Paul Packam, the Chief of Administration, departs on Monday after more than three years in Freetown. He first joined the Special Court in March 2003.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Friday 30 June 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
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For War Crimes...
President Indicted!

By Mohamed Koroma
The Acting Section Director, Amnesty International Sierra Leone, Mr. Brima A Sheriff in a press conference held at their headquarters yesterday said, African Union Leaders who are meeting in The Gambia on Saturday 1st July 2006 is expected to consider a confidential report by a panel of experts, who have indicted, former President of Chad for committing crime against humanity.

Mr. Sheriff said, Hissene Habre fled to Senegal in 1990

Cont. Page 5
President Indicted

after an eight-year rule marked by serious widespread Human Rights violations. He was first indicted in 2000 in Senegal. However, after the Senegalese courts ruled that he could not be tried there, no other African State opted for his trial.

The Director maintained, that the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific European Union (ACP/EU) organization stressed the need to bring former President Habyarimana to justice. He further emphasised that, on 18 November 2005, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture called upon the government of Senegal to extradite Hissene Habre immediately to Belgium.

Making his contribution, Coordinator for Coalition for Justice, Mr. Jabati said, in 1984 UN convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which Senegal ratified in 1986, obliges to investigate, and if there is sufficient evidence, to either prosecute or extradite the alleged tortures that entered its territory, the perpetrators of such crimes must be prosecuted.

Mr. Jabati went on to say that Mr. Habyarimana’s trial would be a milestone in the fight to hold the perpetrators of crimes under international law such as torture. He further maintained that, campaign against impunity is a world wide movement which is part of this campaign to see that Hissene Habre is being tried in Belgium or elsewhere. He requested African Leaders to urge Senegal to act consistently with its obligations under international law and the ruling of the UN committee against Torture, to either prosecute Hissene Habre or extradite him to a country where he can face a prompt and fair trial for the crimes he is alleged to have committed, without the imposition of the death penalty.

Mr. Jabati said, files of Hebre’s political ordeals and police report, DDS (Direction De La Documentation et dela securite) disclosed the names of about 1,208 persons who died in detention during his rule, adding that, a total of 12,321 victims of Human Rights Violations were mentioned.

However, Mr. Brima Sheriff added his voice to the panel that met in secret, without any consultation with civil society organisations adding that, today members of the campaign against impunity are holding news conferences in 17 African countries to insist that Mr. Habyarimana be tried in Belgium as the country is one of the few countries in the world that do not have death penalty in their law books. Mr. Brima Sheriff concluded by saying that Habra’s victims have been fighting for 15 years to see justice being done.
Kofi Annan breezes in Sunday

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, will arrive in Freetown on Sunday for an official visit, during which he will dialogue with President Tejan Kabbah and other high-profile officials. The UN scribe, who will be flying in from The Gambia, will end up in Germany where he is expected to watch the final of the World Cup on July 9.

During his stay in Banjul, he will attend the African Union summit and is further expected to hold a series of bilateral meetings, which would include Côte d’Ivoire that is expected to bring together President Laurent Gbagbo and other African leaders.

Apart from meeting President Tejan Kabbah, the UN scribe will visit the UN Mission in Sierra Leone as well as the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

At the Special Court, he will meet with President Justice George Gelaga-King and other officials.

Before his departure on Monday he will address the media on the occasion of his visit to Sierra Leone.

From Sierra Leone, the scribe will pay a visit to Liberia from where he will go to Côte d’Ivoire before proceeding to his native Ghana on a private visit.

While on an official visit to Germany, the Secretary General will meet officials and Ministers of the German government, including Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Horst Kohler.

His visit will also take him to Bonn where he will visit the UN offices.
The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan will arrive in Freetown on 2 July 2006 for an official visit to Sierra Leone.

While in Sierra Leone the Secretary-General plans to meet with President Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as well as the President, the Registrar and the Acting Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He will also address the staff of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Country Team.

