The Peace Bridge

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:

Thursday, 31 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Hinga Norman writes SLPP

Special Court indictee and former Internal Affairs Minister in the SLPP government, Chief Hinga Norman is reported to have sent a message to the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP). According to reports, Norman’s message to the SLPP is titled: "Letter of exhortation from Chief Hinga Norman." The Chief in his letter, exhorted members of the Party to remain loyal; stating categorically that his indictment should not be blamed on SLPP or any individual of the Party.
Exclusive
Thursday, 31 August 2006

PMDC MAY COLLAPSE

Chief Sam Hinga Norman, Special Court indictee and former Deputy Defence Minister has nailed the people’s Movement for Democratic Change - PMDC from the content of his latest letter from prison stating “do not join any political party (new or old)”.

HOPES DASHED
As we go to press, we were reliably informed that PMDC’s hopes have been dashed by Chief Norman’s shocking admonition to his former CDF members. Charles Francis Margai, lead Defence Counsel for the CDF at the Special Court has been canvassing Norman’s defence as being very pro-CDF. And from the CDF, Margai was

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PMDC MAY COLLAPSE

From front page reportedly gaining steady and rising support since the formation of his party. With Sam Hinga Norman returning to his SLPP roots and his public advocacy for his Kamajor followers not to join any new or old political party until they hear from him soonest, troubles lies ahead for the PMDC.

FUTURE BRIGHT
Is the future going to be bright for the ruling SLPP with Norman now asserting his continued membership and loyalty to the SLPP, observers are now querying. From his Special Court cell, Chief Sam Hinga Norman has dealt another devastating blow to the politics of Sierra Leone and put a whole cloud over it by his stout defence of his SLPPNESS.

The future for Chief Norman is not bright as for now as his destiny hangs in the balance. That is why observers believe that the tactician in Chief Norman could have advised him to adopt this new fighting position.

As we go to press we now wonder what new political strategy the PMDC will adopt to woo the remnants of CDF elements. Whatever the case may be, Chief Sam Norman’s prison letter has thrown spanners into the works of Charles Margai in the South and East of Sierra Leone.
Guest Writer

By Salifu Bockarie

"Norman, Cannot Eat His Cake and Have It..."

Special Court indictee and former SLPP Deputy Defence Minister, Chief Sam Hinga Norman has made an about-face-turn in his until recently, turbulent relations with government and the SLPP hierarchy.

**KEEP QUIET NORMAN!**

Nobody doubted Hinga Norman’s SLPPishnes; so he does not need to remind some of us that he joined the party in 1972 and that he remains a paid up Grand Chief Patron of SLPP. The trials and tribulations of Hinga Norman are not news to some of us. He deserved all the punishment he underwent under the tyrannical APC of Siaka Stevens. He spent two jail terms totaling six years at Pademba Road Prisons.

**OPERATION RESTORATION!**

We do not dispute the fact that Chief Sam Hinga Norman played a pivot role in restoring democracy in Sierra Leone and the democratically elected government of President Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, then in exile in Conakry, Guinea.

Can Hinga Norman for once get the understanding that nobody deliberately set him up with the Special Court?

At least, neither President Kabbah nor Vice President Solomon Ekuma Berewa. The Special Court is independent and above the Sierra Leone jurisdiction.

We do not intend to judge Hinga Norman as that is not our job. Yet still; we condemn the attacks Hinga Norman unleashed on President Kabbah; calling him ungrateful and other names. Moreover, he tried without much success to incite the ex-kamajor militia to cause chaos in this country.

**NORMAN PRODIGAL SON**

Hinga Norman has a very stinking history of insubordination. He attempted a coup by arresting a British colonial Governor under gun point and went to jail for that.

Hinga Norman was the only Cabinet Minister who took the unbecoming habit of banging the table on President Kabbah whenever they disagree on policies and principles.

**ALL IS WELL**

But with Hinga Norman having apologized for his shortcomings and his calculated ploy to split the SLPP; the prodigal son has merely come back to roost where all is well. His come-back has been most welcome by party heavy weights who once considered his ploy to stop the SLPP Makeni convention as inconsiderate.

**THE NORMAN DILEMMA**

The sorriest part of the tale of Chief Sam Hinga Norman was that he truly became a disaster to the SLPP. In the event of him been convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone; the SLPP will be in problem. And vindicating him does not guarantee anyone that such an action would not create even more trouble for a thriving party like the SLPP.

