

Ever since he was captured six months ago in an underground bunker near his hometown of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein has been held in US custody at a secret location. But tomorrow he'll face court in Iraq.

As Alison Caldwell reports.

VOX POP 1: To Saddam Hussein, damn you Saddam Hussein! Shame on you Saddam Hussein!

(Sound of gunfire)

ALISON CALDWELL: It was a major breakthrough for the US military and for Iraq, when in December last year the Ace of Spades, Saddam Hussein, was found in his underground hideaway near his hometown of Tikrit. His capture was announced at a highly charged press conference in Baghdad.

PAUL BREMER: Ladies and Gentleman. We got him!

ALISON CALDWELL: Now six months on, Iraq will officially gain legal custody of the former dictator later today, and tomorrow he will finally face court.

The head of the special tribunal, Iraqi lawyer Salem Chalabi, listed the charges.

SALEM CHALABI: Crimes against humanity in connection Anfal campaign, in connection with the attack on Halabja, in connection with the quelling of the events in March 1991, in connection with killing religious leaders over time.

ALISON CALDWELL: Earlier today, Iraqis in Baghdad welcomed the news of Saddam's handover.

VOX POP 2: Yes, I am happy that Saddam handover to the Iraqi people because, you know, only the Iraqi people suffered from Saddam and I think he will get a fair trial, because I trust in the new government. I am very optimistic and I like the new government.

VOX POP 3: Most of the families of the people who have been executed by him, want him personally, physically to be handed over.

VOX POP 4: It is at least something that he must pay for it, for the suffering of the Iraqi people. In his deeds, I think he deserves the death penalty for him.

ALISON CALDWELL: Balancing Iraqi expectations with the concerns of the international community,
Iraq's interim prime minister Iyad Allawi has promised a fair and open trial for the former leader.

IYAD ALLAWI: Saddam will be entitled to have representation. He is entitled to appoint lawyers, and maybe if he doesn't have money to appoint lawyers, the government will pay the money. So he is represented well. We assure you that it will be a just trial and a fair trial, unlike the trials that he inflicted on his enemies, on the Iraqi people.

ALISON CALDWELL: But it hasn't been easy for the special tribunal since its inception six months ago. Resourcing issues and security problems have forced it to relocate to Kuwait for periods of time, while finding witnesses willing to provide testimony against Saddam Hussein has also been difficult.

Meanwhile human rights lawyers have expressed concerns that amid all the excitement in Iraq, the former dictator may not receive a fair trial.

Geoffrey Robertson is a judge at the Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal. He says the US has a duty of care to Saddam Hussein, as an occupying power.

GEOFFREY ROBERTSON: There's certainly a danger that Saddam may be delivered over to a trial which is not fair by international standards. The Americans have a duty to hand him over at the end of the conflict but only if they're sure that he's going to be treated a) humanely and b) fairly.

Because you remember when Britain handed over the kossacks to Stalin at the end of the second world war, and they were massacred – there were all sorts of allegations that British officers had committed war crimes by handing over someone to the rough justice of a country which they knew would execute or lynch without fair trial.

So, the Americans have to be satisfied as occupying power that he's going to be tried fairly by an independent and impartial court.

ALISON CALDWELL: Iraq's interim government says Saddam's trial is still a long way off. Salem Chalabi says more work needs to be done to ensure a fair and open hearing.

SALEM CHALABI: We have to start the investigation process. We have to begin investigating with them directly. This is going to take some time, so I wouldn't expect something to happen immediately. I would imagine some indictment to be brought down some time in the autumn of this year or so.

ELEANOR HALL: The Iraqi lawyer in charge of the special tribunal Salem Chalabi, ending that report from Alison Caldwell.

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Saddam will get his day in court

Ex-dictator's fate in hands of Iraqi leaders

By TOM LASETER
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

BAGHDAD - Deposed dictator Saddam Hussein, who lived as a king in his palaces while ordering the torture and slaughter of his countrymen, will be legally transferred to the new Iraqi government today and will face arraignment Thursday.

Saddam is to be prosecuted in front of a special war-crimes tribunal. Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said Tuesday the trial wouldn't begin for at least several months.

The tribunal, a five-judge panel, is being designed to hear charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. The specific charges against Saddam haven't been made public. There's a strong list of possibilities: Ordering the chemical weapons attacks that killed thousands in a Kurdish village in northern Iraq; the wholesale murder of Shiite Muslims in the south, who were piled into mass graves; the systematic torture and rape of political dissidents.

"Those most responsible for Iraqi suffering," Allawi said, "will face Iraqi justice."

In addition to an arrest warrant issued Tuesday for Saddam, there are warrants for 11 former top aides who currently are under U.S. control, including:

• Ali Hassan al Majid, known by the nickname of "Chemical Ali" after his participation in the chemical weapons attacks in the north.

• Two of Saddam's half brothers and one of his sons-in-law.

• Tariq Aziz, Saddam's former deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

While Saddam is being legally handed over to Iraq's government, he will remain in the physical custody of U.S. troops at an American base widely thought to be in Baghdad.

In making the announcement of the legal-physical split in custody, Allawi said he'd requested that the Americans keep Saddam until Iraqis could provide adequate security. U.S. officials, though, recently have made it clear it was their decision.

