The abandoned narrow-gauge railway bridge outside of Hastings.

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, 15 March 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Over Norman’s Death...

CDF Vow Revenge

Members of the former Civil Defence Forces, now known as ‘hungry lions’ who graced the funeral of the late Sam Hinga Norman in Bo and at his final
Cont’d. page 2

CDF Vow Revenge

From front page
resting place at
Mongere, have
vowed to avenge the
death of their former
leader.
CDF representatives
from all districts in
the country including
Pujehun, Kailahun,
Makeni, Bonthe etc.
graced the late
Norman’s funeral in
Bo and accompanied
his remains up to
Mongere, in the
Valunia Chiefdom,
where he was laid to
rest.
“Who so ever is re-
sponsible for the
death of the late man
should get prepared
to join him,” they are
reported to have
vowed as they pro-
cessed the streets of
Bo and even up to
the pouring of libra-
tion in front of the
casket at Valunia.
When asked why and
how they intend
avenging the death
of Mr. Norman, one of
them said: “Mr.
Norman was not fairly
treated by the SLPP
government. If they
are in power today,
they have him to
thank. But just look at
the reckless manner
in which he was
abandoned at a time
he too needed their
support. Don’t worry.
We are natives and
have so many ways
of avenging the
death of our leader.”
Important statement expected from Taylor’s lawyer today

Leading Defence Lawyer in the Charles Taylor trial, Karim Khan is back in Freetown from The Hague where the trial is taking place and shall be making a very important public statement today on the trial.

Special Court for Sierra Leone yesterday informed journalists that Mr. Khan will be addressing a news conference this afternoon at the Country Lodge Hill Station, Freetown.

At the last status conference in The Hague, a date was set for Mr. Taylor's trial to begin but it was later reported that the defense requested a lengthy adjournment to give it sufficient time to prepare its case.

No details were given as to what Lawyer Khan shall be speaking about today just usually reliable sources hinted us as we went to press that, among other things, he would update journalists on Mr. Taylor's present health condition against the background of unconfirmed reports in some local newspapers that Mr. Taylor was not feeling too well.
May Hinga Norman’s soul rest in peace

*Dr. Sama Banya*

Another sad chapter has closed in the history of Sierra Leone’s widely acknowledged as the most brutal war. I refer to the arrest, indictment and death in custody of Chief Sam Hinga Norman. Much has been said and much more written on this subject, nearly all of it critical of President Tejan Kabbah, his Vice President Solomon Berewa and the membership of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP). The most vocal and brutal since Norman’s death has been the editor of the Awoko and the New Storm newspapers the latter a registered PMDC Member. Both papers accuse the President and the SLPP as having betrayed Norman and proved ungrateful to him. Awoko further states that Kabbah should have taken a stand similar to that of President George H Bush, or that of the people of ‘Serbia by refusing the establishment of the Special Court. That kind of opinion deceives only the ignorant as both the circumstances and the influencing factors are quite different. Nobody had Hinga Norma or the Kamajors in mind. These people are not writing from a position of empathy with the Norma family. On the contrary they write out of malevolence, because a little professional investigation would certainly have influenced them differently. It is always naïve to pretend to be wise on hindsight. The following are a few facts to remind the impartial and fair minded reader about the sequence of events. When the Lome Peace was being drawn up the government of Sierra Leone decided on a blanket amnesty for all fighters, a proposal which the international community refused to endorse. In the course of time the RUF and its *Cont. page 6*
May Hinga Norman’s soul rest in peace