At the end of the day, what Hinga Norman wants to do is to eat his stale cake and have it at the same time!

But the fine development in the Hinga Noman saga was the mediation that brought Hinga Norman to his senses; that one should not bite the fingers that feeds one!

For now, all is well that ends well.
STILL FIGHTING FROM CAPTIVITY, HINGA NORMAN MAKES PASSIONATE PLEA TO SUPPORTERS

Thursday August 31, 2006

Hinga Norman, the former military officer and minister of government who has spent a lifetime fighting battles, maintained the tempo yesterday with a passionate plea to all his supporters. In a letter addressed specifically to the Kamajors but directed at his supporters, Norman made his position clear on national matters of dire importance.

SAMFORAY DERIDES BEREWÀ'S CLAIMS ABOUT NORMAN ENDORSEMENT

The Spokesman of the Hinga Norman Defence Fund, Rev. Alfred Samforay, in reply to COCORIOKO's inquiry, has denied claims by Vice-President Solomon Berewa that Norman has endorsed his Presidential candidacy and even appealed to his SLPP supporters to vote for Berewa.

According to our Freetown-based reporter, John Kamanda, Vice-President Berewa divulged that information to constituents of Freetown East 111.

In accordance with the ethics of journalism, the Editor of COCORIOKO contacted Norman's Spokesman, SamForay for confirmation.

EARLY MORNING EDITION

The main highlight of Hinga Norman's letter to the Kamajors is his indication that he still stands by the court action he instituted against Vice-President Solomon Berewa's Convention victory in Makeni last year. Said he: "You may be aware that I have taken two judicial actions in recent months in respect of the Party, one of which is still pending in the Supreme Court. Time will tell that both actions were taken for the protection of the Party itself, so that other political parties do not invoke the national Constitution against it at an inauspicious moment to the detriment of the Party, especially considering its twenty-nine (29) years in the political wilderness from 1967 to 1996. After the Supreme Court decision, hopefully in the next few weeks, you will hear again from me as a matter of URGENCY."

The letter effectively laid to rest all hopes that Norman had decided to endorse the Berewa ticket as Presidential candidate for the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), as indicated by Berewa himself while addressing constituents of Freetown East 111 (According to our reporter, Joseph Kamanda). Also, yesterday, the Campaign To Elect Hinga Norman, made an official release to deny that Norman had endorsed Berewa's Presidential candidacy.

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

COMMITTEE TO ELECT HINGA NORMAN

RE: ENDORSEMENT OF MR. BEREWÀ BY CHIEF HINGA NORMAN

The Committee to Elect Sam Hinga Norman wishes to inform the public at home and abroad that recent statements in the local and international press attributed to Vice President Solomon Berewa regarding the endorsement by Chief Hinga Norman of Mr. Berewa for President of Sierra Leone in the forthcoming General Elections are absolutely and categorically false and without any merit whatsoever. There have been no direct or indirect discussions between the Committee to Elect Hinga Norman and Mr. Berewa or any one representing the Vice President and Chief Norman for the purpose of endorsing Mr. Berewa.
While Chief Norman has made it very clear to his supporters - in particular, members of the Kamajor Movement - that he has no intention of leaving the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and that his supporters should not join any other political party, there are no plans now or in the future for Mr. Norman to support, collaborate with or in any way endorse the candidacy of Mr. Berewa in the forthcoming 2007 elections. Chief Norman, however, wishes it to be known that he is still a Chief Grand Patron in good standing of the SLPP and as such has no intention of doing anything that will damage the party. Notwithstanding, Chief Norman is still fully convinced that the election, selection, appointment or by whatever means of Mr. Berewa as Party Leader while at the self-same time holding the office of Vice President of Sierra Leone is in violation of Sections 35(4) and 76(1)(h) of the Sierra Leone Constitution as well as Section 14(1) of the Political Parties Act. The Committee to Elect Norman firmly believes that the Supreme Court will rule on this matter in the next few weeks on the basis of law and without fear or favour. As such all supporters are kindly advised to give the rule of law their full support to take effect. The full text of Mr. Norman’s statement entitled: EXHORTATION TO KAMAJORS issued to Members of the Kamajor Movement as well as a cross section of the party and general community is appended to this release for public information purposes. The public is advised not to make any inferences or conclusions of a contrary nature from signed statement below with respect to endorsement of any candidates in the forthcoming general Elections. Questions regarding the attached statement should be addressed to Dr. Bubuakei Jabbi, Legal Counsel and Political Adviser, Committee to Elect Hinga Norman.