As a prisoner in the Iraqi court system, as opposed to his current designation as a prisoner of war, Saddam will have some newfound freedoms, including the right to an attorney and the right to remain silent.

The question of how and when Saddam is tried has enormous political implications for the Iraqi government, which received sovereignty in a hastily arranged ceremony Monday.

Allawi on Tuesday acknowledged the broader significance of bringing the despot to justice in an Iraqi court.

"We would like to show the world that the new Iraq government means business... and wants to stabilize Iraq and put it on the road toward democracy and peace," he said.

Even as the prime minister spoke of a new, more democratic Iraq, there was fresh violence in and around the capital.

In northern Baghdad, U.S. troops exchanged fire with gunmen at about 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, local time. An Iraqi man was shot, witnesses said. Less than three hours later, in the eastern quarter of the city, a roadside bomb killed three Marines and injured two others. To the south of Baghdad, in the town of Mahmudiyah, Iraqi police fought attackers wielding AK-47's and rocket-propelled grenades for about two hours in a battle that killed one policeman and wounded three.

GAO
UN Expresses Concern Over Security

By Abayomi Tejan
THE latest Security Council delegation to Sierra Leone headed by Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, has raised concern over the current security situation in the country.

The world body seems sceptical as to the government’s ability to sustain peace after UNAMSIL would have completely pulled out of the country in December 2005. The mission’s terms of reference were manifold, but they laid emphasis on the “assessment of the progress towards long term security, the determination of benchmarks for the reduction of the UNAMSIL peackeeping force in 2005,” according to a press release on Friday 23rd June 2004.

A companion of other UN Ambassadors from Algeria, Angola, Benin, Philippines, Pakistan and the United States, the head of delegation informed journalists that the Security Council is still effectively “seized” of the situation in the country, in terms of its ability to consolidate sustainable peace. According to the release, the current view of the situation in the country is one of scepticism as could be deduced from its text and from Mr. Parry’s mood and responses to pointed questions from members of the press.

In its 1537th Resolution adopted in March 2004, the Security Council expressed serious concern over the country’s situation and it observed: “While the situation is one of serious concern, the Council remains committed to the consolidation of peace.”

From Page 1
Taylor, no doubt, is the sin qua non causative factor of the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and his continued stay in Nigeria is a serious concern to many Sierra Leoneans who are still uncertain about rational behind the setting up of the court with Taylor at large, doing business transactions and dealing with his assets with alacrity. The Security Council has requested a progress report from the Secretary General by 15 September 2004, including progress made in the work of the Special Court, but did not include any progress made in the penal system and the independence of the judiciary, which is the resilient stigma that might detail the peace if not given the attention it deserves.

Mr. Parry was therefore urged to consider setting up an International Tribunal on Corruption in Sierra Leone if the UN is to be seen to be serious about this country’s future. Given that UNAMSIL has an approved gross budget of US$543.49 million, and have suffered 137 fatalities to its personnel, and considering that fact that the UN missions are more cost effective per annum compared to the US$794 billion spent on arms alone by governments all over the world, including Sierra Leone, it stands to reason that UN should place more emphasis on preventing wars than by merely restoring what they still consider a fragile peace in Sierra Leone. This could only be done by tackling the root causes of wars in Africa - Corruption and Impunity in the highest quarters of government and the public service.

Although this view was adopted just three months ago, which formed the basis of the UN Secretary General’s 21st report on UNAMSIL to the Security Council, and which resulted in the review and extension of the mission’s drawdown schedule to December 2005, Mr. Parry, however, said nothing to imply that the situation has changed.

Kofi Anan noted in his report that “because the Sierra Leone armed forces faced serious shortfalls” emphasis the SG’s it was impossible for the Government to assume responsibility for external security by the time the mission was set to expire in December this year.”

Thus, the Security Council urged the Government to intensify its efforts to develop an effective and sustainable police force, army, penal system and independent judiciary so that the government can rapidly take over from UNAMSIL full responsibility for maintaining law and order throughout Sierra Leone.

As there are no precise parameters to determining the improvement made so far in the penal system and independence of the judiciary, it remains uncertain whether UNAMSIL will pull out as scheduled. **End of Page 5**
The International Community, War, And Peace in Sierra Leone

Concord Times (Freetown)
OPINION
June 29, 2004
Posted to the web June 29, 2004

By Sheka Tarawalie
Freetown

In contemporary world politics and international relations, especially after the end of the Cold War, it is but appropriate to state that no nation can act or stand alone in the resolution or otherwise of either domestic conflicts or bilateral/multilateral crises.

The greatest reality that has dawned on mankind is arguably the fact that in the pursuit to maintain peace, law and order, there must be coordination and cooperation with all the established apparatus and mechanisms set up for this purpose. "A threat to peace anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere," were the prophetic words that have come to have a very solid bearing in present-day circumstances purportedly spoken by African-American civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr.