From page 2

Allies began to violate the accord with attacks on towns and villages in the rural areas. When the matter was brought to the attention of Sankoh’s men began to advance on Freetown from Rogobere junction, a group of concerned women set out for his residence to impress on him that they the women who with children suffered most were tired of war. They had to flee so Sankoh’s men threatened to either slit their throats or split their bellies. A few days later, in what Awoko, a newspaper derides as an SLPP organized march, thousands of citizens from all walks of life decided to march peacefully to Sankoh’s residence. No sooner had the first batch arrived there—than his security opened fire killing and wounding many. Then the government arrested Sankoh and most of his henchmen were apprehended, he about a week later as he had fled. In addition to the arrests, government was no longer bound by Lome and continued then negotiations for war tribunal. The matter was fully discussed in cabinet with Charles Margai participating as Minister of Internal Affairs. When it was agreed to include all combatants, Hinga Norman and Charles Margai round the Kamajors to persuade them to endorse the agreement even before it was ratified by Parliament. Both as Deputy Minister of Defence and later as Minister of Internal Affairs, Norman and President Kabbah were closed and met regularly. I never once heard President Kabbah address the late man with anything other than “Chief”, or “Norman.” Norman was among the few people who would walk into the president’s private sitting room without appointment or announcement. When the Special Court Act was ratified again Norman reassured the president that he had nothing to fear as neither he nor any Kamajor was involved in any acts of atrocity or human rights abuses, neither did they bear the greatest responsibility.

The subsequent news of Norman’s arrest came as a bombshell; none of us expected it. Therefore when Awoko writes that President Kabbah should not have allowed it, he is really being hypocritical. A clause in the Special Court agreement is that its functions would be completely independent and free from interference by any person or government. What Awoko is saying is that the president should have said something like, “as you were! You’ve touched a sacred cow, the agreement is nullified.” Was failure to do that the great betrayal?

The president immediately contacted Norman’s family in our traditional way and offered government’s help in the chief’s defence. The Southern caucus of the SLPP sent to inform Norman that they were arranging legal representation on his behalf; he informed them not to worry as friends were securing a British lawyer. Again it was Charles Margai who was making that arrangement but as the fees he requested were well beyond the chief’s means that was the end of the matter and it was left to Dr. Bu-Bekele Jabbie to take over the defence to the end. Suddenly the PMDC and its leader would now want us to believe that they are the chief mourners—what nauseating hypocrisy!

But Norman was determined to have his own back on the SLPP. Readers would recall that he took the party to court on two occasions praying for that body to rule that everything he had done was illegal and ultra vires both the national and the party constitution. The party Secretary General and I were the defendants. While judgement was being considered he invited me to visit him in his cell; we had a very amicable two hour conversation including a suggestion to map a way forward. I would have kept my silence in respect of Hinga Norman’s memory but for the nonsense that’s been thrown around by trouble makers in their attempt to discredit us.

[NOTE: This same article appears in several papers today.]
Know Your Leaders Part III – Johnny Paul Koroma

In the land of Tumbudu, Kamara Chieftdom in the Kono District in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone, Retired Army Officer and Leader of the Peace and Liberation Party was born on the 9th May 1960.

His parents are Mr. Theophilus Koroma and Madam Rebecca Koroma. He entered the St. Anthony’s Primary School at Syke Street, Freetown in 1965 where he sat to the Selective Entrance Examination in 1971. He later gained admission into St Edwards Secondary School (May Park) Kingtom in 1972 and sat to the Ordinary Level (GCE) Examination in 1978.

Between 1982-1984 he enlisted in the Liberian Army Education Services and also underwent a course at the Accounting Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM). He worked as an Account Clerk and Army Pay Master.

In 1985, Johnny Paul joined the Sierra Leone Army and came out as the best recruit between 1986-1987. He served as an infantry soldier at the First Battalion, Freetown and the Infantry sub-unit Lungi Garrison.

Later in 1987, he became an officer cadet having succeeded in the cadet examination. To improve on his military profession and that of the status of the country, he was fortunate to be among those sent to the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst in South England. At the end of his training in 1989, he graduated as one of the best officers and as a subaltern.

A year before the decade long brutal war in Sierra Leone, he was training young recruits at the Moa Barracks at Daru in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone. At the start of the rebel war in 1991, he was sent to the Junior Command and Staff College in Ghana.

He was among those Officers to first engage the rebels into active combat at Bomaru on the 23 March 1991.

