A village somewhere between Monrovia and Freetown, partly obscured by clouds.

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, 1 May 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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### Local News

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Prosecutor says "no sealed indictments"

By Kelvin Lewis

The Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone Stephen Rapp has told journalists in Liberia that there will be no more sealed indictments.

Questioned on whether there are any more sealed indictments, by Liberian journalists on a trip to the country last week, Prosecutor Stephen Rapp said "There are no sealed indictments. There are no other individuals from Liberia that stand indicted. The Court has a limited mandate, we have a completion strategy that basically requires us to conclude all of our trials and all of our appeals by the end of 2009. So our capacity to pursue further cases at this point is very limited. And indeed, we’ve developed a budget for the people that we have in custody that we need to try. So no sealed indictments, no other Liberians to be charged."

His statements however came in the wake of a recent announcement over the SLBS radio during the Independence Day broadcast where the names of 42 people were read out for release from the prisons by the traditional Presidential pardon.

Among this list was the name of one prisoner who it was announced would be handed over to the Special Court.

This fueled speculation about a possible sealed indictment like the one for Charles Taylor which was only unsealed on the day he left Liberia for Ghana.

The action however has been reportedly frowned upon by the Special Court authorities.

As a result, reliable sources intimate that the Special Court has formally protested to the government about the disclosure of the name of their possible witness. The usually reliable source says that such issues are discussed with the highest levels of confidence and it was very surprising to see that confidence being breached.

This is viewed in the light of concerns raised by the prosecutor about the safety of prosecution witnesses. Prosecutor Rapp says "All efforts that are needed to be made ... will be made to protect the security and the identity of all prosecution witnesses. Our efforts are supported by the protective measures for witnesses put in place by the judges of the Special Court."
Taylor’s trial starts June 4

By Ibrahim Seibure
Acting Registrar, Herman von Hebel of the United Nations backed Special Court for Sierra Leone last week disclosed to journalists in Monrovia, Liberia that former President Charles Taylor’s trial is expected to start on June 4, 2007 in The Hague at the premises of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

He stressed that although the premises of the ICC is going to be used, Taylor will remain to be within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and that the proceedings will be in conformity with its own proceedings.

“The reason for our visit and for us being here lies in the Security Council Resolution 1688 which provided for the transfer of Charles Taylor to The Hague. Also it provided us with the obligation to make the trial against Charles Taylor as accessible as possible to the public in Sierra Leone and in the region, and in particular to Liberia,” Hebel stated.

“Also, and that is under the auspices of the BBC World Service Trust, we have elaborated a programme with the BBC which will allow for journalists, both from Sierra Leone and from Liberia on a rotational basis, to go to The Hague and go to the proceedings in the case of Charles Taylor. Those journalists will be based there for up to about three months and will then rotate with other colleagues. During their presence, and also when coming back, they will be assisted by the BBC in producing documentaries, in making media presentations, and also use that work in any outreach activities that may take place in the country. And so we will do that on a rotational basis so that the number of journalists, and again from both countries, Sierra Leone and Liberia, will be able to have their own coverage of the proceedings.”

He added, “Also what we will have is that there will be members of Civil Society, and here again from Sierra Leone and Liberia, that will be invited to come over to The Hague for about a week and actually see the proceedings themselves so that they have a full picture of how the proceedings are going, make their own assessment, share that with members of their organizations, and see simply how the proceedings are working, and how fair and effective trial is being given to Mr. Taylor,” he said.

Cont. page 3
"Norman’s Death Turns Special Court into a Scarecrow of Injustice and Financial Miscalculations"

BY TALLEYRAND

Friday 20th April 2007, the Special Court for Sierra Leone hosted at its one of its Trial Chamber, the 3rd International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Moot Court Competition where students of the University of Sierra Leone demonstrated the interpretation and application of IHL which was being applied by the court to try those who bear the 'greatest responsibility' in the country's eleven years civil war.

Entering the premises that hosted the court and its officials, there was sense of quietness that was visibly seen but the absence of Hinga Norman sent a spine chilling message that the place once regarded for justice has in actual fact turned to be a scarecrow of injustice and financial miscalculation.

Indeed Norman's death dealt a cruel blow to the Special Court and Sierra Leone.