Today, the resolution of conflicts or their prevention has been largely given to the United Nations (UN), an organization formed after the horrendous 2nd World War to pursue the path of peace in an effort to prevent another world anarchy. Ever since, the UN has played sometimes crucial and controversial but at times commendable roles in resolving conflicts of national, regional, or international character. Hand in hand with the UN are similar but less authoritative bodies like the Commonwealth, the Organization of Islamic Countries, and the European Community - these three, though having specified (either colonial, religious or regional) backgrounds, have actually assumed powerful functions to attain all-encompassing international authority, primarily because of the economic clout and status they carry.

Notwithstanding, by virtue of geographical location, and impelled by economic/political considerations, there have been other regional or sub-regional organizations that were formed to either supplement or complement the efforts and actions of the international organizations in the search for world peace, economic growth and international relations. In the case of West Africa, and particularly Sierra Leone (my home country) the relevant institutions are the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now transformed to the African
Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union (MRU), and bilateral arrangements like the State of the Forces Agreement (SOFA) between Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it will be reasonable to analyze the eleven-year-war in Sierra Leone from the perspective of the impacts caused by respective international institutions in resolving (or not) a conflict that killed thousands of people, left many more homeless, and destroyed an inestimable amount of property. Now, the war - but apparently not the conflict - in Sierra Leone is over, as hostilities have ended, but there is the simmering judicial confrontation posed by the establishment of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone that has been given the task of trying all those bearing the greatest responsibility in the war, irrespective of which faction (pro- or anti-government) they belonged to.

Has the Sierra Leonean conflict been really resolved?

What roles did the international community and institutions (and their personnel) actually play in resolving or - as may be revealed - fuelling the conflict? Why did virtually three internationally-backed peace arrangements (The Abidjan Peace Accord - 1996, the Conakry Peace Plan - 1997, and the Lome Peace Accord -1999) fail? Was it wholly the fault of local players or were they influenced by international forces? Does personal or friendly gratification really have a role in some of these arrangements as against the general good and the stipulations of the accords? Which lessons are to be learnt from the Sierra Leone experience? These and many more questions and issues are going to be addressed in this paper.

THE WAR IN PERSPECTIVE: The Sierra Leonean war could appropriately be described as a by-product of the war in Liberia. One can from the outset suggest that, had there not been a war in Liberia (both for geographical proximity and warlord affinity) it would have been virtually impossible to start one in Sierra Leone. No wonder that - to come to the conclusion beforehand - the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, has been indicted as one of those bearing the greatest responsibility in the war in Sierra Leone.

One thing that is absolutely clear is that both Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh, the late and erstwhile leader of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that started the war in Sierra Leone, were 'comrades-in-arms' who got their guerrilla training in Libya, from where they proceeded to Ivory Coast and launched the war against Liberia in 1989, which subsequently spilled over into Sierra Leone in 1991.

It first started as cross-border raids by Liberian fighters searching for food and escape roots, but when Taylor threatened to ensure that Sierra Leone tasted 'the bitterness of war' for allowing ECOWAS troops to use her as a base to stop the war in Liberia, and when Foday Sankoh ultimately went on the air to say he had started a rebellion to remove the All People's Congress (APC) government from power, the stage was all but set for the
unleashing of one of the world's most disastrous and inhuman civil wars in contemporary times.

The government and the army were ill-prepared for war.

Having been in power for over twenty years without much to fear from an insurrection or an invasion, the APC government largely had a ceremonial army, poorly armed and poorly paid. Sankoh, having been an army officer himself, knew this and capitalized on that.

Starting from Bomaru in the Kailahun district in the East on 23rd March 1991, the war gradually but actively claimed and captured territory for the nation to know that it was for real. Initially, perhaps due to the ineptitude and lackluster performance of the government, some people hailed it as the only way of removing a clique which had so entrenched itself in power that the slightest opposition was virtually not tolerated.

Though one school of thought maintained that the APC was actually by then introducing reforms for a pluralistic political atmosphere, the opponents still insisted that they were cosmetic and a mere bid to hoodwink the international community, which at the time, after the fall of the Soviet Union, was calling for the democratic 'wind of change' to blow across the globe with a view to particularly change communist / one-party states, one of which was being operated in Sierra Leone.

The rebel war was therefore bound to have sympathizers and collaborators. And as the rebels' main targets at first were military positions, backed by a 'sensitization' of the civilian populace about their programme in the areas they captured, the height of collaboration became immeasurable and things became so confusing that there was now lack of trust between the soldiers and the civilians as to how to pursue the war. Simultaneously, the government, sitting in the cozy unaffected city, was blamed for lack of commitment. And for this it paid a dear price when a group of soldiers abandoned their positions at the war front, came to Freetown to apparently complain, which eventually ballooned to a military take-over on April 29 1992.

The National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) committed itself to quickly end the war and return the country to democratic rule. The response of the civilian population was a unanimous acceptance of the regime - at least from the demonstrations and utterances in Freetown and other big towns in the country. The international community was at most aloof, with Britain (the former colonial power) the lone voice in pronouncing reservations about the take-over and announcing the temporary closure of her High Commission in the country (It was however later re-opened during the course of the regime).

The new Head of State, Capt. Valentine Strasser, promised to fight the rebels on all fronts - land, air, and sea - which he manifested by allocating a greater chunk of the national budget to the purchase of military hardware and increasing pay facilities and other services for the army. Indeed, by December 1993 the rebels had been pushed, with towns and villages recaptured from them as far as back to the Liberian border. By all means, the
whole territory of Sierra Leone had been liberated. Immediately thereafter, the government announced a unilateral ceasefire, holding out the olive branch to all those rebels that were willing to surrender. But this, as events subsequently turned out, was a terrible mistake.