Following the visit to Sierra Leone, the Secretary-General will travel on to Liberia.
US embassy welcomes Taylor’s Transfer To The Hague

A press release by Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman of the US Department of State has stated that the United States welcomes the transfer of former Liberian President from Sierra Leone to The Hague where he is to stand trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

It says the transfer of Taylor is an important step forward for justice and accountability and will contribute to stability in West Africa after decades of civil conflict and that the arrest and trial of Charles Taylor is as a result of years of support for democracy and diplomatic efforts by the US and its international partners. The release further states that in 2003, President Bush demanded that Taylor step down to help bring peace in Liberia since the US government had been working towards a democratic transition in that country and that even though Nigeria offered Taylor temporary place of exile in order to facilitate his departure, the US had always maintained that Taylor needed to be held accountable for his actions and thus support Nigeria’s decision to hand over Taylor to the democratically elected government in Liberia.

The release also states that the US had worked in the Security Council to make Taylor’s trial possible by authoring Resolution 1638 in November to give the UN Mission in Liberia the authority to arrest Charles Taylor and bring him to the Special Court for Sierra Leone and also subsequently worked to ensure the adoption of Resolution 1688 on June 16 which authorized the Special Court to hold Taylor’s trial in The Hague.

According to the release Taylor becomes the first African president to be charged for war crimes and crimes against humanity and that his trial will demonstrate the commitment of the international community to hold individuals responsible for their actions and. It applauds the efforts of all those who have worked with the US to bring Charles Taylor to justice.
KOFI ANAN ARRIVES IN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS

Kofi A. Annan is the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations and the first to be appointed from the ranks of the United Nations staff. A national of Ghana, he joined the UN system in 1962 and has served the organization at headquarters and in the field, dealing with matters ranging from personnel and budget to refugee assistance and peacekeeping.

As Secretary-General, his priorities have been to adapt the United Nations for the 21st century through a comprehensive programme of reform; to strengthen its work for peace and development, particularly in Africa; to advocate human rights and the rule of law; to raise global awareness of the AIDS epidemic; and to bring the UN closer to the public by working more closely with NGOs, Parliamentarians, academic institutions, the private sector and other partners.

He received his undergraduate degree in economics from Macalester College in Minnesota, and did post-graduate work at the Institution of International Affairs in Geneva and as a Sloan Fellow in management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mr. Annan is married to Nane Annan of Sweden.
Kofi Annan to Visit Special Court

By Sahr Musa Yamba

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Kofi Annan is to Monday pay an official Visit to Sierra Leone, including the Special Court, UN sources state.

Reports say Kofi Annan is to meet with President Kabbah and hold meetings with the Special Court President, Judges and other officials.

It is not immediately clear what the UN Secretary-General will be discussing with Special Court officials, but he is however expected to be briefed on proceedings at the Special Court.

Kofi Annan is further scheduled to address UN officials in the country. He is expected to travel to Liberia from Sierra Leone.

The Secretary General arrives in Sierra Leone via the Gambia where he is to attend the African Union Summit.

UN officials say the Secretary General will hold, on the margins, series of bilateral meetings and host a mini summit on Cote d'Ivoire, which will bring together President Laurent Gbagbo and other African Leaders.

Kofi Annan also visits Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana before finally departing for Germany.
Interview With President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

Monrovia

_In a special interview with IRIN, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf talks about the challenges of justice, reconciliation and economic revival after 14 years of civil war and how it feels to be Africa's first woman president._

**What do you think about the upcoming trial against former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who has been accused of war crimes in neighbouring Sierra Leone?**

"The trial is not a Liberian problem, it's a UN problem. Charles Taylor was not indicted in a Liberian court. He was indicted by a UN Special Court for crimes committed in Sierra Leone. As far as we are concerned, we just didn't want the trial to be held in our region because it brought risk to all of our countries. We just hope that the trial will be free and fair, and that he'll be given the right to defend himself.

**But do you think the trial of Charles Taylor will help bring durable peace to Liberia?**

"It allows Liberia to move forward. As long as the threat of return was there, it held certain risks for us. For us, that settles the matter, no matter what the final verdict is. Liberia can move on and break from the past. That is very important for us to try to achieve our development goals and reconcile our nation."

