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:

Monday, September 12, 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. Villa
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So long a Letter to Parliamentarians

Today, the trumpet summons this generation’s leaders to do what is right to ensure a safer and better future for Sierra Leone. The call is for the country’s parliamentarians to pull out of the United Nations deal that created the Special Court for Sierra Leone. They should act because doing so is in the best interests of the country. The Special Court has already been found to be unconstitutional, and there are reasons it is in the interest of the country to have it abandoned.

First, the Special Court has consistently demonstrated that it is incapable of understanding the complexities of Sierra Leonean politics. It has neither the legal nor the political wisdom to craft a solution to the country’s problems in a manner that is acceptable to all parties. It has, in fact, been criticized for its bias and for not addressing the underlying causes of the conflict.

Second, the Special Court has repeatedly demonstrated that it is not capable of handling the large number of cases it has been given. It is unable to keep up with the pace of the trials and is often forced to make decisions without adequate evidence. This has led to a situation where justice is being denied to many of the accused.

Third, the Special Court has been found to be unconstitutional by the United Nations. This makes it illegal for the country to continue to support it. The country should not be complicit in the violation of its own laws.

Fourth, the Special Court has been found to be ineffective in achieving its goals. It has not been able to bring about the desired peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

Finally, the Special Court has been found to be too expensive. The costs of running it are higher than what the country can afford.

In short, the Special Court is not fit for purpose. It is time for the country’s parliamentarians to act to ensure that justice is served to all parties. This is not just what is right, but what is necessary for the country’s future.
Taylor to Create Problem for Obasanjo

Concord Times (Freetown)
NEWS
September 7, 2005
Posted to the web September 7, 2005

By Tanu Jalloh
Freetown

A joint press release issued by twenty-one human rights organizations across Africa has drawn the attention of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria ahead of a possible problem should exiled ex-Liberian President and Special Court indictee, Charles Taylor continue to influence his decision.

"We the undersigned Liberians, Nigerians, Sierra Leoneans, other Africans and international organizations are calling on President Obasanjo to immediately end his government's persecution of human rights campaigners, reassure Liberians and all Africans that Charles Taylor will not, shall not and cannot be allowed to subvert the collective will of ECOWAS, African Union and the World Community," the release states and further called for the immediate handing over of Taylor to the special Court for Sierra Leone.

The release also states that the fact that Obasanjo is turning on his citizens rather than turning over a war crime indictee to have his day in the Special Court for Sierra Leone raises questions about his commitment to upholding standards of the African Union of which he is the current chairperson.

"African leaders and institutions must ensure justice is done for countless victims of rape, child soldiers, journalists, amputees, refugees and all those whose lives have been wasted in the Liberia, Sierra Leone and other conflicts," the release states.
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 10 Sept 2005

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL]

International Clips on West Africa

10/9/2005 11:11:56

Annan says Ivory Coast elections will not be held on time

PARIS (AP) — Ivory Coast's presidential elections scheduled for next month must be delayed because preparations are not ready, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, blaming the West African nation's political leaders for "destroying" their country.

Elections planned for Oct. 30 in the war-divided nation "won't be possible because political leaders and parties have not cooperated," Annan said in an interview broadcast Saturday on Radio France Internationale.

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored yesterday at 18:45 and today at 06:45)

Pro-Democracy Groups Warn of Violence During Elections

• A National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute and Carter Center joint pre-election assessment delegation visiting Liberia has warned that violence could disrupt the electoral process due to setbacks in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration program which left a number of ex-combatants frustrated.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Elections Commission Pleased with Poll Preparation

• National Elections Commission Chairman Frances Johnson-Morris told a news conference in Monrovia the NEC was pleased with the level of preparation by poll workers but said there were still challenges posed by bad roads and lack of logistics which the commission and stakeholders including international partners could overcome before 11 October.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio)

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.