Because, as the soldiers stopped their pursuit, the rebels used the lull as an opportunity to regroup and restart the fighting. By the time the army knew what was going on, they had been overwhelmed - and the RUF was soon to knock on the doors of the city as they came as close as 23 kilometers away.

The lack of trust between soldiers and civilians intensified, and soon there were inevitable bloody clashes between the two. Although there was already a transition programme that was being apparently followed, the civilians added more pressure for the military government to back out. And three months to the holding of the scheduled elections there was a palace coup against Strasser which placed his then second-in-command, Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio, as the new head. Bio committed himself to continuing the electioneering process, while at the same time starting to talk to the rebels for an end to the war. He organized a communication process wherein the military and some politicians were able to directly speak to Sankoh in the bush via VHS radio.

The voice was heard but there were still doubts as to the authenticity of the speaker. So, when the government sought to delay elections by organizing a consultative conference asking for peace before elections, there were suspicions; and delegates - backed by calls from the international community for democracy to take hold - replied with a big 'no', pressing for the vote even though the head of the army said he could not guarantee security for all during voting. And it turned out that on the day of elections, indeed the rebels went to town and disrupted the voting in some areas, even cutting people's thumbs for exercising their franchise.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION: The initial perception about the war in Sierra Leone by the international community and even many Sierra Leoneans was that Foday Sankoh was a mere hoax being used by the rebels in pursuance of their goals - whatever they were. The feeling was that the rebel outfit was rudderless and there was no Foday Sankoh.

It was only through the efforts of the then Ivorian government of Henri Konan Bedie (whose Foreign Minister Amara Essy, encouraged by the NPRC, flew to Sankoh's jungle stronghold to convince the rebel leader to come out and state his case) and a non governmental international organization, International Alert, working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), braving the jungles of Kailahun district via helicopter and by road, that Sankoh was convinced to come out of the bush for the whole world to see him. He appeared bearded, disheveled, but firm in his convictions on his first public appearance since the war in Ivory Coast.

The international community's interest was then aroused, and efforts were made to strike out a peace deal between the rebels and the government culminating to the signing of the
Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996 - that is, after it had been ensured that the fruits of peace could only be harvested with the international community's support when there was a civilian government in place. It was during the military government that Sankoh was brought out of the bush, but it was at the time of the civilian government that emerged after the elections under President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah that the peace agreement was signed, with international institutions as moral guarantors. ECOWAS, the OAU, the Commonwealth and the UN were all represented during the deliberations. Basically, the agreement called for an end to the war, a disarmament programme for all combatants, and the formation of confidence-building commissions which would include the rebel group in the running of state affairs. Since then, the regional and international bodies paid greater attention to the conflict-resolution process in Sierra Leone.

THE PEACE ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR FAILURE/SUCCESS: The Abidjan Peace Accord was generally hailed by both sides of the conflict, backed by jubilation from the general Sierra Leonean populace and commendations from African and world leaders as the best way out of the mess in which the country had found itself. Yet, by January 1997, hostilities resumed, the peace agreement was in tatters, and everything was back to square one.

The big question therefore is, what went wrong? Who was to blame for the breakdown of the peace process?

Did the international institutions that committed themselves to the peace process play their roles well?

I must hasten to mention that after the Abidjan Peace Accord, at least three other peace agreements (the Conakry Peace Plan of 1997, the Lome Peace Accord of 1999, and the Abuja Peace Commitment of 2000) were signed before it was finally declared that peace had finally returned to Sierra Leone. And each of the subsequent arrangements was hailed as a way out, but each (perhaps except the one at Abuja) woefully failed to the extent of pushing the whole nation to the precipice of an all-out war.

For the sake of this paper, I will concentrate on analyzing the roles played by the international community in resolving (or refuelling) the conflict in Sierra Leone. One question to ask is that, would peace have come earlier, say in 1996, instead of now after so many people had been killed and properties destroyed if these institutions had acted properly in accordance with their respective objectives? Were they acting in concert and coordinating with each other, or were the regional institutions and actors having their own agenda different from that of the wider international ones? Did these institutions themselves get mired in the conflict, and in a sense become participants in the hostilities? Or was their best just not good enough for the Sierra Leonean warmongers? One thing we must accept absolutely is that it has been through the signing of an accord that peace has eventually returned to Sierra Leone, and essentially one accord cannot be more beautiful than the other. Certainly, there must have been some terrible mistakes by either the stakeholders or the moral guarantors for more than one accord to fail. The provisions of the Lome Peace Accord were certainly not essentially different from those of the Abidjan
Peace Agreement, neither from those of Conakry nor from those of Abuja - and the one connecting reality is that they were all signed under the tenure (whether at home or in exile) of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who is still the sitting President of Sierra Leone. So, was the failure of the earlier agreements a result of a hidden agenda, a miscalculation, or a self-serving ploy?