**The Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was officially inaugurated last week. Some representatives of civil society say it is not enough to just have a TRC. They say Liberia should have its own war crimes tribunal. What is your opinion on that?**

"You know, we discussed this during the peace talks in Accra [Ghana]. Thousands and thousands of young people, many of them children as young as 10 years old, were forced into violence. They were drugged, they were put on alcohol, and they did bad things. We said, what are we going to do? Take these young people to a war crimes tribunal? What we agreed was, as a first step, we need to put in place the process of contrition and forgiveness. We can have these young people face their accusers, have them say they are sorry and try to have them make a new life. When these accusers say they want more than forgiveness, they want justice, the TRC must recommend justice for them. Then, we can talk about who should face a court. So it's a two-step thing. But our first step is to find the means to rehabilitate those who were conscripted into war. It's not a question of undermining justice. We are trying to find a balance between justice on the one hand, and reconciliation on the other."

**The International Crisis Group recently issued an elaborate report detailing the problems of Liberia's justice system. Do you plan to implement the reforms the ICG recommended and are you getting help from the international community to do so?**

"We are getting some help but it is not enough. Our entire judicial system has broken down because of the many years of lawlessness, indiscipline and warfare. We need more training to get more qualified judges. We need infrastructural reforms. All of our laws need to be re-examined..."
by a law reform commission. We had so many interim governments, and they passed so many laws, that some of them are duplicating each other, while others are contradicting each other. But it is not enough to just talk about bringing in people to make assessments. We are getting some help but it is not enough. One of our difficulties is that the international community will not support local costs such as salaries. Our salary scales are so low that our judicial system has become corrupt over the years. Now, we need to do some things ourselves. Liberia has to take primary responsibility for its own reform agenda. But our resources are limited. We have to attract the private sector to get jobs to our people that will enable us to raise the government revenue, but to do that we have to build infrastructure. It's a very complex problem of development we are facing here. Anyway, we are putting together a broad development agenda. We are having a partnership meeting here in July, and we'll put all these things on the table and see how we can work out a programme of collaboration with our partners."

**After more than five months in office, how successful have you been in attracting foreign investors to Liberia?**

"Investment proposals are still being discussed. We've undertaken to review all concessions and contracts that were signed during the interim government as many of them were not signed in the interest of our country. That process is ongoing. We have also been under sanctions, although sanctions on forestry were lifted just last week. The ministry is now looking at proposals along with our national investment commission. This time, we want to be very careful in giving out a concession and making sure it benefits the local community. It must also bring adequate resources to the country. So we don't want to be hasty. Some 20 proposals on [forestry] investment are now being looked at. We expect that by October, when the rainy season is over, we will have several concession agreements signed."

**Apart from sanctions, what has been your main stumbling block to attracting the private sector?**

"Our main obstacle is infrastructure: the lights, the water, the roads. Companies can't operate without those things. And even though we have commitments from our partners, it takes time to turn commitments into cash."

**What do you believe is your biggest achievement so far?**

"We have set our financial house in order quite a bit. As a result, our revenues were up thirty percent in this fiscal year. We've taken all the strong measures that have enabled us to lift sanctions, which meant cancelling more than eighty contracts and agreements. We've already met the qualification for the general system of preferences so that we're now trying to qualify for AGOA [African Growth and Opportunity Act]. Exim Bank has reopened its facilities in Liberia. Our code of conduct has been concluded and is going to the legislature. We've restructured the government and brought in what we think are a lot good Liberians with qualifications and integrity. So I think we've taken all the good first steps. But we haven't done everything. Electricity - we hoped we could have done more but the resources and the technical assistance just weren't there. Our infrastructure remains largely undeveloped. But we've been able to get the World Bank to give us some 60 million dollars in grants that will be used to fix our roads when the rains stop. We also have a staff monitoring programme with the International Monetary Fund, so we hope that we can look for debt relief maybe within a year or so. The big challenge that remains for us is job creation. We want young people to work or go to school. That is our main preoccupation right now."
How good is your relationship with the opposition, especially with former presidential candidate George Weah, your rival in the second round of elections [in November]?