With the demise of APC led government in 1992 at the hands of Junior Military Officer by the NPRC soldiers he was appointed Operation Officer and Adjutant 1st Battalion. In 1994, he attended the Junior Commandant Staff College, Teshi/Accra, Ghana. Upon his return and got married to Makuta. They have five children.

In 1995, Major Koroma rose to the rank of Battalion Com-
In 1995, Major Koroma rose to the rank of Battalion Commander and was given the task to repel the rebels at the gateway of the city (Waterloo and Newton). This man as with most other Army Officers was faced with a daunting task of repelling attacks all over the country.

As the country was entering a new political era where democratic elections were scheduled for 1996 and the military junta of the NPRC was relinquishing the seat of government, he served as Battalion Commander for 22 and 7 battalions and was sent to Bo in the Southern Province at the 1st Brigade in May.

In 1995, he was implicated in a military coup and was imprisoned at the maximum Pademba Road Prisons in Freetown. Unfortunately in May 1996 shortly after the SLPP has taken over the seat of government through a democratic process, Rtd. Johnny Paul Koroma was forcefully removed from prison by Junior Officers and made Chairman of the AFRIC and Head of State of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

In 1998, he was removed from power by ECOMOG Forces and he fell out with the RUF. With this development, in falling out with this group, he and his family were held hostage by the rebels in the Eastern part of the country.

He later went to Liberia in 1999 to secure the release of British American and UN Peace keepers held at Okro Hills. With the drive for maintaining sustainable peace in Sierra Leone, he returned to Freetown in 1999 and pledged to work hand in glove with President Kabbah to implement the peace process (Lome Peace Accord) that was signed on the 7th July 1999 in Lome, the Togolese capital.

During this period, he attended the Peace Conference in Geneva, Switzerland and Accra, Ghana. He also called the Nation to observe a week of fasting and prayers before inviting youths and all loyal forces to take up arms and defend their land in the advance of the rebel forces into the City to disrupt the peace process. Later, he resigned from the Commission of Peace and the Army in 2002.

With the advent of Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in 2002, he formed the Peace and liberation Party (PLP) which contested the elections and ushered him as an MP. During this period he pursued Theology at Faith Bible College.

As he was considered a war crime indictee by the Special Court he fled the country and very little is known about his whereabouts at the moment.
Civil Society Demands SLPP, APC Court Cases Verdict now

As a follow-up to their Press Release issued a few days ago, a newly established civil society organization network, the Democracy Sierra Leone 2007, advocating for the holding of free and fair Presidential and Parliamentary general elections on 28 July 2007 has demanded the immediate issuance of verdicts in the Court Matters involving the All People’s Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP).

In a release read out to journalists by a member of Democracy Sierra Leone 2007, Mr. Daniel Mbonpa Turay at a press conference held at SLENA, yesterday 14th March, 2007, it was stated among other things that as a civil society organization, they are concerned over the delay by the courts to arrive at a verdict on the matters involving the major political parties cases in courts of Sierra Leone.

As a network advocating for the holding of free and fair democratic elections, they have viewed the delay of these verdicts on the two major political parties as a potential recipe for crisis which the people of this country do not want to go through anymore. He went on to state that the more these matters are delayed in the courts, the more anxiety is created amongst the voting populace. The release went on to indicate that, they are of the opinion that a quick dispensation of justice be meted out soonest or for a transfer of these cases to be made from the Law Courts to the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) for prompt intervention and solutions.

Mr. Turay also informed that his group has already contacted the PPRC Chairman, Hon. Justice Warne as well as the Hon. Chief Justice of Sierra Leone with a view of requesting the PPRC to help in expediting the various outstanding political parties cases in the courts. They particularly cited the All People’s Congress (APC) internal wrangling over the leadership of Ernest Bai Koroma after he changed the APC Constitution and the PMDC’s Charles Francis Margai who is challenging Vice President Solomon Ekuma Berewa, the Leader of the SLPP over the latter’s eligibility for leadership of the SLPP whilst at the same time serving as the country’s sitting Vice President.

