PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Tuesday 07 & Wednesday 08 December 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248
MOBILE: 232 76 645 914
PRESS RELEASE
Freetown, Sierra Leone, 7 December 2004

German President Visits the Special Court

The flag of the Federal Republic of Germany flew over the courthouse Tuesday, marking a visit to the Special Court by German President Horst Köhler. President Köhler’s visit was the first ever by a Western Head of State to the Court’s complex in Freetown.

President Köhler, accompanied by a high-level German delegation, was welcomed in front of the courthouse by the Special Court President, Justice Emmanuel Ayoola.

In a meeting with Special Court Judges, the President was briefed by the Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, Benjamin Ittoe, on the progress of the trials so far. President Köhler discussed with the Judges the challenges of providing justice and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

In a second meeting, which was attended by international and Sierra Leonean Court officials, the German president and his delegation talked about the progress and challenges encountered by the Court, as well as its reception by the people of Sierra Leone.

After briefly observing the trial in progress, President Köhler spoke with reporters gathered in front of the courthouse. In his remarks, the President called the Special Court “a very important institution for working to bring justice to Sierra Leone.” He also stressed the importance of reconciliation in the aftermath of the country’s decade-long civil war.

“It is important that at the end the people of Sierra Leone will see that there is justice in the world for them,” he said. “Based on that, they will get a long-term perspective of peace, economic and social development. We want and have to care about the people here in Sierra Leone.”

In response to a question from a German reporter on how he thought justice was delivered at the Special Court, President Köhler said this was not a question which could be answered responsibly with a quick statement.

“I believe that I am encountering two things here, which need to be weighed carefully,” he said. “First, from the perspective of the international community, that is, how the crimes here are judged, but also – and for me this is just as important – how within the international community there can be a structured
way of dealing with justice which in the end will benefit the country and also the people themselves. We should never forget that.”

Justice Ayoola explained the mandate of the Special Court, which is to prosecute only those deemed to bear the greatest responsibility for the atrocities which took place during the conflict in Sierra Leone.

“We believe that if we had tried everybody who participated in the conflict, the thing will be endless because it’s a very large number,” he said. “When you keep the ringleaders that sends a message that if you can try the highest then the smallest will know that he has no hiding place in future.”

#END

The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996. To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA - NOT FOR ADVERTISING

Produced by the
Press and Public Affairs Office
Special Court for Sierra Leone
Mobile: 232 76 655 237
Email: SCSL-pressoffice@un.org

Visit our website at www.sc-sl.org
German President visits Special Court

BY THEOPHILUS GBEDEDA

As part of his three day working visit to Sierra Leone, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Prof. Dr. Horst Kohler, yesterday paid a special visit to the Special Court for Sierra Leone where he was taken on an inspection tour of the court's premises and updated with progress made this far.

The Federal President was received by the President of the Special Court, Justice Emmanuel Awoola and a special guard of honour mounted by the UNAMSIL Nigerian Contingent.

In his address, the Professor Dr. Horst Kohler said his visit to the Court was in recognition of the important task it has been working to bring.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

German President visits Special Court

FROM PAGE 1

Justice to the people of Sierra Leone is important, he said, and the President of the Special Court, Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Awoola, stressed the importance of the court's role in ensuring justice for the people of Sierra Leone.

On the justice issue relating to the Special Court, the President said, "I believe that I am encountering two things here, which have to be weighed carefully, one is the perspective of the international community, and that is how the crimes here are judged.

"But also, and for me this is just as important, how within the international community there can be a structured way of dealing with justice, which in the end will benefit the country and also the people themselves. We should never forget that," he concluded.
Legal Tussle
Norman Appeal Against Trial Chamber

By Joseph Konneh

The Trial Chamber at the Special Court for Sierra Leone is currently faced with not only the hearing of witness testimonies to bring to justice the perpetrators of the 1990s war, but also the Herculean task of sorting out and resolving legal aspects that they described as "technically complex and controversial both in terms of legal theory and practice." The trial is "utterly unclear and confusing a sea of law," in their view, left them "utterly divided.