"We still have some problems with the main opposition. We don't have a very strong relationship with Mr Weah and his people. We've forged a relationship with the young people who were largely his constituency and we are trying to respond to their needs. We don't think it's political for them. It's a question of them getting engaged, getting a job, putting them through schools. But we are still trying to find the means to improve the relationship with the leadership of the main opposition."

You recently raised alarm over the fact that the percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS has gone up dramatically. Are you considering special measures to combat the spread of the virus in Liberia?

"We know the incidence has gone up from four percent a few years go to about twelve percent now. And yes, that is alarming. The ministry of Health has come up with an AIDS programme which has a lot to do with sensitising the public and trying to change people's behaviour. The response to those who have AIDS, of course, requires resources. This month, we'll have a team coming in from a laboratory in Chicago to train our people on how to administer anti-retroviral drugs. But our biggest concern is sensitisation. Don't forget we have peacekeepers here from all over the world, from all over Africa, so the potential is very high."

Have you met particular obstacles on your way since you were elected due to the fact that you are a woman president?

"I don't face any particular problems as a woman president because I have been a professional for a long time. I keep telling people: I am a technocrat who happens to be a woman. I earned my professional credibility a long time ago in a male-dominated world. I just hope that as a woman, I bring in an extra dimension to the job. I bring in the sensitivity of being a woman and a mother, and that means I pay more attention to women, children, and the social needs of society. Other than that, I don't really face any obstacles. As a matter of fact, I see it as a positive [thing] because I get support from women. They are my main constituency. But I don't run a woman government. I run a government of people. Of course, I am the first democratically elected woman president in Africa, and that raises a lot of expectations. Because I represent the aspirations of women all over Africa, I must succeed for them. I must keep the door open for women's participation in politics at the highest level. That is both humbling and exciting."

[ This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations ]
The New Republic Online  
Thursday, 29 June 2006

WHAT QADDAFI OWES HIS NEIGHBORS.  
Blood Money

by Mark Kukis

Last month Muammar Qaddafi's considerable efforts to end his long estrangement from the United States finally paid off. The Bush administration announced plans to drop sanctions against Libya and establish normal diplomatic relations, complete with an American embassy in Tripoli. Thus, it would seem, Qaddafi has now successfully morphed from pariah to patron in the eyes of Washington. The transformation was a long time coming, and it cost Qaddafi much. The Libyan ruler effectively blew all the money he sunk into the country's derelict nuclear weapons program, which he gave up in addition to renouncing terrorism. Add to that the millions of dollars lost to Libya over the years because of sanctions brought on by a defiance toward Washington that Qaddafi ultimately abandoned. Money down the drain, all of it.

But it's the bill Qaddafi got for the downing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 that stands out as the most visible payment he's yet offered for his new status. Qaddafi has accepted responsibility for the deaths of the 270 people killed in the attack, agreeing to pay $2.7 billion to families of the victims. With that, Qaddafi probably considers his atonement complete. But if Qaddafi is now in the business of writing checks as compensation for the deaths he's caused, this should be just the beginning. That's because most of the people Qaddafi owes are in African countries, not America or England. Indeed, Qaddafi's forays into Middle East politics and global terrorism seem like momentary distractions when taking a long view of his reign as leader of Libya, where he took power in 1969. Qaddafi's real legacy is written across Africa, which he has treated as a personal playground for blood sport over the decades. How much does Qaddafi owe his neighbors to the south? Thanks to the precedent established by the Pan Am payment, it is possible to come up with a rough estimate.

