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:

Tuesday, 15 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217
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CAMPAIGN AGAINST DEATH PENALTY INTENSIFIES

By Aminata Khumala
Cardinal Chambers in association with the Centre for Capital Punishment Studies past Thursday at the British Council Seminar Room, Tower Hill in Freetown ended its first meeting with organizations partnering with, Cardinal Chambers to abolish the death penalty in Sierra Leone.

The Chairman of the occasion who is also Executive Secretary, Cont. back page
DEATH PENALTY

From page 1

Campaign Against the Death Penalty. Brima Koroma explained that his organization is an independent non-profit making organization which was set up in 2006 adding that Campaign Against the Death Penalty is working in close partnership with the Centre for Capital Punishment U.K.

Brima Koroma further disclosed that the death penalty should be abolished in all forms, whether in a political or murder case reiterating, “the aim of the organization is to promote legal rights for the abolishment of the death penalty because every human being has a right to life.”

Brima Koroma went on, “the aims and objectives of Campaign Against the Death Penalty is to campaign and promote the right to life, to collaborate with government and other stakeholders and work to abolish the death penalty in Sierra Leone, including the publication of newspapers, magazines and journals in addition to radio discussions aimed at promoting strategies against the death penalty and to also promote dialogue among civil society.”

The Executive Secretary further maintained that his organization would soon be engaged in a robust campaign against the abolition of the death penalty and urged all to work and closely collaborate with Campaign Against the Death Penalty thereby sustaining the work against the death penalty campaign in Sierra Leone.

Alhaji I.B. Kargbo, President of SLAJ stated that the death penalty can easily be described as institutional killings of citizens of a given country, reducing the State itself to the status of a murderer as he also pointed out that capital punishment has been so totally abused in Africa, including Sierra Leone that capital punishment has been seen by many observers as sometimes most questionable.

“In Sierra Leone, citizens have become victims of the death penalty either because the State finds them guilty of having murdered another citizen or somebody else or because they were perceived by the State and the judicial system as having attempted to overthrow a government,” he observed.

Alhaji I.B. Kargbo also opined that the execution of attempted coup plotters who have no right to appeal as was the case in Sierra Leone, did not minimize the high incidence of coup plots.

He further reiterated that the death penalty in Sierra Leone has been questioned not only because the execution of murderers does not eliminate the crime of murder but that the death penalty merely continues to humiliate humanity.

Alhaji I.B. Kargbo submitted that there is international uproar about the recklessness in which some States utilize the death penalty and it can only be concluded that not only is the death penalty inhumane but also it is a violation of the rights of human beings.

He pledged his support to the Campaign Against the Death Penalty and guaranteed that never again would any government utilize the media to propagate the death penalty law.

Other speakers at the occasion were Brima A. Sheriff, Acting Director of Amnesty International-Sierra Leone, John Caulker, Director of Forum of Conscience, Christian Lawrence of Campaign for Good Governance, Gibril Massie-Bah, Director, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights and Rev. Moses Kanu, Coordinator of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone who pledged his organization’s unflinching support in the fight to abolish the death penalty in Sierra Leone.
Will the International Criminal Court Have Any Positive Effect on Africa?

After much delay, the ICC finally became a reality on April 11 when the number of countries to ratify the Rome Treaty, that created the ICC in 1998, increased by sixty six. Ten countries deposited their instruments of ratification with UN to endorse the 60 needed for the ICC to be up and running. It came into force in July that year.

There was a lot of back-slapping among UN stake holders in New York, USA. It is the Global force that has been championing the direction of ICC since Trinidadian President Arthur Robinson first introduced it at the GL Assembly way back in 1989.

UN Secretary General Kofi Anan noted: "The long-held dream of a permanent international criminal court will now be realized. Impunity has been dealt with a severe blow. Those who commit war crimes, genocide or any other crimes or human rights violations against innocent people around the world will no longer go without being brought to justice".

UN under Secretary General, Hans Coren said: "A page in the history of mankind is being turned. May all these serve our society well in the years to come."

Other major human rights advocates also heaped praise on the ICC, claiming that it is potentially the most important human rights institution initiated so far in the last 50 years.

Perhaps as the human rights lobby was celebrating the coming into being of the ICC, an opposition come in with a heavy bang in some camps against the newly born institution.

We can expect China and Iraq to oppose such a court. We should not be surprised to find out that Qatar, Yemen, Libya and Israel voted against the creation of the ICC. But what about the US, being among the seven countries that are totally against the ICC? This is another proposition.