On the 29th of September this year, Chief Norman, who is first accused in the CDF trial filed a motion seeking a stay of prosecution and an amendment to the consolidated indictment pursuant to Rules 52 and 61 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the Special Court. In that application, he also sought to have the first or initial indictment against him on which he was arraigned on the 3rd of March 2003 before Judge Pierre Boutel-Dubreuil withdrawn so as to avoid a perceived double jeopardy. He submitted that the two indictments are currently "lying against his and" contrary to the rules of law against double jeopardy under Article 913 of the statute. He expressed concern based upon "experience before domestic Sierra Leonean tribunals" that a complete acquittal on the consolidated indictment could "make him vulnerable to further prosecution on the initial indictment.

Chief Norman's submissions were to the effect that the joinder indictment filed against him and his co-accused persons was a new and different indictment which requires personal service and an arrangement on the new indictment. His submissions are premised on the allegation that the consolidated indictment expanded the scope of the charges brought against him. It also establishes, amongst other things, new crime bases and fresh allegations to which he did not plead during his initial appearance on the first individual indictment before the Chamber on March 7, 2003.

On the 29th of November 2004, the Trial Chamber in a vote of 2-1 ruled against his application. In their majority decision, the judges acknowledged that their own order of 26 February 2004 which had been in effect through the Trial Chamber. Although the Trial Chamber also definitively found, as alleged in Norman's motion, that the consolidated indictment contains new factual allegations added in support of existing confirmed counts and substantive elements of charges that are material to the case against the three CDF accused, they granted relief putting the prosecution to their election either to expunge the portions added to the original indictment or to amend the indictment with leave of the chamber.

The Chief of Court Management has informed the Trial Chamber that Chief Norman was not personally served with the consolidated indictment in his report. Court Management stated that the joint indictment was only served on counsel for Norman, as the prosecution had not asked for personal service on the accused. And in accordance with Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the Trial Chamber has ordered in its decision on whether for a single consolidated indictment be prepared as the indictment on which the joint trial shall proceed, and be served on each accused person. Based on the foregoing the Trial Chamber finds that the action of the prosecution and Court Management on the service of the indictment on Norman's lawyers does not comply with Rule 52, or the order of the Chamber. The Trial Chamber therefore maintains that while such a failure to serve the consolidated indictment personally on Chief Norman constitutes a procedural error, it alone would not however, in and of itself, unfairly prejudice Chief Norman's right to a fair trial. This did not go down well with both Chief Norman and his defense counsels. Against this backdrop, Chief Norman on Thursday last week filed an appeal to the Trial Chamber to allow him to make an immediate interlocutory appeal on the ruling to the highest authority organ of the Special Court, the Appeals Chamber. It remains whether the Judge will allow him to seek further redress or maintain their position.
The Special Court issued a press release in Freetown yesterday informing members of the public that the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone is moving to a new hearing schedule in 2005 with the Judges of Trial Chamber No. 1 presiding over alternate cases for six weeks at a time in an effort to speed up the trials. The press release noted among other things, "This change should speed up the two trials currently underway, the trial of three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front and the trial of three alleged members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)." The press release further clarified that the trial of the three alleged members of the CDF, Sam Hinga Norman, Monima Fahnah and Alfons Konduwa, is said to break on December 7. However, the registry of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will remain open until December 17th, when official judicial recess commences.

According to the press release, the trial of the three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will resume on December 18th, 2004.

The press release assured the public that the Special Court will maintain a high level of security at all times. It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre, actually named in honour of

Cont. back page

The press release noted among other things, "This change should speed up the two trials currently underway, the trial of three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front and the trial of three alleged members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)." The press release further clarified that the trial of the three alleged members of the CDF, Sam Hinga Norman, Monima Fahnah and Alfons Konduwa, is said to break on December 7. However, the registry of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will remain open until December 17th, when official judicial recess commences.

According to the press release, the trial of the three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will resume on December 18th, 2004.

The press release assured the public that the Special Court will maintain a high level of security at all times. It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre, actually named in honour of

Cont. back page

The press release noted among other things, "This change should speed up the two trials currently underway, the trial of three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front and the trial of three alleged members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)." The press release further clarified that the trial of the three alleged members of the CDF, Sam Hinga Norman, Monima Fahnah and Alfons Konduwa, is said to break on December 7. However, the registry of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will remain open until December 17th, when official judicial recess commences.

According to the press release, the trial of the three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will resume on December 18th, 2004.