Kind Regards,

Alfred M. SamForay,
Committee to Elect Hinga Norman

EXHORTATION TO KAMAJORS
BY CHIEF SAMUEL HINGA NORMAN

1. I have been a MEMBER of the SIERRA LEONE PEOPLES PARTY (SLPP) since 1972, and up until today I still am. And a fully paid-up Grand Chief Patron at that for several years now.
2. I have suffered immensely in my time, in one way or another, for the SLPP. I was charged with treason and sentenced to death in the early years of APC power for allegedly participating in activities in support of the SLPP during the crisis years of 1966 to 1972. I spent a total of four (4) years in prison before my release on winning my appeal; and nearly another two (2) years’ detention in solitary confinement (1974 to 1975).
3. And when the SLPP government was overthrown in May 1997 after only fourteen (14) months in office, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah fled into exile and made a passionate plea to the people of Sierra Leone to do everything in their power to restore his government back to power. You and many others, including my humble self even as his Deputy Minister of Defence, eagerly took to the bush for several months and finally succeeded in bringing back the President and his government in March 1998, a job we selflessly did without any prior conditions of remuneration or other reward.
4. The government subsequently made an agreement with the United Nations to establish a Special Court for Sierra Leone. And today, three of us who were among the most instrumental in securing that restoration are standing trial before that Court right in the heart of Freetown, where we have been detained for over three (3) years now, all in proxy for your own alleged activities during the war.
5. Neither the Party (SLPP - Palm Tree) nor you as its members are responsible for what is happening to me and my two colleagues. The Party, as a party, has not done anything to hurt me. And so I will never take any action against the Party or anyone who has not hurt me. Our reward lies in the bosom and contemplation of the Lord Allah, and will surely come one day.
6. You may be aware that I have taken two judicial actions in recent months in respect of the Party, one of which is still pending in the Supreme Court. Time will tell that both actions were taken for the protection of the Party itself, so that other political parties do not invoke the national Constitution against it at an inauspicious moment to the detriment of the Party, especially considering its twenty-nine (29) years in the political wilderness from 1967 to 1996. After the Supreme Court decision, hopefully in the next few weeks, you will hear again from me as a matter of URGENCY.
7. Until then, PLEASE, in the name of God and the dear lives that were lost in the defence of our country and our Party, I repeat PLEASE, DO NOT JOIN ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY (new or old) for the purposes of the next general elections.
8. WAIT ! BE PATIENT AND STEADFAST !!
The Analyst (Monrovia)
Tuesday, 29 August 2006

FOHRD Wants Taylor’s Conditions Investigated

The Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD) said its attention has been drawn to reports of the appalling conditions of Charles Taylor in the Hague Prison and is requesting Amnesty International (AI) to investigate the reports.

"As member of the international Campaign Against Impunity, the attention of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD) has been drawn to growing reports in the Liberian media concerning the plight and condition of former Liberian President, Charles Taylor who is currently serving pre-trial detention in the Hague, the Netherlands," FOHRD said in a communication it sent to AI Secretary General Irene Khan dated August 23, 2006. The communication quoted media reports as saying that Mr. Taylor was not only suffering in jail as the result of reduced feeding set at one meal a day and high telephone charges of US $7.00 per minute, but that his health was deteriorating rapidly.

Besides these, the FOHRD communication quoted other media sources as claiming that Mr. Taylor was sensing death because he was subjected to 16 hours of solitary confinement daily.

"In particular, FOHRD is seriously concerned about the reports and wishes to request Amnesty International to investigate, verify and authenticate [them]," the communication said.

It said its concern stems, for the most part, from the fact that these reports seem to negate what the existing conditions and facilities at the prison in The Hague are supposed to be.

"If the Liberian media reports are true, Madam Secretary General, it suggests the possibility of discriminatory treatment against Mr. Taylor who still enjoys the benefit of the 'presumption of innocence until guilt is proven'," FOHRD said.

It then reminded Ms Khan that Mr. Taylor was entitled to and deserved to be accorded the protection of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva in 1955, and approved by the Economic and Social Council by its resolutions 663 C (XXIV) of 31 July 1957 and 2076 (LXII) of 13 May 1977.