With President Kabbah having worked at the UN for over fifteen years before returning to Sierra Leone, these questions could not have been more appropriate with another persona as Head of State of Sierra Leone. The first thing that would come to mind is that, since these institutions were run by human beings, perhaps - and at this stage it is simply perhaps - mortality, being prone to err out of sentiment, could have influenced certain situations in support of a former colleague when reality and common sense could or should have dictated otherwise. Was a blind eye turned to the plight of the country to save the name and neck of a former UN official? Or was a retired UN official allowed to interpret the rules in his interest as against the provisions of the peace arrangements? Was it a question of might against right?

On the other hand, as the rebels purposely started the war to remove a government from power, were they power-hungry to the extent that no peace deal would stop them from gaining ultimate political authority?

Were they merely signing to give the impression of seriousness but underneath planning to wreak more havoc until they took the seat of power? Was rebel leader Foday Sankoh ever satisfied with a compromise position that placed him in a subsidiary authority other than that of Head of State?

Or were his fighters just ruthless vermin whose preoccupation was to cause mayhem and not to abide by any internationally endorsed principles?

ANALYSIS AND SUBMISSION From the outset, I must state that I am going to give more attention to the two most controversial peace accords - Conakry and Lome - in which the international community actually showed greater attention and contributions. The Abidjan Peace Accord of 1996 was more the outcome of haphazard bilateral cum regional efforts than anything else. The government of Ivory Coast at the time headed by President Konan Bedie influenced the RUF (which was having an office in that country) to sue for peace.

Facilitated by International Alert and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Ivorian Foreign Minister Amarra Essy met RUF leader Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone, brought him out of the bush, culminating to the signing of the accord on 30th November 1996.

Among other things (as could be found in the webpage 'www.sierra-leone.org' on that date), the agreement called for the demobilization of RUF fighters, the removal of foreign forces, including the South African mercenary force 'Executive Outcomes', for the government to establish work-training programs for former RUF fighters, and for the
incorporation of some former rebels into the Sierra Leone Army. It also provided for the transformation of the RUF into a political party.

However, as stated earlier, by January 1997, the peace accord was in shambles. The blame for this could be apportioned more to internal players than external factors. There seemed to be a considerable lack of trust between the two parties, and before long there were accusations and counter-accusations. The government accused the RUF of an unwillingness to disarm, while the rebels claimed that the government was disregarding the accord and attacking their positions. It was hard to believe anyone. But what became clear was that the government downplayed the breakdown of the ceasefire. For example, when reports emerged about a massacre of up to 150 people by "unknown gunmen" in an area held by the RUF in Tonkolili district, Presidential Adviser Sheka Mansaray denied that, and said: "The reports threaten to undermine the increasingly cordial relations between the RUF and the government... Several donor countries have informed the government since the signing of the accord of their willingness to contribute to the government's plea for $1 billion to rebuild and resettle the country. These reports threaten to keep donors away." Apart from sounding overzealous for the money, one wonders if the government spokesman was saying the truth, at least about the "increasingly cordial relationship" with the rebels.

Because a few weeks later the government colluded with some representatives from the RUF sent to represent the outfit in the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) in Freetown in announcing the overthrow of rebel leader Foday Sankoh, who at the same time had been arrested in Nigeria by the government's ally, General Sanni Abacha. Later, the leader of the plotters, Philip Palmer, confessed about the plot with the government. After that unfortunate mistake (which made the government to naively ask the plotters to go to the bush and talk to the fighters on the ground to accept the overthrow of Sankoh, which in turn led to the boys kidnapping the delegates), there was no iota of trust left between the two parties, and hostilities resumed.

None of the provisions of the accord was implemented, and another decision the government took was to reduce facilities for and even down-size of the army, instead of planning to incorporate the rebels. In fact, the government was accused of swelling the ranks and arming the pro-government militia, the Kamajors. The army felt threatened, and in the end they staged a coup in May 1997.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was mostly due to internal distrust and miscalculation, the international community and institutions represented during the signing of the accord could have done more.

The arrangement called for the deployment of UN observers to monitor the peace accord, but none arrived to do so up to the time of the coup. Also, the international community failed to remind the government of the folly and indeed the danger of supporting the overthrow of Sankoh, who was the chief signatory representing the rebel group in the accord.
The international community should have known that its own credibility was at stake, because "... In February 1995, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Envoy, Mr. Berhanu Dinka... (who) worked with the OAU and ECOWAS to try to negotiate a settlement to the conflict.....Dinka assisted in negotiating a peace agreement in November 1996 between the government and the RUF known as the Abidjan Peace Accord."4 It was only after the overthrow of the government that the international community raised concerns about the peace process and the importance of constitutional authority. The accord that was subsequently signed in Conakry, Guinea, was actually now more of the result of the efforts and work of the international community and institutions. The Conakry peace plan, with the UN, the OAU, and ECOWAS principally playing the role of moral guarantors, was signed on 23rd October 1997. It was not significantly different from the previous one, but it must be noted that this time around the elected government was in exile and the RUF was now subsumed to the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), the ruling military junta. Among other things, the accord called for the return of power to the elected government on April 22 1998, an amnesty for all combatants, the inclusion of Foday Sankoh in the peace arrangements, the enlargement of the ECOMOG force to disarm the warring factions, and "if approved by the Security Council - assisted by UN military observers."5 The accord was hailed by all as the best way out. But it again failed.