The Democracy Sierra Leone 2007 have resolved that only an immediate judgment and verdicts on these matters will ensure a smooth playing field where all can participate in the elections.
For Hinga Norman, the Case is Dead

OPINION
By Pel Koroma
Freetown

CONE! CONE - CONE -CONE"HINGA NORMAN IS DEAD" the town crier announces the fallen of a HERO -a Soldier, Politician ,Prisoner, Regent Chief, Kamajor boss - Kori Bondo and fighter, Democrat, Deputy Defence Minister, Civil Defence Force Coordinator, Internal Affairs Minister, Special Court Indictee and finally Dead and no more.

When one considers all these stages in a man's life, one will surely ascertain that the further a man goes from his house in which he is truly known, the more liable he is both to misrepresentation and non recognition.

The talk for Hinga Norman has just started in the history of Sierra Leone. The Civil Society Movement's action to solely spear head the burial ceremony of Pa Hinga Norman, frowning on the participation of politicians was unfounded. Hinga Norman remained a politician until his death. He was a political heavy weight whose actions was an indelible mark in the history of Sierra Leone.

Apportioning blame on specific political group for the demise of Hinga Norman is un godly. The case is, we should accept together as Sierra Leoneans that our decision for the Special Court was hasty. This has proven that mostly actions taken during periods of vexation could be dangerous. If we are honest enough, The Teachers Union, The Bar Association, Medical Services Association, MRD,CMS, Drivers Union, Students Union, Petty Traders Association, Farmers Association, Parliament, Judges and the President and his Cabinet together with the people of Sierra Leone advocated for a Special Court. God bless the few Sierra Leoneans who actually viewed the Special Court at that time as a waste of resources which could have been used to develop the people. The Special Court project for the West has not yielded any dividend to the people.

Instead, it has created confusion, misunderstanding and rendered the TRC useless. God has proven that we were wrong to have opted for the Special Court as a nation. All the people we want to see judgment passed over have bowed down to death naturally even though in the hands of the Whiteman's court. But who to blame?

Sierra Leoneans really never knew the court was going to target Hinga Norman. "those who bearer the greatest responsibility" became the key phrase with the UN engineered court. This saw Hinga Norman falling to the hook of the Special Court. It was critical that some members of the CDF were determined to prosecute Hinga Norman. Anyway differences must erupt in any movement especially that targeting leadership and control.

My problem with Civil Society is that none ever dear lift a finger against the special court. It was taken hook line and sinker. The leaders of Civil Society movement will not say they were not consulted for the Special Court but even at that, it was expected as a group armed with all rights accorded citizens of Sierra Leone to stand out and tell the President and the UN that the court will never heal the wounds, instead it will widen the division. Festus Minah, Charles Mambu and
others braved the guns when they asked the junta boys to quit power in 1995. Civilians fought with soldiers on the Streets and the soldiers finally succumbed to the dictate of the people which saw Kabbah to power. Minah and his friends preached civil disobedience in the 1997 interregnum.

They succeeded. The people listened to them. Let me now point out to Minah and Mambu that they did not make any effort to dame the Special Court even when they as opinion leaders discovered that the Special Court was a recipe for disunity, buffetting the much needed TRC. You should be blaming yourselves now for Hinga Norman dying a prisoner. You have failed in your role as Civil Society leaders. You should have educated the people on the disadvantages of the Special Court and register your protest.

Fortunately, Sierra Leone being a donor driven country, is been regulated by the West. The major requirement for relation with donors is for one to be democratic. Mambu and Minah will not tell me that Kabbah was going to kill them had they inspired the people to protest against the Special Court. Forget about the politics. If you people had really believed that Hinga Norman was another GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would have done your part by opening another chapter for his freedom. But you people have been all quiet all this while even when you people have the apparatus to change things. It is no political party affair but you failed in the capacity you are defending.