The press release assured the public that the Special Court will maintain a high level of security at all times. It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre, actually named in honour of

Cont. back page

The press release noted among other things, "This change should speed up the two trials currently underway, the trial of three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front and the trial of three alleged members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)." The press release further clarified that the trial of the three alleged members of the CDF, Sam Hinga Norman, Monima Fahnah and Alfons Konduwa, is said to break on December 7. However, the registry of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will remain open until December 17th, when official judicial recess commences.

According to the press release, the trial of the three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will resume on December 18th, 2004.

The press release assured the public that the Special Court will maintain a high level of security at all times. It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre, actually named in honour of

Cont. back page

The press release noted among other things, "This change should speed up the two trials currently underway, the trial of three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front and the trial of three alleged members of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF)." The press release further clarified that the trial of the three alleged members of the CDF, Sam Hinga Norman, Monima Fahnah and Alfons Konduwa, is said to break on December 7. However, the registry of the Special Court for Sierra Leone will remain open until December 17th, when official judicial recess commences.

According to the press release, the trial of the three alleged members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will resume on December 18th, 2004.

The press release assured the public that the Special Court will maintain a high level of security at all times. It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new building of the Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre will be officially opened by Nigerian Battalion 19 personnel who took up duty in Sierra Leone recently as part of UNAMSIL.

It is also stated that the new Robert Lee Paramil Security Centre, actually named in honour of

Cont. back page
As Special Court Bends Over...

Penfold Assures Norman of International Support

Even though the visiting ban on Norman has not been lifted, the Special Court yesterday allowed former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Peter Penfold to see him at his detention facility. Komaratu Peter Penfold's application to meet with the indicted former deputy Minister of Defence, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, had earlier been denied.

Yesterday however, in the morning hours, our source intimated that Penfold had a two-hour meeting with the erstwhile Civil Defence Co-ordinator at the Special Court Jammeh Kenyatta Road Detention Facility. Norman had earlier been banned from receiving any visitors for a period of one month as a penalty for violating his privileges on three separate occasions. Contrary to Rule 42(a) of the Rules of Detention, he circulated letters without the consent of the Court's Registrar and the letters were reproduced, some in part, and some in whole, in several local newspapers.

The Registrar's office invoked Rule 47(1)(b), (6) and (7) of the Rules of Detention, to prohibit him from seeing visitors for a period of four weeks, which is currently ongoing. Since Penfold is a regular visitor and considering his status as one-time High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, he was made an exception to the rule.

The purpose of the meeting was to reassure Norman that the support initially pledged to him by Penfold and other supporters of international repute, like, according to unconfirmed sources, the former U.S. Ambassador John Fish, remains unavering.

Penfold who is a friend of Sierra Leone and a regular visitor here, when later contacted on his cell phone, and Norman is in good spirit, "I am very happy that the support of members of the international community," he said and explained that the statement of presiding judge Justice Benjamin Figueroa, in which he argued that Norman had not been properly indicted and arraigned, as opposed to the other two judges in the Trial Chamber, who disagreed, encourages Chief Norman. "That is why he submitted an appeal," Penfold said.

The decision to allow the meeting between the two was taken following our

Komaratu Penfold and Chief Norman Meet Yesterday

Komaratu Penfold and Chief Norman met yesterday.
OPINION
THE FARCICAL NATURE
OF THE SPECIAL COURT

By Josie Kai

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has alleged, if not actually, become a farce. Founded and established for the most serious of intentions, it is on the path of ending up in a lampoon pot. "To try those bearing the greatest responsibility in the war..." was a message more than enough to send chilling effects down the spines of the war mongers in the civil war. A school of thought holds the view that Issa Sesay overplayed the peace actor role in disarming the RUF rebels with the aim of finding an escape route from the Special Court. That is, had he known that all the gears of literally starving and dining with President Kabbah amid sharing a peace award the former commander would still have to face the court, he would have had second thoughts in pushing matters too fast too soon.

For fear of the Special Court former fearsome AFRC junta commanders overnight became celebrated members of a peace commission, vowing for peace at all cost - apparently to be seen as bearing the greatest responsibility in bringing peace instead of the other way round.