Whose fault was that? Here, I dare submit that the international community and institutions - or rather the personalities representing them - played a greater role in derailing the accord. It appeared they were prepared to gloss over all other provisions and concentrating on the one that stated that President Kabbah should return on April 22.

The junta complained that, though they were willing to abide by that date, there were key issues to be addressed before its implementation. It maintained that there were no other soldiers in the "so-called" ECOMOG force except Nigerians with whom they have had several skirmishes, that RUF leader Foday Sankoh should be released, and that the Sierra Leone Army could be restructured but not disarmed.

This was interpreted as a lack of commitment to the accord by the military junta. The UNAMSIL website does not mince its words on that: "Although the junta publicly committed itself to implementing the agreement, it subsequently criticized key provisions and raised a number of issues, with the result that the agreement was never implemented."6 This, to me, is essentially misleading. Because the UN Special Envoy at the time, Francis Okelo, visited Freetown, and after discussing the issues with the junta, told a press conference that they were "legitimate" and said if steps were not taken to address them, "we might fall behind the deadline."7 Furthermore, the UN team, which traveled to Makeni in the north, expressed surprised that the situation on the ground was different from the picture of chaos being churned out to the world by Guinea-based politicians.

In fact it was the pro-government militia, the Kamajors, implementing 'Operation Black December' (launched after the signing of the accord) that carried out attacks in the presence of the UN team.8 But what baffles me, and why I have allocated a greater
portion of the blame to the international/regional community and institutions for the collapse of the Conakry Peace Plan, is that they had known that the government-in-exile was playing some tricks and yet hailed it when it used force to totally destroy the accord and overthrow the junta. In justifying that action, the UNAMSIL website states: "In February 1998, ECOMOG responding to an attack by the rebel/army junta forces, launched a military attack that led to the collapse of the junta and its expulsion from Freetown." This is amazing, because the facts state that the Security Council felt hoodwinked by the Nigerian forces, in that while they were talking peace on the surface, they were actually planning an all-out attack, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan actually called for an end to hostilities.9 Apart from the government's launching of 'Operation Black December' which should outrightly have been condemned by all moral guarantors of the October peace plan, the government was preparing for war in that the Italians were actually bombing Freetown in excess of the UN mandate to enforce sanctions on petroleum products and arms; it had also contracted the services of a British mercenary firm, Sandline International, whose chief coordinator; Indian-born Thai Banker Rakesh Saxena was arrested in Canada in early February10; and the former Nigerian Commander in Sierra Leone was quoted way before the attack in the Vanguard newspaper of Nigeria as having stated that "only force" can restore President Kabbah.11 All this shows that there was a calculated plan on the side of the government and its allies to break the peace agreement, and the international community and institutions cannot pretend not to know that. They were giving Kabbah all the fitting accolades of the Head of State of Sierra Leone, attending all international conferences - and being given financial and moral support: the European Union pledged $360 million, the UK pledged £130,000, while the US categorically stated that it only recognized Kabbah as the President of Sierra Leone.12 On its part, the Organization of Islamic Countries made President Kabbah their Vice President for Africa in a conference held in Iran.13 "It appears that the international community has ganged itself up against Sierra Leone while its people suffer. We want the international community to play a fair game in the name of neutrality."14 These were the words of the AFRC Secretary General, Col. A.K. Sesay, who after the overthrow of the junta was executed along with twenty three others, forgetting that the Conakry Peace Plan called for an amnesty. Clearly, the international community and institutions did not only fail to condemn but actually colluded in contravening the peace plan to which they were moral guarantors. This is because after the fall of the junta, all were sending congratulatory messages to the intervention force: the US government, President Robert Mugabe (as OAU Chairman) and Niger welcomed the intervention15, while Chief Emeka Anyaku, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, praised the success of the Nigerian soldiers.16 I need not mention ECOWAS because Nigeria's Sanni Abacha was Chairman then; and as for the UN, its statement speaks louder: Following the return of President Kabbah, "The Security Council terminated the oil and arms embargo and strengthened the office of the Special Envoy to include UN military liaison officers..."17 This could be described as the most terrible mistake of the international community in trying to resolve the Sierra Leone conflict, because the destruction that resulted and the number of people killed and mutilated between that time and when another peace accord was signed in July 1999 outnumbered all that had happened previously in the 11-year war. That none of these institutions or their representatives reminded President Kabbah of the need to still have
dialogue with the rebel/army coalition even after his reinstatement on 10th March 1998 underlined some sort of "conspiracy" against the accord.

It was only when the whole thing boomeranged, with the Nigerians incapable of "flushing out" the rebels and the latter were approaching Freetown (which they eventually attacked and occupied) that voices started to come out about negotiating again. Even then, the intransigence of the government and some of its allies even within these institutions could not be hidden. A look at some statements uttered then can tell the story. On hearing of the resurgence of rebel activities, President Kabbah had this to say to Freetown residents on radio and television: "There is no reason to panic.