To calculate how much Qaddafi owes his African victims, you first have to try to calculate how many deaths he is responsible for. Start with Uganda. One of Qaddafi's earliest friends in Africa was that country's notorious dictator, Idi Amin. It was like they were made for each other. Amin shared Qaddafi's cartoon vision of what an African leader should be, insisting that his full title read: "His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin, VC, DSO, MC, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea, and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular." Qaddafi began supporting Amin's regime in the early 1970s, telling Amin to cut Uganda's ties with Israel in exchange for solid backing from Libya. He stood by Amin throughout his rule of Uganda, even going so far as to airlift Libyan troops into the country twice to fend off Amin's enemies, who ultimately drove him from power in 1979 anyway. Today, stories from Amin's years in power endure as some of the most ghoulish in Africa's rich history of atrocities. Like many tyrants, Amin murdered rivals, real and imagined. Unlike many tyrants, Amin apparently kept the severed heads of his most hated foes in his refrigerator--so he could talk to them from time to time. An estimated 400,000 people died at the hands of Amin and his forces while he held power. When it ended, Amin fled, fearing for his life, and found safety, naturally, in Tripoli.

Most recently Qaddafi's hand in sub-Saharan Africa has been Charles Taylor, the deposed Liberian president who now awaits trial for war crimes. Qaddafi was Taylor's chief backer when Taylor launched a guerrilla campaign against the government of Liberia in 1989. The civil war that followed claimed some 200,000 lives. And from there the violence spread. In the years that followed, up to
50,000 more people died in Sierra Leone as militias loyal to Taylor terrorized the country through much of the 1990s.

Then there was the civil war in Chad. During the 1980s, Qaddafi backed rebels seeking to overthrow Chad's government, a conflict that left about 11,200 dead before Libyan troops were forced out of the country in 1987. (Those numbers leave aside Qaddafi's role, albeit an indirect one, in the unfolding genocide in Darfur. Qaddafi used Darfur as his base to oppose the Chad government; and needing proxies for his fight, he armed Arab Darfuris with both weapons and his own doctrine of Arab supremacism. Two decades later, the ethnic tensions Qaddafi heightened for his own purposes during the 1980s would erupt into a genocide that so far has claimed well over 400,000 lives.)

There were other wars too. In 2001, Libyan troops joined Congolese rebels and soldiers from Chad to fend off a coup attempt in the Central African Republic. Even now Qaddafi has a stake in the conflict gripping Ivory Coast. But it's in Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Chad where Qaddafi's impact has been most deadly and direct. If he's feeling remorseful enough for past deeds to pay compensation for them, then he owes the residents of these countries a lot of money.

The question is: How much? It would be impossible to calculate if the Pan Am 103 settlement didn't offer the beginnings of a formula. Qaddafi is paying roughly $10 million for each person he bombed out of the sky in 1988, a sum endorsed as fair payment by the White House and the family members who took the money and urged President Bush to normalize relations with Libya. A conservative estimate for the number of people Qaddafi has helped kill over the years in Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Chad would be around 661,200. (To keep things simple, we'll leave Darfur out of these calculations, despite the less-than-helpful role Qaddafi played there.) So, at $10 million per person, Qaddafi conceivably owes families across sub-Saharan Africa about $6.6 trillion altogether. But it's more complicated than that. For one thing, Qaddafi wasn't the only one responsible for the killings in Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Chad. For another, in the grim calculus of blood money, not all lives are worth the same amount. The payout can vary according to how much a victim could earn and how they died.

Take the victims of Pan Am Flight 103. Not everyone on that plane was destined to earn $10 million had they lived. A typical American, as most victims were, earns about $1.95 million over the course of his working life if you extend current gross national income per capita in the United States over the decades between full-time employment and likely retirement. That means Qaddafi paid roughly 400 percent more than each life was worth in strictly monetary terms. Assume that formula applies to payouts he should offer in Africa as well. The annual gross national income per capita of someone living in sub-Saharan Africa is less than $765, the lowest in the world. The average lifespan for the region is 46. If you were to work in sub-Saharan Africa from age ten until the day you die, your total take would probably be somewhere in the neighborhood of $26,775. So the Qaddafi blood money formula for Africa could look something like this:

\[
\text{number of dead} \times \$26,775 \times 4 \quad \frac{\text{number of dead} \times \$26,775 \times 4}{2}
\]