"Specifically, Mr. Taylor is entitled to be provided by the administration at the usual hours with food of nutritional value adequate for health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served," FOHRD said in the communication signed by its Executive Director, Aloysius Toe.

Meanwhile FOHRD said it looks forward to a thorough investigation of the reports in order to establish the fact and improve the conditions of Mr. Taylor in case the reports were correct.
Human Rights Group On Taylor's Condition Reports

The Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD) says its attention has been drawn to recent reports in the media concerning the condition of former president Charles Taylor who is currently serving pre-trial detention in the Hague, the Netherlands.

FOHRD, a member of the International Campaign Against Impunity, said it is requesting an investigation by the Amnesty International so as to verify and authenticate said media reports.

The foundation in an open letter to the Amnesty International secretary general said its concern stems from the fact that the media reports seem to contradict what the existing conditions and facilities at the prison in the Hague are supposed to be.

FOHRD said if the media reports are true it would suggest that there is a possibility of discrimination in the treatment given former president Taylor.

International Clips on Liberia

UN, Nigeria appeal to Liberian refugees to return home

LAGOS, Aug 30, 2006 (AFP) - The United Nations refugee agency and Nigerian officials Wednesday appealed to recalcitrant Liberian refugees to go back home, warning that time and hospitality were fast running out against them. The representative for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Nigeria, Alphonse Malanda, expressed regret that of some 6,000 Liberians officially registered with his agency, only 141 of them have indicated they intend to return to Liberia before the end of this year, under a voluntary repatriation programme.

International Clips on West Africa

Ivory Coast political players to hold talks to unblock peace process

ABIDJAN, Aug 30, 2006 (AFP) - Ivory Coast's political players are due to hold talks on Monday in bid to iron out differences that have paralyzed the country's fragile peace process, a government source said Wednesday. "The meeting will take place on September 4 in Yamoussoukro. Everyone has agreed (to attend)," a source in the transitional government of Prime Minister Konan Banny said.

Gov’t Reaffirms Support for Peacekeeping Initiatives

By Ndubuisi Francis

Lagos, Aug 29, 2006 (This Day/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) --The Federal Government yesterday expressed an unflinching resolve to continue to support peacekeeping initiatives within the country, the sub-region and the entire world, stating that Nigeria has played prominent roles in maintaining peace in several West African countries and beyond. Defence Minister, Alhaji Rabiu Kwankwanso, who expressed government's stance on peace-keeping initiatives while seeing off some Nigerian soldiers heading for peace-keeping in Sierra Leone, and receiving another contingent returning home, said Nigeria's support for peace in West Africa remain unshaken.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Johnson-Sirleaf Installs Associate Justice Ja’neh

(The Inquirer, The Analyst, Heritage, Daily Observer and Public Agenda)

- Installing Cllr. Kabineth Ja’neh as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said that democracy prevailed after the hauling and pulling that characterized the appointment and confirmation of Justice Ja’neh.
Following his commissioning, Associate Justice Ja’neh said that the Oath he took will be exercised with unmitigated obedience and religious faithfulness, adding that the induction has accorded him an opportunity to serve the country in a high judicial office at a critical juncture in the history of the nation.

Associate Justice Ja’neh reiterated that at joining the Court’s Bench, justice shall not be for sale or for favor.

President Johnson-Sirleaf Commissions Liberian Envoys
(The Analyst)

In a press release issued in Monrovia yesterday, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf cautioned Liberians in the Foreign Service to contribute to a policy formulation that would expand Liberia’s partisanship abroad and change its image on the international scene. She also challenged them to be true ambassadors of Liberia.

President Johnson-Sirleaf’s remarks came when she commissioned four Liberian Ambassadors including former presidential candidate Nathaniel Barnes as Liberia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Cllr. Lois Brutus, Ambassador to South Africa, Dr. Edward Clinton, Ambassador to Ethiopia and Konah Blackett, Ambassador to Egypt.

U.S. Congressmen Extend Protective Status for Liberians
(The News, Daily Observer, Heritage and The New Liberia)

In a letter dated 11 August, 2006, a group of United States Congressmen requested President George Bush to extend the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Liberians in America because they had suffered a long and difficult recent history from which they were beginning to recover.

The Congressmen’s position stemmed from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf’s appeal to the United States Government to extend the statuses under which Liberians are staying in the US.