There is no way the rebels can harm you. They are a handful of people and not strong enough to make any trouble for you people in Freetown.... ECOMOG has assured us 100% that they are completely on top of the situation...."18 Ten days later, Kabbah was more categorical in stating that the rebels were trying to create panic in the civilian population "in an attempt to pressure the government to negotiate", but said that he and his government "would not allow " themselves to be forced into such a deal. He went on to state that Liberian President Charles Taylor had advised that RUF leader Foday Sankoh be released, yet "it would be totally irresponsible" and a violation of the law if he did that.19 It was more than a capitulation when after the rebels entered the city on January 6 1999, Kabbah was more than enthusiastic in taking Foday Sankoh from prison and starting to negotiate with him, leading to the signing of the Lome Peace Accord.

But way before that, some exposure had been made of the hypocrisy of the international institutions and/or their representatives. Even though a consultative conference of paramount chiefs and traditional elders were urging that "the philosophy of fire putting out fire cannot work any more. This war will only end at the negotiating table"20, and rebel Field Commander Sam Bockarie had stated their objective that they intended attacking Freetown, but "We are asking for peace. We are not coming for revenge... We want to enter into dialogue," provided there was an immediate and unconditional release of RUF leader Foday Sankoh, saying the rebels would give up their arms only if Sankoh made the request, on the condition that he were "free, on neutral territory, and not under duress"21, no one took action to try that path. In fact ECOMOG detained the chiefs, with the self-glorious assertion that "...ECOMOG is in control of the situation, and is presently engaged in routing and destroying the rebels."22 And they had tacit, if not overt, support from the international community and institutions. The Resident Chief of the UN observer mission (UNOMSIL), General Subashi Joshi, told UN staff that there was no cause for panic:"The situation would be under reasonable control within a couple of days.... Freetown is well protected."23 Coincidentally, that was the same day that President Kabbah had assured 100% security to Freetown residents, and it was on that same day that a statement of the UN Security Council read by its President, Jassim Mohammed Buallay of Bahrain, maintained that Council members "expressed their concern at the intensified attacks launched by rebel forces....

(and) reaffirmed their support for the government of President Kabbah and continue to commend the role of the ECOMOG force."24 Britain's Foreign Office Minister of State
for Africa, Tony Lloyd, while evacuating British citizens due to the worsening security situation, still maintained, "But our strong support for the democratically elected government of President Kabbah remains undiminished..."

We continue to lead international support for the legitimate government in Sierra Leone, and we are in close touch with our partners in the Security Council and elsewhere on how to take things forward."25 On his part, the Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyakwu, responding to the situation, said, "I hope that the resurgent rebel activity which has intensified in recent days, will be swiftly and effectively dealt with", adding that the ousting of the AFRC military junta in February and the restoration of the elected civilian government had demonstrated the Commonwealth's commitment to democracy.26 The ECOWAS Committee of Five set up for the resolution of the conflict, held an emergency meeting in Abidjan, but didn't come with new initiatives : they called on the rebels "to cease fighting immediately, lay down their arms, and recognize the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah...." Perhaps the only personality to be singled out of the blanket blindness to the situation at the time was UN Special Envoy Francis Okelo who stated that the Sierra Leone government might have no choice but to negotiate with "those who have grievances" sooner rather than later, because "the situation on the ground is getting worse. The government has to take this seriously. It can't stand back and wait for things to get better."27 But, in reality, it was the barking of a toothless bulldog, as no action was taken to that effect.

What I am trying to point out is that, in their support for democracy or particularly for President Kabbah - as it were - the international community and institutions and /or their representatives forgot about the peace process, particularly having dialogue with the rebels, until Freetown fell. The UN website has this to say: "In the aftermath of the rebel attack (on Freetown in January 1999) UN Special Representative Francis Okelo, in consultation with West African states, initiated a series of diplomatic efforts aimed at opening up dialogue with the rebels.

Negotiations between the government and the rebels began in May 1999 and on 7th July all parties to the conflict signed an agreement in Lome to end hostilities and form a government of national unity."28 Then one is tempted to ask, why was the deadline of the Conakry Peace Plan for Kabbah to have been reinstated peacefully on April 22 1998 not adhered to? Why all the fuss, the force, and the killings, when in the end the RUF leader was given the status of Vice President and junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma made Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) through the Lome accord?

All the hundreds if not thousands of people - soldiers as well as civilians - detained as rebel collaborators (forgetting the amnesty provisions of the Conakry accord) after Kabbah's reinstatement were now again given freedom and amnesty under the Lome accord. Eventually, according to the provisions of Lome, the Sierra Leone Army was to be restructured, not disarmed or disbanded as was to be for the civil militia, and suitable RUF fighters were to be incorporated in the Army. And then the reality of not leaving the peacekeeping task entirely on the Nigerians dawned: "The parties to the conflict also
requested an expanded role for UNOMSIL...the Security Council authorized the establishment of UNAMSIL, a new and much larger mission with a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers, to assist the government and the parties in carrying out provisions of the Lome Peace Agreement.

At the same time, the Council decided to terminate UNOMSIL. "29 Progressively, the UNAMSIL contingent reached a peak of 17,500 military personnel.

While not justifying military rule, I wish to submit that all these efforts by the international institutions were much the same things that junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma was talking about, for which it was said the junta was not committed to the peace accord. On hindsight, one would say without hesitation that had all these steps been taken in 1997, many lives and property could have been saved, and my country Sierra Leone would not have gone through the bestial atrocities for which she has lately been known of.