Definitely, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, a member of Cabinet, never dreamed of the long arm of the Special Court catching him. Of course he could have found also his own escape route. At the beginning, for sure, many Sierra Leoneans thought the Special Court was the ultimate panacea to the country's problems. Backed by the whole international community (Kofi Annan bringing a personal prestige to bear, with America displaying support by providing the prosecutor and dollars, and the British inevitably giving full sustenance with personnel and pound sterling), the court was looked up to by Sierra Leoneans as a deliverer - at least from a juridical perspective.

Today, with a single indictment yet to be convicted, and just a year more for the end of its mandate, the Special Court has ironically become an abhorrent, or hated, object in many homes. It has virtually joined the long history of Sierra Leone's chequered judicial system. Starting with the monstrous theft of the amount of money poured into the project while the citizens still await a vision of more sleeping on hungry stomachs, to the inability to arrange before it more responsible (for want of a better expression) perpetrators, it has obviously failed in its duty - the very foundation on which it should have stood has been swept under it.

The court, incredibly, has since unceremoniously hung on a thin thread of functionality by catching men (significantly no women) from the various war-wracked factions mentioned in order to present to the world a make-shift picture of having caught the big fish that bear the greatest responsibility.

So by arranging a man like Hinga Norman, Special Prosecutor David Crane could trump success in his task, that is. And of all the indictees, Norman has been the most troublesome. He has been able to send rebellious war-renegades messages to his Kamapps, he has been able to bring proceedings to a halt, and he has been able to post letters from his cell.

And for three reasons, Norman has been refused the "right" to be visited in prison. The latest victim of this ban is former British Commissioner Konahaba Peter Penfold. Despite the former pro-democracy diplomat being vehemently opposed to the setting up of the court in the first place, and in spite of the Special Court claiming to follow international standards in trying people that have allegedly broken international law, there is certainly a serious discrepancy in refusing a meeting between Penfold and his former friend on the basis that the latter has not been following the court's procedure of incarceration.

Suffice it to say that this has exposed the Special Court's inability to control the court to ensure that prisoners adhere to the rules, and these must be implemented through strict supervision both day and night. But because it has not been capable to function as it should, the court has found itself in a situation wherein it has allowed one man to send letters outside (in more than two occasions) from a prison where the image of the security forces in Sierra Leone is being more adversely condemned than the rest of the mankind in still to be redeemed, and has refused another man who has flown from thousands of miles away to pay a visit to his former colleague.

And what is revealed at the end is a court and-stick situation: relating the atmosphere within, to tighten the screws without. Tempting trapped Norman to be masochistic in order to ban his friends from seeing him.

Although at the nick of time, perhaps in order to save its face, the court has agreed to allow Penfold to meet with Norman on the day that the former would return to his native England - and a day before the official ban should expire - what the whole episode has unearthed is the question about the credibility of the Special Court. Which international standards is the court really following? The reality, for now, is that the road is still long and rugged for Sierra Leone's judicial system: import or not.
Trial Of Hingga Norman, 2 Others Break Today

Special Court yesterday announced new hearing schedule for 2005 with Judges of Trial Chamber No 1 hearing alternate cases for six weeks at a time. This change is to speed up the two trials currently underway.

However, the trial of Sam Hingga Norma, Monama Fonanah and Allieu Kondewa, all members of the Civil Defence Force, is set to break today, but the court says the registry will remain open until December 17 when official judicial recess begins.

On the other hand, the RUF trial will resume on January 10 with the status conference.

where the welfare of detainees is discussed. During the recess, security will remain in force with UNAMSIL Nigerian Battalion 19, which recently took up duty in Sierra Leone, complementing Special Court security personnel and the Sierra Leone Police.

Next week, the new Robert Lee Parnell security centre, named after the late Chief of Security, is to be commissioned and will provide space for additional troops from UNBATT 19.
America Threatens Tough Sanctions, If

The Inquirer (Monrovia)
NEWS
December 7, 2004
Posted to the web December 7, 2004

By Charles Crawford
Monrovia

Says Liberia Risks Losing Assistance

The United States government has threatened to recommend to the United Nations the inclusion, without hesitation on its travel and assets freeze lists, of names of individuals who are selfishly blocking the peace process in the country.

Addressing a news conference over the weekend in the auditorium of the U.S Embassy's Public Affairs Department, Amb. Blaney said, "we are watching those who are seeking to undermine the elections timetable, or the peace process, and we reserve the option to take appropriate action if necessary.