Former US President Bill Clinton held out until he was
president before he could sign the Rome Treaty, although it was not ratified. Now President G.W. Bush threatened to "unsign" to. The Americans have based their skepticism about the ICC on flimsy notion that the court would be used indiscriminately

fire" accounted for a substantial number of allied forces casualties. If, on the other hand, the US Army or legal authorities happen to be dragging their feet, then the ICC will have to step in. But, given America's support for fair play and justice, Pots and Pinochs of the future are held to account. Given that Iraq's Saddam Hussein is America's bugbear, the US would do well to reconsider its stance about the ICC. The problem is that US opposition to the ICC would not

There was a lot of back-slapping among UN stake holders in New York, USA. It is the Global force that has been championing the direction of ICC since Trinidadian President Arthur Robinson first introduced it at the GL Assembly way back in 1989

against our servicemen. But this is a distortion of what the court is meant to do. It has been mentioned openly by the UN that the ICC is not directed against criminals of a particular country. But that it is directed against criminals and will prosecute them in situations where the country concerned is either unable or unwilling to prosecute.

So, if US servicemen happen to err in battle, their legal system would, in the first instance, take action to put the situation right. After all, fatal mistakes do take place in the heat of battle as we saw in the Gulf war in the early 90s and now see in Iraq where "friendly

we would expect the US to take swift action against its servicemen who do not adhere to the rules of engagement or the Geneva Convention. However, given the hawkish mood among some members of the Bush administration as at post September 11 we are not so sure whether the US will come on board the ICC bandwagon.

US disapproval of the ICC does not augur well for its fight against "terrorism". The ICC, after all, is aimed at those who would want to use illegal means to further their "cause."

As one human rights activist put it, the ICC "will be the court where the Saddams, Pol stop there. It could very well extend to other treaties such as the UN convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the convention on economic, social and cultural rights (CESCR). These treaties have been signed but not ratified by the US government.

But is the American hoo-ha over the establishment of the ICC really justified? We do not think so. For one thing, the creation of the ICC has presented the opportunity for the international community to act against the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes that cause international attention. This is something that has been lacking in the international justice system. The ICC should really be seen as an extension of the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia.

But the ICC's international nature is restricted in the sense that it will not take precedence over national criminal justice system. Rather the ICC will complement them. As we have already pointed out, this means that the ICC will only act when a particular state, according to Article 17 of the ICC Statute, is "unwilling or unable genuinely to carry out the prosecution or investigation."

Also, the ICC will not deal with retroactive matters. It will not be part of the UN system and will be funded by countries that are party to the ICC treaty. Of course, there is no running away from the fact that in its early days, the court will have to be subjected to some political control. But this should not mean that the ICC will not be able to deliver justice to those who have suffered injustice.

That is why we do not want American skepticism to put a hold on a worthy institution. After all, in its fight against terrorism, the US should see the ICC as an important ally in this battle. Whether we like it or not, the ICC is destined to become an integral part of the international legal landscape.

Some Africans have asked if the ICC will help Africa to achieve peace as most of the auxiliaries of the ICC are African colonial masters who left Africa with nothing but division, poverty and time bombs.
UNMIL Vows to Avert Arm Threat, Increases Patrols At Borders

By Staff Reporter

The United Nations (UN) Secretary General Special Representative to Liberia, Ambassador Alan Doss said the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) will deal with any arm threat from within or outside of Liberia.

Ambassador Doss said to do this the UN mission has adopted a variety of approaches and undertakings to deal with any kind of problem that might threaten the security and safety of every Liberian.

Addressing a special press conference on the security situation in the country held last Friday at UNMIL headquarters in Monrovia, Ambassador Doss said UNMIL is currently conducting cordon and search operations in Monrovia and parts adjacent.

The UNMIL Boss said whenever his mission received tangible information relative to arms, the mission's personnel would move in to carry out a massive search operation.

Ambassador Doss said UNMIL has also been carrying on its regular border patrol in what he called "a special operation." Ambassador Doss told journalists that these patrols are being carried out to ensure that there is no movement of weapons into Liberia.

The UN Secretary General Special Representative said UNMIL is also working to ensure that no Liberian is recruited to carry out any problem in the West African sub-region.

On the current patrol of UNMIL, Ambassador Doss said "we are forging a special relation with the people living at the borders to ensure that the country remains safe. "He said to ensure that there is no movement of arms into the country; UNMIL is also forging a special relationship with the authorities in Sierra Leone, La Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea. "I have been to the borders to ensure that things are well," he said.

On the mission's quests to fight crime Ambassador Doss said UNMIL has increased its regular patrol in conjunction with the Liberia National Police (LNP) both day and night to curtail lawlessness. Doss said because Monrovia is a big city with about a million people, coupled with the lack of roads in some areas, the mission would depend on information from the people to fight crime; noting that the mission would ensure confidentiality of those giving the mission such vital information.