I am not convinced the way the Civil Society has portrayed Hinga Norman's death. Charles Margai of PMDC and Ernest Koroma of APC also supported the Special Court whole heartedly as Sierra Leoneans. But why now do they want to make political gains out of Hinga Norman's death? Ernest Koroma never proposed a bill in parliament to bring down the Special Court as he believed it was alien to our African culture. In Africa, we reconcile. Infact, God knows Hinga Norman's arrest seemed like a plus to Ernest Koroma four years ago. What is the point now with his death?

God knows Ernest and his APC regarded Norman's arrest as a dog eat dog issue that never was any issue.

People are not fools. What does Ernest refer to as government? Ernest Koroma's minority would have brought peoples attention to reality but it was never Ernest' concern. Ernest favoured the court because he wanted international recognition. When will Africa get people that will stand against Western infiltration? Ernest should know that no particular group sacrificed Norman but the people of Sierra Leone themselves.

For Charles Margai, no body will listen to him. He is not a Kamajor, let me hastenly remind him. In times of trouble, turbulence, fire and wailing Charles was not with them. Charles should not preach politics to Hinga Norman's friends. It is impossible for them to pitch tent with him now. Charles is a stranger to the militia men. During the war, Charles distanced the Kamajors. Charles did not identify himself with the displaced people at the heath of the war. What NGO did Charles spear head? All is just politics? No. Infact Charles have not defended women's right in the past, let alone children's right. He is an old lawyer and should have tried to advocate in the past for all these human rights recognized by the United Nations.

Infact, I can tell Charles Margai as a traditional man that Hinga Norman died with serious grudge against people like him. What happened at the Special Court?
Hinga Norman's family knows. They will not forget and easily give Charles the seat by the window. Hinga Norman was never a friend of Charles. The people of the South and the country at large knows. He was one of Charles adversary in the SLPP. Why has his death become so paramount to Charles. The case is, Charles and Ernest are loosing but should not take along our great man Chief Hinga Norman with them. Let posterity be the best judge. Charles and Ernest will not make any gain out of Norman's death. The people know the truth.

The family of Hinga Norman should realize that Hinga Norman's death as a prisoner shows the cruelty of fate. It was not SLPP that handed Norman to the Special Court. The fact is the people wanted the court. I want the family to know that majority members of the SLPP still hold Hinga Norman in high esteem. He was the most honourable man. His work is on the wall. He may have had hiccups with some party members but Hinga Norman would have never opted leaving SLPP. He died SLPP. I want the Hinga Norman family and friends to take heart. Greater proportion of peace loving Sierra Leoneans are grieving with them. Life spent worthily is counted by deeds.

Truely Hinga Norman's life was well spent. He was a Title man who remained traditional, respecting all its values and beliefs and bent on upholding customary principles. People in the SLPP are missing Hinga Norman. To a lot of the Palm Tree members, he was a HERO. Most people are not happy especially for the stance taken by the Civil Society Movement. Hinga Norman's funeral was suppose to be SLPP burial. Let members of the Hinga Norman family be patient and mourn the loose. Always remember that SLPP is a home for all the Hinga Norman family. It is not easy to start and therefore good to mend, amend and forge ahead. Norman spent his last sweat and energy for the SLPP party. And the party belongs to no individual.

Hinga Norman has his records in the SLPP, so I advise all his family members to leave space for the love the deceased manifested for his party. A lot of good people in the SLPP will surely not allow Hinga Norman work to go unnoticed.
In another engagement, President Jammeh received a delegation from the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The delegation, led by the Chief Prosecutor, Mr Steve Rapp was accompanied to State House by the Permanent Secretary, Department of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bai Ousman Secka.

Speaking after his audience with the President, Mr Steve Rapp disclosed that his delegation was travelling throughout West Africa to meet various leaders to ask for their assistance and cooperation with the Special Court's efforts to make sure that justice is done in the upcoming case in the Hague against the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor.

The former Liberian President has been indicted on eleven counts for various war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone.

Mr Rapp told the Daily Observer that his discussion with the Gambian leader was "very fruitful. We discussed some specific situations and President Jammeh was extremely forthcoming as he strongly supports the efforts of the Special Court for Sierra Leone."