A Ministry of Information press release quoting the letter said that the Lawmakers recounted that following Liberia’s plunge into civil war in 1989, the US Attorney-General granted all Liberians the opportunity to register for the TPS which was renewed each year until 1999 when it was followed by the Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) from 1999 to 2002.

Former Justice Minister Blames UNMIL for Insecurity
(The News)

[SIC] Speaking to reporters Tuesday in Monrovia, former Justice Minister Koboi Johnson said that the increase in arm robbery activities in Monrovia and some counties suggest that the United Nations Mission in Liberia is not effective in carrying out its mandate.

Cllr. Johnson added that it was unthinkable for the current strength of 15,000 UNMIL soldiers and police officers to be in the country amidst continuing arm robbery activities specifically taking place in Voinjama, Lofa County where two armed men over the weekend attacked the offices of the Community Habitat Fund (CHF) situated in the heart of Voinjama, without being detected by the peacekeepers.

Minister Frowns at Child-Labour at Concession Areas
(The News)

Mr. John Josiah, Deputy Minister of Labour said that it was unfortunate that the use of child-labour has become rampant at non-Liberian-owned concession areas in Liberia and urged international rights groups to check the practice.

Speaking at a capacity-building workshop for labour inspectors, commissioners and cycle focal point, Mr. Josiah named the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company where work is so voluminous for the tapers that they seek the help of their wives and
children. He called on the Government of Liberia to review all concession agreements to ensure that the rights of employees are not abused by employers.

**Lawmaker Files for Reconsideration of Forestry Reform Bill**
*The Inquirer and Public Agenda*

- Legislative reporters yesterday said that Maryland County Representative David Saydee had filed a motion for reconsideration against the passage of the Forestry Reform Law after the House of Representatives voted against his previous suggestion that 15 percent of forestry revenue intended for the Government be given to counties from which round logs will be extracted.
- A 3-month ultimatum by the UN to review Liberia’s timber policy for the possible lifting of sanctions will expire in September, 2006.

**Education Minister Urges Government to Swiftly End Tension at University of Liberia**
*The Informer, The News and National Chronicle*

- Speaking at a meeting with the leadership of students of the University of Liberia, Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto requested the Government of Liberia to act swiftly to end rising tension at the University, and called on the students to refrain from any actions that could compromise the learning atmosphere.
- He advised the students to refrain from rioting because it could be misinterpreted by people who do not understand the hardships students go through in attending the University. Meanwhile, the students presented an 11-count document detailing their concerns for the University’s authority to address.

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

**President Johnson-Sirleaf Commissions Liberian Envoys** *(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

**Lawmaker Files for Reconsideration of Forestry Reform Bill** *(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

**Elections Commission to Release Preliminary Result of Margibi County District By-Election**

- Correspondents said that the National Elections Commission will today release preliminary results of the Legislative By-Election which was held in District #2 in Margibi County. The correspondents added that the ruling Unity Party had received 2,059 votes, Congress for Democratic Change, 913, an Independent candidate, 723 and 540 from 12 polling centers. *(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

**Lawmakers Ratify International Conventions against Corruption**

- The House of Representatives yesterday ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. In its convention, the UN urges its member States to seek a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to prevent and combat corruption while the African Union’s calls for the setting up of a coordinating mechanism to effectively combat corruption. *(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*
Economic Governance Steering Committee Says Contract and Concession Review Processes Slow

- The Economic Governance Steering Committee which oversees the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), said that it is disappointed with the slow pace of the process to review Contracts and Concession, but blamed that on the fact that time was spent on recruiting experts coupled with the absence of documentation and the failure of some Government entities to submit their contracts for review.
Bosnian Serb faces life jail call
Prosecutors at the war crimes tribunal in The Hague are demanding life in prison for a former Bosnian Serb politician accused of genocide.

Momcilo Krajisnik was speaker of the Bosnian Serb parliament in the 1992-95 war and was a key aide to wanted wartime leader Radovan Karadzic.

He is also accused of complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. He denies all the charges.

Prosecutors claim he helped mastermind the murder of civilians.

"Each count of the indictment individually, if found to be true, merits the highest possible sentence," a spokesman for the tribunal quoted the prosecutor, Alan Tieger, as saying.

"It is our submission that Mr Krajisnik should be sentenced to prison for life."

A court decision is expected before the end of September.