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:

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The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
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Sierra Leone Special Court: A View beyond Slogans and Propaganda

The United Nations in particular should marshal its resources to help societies emerging from conflict to develop their national judicial capacities in a manner that is accountable to their citizenry.

The conflict in Sierra Leone was, by all accounts, marked by horrendous crimes that are directly responsible for these crimes must be held accountable for their personal actions. This view is echoed by the Sierra Leone Special Court (SLSC) which, in its recent decision, only those individuals who committed or facilitated crimes or benefited from the conflict were identified by the SLSC. Restoring balance in all the areas of society, however, the reach and competence of the court has limited the nation’s ability to punish the accused. Being brought in, a court may be a mechanism for justice, but it cannot be a substitute for government. To this end, the United Nations and the Sierra Leone Special Court must be vigilant in their efforts to ensure that the goals of justice and accountability are achieved.

But the rule of law cannot only be imposed by international bodies, to make the rule of law effective, citizens must know their rights and obligations. They must understand how and why the law works and how it influences them. Where legal and judicial matters are necessary, it is important to ensure that information, absolute secrecy can encourage corruption.

The required financial and resources are all measures aimed at satisfying the “accountability to their citizenry” requirements. The oversight by the United Nations Government, which can only be done with the cooperation of the United Nations, amounts to an attempt to impose the Special Court on the people of Sierra Leone, without the consent of the people. The introduction of the Special Court is a further step in the United Nations’ strategy to impose a solution without the consent of the people. The Special Court is no solution to the problem of accountability and justice, but it is a step in the right direction.

Credit: Source: "The United Nations in particular should marshal its resources to help societies emerging from conflict to develop their national judicial capacities in a manner that is accountable to their citizenry."
Charles Taylor to create problem for Obasanjo

A joint press release issued by twenty human rights organizations across Africa has drawn the attention of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria ahead of a possible problem should ex-Liberian President and Special Court Judge 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.

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Charles Taylor to create problem for Obasanjo

The release also states that the fact that Obasanjo is turning on his citizens rather than turning over a war crime indicted 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 Liberian, Sierra Leone and other conflicts," the release states.