You divide the total by two because Qaddafi's lawyers could reasonably argue that Libya should only pay 50 percent of the damages in a place like Liberia, while Taylor and company should be billed for the rest. In the case of Flight 103, Qaddafi implicitly acknowledged responsibility for ordering the deaths of the people aboard and paid the negotiated settlement without hitting up anyone else for cash. The only middlemen in that act of violence were apparently lowly operatives carrying out instructions.
It was different in Africa, where Qaddafi enabled many terrible men with money and guns and stood by while they conducted killings. So while Qaddafi is certainly culpable, the blame is shared, as would be any compensation he could be pressed to give. I know, I know: Taylor doesn't have that kind of money. And good luck trying to get millions out of Amin, who's dead. The point is that Qaddafi is at least half responsible for the violence he fueled by supporting killers like Taylor and Amin. If Qaddafi were to accept this rather lenient formula of damage assessment for actions in Africa, then he would owe $35.4 billion to families in Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Chad.

To be sure, deaths of soldiers in warfare are not the same as deaths of civilians in a terrorist attack. And many of those who died in the wars Qaddafi started were indeed soldiers. On the other hand, many civilians died in these wars as well. What's more, these calculations leave out indirect victims of Qaddafi's meddling--such as the hundreds of thousands killed recently in Darfur--as well as survivors of these conflicts. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, fighters backed by Taylor used rape and amputation as war tactics. Anyone who's had his arm hacked off with a machete deserves compensation, as does anyone who's survived sexual assault by the drunken and drug-addled thugs responsible for most of the violence in the West Africa that Taylor and Qaddafi made. However you run the numbers, Muammar Qaddafi will always be in the hole.

Mark Kukis is a reporter at National Journal and the author of My Heart Became Attached: The Strange Odyssey of John Walker Lindh.
Senegal pressed to ensure Habre faces charges

By Alistair Thomson

Banjul - The African Union must press Senegal to prosecute or extradite former Chad President Hissene Habre to face charges of mass murder and torture, a coalition of human right groups said.

A Chadian official inquiry has accused Habre's government of 40,000 political killings and 200,000 cases of torture during his 1982-1990 rule. He denies all knowledge of abuse and now lives in exile in Senegal.

Few former African strongmen have faced charges for past wrongs and many live comfortable lives in exile, but activists say the extradition of Habre would reflect a stiffening resolve on the continent to seek justice over impunity.

'It is time for Habre to face trial'

The African Union is expected to consider whether to try Habre in Africa or extradite him to Belgium in a summit in Banjul, Gambia this week after Senegal said last month the 53-member body should deal with the issue.

The Coalition Against Impunity, a group of 300 African and international civil society bodies, said in a statement issued late on Tuesday the African Union must force Senegal to abide by its international obligations and ensure Habre faces justice.

"Habre's victims have been fighting for 16 years to see justice done," said Kolawole Olaniyan, director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme, which is part of the Campaign Against Impunity.

"It is time for Habre to face trial for his alleged crimes." The pan-African organisation set up a panel of African jurists last year to decide what recommendation to make to AU heads of state when they meet in Gambia on July 1-2.

Ismail Hachim Abdallah, president of an association of victims of political repression in Chad, was imprisoned for two years under Habre's rule.

Backling calls for the former president's extradition, he described how he was locked in a tiny cell and left to watch those around him die of asphyxiaton.

"It is a way of exterminating prisoners. Some of them were taken away to be executed, some were asphyxiated," he said on the sidelines of the AU meeting in Banjul.

Habre's extradition would follow the transfer of Liberia's former warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor last week for trial at The Hague on war crime charges stemming from his role in Sierra Leone's brutal civil war.

"Habre's trial would be a milestone in the fight to hold the perpetrators of crimes under international law, such as torture, criminally responsible for their crimes," said Reed Brody, special counsel at Human Rights Watch, which is also part of the Campaign Against Impunity.
Liberia urges quick lifting of UN diamond ban

By Alphonso Toweh

MONROVIA, June 29 (Reuters) - Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf called on the United Nations to lift a ban on diamond exports from her war-ravaged West African country quickly, saying it had complied with Security Council requests. Johnson-Sirleaf, who took office in January as Africa's first elected female president, wants the United Nations to lift embargoes placed on Liberia during the final years of its 14-year diamond-fuelled civil war, which ended in 2003.

