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, July 19, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Mariama S. Yilla
Ext 7217 / 7216
Hinga Norman writes United Nations

In the letter, Chief Hinga Norman stated how he has been misrepresented by the Council of Ministers since his arrest over two years ago. Chief Norman also said he has been suffering from serious illness and treatment at the hands of the Administration, and continues to suffer from "very serious denial of justice," adding that the situation of illness and denial of treatment by the Administration is now unbearable and unsustainable.

He noted in the letter his continued progress.
Hinga Norman writes United Nations

The 19th of July 2003

Norman’s Letter

1st June 2003

Sirs,

I agree with the conclusions of the IACU report and the recommendations of the United Nations. The report is objective and professional. It is a landmark document that will be remembered for many years to come. The report highlights the failings of the United Nations and its member states, and it calls for urgent action to address these failings.

I urge the United Nations to take action to prevent similar situations from happening in the future. The report recommends that the United Nations should establish a mechanism to monitor and report on human rights violations. This mechanism should be independent of the United Nations and its member states, and it should have the power to investigate and adjudicate complaints.

I also urge the United Nations to establish a fund to provide compensation to victims of human rights violations. The fund should be funded by member states and should be independent of the United Nations.

I urge the United Nations to take action to ensure that human rights are respected and protected.

Yours sincerely,

Hinga Norman

United Nations
Ahead of SLPP convention...
Norman Gives Special Court Ultimatum

BY: Dharmika S. Gohade

As the Secret Leonce People Party (SLPP) national convention draws near, attention turns to the Special Court which is due to deliver its verdict on the former President and former Prime Minister, Mohamed Nasheed, for corruption charges. If the court fails to deliver its verdict within the stipulated time, the SLPP convention will be postponed.

Norman, the party's leader, has made it clear that he will not attend the convention if the Special Court fails to deliver its verdict within the given time frame. He has also stated that he will not participate in any other political event unless the court delivers its verdict within the stipulated time.

The SLPP convention is scheduled to take place in early September, but Norman has warned that if the court fails to deliver its verdict, he will not attend the convention.

The SLPP has been facing internal struggles, with some members calling for a boycott of the convention. Norman's stance has added to the tensions within the party, as he has been critical of the government's handling of the trial of former President Nasheed.

Leaders of the opposition parties have also called for a boycott of the convention, demanding a fair trial for Nasheed. The situation has escalated, with the government accusing the opposition of politicizing the issue.

In a statement, Norman has stated that he will not participate in any political event unless the court delivers its verdict within the stipulated time. He has also called for a fair trial for Nasheed, stating that he will not participate in any event that is not in line with his party's principles.

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Special Court to change hands

By Ibrahim J. Sesay

As many Sierra Leoneans are greatly concerned about the security of the Special Court for Sierra Leone once UNAMSIL would have left, the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, Maj General Hajan Akram has disclosed that the Special Court will be secured by troops of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), after UNAMSIL leaves later this year. "As far as the security of the Special Court is concerned, on our departure, it would be officially handed over to UNMIL by the UN security council." He went on to say that the prime control of the Special Court compound would be the responsibility of UNMIL. "If the Special Court want to do their job they need security and I believe that the security would be provided by the United Nations," he said.

In terms of logistics the Force Commander said "as far as logistics are concerned, that will be taken care of by the UN office in Sierra Leone." However, the actual number of security personnel to take over from UNAMSIL is not yet known, "but the Security Council is working on it and will soon make an announcement," the Force Commander said. In a confident mood, the Force Commander further said "mischief makers who want to take advantage of the situation will do so at their own risk."
CAI urges visiting UN envoy to call for Taylor's surrender

During her visit to West Africa this week, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour should press for liberian President Charles Taylor's surrender to the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Campaign Against Impunity (CAI) said July 15th, 2005.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, is currently on a 10-day visit to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda to assess efforts to build effective mechanisms of human rights protection in countries emerging from armed conflicts. Arbour is a former chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The Campaign Against Impunity, a coalition made up of some 20 rights and international civil society groups, which was formed two years ago to pressure Nigeria to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, said, "Bringing war criminals to justice is one of the best strategies for ensuring human rights protection in Liberia and the region."

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is due to begin trials in July, and the campaign wants the international community to consolidate the gains made in recent years. There are concerns that Taylor's involvement in Liberian politics, despite the terms of the agreement granting him asylum, which prohibits any such meddling.

CAI urges visiting UN envoy to call for Taylor's surrender

The Campaign Against Impunity urged Arbour to explicitly call for Nigeria to promptly surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court to face trial. This trial must be in accordance with international law and standards, which means the right to a fair trial, including the presumption of innocence. Without Taylor's surrender, justice for the war crimes committed during the Sierra Leone civil conflict cannot be realized and building effective systems for human rights cannot be achieved.