He also expressed appreciation of President Jammeh's support in ensuring that the kind of conflict which occurred in Sierra Leone where young people had their arms and legs cut off would not be allowed to occur again and that those who committed such atrocities would not escape justice. "The people responsible for the forces that committed such atrocities should be held responsible and brought to justice", he concluded.
War crimes against women go on with impunity

Louise Arbour says rendering justice to the victims is a precondition for reconciliation and peace to take hold.

The plight of victims of sexual attacks during conflict has come to the fore once again when last week the International Criminal Court’s prosecutor requested summons for two Sudanese connected with atrocities in Darfur. According to the prosecutor, there is strong evidence pointing to the suspects’ responsibility for mass rape and other war crimes.

Previously, the court had issued an arrest warrant for the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group in Uganda, on the ground of war crimes, including ordering sexual enslavement and rape.

Thus, International Criminal Court action is gearing up to bolster the cumulative experience of international justice mechanisms that have brought to light specific types and patterns of sexual crimes targeting mainly women and girls in war-torn zones, as well as identified individual responsibilities in their commission.

The work of these courts has also highlighted the difficulties in prosecuting perpetrators andcountering the culture of impunity that shields their criminal acts. Such impunity, of course, permeates all societies, be they peaceful or at war. Not by coincidence, this year's International Women's Day was dedicated to combating this pervasive lack of accountability.

It is, however, in times of war that the effects and consequences of impunity are at their starkest. This is due both to the widespread, systematic and often sustained nature of sexual attacks and to the number and callousness of perpetrators.

Although at their most brutal in war, sexual abuses against women often stem from longstanding prejudices, a lack of equality and discrimination that had condoned such violence all along. When perpetrators go unpunished, they are emboldened to strike again, perpetuating and encouraging vicious cycles of attack and reprisal even when a country emerges from conflict. Rendering justice to the victims is, therefore, not only a moral imperative, but also a precondition for reconciliation and peace to take hold.

Yet, sexual violence has been traditionally under-reported and under-prosecuted. As a result, such crimes have long been considered as regrettable but unavoidable byproducts of armed confrontation. Women as victims or pawns of belligerents could demand no recourse.

Only recently has this powerlessness been addressed, primarily by the groundbreaking work of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The tribunals defined systematic violence against women as crimes for which those responsible could be held accountable, thereby empowering victims to have their day in court.

The creation of the International Criminal Court gave an additional boost to such emerging jurisprudence and changing mind set. Its statute stipulates that rape, sexual slavery, enforced
sterilization, or any other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity are considered as war crimes. If these acts are committed as part of widespread or systematic attacks on a civilian population, they constitute crimes against humanity.

It now remains to be seen whether governments will accede to the court's requests and surrender the suspects for trial.

But if government non-compliance is potentially the main obstacle to the course of international justice, there are other factors that hamper prosecution. Victims of all forms of violence are often reluctant to come forward, in large part because they have little confidence that justice will be done. Although some of the perpetrators may have been apprehended, others, as well as their accomplices, may remain at large and are therefore capable of inflicting further harm to victims, witnesses and their families.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone has made strides in addressing such hindrances in the face of a monumental task. As the result of 10 years of conflict and the belligerents' methods of warfare in that country, the brutality of sexual violence was extraordinary, and its victims were to be counted in the thousands.

The court benefited from its proximity to the victims, the parallel work of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a framework that protected the victims and ensured that their dignity was preserved. The International Criminal Court, too, is building on previous experiences and strengthening legal assistance and protection for victims.

Although the mandate and machinery of international courts have become increasingly more sophisticated and far-reaching over the years, gender justice continues to remain the exception rather than the rule. Successfully prosecuted cases represent just the tip of the iceberg.

The crux of the matter in combating impunity is the requisite political will to tackle it. Often slow to gear up into motion, such political will needs to be mobilized through domestic and international pressure as well as continuous scrutiny.

Louise Arbour is the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.