Police Probe Mittal Liberia Deal

By IAN BICKERTON and DINO MAHTANI

Anti-corruption police in the Netherlands have been inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the award of a Liberian iron ore contract to Mittal Steel, the world's largest steelmaker. The Rotterdam-based company headed by Indian billionaire Lakshmi Mittal last year won rights to exploit estimated 1bn tones of Liberian iron ore in return for a promised 900m dollars investment. Two officers from a special branch attached to the Netherlands public prosecution department that deals with internal investigations into the police and civil service and with international corruption cases visited the West African state this month, where they interviewed trade unionists and members of the previous Liberian government.

Ivorian government, rebels, resume talks on disarmament

BOUAKE, Ivory Coast, June 29, 2006 (AFP) - Disarmament talks between Ivory's Coast's loyalist forces and rebels resumed on Thursday in the rebel stronghold of Bouake, with both sides agreeing not to tackle thorny subjects. Troop disarmament is a key step in the peace process in the West African country, which has been divided since September 2002 when the rebel New Forces (FN) failed to oust President Laurent Gbagbo in a coup attempt.

Kofi Annan to Visit Special Court

By Sahr Musa Yamba

Freetown, Jun 29, 2006 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Kofi Annan is to Monday pay an official Visit to Sierra Leone, including the Special Court, UN sources state. Reports say Kofi Annan is to meet with President Kabbah and hold meetings with the Special Court President, Judges and other officials.
Local Media – Newspapers

Government Threatens Civil Servants with Mass Dismissals

- Civil Service Agency Director-General William Allen has threatened to recommend to government to dismiss any civil servant who participates in a planned civil servants’ strike on Monday. Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday, Dr. Allen cited a section of the Liberian Labour Law which prohibits strikes against the Liberian government. He said that his Agency is prepared to engage in a dialogue on issues that affect the welfare of civil servants.

University Faculty to Return to Class Tomorrow

- Professor Clifford Young, President of the University of Liberia Faculty Association (ULFA), told journalists yesterday that his Association had resolved to end its protest for salary arrears for the good of the country. However, he said that ULFA maintains its call on President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to remove Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh as President of the university because he had misused funds belonging to the institution. Dr. Conteh dismissed the allegation, describing it as unrealistic in the absence of evidence.

UN Secretary-General to Arrive in Liberia Next Week
(Daily Observer and The Informer)

- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is due in Liberia next week after attending the African Union Summit in Banjul, the Gambia and visiting the UN in Sierra Leone and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Labour Minister Says 1,500 Liberians to be Employed Monthly
(The News)

- Speaking in Monrovia yesterday at a ceremony for stakeholders of the government’s employment creation program, Labour Minister Samuel Kofi Woods announced that the government and its international partners have initiated programs to create over 50,000 jobs for Liberians in two years under the Liberian Emergency Action Program and the Liberian Emergency Employment Program.

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)

President Says Liberia Has Made Progress to Reform Diamonds Sector

- Opening a conference in Monrovia to find ways to regulate the diamond sector in West Africa, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that Liberia has done much to deserve the timely removal of the sanctions on diamonds. She said that her government had complied with every request by the UN Security Council to regulate the sector.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)
Budget Director Says Fiscal Budget Addresses Civil Servants
• In an interview yesterday, Director-General of the Bureau of Budget Augustine Nguafuan said that the government considered the plight of civil servants in its budgetary projection for 2006/2007 but added that the availability of resources to make practical the government’s intention remained a problem.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Banks Agree to Cash Civil Servant Salary Checks
• At a dinner hosted for a visiting IMF delegation yesterday, Central Bank of Liberia Executive Governor Mills Jones said that his bank and commercial banks agreed to have commercial banks encash the salary checks of civil servants who usually queue for long hours to encash their checks at the Central Bank.
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Civil Service Director to Recommend Dismissals of Protesting Civil Servants
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

University of Liberia Faculty Ends Protest for Salary Arrears
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Labour Minister Announces 50,000 Jobs for Liberians
(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)