Indeed, it was the Lome Peace Accord that effectively ended the war. Although there were hitches here and there, including a return to hostilities when some UN soldiers were captured by a group of RUF fighters culminating to the shooting down of some twenty-odd demonstrators at the residence of RUF leader Foday Sankoh, the truth is that many rebels had already disarmed when Sankoh in the company of UN soldiers ordered them to do so, and virtually all soldiers listening to an order from Johnny Paul Koroma had returned to demobilization camps for eventual retraining. It was in fact these former 'renegade' soldiers that stood up on May 8 2000 to forestall the aim of the splinter RUF to disrupt the peace process. Although the rebels complained that they took that decision to draw the attention of the international community to certain unimplemented provisions of the accord (like not giving their officials key appointments to government parastatals), the presence of UNAMSIL as a configuration of soldiers from various nationalities, and the national army's realization that they were still regarded as the soldiers of the state, gave the necessary impetus to forestall further chaos.

CONCLUSION: I will be remiss in my duty if I state that the international community and institutions totally and absolutely failed in resolving the conflict in Sierra Leone. Not at all. My humble submission is that they acted very late - and that truth cannot be divorced from the fact that there was too much sentimental support for President Kabbah to the effect that many things were overlooked. I am tempted to feel that had it been another person - and not Alhaji Dr.

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah - the situation could have been different. But Kabbah, having studied in the UK, worked at the UN (in the US, with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as "a friend") for over 15 years, also having former ECOWAS Chairman Sanni Abacha as a very close friend, with the Commonwealth Secretary General being a Nigerian, at the same time being a Muslim at a time when the Presidency of the UN Security Council was held by a fellow Muslim from Bahrain, the time could not have been more auspicious for him to have manipulated the situation to his advantage - though, I must state, his colleagues might not have acted the way they did with the expectation of a catastrophe in
the magnitude of what befell on Sierra Leone under his tenure. But, all in all, with many of us having survived to tell the story, there is a partial success side to the events; because, after all, there is some democracy and some peace in the country, which, I admit, could not have been attainable without the continuous efforts of the international community and their institutions - particularly in convincing the various warring factions to participate in the disarmament programme, albeit with pay for those who committed horrendous atrocities!

The main lesson to be learnt from Sierra Leone is that, these institutions actually have the capacity to succeed devoid of unnecessary delays and sentiments. Incidentally, what I am saying is that, the international community and institutions have the wherewithal, the resources, and the man-power to avert catastrophes and even prevent wars; but many a time, as in the cases of Rwanda, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, are crippled and at times incapacitated by either bureaucratic delays or human foibles - which usually lead to unforeseen and untold carnage, only to be regretted by all. Then there is the added problem of patronage and sentiments, which more often than not even contravene the very essence and foundation for which the international institutions were established.

It is very important to realize that if these impediments are not overcome for the betterment of the rest of mankind, we will all be soon engulfed in a disaster that can be uncontrollable and unpardonable. The Sierra Leone experience must be a lesson that even the greatest nations and the most powerful institutions must take a cue from as to how to - as far as possible - act fast enough and remove personal relationships in the course of promoting peace and tranquility for our world.

The instituted international community-backed Special Court is a welcome deterrent to many a warlord, but it remains to be seen whether it will turn out to be the value for which colossal sums of dollars and pound sterlings have been churned out. Particularly, there is the disheartening fact that the principal players/ key indictees "bearing the greatest responsibility" in the war are actually all absent in the dock. RUF leader Foday Sankoh and his most powerful lieutenant Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie, plus the Nigerian Commander of the intervention force (lacking a requisite UN resolution to use force against the junta) General Maxwell Khobe, together with SAJ Musa (the Sierra Leonean Army officer who actually commanded the thousands of "renegade" soldiers in the bush while Johnny Paul was under RUF detention) are now dead; Liberian warlord and former President Charles Taylor has refused to submit to the court's jurisdiction while enjoying the protection of political asylum in Nigeria (with Sanni Abacha dead and gone); and former junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma has evaded arrest by going into hiding; while a perhaps extreme school of thought see no reason why President Kabbah's former Deputy Defence Minister Sam Hinga Norman could be indicted while letting off the Head of State from whom he had been receiving directives and logistics. In an article in The Independent newspaper of Sierra Leone posted to www.allafrica.com on June 15 2004, Abduk K.
Bangura, in an opinion entitled 'The Problem With The Special Court For Sierra Leone', stated that, "Also troubling is that Kabbah and the foreign arms suppliers who helped fuel the brutal war have not been indicted. In his 30-page report to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the US-based spokesman of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), Rev.

Alfred Sam Foray, provided evidence that reveals Kabbah's support for and approval of CDF activities.

Officials of Sandline International, a private military company, have long since been exposed for supplying weapons to Kabbah..." Is it the same protectionist policy for a former UN man?

Whatever may be the end result, the international community, especially the United Nations, needs to be more impartial in resolving conflicts, whether in the Phillippines or India/Pakistan or Israel/Palestine or Iraq, than it has been in trying to do so in Sierra Leone. Our world deserves better.


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