"The United States can propose to the United Nations additions of individuals to both the UN travel ban list and to the UN assets freeze list. Individuals selfishly blocking the peace process will likely find themselves on one or both of those lists, and could be subject to U.S. laws and policies as well. The actions of a selfish few should not disenfranchise everyone else in Liberia.

"So, I say to Liberians, do not let a greedy few deny your right to vote, and deny you your chance for a more prosperous future. Insist upon free and fair elections, held on time, that conform international standards."

Donning a blue coat and a red tie, the U.S. diplomat in a very serious tone, said "the CPA does not state that reform of electoral system must be approved by the NTLA, but, as everyone knows, the CPA calls for elections no later than October 2005."

"The United States does not think that the NTLA's involvement is essential in this process, since this election is clearly an extra-constitution event that lies within the framework of the CPA and is governed by the CPA." Nonetheless, Amb. Blaney added, "the NEC chose to submit an electoral reform bill to the NTLA in August. Unfortunately, the NTLA delayed for several months passage of this bill, and just last week, adopted a modified form of the bill that does not set aside the constitutional provision that calls for a census before elections. They did this knowing that a census is impossible to conduct before October 2005. In fact, the drafters of the CPA in Ghana all knew and agreed unanimously that a census could not be conducted before the October 2005 election.

"So, what conclusion must we draw; other than the NTLA is not serious about timely elections, and does not intend to honor one of Liberia's key obligation under the CPA.

"Let me be clear: the United States is committed to assisting in the implementation of the CPA with election no later
LIBERIA: National army to get back on its feet after years of civil war

06 Dec 2004 18:46:06 GMT
Source: Integrated Regional Information Networks

MONROVIA, 6 December (IRIN) - Liberia's transitional government has begun paving the way for a new national army to emerge from the ashes of 14 years of civil war, backed by funding from the US government, a top military official said on Monday.

Most of the soldiers in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) defected to rebel factions after civil war broke out in 1989, providing many of the groups' senior commanders.

The national army has been in disarray ever since and for the 16 months of peace Liberia has known, the world's biggest UN peacekeeping force -- made up of some 15,000 soldiers -- has been stationed in the country.

Now moves are afoot to rebuild the national army.

"From October to end of November, we started the restructuring program by re-documenting the present strength of the army," army spokesman Richard Barnah told IRIN. He said the process was designed to work out how many people had reached retiring age or had left the army.

The United States' role of training armed forces in Liberia, the country founded by freed American slaves in the early 19th century, would continue in the post-war era, Barnah said. Washington offered a helping hand with army training from the 1950s up to the outbreak of civil war.

"There are now negotiations between the transitional government and the US government for the latter to provide training for the army," Barnah said.

The US ambassador to Liberia, John Blaney, said last week that his government had already set aside US$ 35 million to carry out the army restructuring before general elections, scheduled for October 2005.

"Training the military is a long-term process," Blaney told reporters. "The intention of the US is to start this process in the first half of 2005. We have about 35 million earmarked for this task."

Disarmament has now been completed in the heavily-forested West African country, with more than 102,000 men, women and children disarmed and around 27,000 weapons handed in.

Rebels and militia groups formally disbanded last month in line with a peace deal signed in August 2003 and now attention is turning to
reviving a national force, which has been effectively redundant since 1989.

There were attempts to restructure the army during the years of civil war but none of them successful.

Under the Abuja peace accord that led to a break in the fighting in 1996 and general elections in 1997, the West African peacekeeping force (ECOMOG) was supposed to retrain a new national army based on fair ethnic and geographical representation.

But Charles Taylor, who won the 1997 elections, sidetracked the issue, saying the restructuring was solely a matter for the elected government.

A year later his government established a commission which recommended a 6,000-strong army but the proposal was never implemented.

Then in 1999, civil conflict erupted again and plans for the army fell by the wayside as Taylor favoured his former rebel fighters, who formed militia groups that battled rebel insurgents until 2003 when a peace deal was finally imposed and Taylor fled into exile.

Integrated Regional Information Networks news
Heads of UN missions in West Africa today held a special working session at the UN Mission in Liberia Headquarters in Congo town. The need for high-level meetings was created based on a request from the Security Council for UN peacekeeping missions in Africa to meet and take concrete actions towards implementing a regional approach, which also includes pulling together UN assets across the region and explore combined efforts between the missions to achieve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General SRSGSs reviewed the overall situation in the region as well as in each of the mission areas.