He further revealed that UNMIL is working to strengthen the capacity of the Liberia National Police (LNP) in her drive to fight crime. The Ambassador went on to say that such capacity- building would include proper mobility, communication and uniforms for the police.

Ambassador Doss who stressed the need for trained and qualified personnel of the LNP said the mission is in contact with some donor countries to capacitate the LNP. He noted that the governments of Norway and Nigeria have expressed their willingness to help in this direction. He said fighting crime is not only for the Monrovia area but other parts of the country. The UNMIL boss said the courts and the correction system also need support in the fight against crime.
UNMIL and GOL to repossess Guthrie Rubber Plantation

Reported by Moses Wenyoo

UNMIL and the Government of Liberia are expected to repossess the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi County Tuesday. The head of UNMIL Alan Doss and government representatives would attend the repossession ceremony.

Mr. Doss said UNMIL would prevent efforts by what it calls any groups of gangsters to seize the economic assets.

Mr. Doss made reference to the Guthrie rubber plantation and other public plantations in the country that are occupied by ex-combatants.

This latest move is part of efforts to restore what Mr. Doss called national management to those plantations.
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 14 August 2006

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

International Clips on Liberia
There were no stories on Liberia in the major international media today.

International Clips on West Africa
There were no stories on West Africa in the major international media today.

Local Media – Newspaper

Police Yet to Charge Presidential Guard Accused of Killing Colleague
(Public Agenda)

- Police in Monrovia have arrested and continue to detain without charge, Special Security Services (SSS) officer Darlington Bleh, who allegedly shot and killed a colleague, Emmanuel Williams, at the home of SSS Director Chris Massaquoi. Mr. Bleh said in a voluntary statement to the police that he shot Williams on mistaken identity.

Secret Meetings Disrupted
(New Democrat)

- According to a source, intelligence security units recently disrupted secret meetings in Monrovia by several individuals. One of the alleged attendants at the meetings, former Armed Forces of Liberia Deputy Commanding General Wolo Nagbe was called for questioning, released and told to report regularly for briefing. The source said motives for the meetings had not yet been established.

U.S. Firm to Control Weapons in Liberia
(New Democrat)

- A U.S.-based firm, which is yet to be identified will be in charge of controlling weapons ordered for use by certain sectors of government security, a source said, adding that this is intended to prevent the weapons falling into the wrong hands.
- The source also said that the American Secret Service was due to return to re-examine the leadership of the SSS following the shooting incident at the residence SSS Director Massaquoi.
Ghana Reaffirms Support to Liberia
(The Inquirer)
- In a meeting with Defense Minister Brownie Samukai in Monrovia over the weekend, Ghana’s Ambassador to Liberia Maj.-Gen. Francis Adu-Amanfeh reaffirmed Ghana’s commitment to assist Liberia in its reconstruction drive.
- Ambassador Adu-Amanfeh told journalists that his visit to the National Defense Ministry was to discuss with the authorities ways in which the Ghanaian Government could contribute to restructuring and retraining of the new Liberian army.

Budget and Maritime Bureaus to Merge with Finance Ministry
(Liberian Express)
- There are plans by the Liberian government to merge the Budget and Maritime Bureaus to be placed under the Ministry of Finance to strengthen public financial management and effective budget implementation. The plans have already won the approval of World Bank and International Monetary Fund officials.

Ex-Combatants Vacate Rubber Plantation
(The News, The Analyst and New Democrat)
- Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss said over the weekend that UNMIL would tomorrow formally turn over to the Liberian government the Guthrie Rubber Plantations, which was recently vacated by ex-combatants.

Governance Reform Commission Presents Anti-Corruption Strategy Report to Government
(Heritage and The Informer)
- Governance Reform Commission Chairman Amos Sawyer during a recent cabinet meeting presented the National Anti-Corruption Strategy to the government.
- He said that the process involved the putting into place of a policy followed by a strategy for implementation, but noted that for the strategy to be successful and effective, it must be driven by the political will of the government and the ownership of civil society.

Former Liberian Leader Health Deteriorates in Prison
(The Informer)
- Reports from The Hague said that the health of detained former President Charles Taylor is fast declining and that he shows evidence of considerable weight loss.
- A source said that Mr. Taylor was refusing the food being served to him, describing it as “too European” and had survived only on water for a period. The unwillingness by prison authorities to allow Mr. Taylor to walk around the prison and exercise for longer hours was also contributing to the decline in his health, the source added.