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The Campaign Against Impunity urges the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, who is currently on a 10-day visit to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda to assess efforts to build effective mechanisms of human rights protection in countries emerging from armed conflicts, to press for the surrender of Charles Taylor to the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Coalition Against Impunity, a coalition made up of some 20 rights and international civil society groups, was formed to pressure Nigeria to surrender Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

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Sierra Leone: UN Rights Chief should call for Taylor’s surrender

armed opposition groups, which Taylor actively supported.

In 2003, while the Liberian capital Monrovia was under siege by rebels, Taylor was granted asylum in Nigeria, where he currently resides.

Mrs Arbour recently said there is a link between the pursuit of justice and the restoration of peace and order. The Sierra Leoneans and Liberians who are part of this coalition couldn’t agree more, said Ezekiel Pajibo, director of the Center for Democratic Empowerment in Liberia, and other group which is part of the Campaign. Nigeria’s refusal to surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court stands squarely in our path to stability and the rule of law.

The Campaign has stressed that Nigeria’s failure to surrender Taylor to the Special Court undermines not only attempts to confront impunity in West African, but also efforts by the international community to consolidate stability in the region. There are consistent reports of Taylor’s interference in Liberian politics, despite the terms of the agreement granting him asylum, which prohibits any such meddling.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in his June 7 report on Liberia that Charles Taylor us reportedly in regular contact with his former business, military and political associates in Liberia and is suspected of sponsoring a variety of presidential candidates with a view to ensuring that the next Liberian Government will include his sympathizers. Only days ago, Liberia’s Transitional Minister of Justice demanded that Charles Taylor’s exile be reviewed, stating that Charles Taylor’s exile poses a threat to Liberia and the region due to the excessive meddling that continues to go on.

In advance of the African Union summit last week, the Campaign Against Impunity—which includes Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Open Security Justice Initiative—held press conferences in 15 African cities to call for Charles Taylor’s surrender to ensure justice and stability. In conjunction with the press conferences, the Campaign issued a declaration urging the African Union to take action on this issue.

The Campaign asserted that by calling for Taylor to be turned over to the Special Court, Arbour would be standing up on behalf of justice for the victims of war crimes committed in Sierra Leone. On March 14, Arbour told the UN Commission on Human Rights that justice affirms society’s solidarity with the victim, rather than the offender.

While promoting human rights in West African, Arbour must use her voice to call for Taylor to be brought to justice, said Richard Dicker, director of Human Rights Watch’s International Justice Program.

The Campaign Against Impunity urged Arbour to explicitly call for Nigeria to promptly surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court to face trial. This trial must be in accordance with international law and standards guaranteeing the right to a fair trial, including the presumption of innocence. Without Taylor’s surrender, justice for the horrific crimes committed during the Sierra Leone civil conflict cannot be realized and building effective systems for human rights cannot be achieved.
Human Rights Commissioner Wants Taylor Here Now

Louis Arbour, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for the immediate transfer of Charles Taylor from Nigeria to stand trial before the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Human Rights Commissioner who was in Sierra Leone on a four-day working visit as part of her mission to West Africa, told Special Court officials Friday that it was time for justice to follow its course, thus reiterating her support to the Court's efforts in securing the arrest and transfer of the former Liberian president.

With the Court holding a pledging conference in September this year in an attempt to obtain contributions from member states to secure funding for the Court's operation beyond 31 December 2005, Ms. Arbour assured that she will give her fullest backing to such an initiative to ensure that the Court carries out its mandate to the letter.

During the hour-long meeting, the Human Rights Commissioner was briefed by senior officials of the Court on the progress of the trials and other salient issues.
Prosecution wraps up CDF case

FROM PAGE 1

of the Prosecution's case in the first of three ongoing trials at the Special Court. The trial of Sam Hinga Norman, Momma Fofana and Alieu Konneh, the CDF Accused, began on 3 June 2004. During five trial sessions that spanned just over a year, 75 prosecution witnesses - three of them expert witnesses - gave testimony in the case.

Lawyers will now prepare to present the case for the Defence in proceedings that are expected to last into next year. The three accused each face an 8-count indictment alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Specific charges include unlawful killings, forcing and burning, terrorizing the civilian population, and the use of child soldiers.

Meanwhile, two other cases are continuing at the Special Court. In the case of the RUF Accused (Isa Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbue), 39 witnesses have given evidence. That trial began on 5 July 2004. In the case of the AFRC accused (Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara and Saidu Babor Kamara), which began in March this year, 41 witnesses have testified so far.
At Special Court...

Prosecution wraps up CDF case

By the Review-Herald

Special Court prosecution Attorney, Michael Long, spoke on Thursday, 19th July 2004, announcing the end of the prosecution’s case in the court of three former top members of the Civil Defense Force (CDF), namely Chief Sam Kupa Norman, former Fadok, and Alieu Kamara. According to a Special Court judge, issued orders over the weekend, 8 prosecution witnesses gave testimonies in the case of three, expert witnesses, during the five trial sessions which spanned over a year.

Defense lawyers on the other hand, are now bringing up their evidence to argue and present their case in defense of their three accused persons. The proceedings are however