On Sierra Leone, the SRSGS stressed the necessity for a smooth and realistic strategy for the United Nations to welcome the transitional plan crafted by UN Mission in Sierra Leone and the country team in Sierra Leone as a mode of transition from peacekeeping to peace building.

They also acknowledged with satisfaction the handing-over of security responsibilities to the government of Sierra Leone and expressed their concern about the potential impact on mass poverty and endemic youth unemployment on the sustainability of the peace achieved. They also welcomed the progress made in the peace process in Liberia, including the completion of the disarmament and demobilization process and the dissolution of all the former warring factions.

They also recognized that serious challenges lie ahead, in particular the lack of adequate authority and the poor economic condition of the country. They brainstormed on plans to facilitate the integration of internally displaced and returnees, as well as the overall recovery process.

The gentlemen also expressed concern at the existence of a correlation of the unwillingness consisting of Liberians who seek to derail the elections and the entire peace process sentence as heard.

The SRSGSs spoke of the importance of drafting on an urgent basis an electoral law that is in accordance with the comprehensive peace agreement and international standards.

They expressed deep concern about continued instability in the region and called for effective and robust action to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

On Guinea-Bissau, they agreed on the necessity to address with no further delay the issue of security sector reform and the strengthening of the state government as a prerequisite for sustaining peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. They drew attention on the fact that the increased deterioration of the situation in the country will require the strengthening of peacemaking elements of the mandate of the UN missions.
Violence against women and children is being used as a weapon of war, an Amnesty International report showed today.

The study, titled Lives Blown Apart: Crimes Against Women In Times Of Conflict, said women are being targeted by male combatants to terrorise communities in 36 conflicts around the world.

The study, released ahead of International Human Rights Day on December 10, shows women are suffering rape, slavery, mutilation and death.

Amnesty International said women are the "collateral damage" of war and called for global action on the issue, including early prosecutions by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The report said there was evidence of the abuse of women's and girls' rights in conflicts all over the world, including Colombia, Iraq, Sudan, Chechnya, Nepal and Afghanistan.

An estimated 32 million women and children have been forced to flee their homes because of violence and human rights violations, the report said.

This includes a staggering 1.4 million who have left their homes in Sudan and 2.7 million in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the report said.

Sanguina, who was raped twice in the DRC, testified in the report: "In the community, they made such fun of me that I had to leave the village and live in the forest ... I am hungry, I have no clothes and no soap."

She added: "I don't have any money to pay for medical care. It would be better if I died with the baby in my womb."

Amnesty International UK director Kate Allen said a strong message must be sent that violence against women will be vigorously pursued.

"We are calling for decisive global action to stop violence against women in war and we particularly call on the International Criminal Court to make a point on tackling this in one of its early prosecutions," she said in a statement.

"Firm action by the ICC will help shame countries into promoting action through their national courts."
The human rights organisation also called for Governments to warn their armed forces that violence against women and girls will not be tolerated.

International Human Rights Day is December 10.

**LOAD-DATE:** December 8, 2004

Source: News & Business > News > News, Most Recent 90 Days (English, Full Text)

Terms: WOMEN AND WAR WORLDWIDE, KATHERINE DANKS, PA, ... COMMUNITIES IN 36 CONFLICTS WORLDWIDE, AN AMNESTY ... SEXUAL ASSAULT DURING THE CONFLICT THERE. IN 2003, CLINICS ... 56%); RWANDA (54%); LIBERIA (53%); ... RIGHTS (78%); WAR & CONFLICT (77%); CRIMES AGAINST ...

View: Full

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 8, 2004 - 6:04 AM EST

About LexisNexis | Terms and Conditions

Copyright © 2004 LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
Women's lives and bodies -- unrecognized casualties of war

press release, 08/12/2004

Women and girls bear the brunt of armed conflicts fought today both as direct targets and as unrecognized "collateral damage". *Lives Blown Apart* a new report in Amnesty International's campaign, Stop Violence Against Women, calls for global action to challenge both the violence and the failure of governments to prevent it.