International NGO Calls for Fast Track Court for Rape Cases
(The News and Heritage)
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in a press release over the weekend expressed strong support for the establishment of a fast track deal with rape cases.
- The IRC announced that it would conduct a sit-in at the Temple of Justice tomorrow to show support for the setting of the fast track court. The IRC condemned the increase in rape cases in the country.
Plantation Workers Threaten to Strike
*(Heritage)*

- The General Agriculture and Allied Workers Union of Liberia (GAAWUL) has threatened to mobilize all its members across the country to stage a solidarity strike in protest of the alleged lawlessness being perpetrated against several of its members at the Liberia Rubber or Cocopa in Nimba County and at the Firestone Rubber Company in Margibi County.
- GAAWUL’s President Lavelaku Stanley told a news conference in Monrovia over the weekend that members of the organization were being killed, chased with guns and their crops stolen by gangsters and called on the government to curb the situation to avert a major strike by GAAWUL.

Catholic Justice and Peace Commission Criticizes House Speaker
*(Heritage)*

- The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) over the weekend criticized House Speaker Edwin Snowe for his recent statement, threatening to mobilize constituents of Montserrado County District #5 to sit-in at UNMIL Headquarters if armed robberies in Paynesville, a suburb of Monrovia went on unabated.
- JPC said in a statement that the Speaker’s method of solving the problem of armed robberies, which is a national security issue, was the wrong approach, adding that the Speaker should rather advance suggestions for tackling the menace through a legal means.

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

Government Institutes Measures to Halt Child Trafficking

- Speaking at the end of a workshop over the weekend, Deputy Labour Minister for Administration, John Josiah said that the government has put in place measures including the passing of a law creating a national task force to check child trafficking in the country. He said that it was now left with the President of Liberia to constitute the task force and make it effective.

Criminal Courts Open for August Term Today

- The Criminal Courts A,B,C & D will today open for their August Term of court and in the wake of the opening the Supreme Court has reshuffled Presiding Judges.
- A release issued in Monrovia said that Judge Benedict Hodd has been moved to Criminal Court-A replacing Judge James Zota who has been assigned to Grand Gedeh County in Southeastern Liberia. Judge Elmira Paye has been appointed to head Criminal Court-B replacing Yusuf Kaba while Judge William Weh will take over from Blamo Dixon at Criminal Court-C. Judge Saykahjepo Wollo will retain his job at Criminal Court-D.

UNDP National Policy Analyst Address Journalists Forum Today

- A Press Union of Liberia (PUL) statement said that UNDP’s National Policy Analyst George Gould will today address the Union’s Edward Wilmot Blyden Forum, focusing on the role of the media in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The PUL is holding the forum in partnership with the UNDP to strengthen its advocacy for the MDGs set for 2015 by the United Nations to improve the lot of the poor.
Laboratory Board Complains of Shortage of Laboratory Technicians

- The Association of Medical Laboratory Technicians Accreditation and License Board of Liberia have lamented the shortage of trained laboratory technicians in the country. The group also said that it is unhappy that laboratory technicians are being low salaries and called for some adjustments which would attract people to the profession.
- In his remarks at a function over the weekend, Mr. Gayweabah Flomo, the Board’s Chairman called for the reopening of the School of Laboratory Technology at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in order to train more practitioners in laboratory science.

Government Repairs Major High School in Bomi County

- Mr. Amos Folley, Bomi County Supervisor of Schools told journalists over the weekend that repair work was nearing completion on the C.H. Dowey High School, a major secondary school in the county. He added that the project which is being funded by the Ministry of Education at the cost of US$600,000 includes refurnishing the school’s housing units, classrooms and restoration of electricity.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Lawmaker Urges Electoral District to work with Representatives

- In his address at a ceremony to launch a development project at Weala, Margibi County, House of Representatives Speaker Edwin Snowe called on the citizens of District # 1 in the County to cooperate with their representatives, adding that if development must go to an area, the citizens must work with their leaders.
- Speaker Snowe lauded opposition Liberty Party leader Cllr. Charles Brumskine for launching the project which he added signals a constructive engagement with government.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Opposition Party Launches Campaign for Candidate in By-Election

- Opposition Liberty Party leader Charles Brumskine has urged citizens of District #2 in Margibi County to vote for his party’s candidate Madame Zoe GouGou Willie in the ensuing for a by-election to a representative seat.
- Cllr. Brumskine said that the hope of the people of District #2 would be dashed if they voted for the candidate of the ruling Unity Party because since the seating of the UP-led government, the prices of busy commodities continue to rise.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

STAR RADIO (News culled from website today at 09:00 am)

Land Dispute Erupts Between Tribal Groups in Lofa County

- A land dispute which has existed for over 50 years between the Gbandi and Kissi tribes in Lofa County has re-emerged.
- Kolahun District Commissioner Morris Tamba told correspondents that conflict was about to break out over the land for which more than 40 persons have allegedly been killed since the 1950s. Commissioner Tamba said that the Kissi people from Foyah District currently occupy the Gehlehma land which originally belonged to the Gbandi people of Kolahun District.

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.