"Patterns of violence against women in conflict do not arise 'naturally' but are ordered, condoned or tolerated. They persist because those who commit them know they can get away with impunity," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

The report lays out the global picture revealing a systematic pattern of abuse repeating itself in conflicts all over the world from Colombia, Iraq, Sudan, Chechnya, Nepal to Afghanistan and in 30 other ongoing conflicts. Despite promises, treaties and legal mechanisms, governments have failed to protect women and girls from violence.

"Women and girls are not just killed, they are raped, sexually attacked, mutilated and humiliated. Custom, culture and religion have built an image of women as bearing the 'honour' of their communities. Disparaging a woman's sexuality and destroying her physical integrity have become a means by which to terrorize, demean and 'defeat' entire communities, as well as to punish, intimidate and humiliate women," said Irene Khan.

On top of this it is women and children who are forced to flee their homes. It is women who care for the sick and injured and it is women who have to collect food and water - tasks and situations that put them at further risk of abuse.

Rape survivors suffer not only from psychological and emotional trauma, from the impact on their health and the risk of HIV/AIDS, but also from the fear that they will be ostracized by their families and communities if they are publicly identified as a rape victim.

"In the community, they made such fun of me that I had to leave the village and live in the forest. [...] I am hungry, I have no clothes and no soap. I don't have any money to pay for medical care. It would be better if I died with the baby in my womb," Sanguina was raped twice during the DRC conflict.

Justice is key to stopping the violence and when the International Criminal Court begins its first prosecutions, it will open a new avenue for women to access justice. Justice is not just a technical tool but has a concrete impact. It confirms that rape and sexual violence are crimes, restores dignity and feelings of self worth and it delivers redress. Justice is also a vital step to prevent the crimes from happening again, it sends a signal to those who would commit violence that it will not be tolerated.

"It is absolutely pivotal that one of the first prosecutions by the ICC next year includes crimes of violence against women. A strong global message must be sent that violence against women will be vigorously pursued. Firm action by the ICC will help shame states into promoting action through their national courts," said Irene Khan.

However the ICC cannot deliver justice without political support. The success of an ICC prosecution will also depend on the cooperation it receives from governments on practical issues, including the assistance it receives during investigations, the sharing of evidence and the protection of witnesses who may be at risk.

"Women's lives and their bodies have been the unacknowledged casualties of war for too long. Tools to tackle the violence exist, but justice for women victims of war will only be delivered if world leaders are ready to do more than just make pious statements condemning rape and sexual violence. They must adopt an agenda for action, centred on the ICC and complemented by universal jurisdiction through national systems," said Irene Khan.

The report highlights how the fight for women's security and human rights is jeopardised by increasing militarization and the introduction of new security agendas to fight global terrorism. US led security doctrines have stretched the concept of "war" into areas formerly considered as law enforcement promoting the notion that human rights can be curtailed in the name of security.

Despite the impact of conflict on women and girls they are still excluded from the peace negotiation tables. Often it is the men who initiated the war who take decisions on how peace should be built and introduced.

"Women have a crucial role to play in re-building secure communities and countries. All over the world women are challenging violence, discrimination and silence. Without women's active involvement in any peace process there can be no security, no justice and no peace," said Irene Khan.

Amnesty International is presenting an agenda for action at global, regional, national and local level:

* The ICC must be allowed to act effectively and deliver justice to women and girls. If the Security Council is serious about ending violence against women in conflict it can refer cases to the ICC, when governments fail to do so.
* Governments must give their political support to enable the ICC to work effectively. This includes ratifying the Rome Statute of the ICC, implementing the Rome Statute into national law so that perpetrators can be prosecuted for these crimes in national systems, sharing information with the ICC, and providing protection for victims and witnesses.

• Governments must publicly condemn violence against women and girls in any circumstances, issuing clear warnings or instructions to their forces that violence against women will not be tolerated.
• The international community: all governments, the UN and relevant international bodies must ensure that women play a key role in the design and implementation of all peace-building initiatives.
• All parties and the UN must provide immediate and effective assistance to survivors of violence against women, including emergency health care programs and rehabilitation.

"We have to mobilize global outrage - to challenge the violence, support those women who suffer and put pressure on those who can bring about change. It is the power of individual women and men that drives change," said Irene Khan.

The report is part of Amnesty International's global campaign Stop Violence Against Women. For more information please visit our web site: http://news.amnesty.org

Back

ACT770952004.WPD ACT770952004.RTF newsrelease.pdf