Since its establishment in 2003 the court has shown very little progress as three of the four most wanted indicted accused of bearing the 'greatest responsibility' in the war, Foday Sankoh, Sam Bockarie, Charles Gbansay Taylor, Johnny Paul Koroma who is still a fugitive in hiding and Hinga Norman are missing.

The demise of the 'most wanted men' has sent many signals to the general public that the justice system of the international community courtesy of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and Sierra Leone herself has made the mission to address impunity failed.

First Foday Sankoh who led the war died in detention under house arrest, then Sam Bockarie, Sankoh's former field commander in the war theatre was assumed killed by Taylor's men, Johnny Paul Koroma later escape following suspicion that he would be indicted and now Norman dead after a hip replacement in a Senegalese military hospital failed.

IHL which was actually being applied and tried in the process has failed to yield its desired objective as Norman's trial was completed and the court was due to deliver a verdict on the eight counts of crimes against humanity charged against him.

Prior to his death, inside sources at Special Court had predicted that his verdict was strong to survive the trial whose prosecution and defence were lukewarm which the court was being criticized for by the likes of former British High Commissioner from 1997 to 2000, Peter Penfold.

Indicted together with his two able bodied men, Moinina Pofana and Alliger Kondewa, the late Norman would not to be given a posthumous verdict by the court which is alleged to have wasted about $90 million in expenses without achieving justice for the victims of the war.

This has been deliberately done so the world will never know how much blame lay with Mr. Norman.

Built on the experiences of similar tri-
bunals set up in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone which had fewer budget voluntarily funded, had been revealed by impeccable sources that it deliberately indicted Mr. Norman to avoid what is termed blames or accusations of "Victor's Justice" by the others. This has been followed by controversial proceedings and scandals of bribery to witnesses by the prosecution team including an alleged $15,000 paid to a witness for re-housing.

Between 2005 to 2006, about $170,000 was expended to witnesses by the prosecution team while the defence had nothing and would had to go out and scout for its own funds, sources said.

Scandals like used phone scratch cards to raise money for witnesses' transport by lawyers of a defendant from foreign workers in the country and the financial parameters of $4.2 million for the prosecution team than the defence all made the picture at Special Court grey.

The salaries of lawyers and judges at the court alone account for about $19 million annually more than the country's security and defense budget, all has been wasted to address impunity, sources also claim. The current budget under estimation that extends up to 2009 is cynical to be used as a model of international justice.

But despite its glaring failure, the people, both victims and perpetrators have come to live side by side with one another, a cornerstone benefit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) widely respected and regarded by the people of Sierra Leone as the truest means through which justice has been attempted to be addressed.

Unlike the Special Court, the likes of Peter Penfold was quoted saying that its mere existence after the death of Foday Sankoh was just to appease the international community's conscience for not having done enough to end the war and give justice to the people of Sierra Leone.

But Norman's death saved the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah some blushes as a guilty verdict could have been more disastrous and embarrassing to the SLPP which he fought on its behalf and ironically betrayed him when its current vice president standing in the elections, Solomon Berewa, then Attorney General, signed his arrest warrant and handed him over to the court.

Today all the big actors are missing in action while the Special Court now remains standing like a skeleton in a laboratory: silent, helpless and guilty. This was demonstrated at the Moot Court Competition when the current president of the Trial Chamber of the court Justice George Gelela from Sierra Leone told a prosecution team member who cited the court's infallibility trial of Hinga Norman as an example, in haste to "sit down", thus technically dismissing going further his citation.
AI calls for the abolition of the Death Penalty in Sierra Leone

BY SANTIGIE KAMARA

Amnesty International, Sierra Leone Chapter has called for the abolition of death penalty in the country.

Speaking to press corps at the national secretariat in Freetown yesterday 30th April 2007, the head of the local chapter, Mr. Brima Sheriff told journalists that it is now imperative for the Sierra Leone government to abolish the death penalty as its negative impacts on individuals and the country have cost it great irreparable loss.

In a press release issued by the international chapter in London, AI Secretary General Irene Khan maintained said about six countries in the world are responsible for 91 percent of all executions carried out in 2006.

These are Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, the USA and China which are yet to abolish the dreadful plague. The release also states that 16 countries had abolished the death penalty for all crimes in 1977 and thirty years on, the number of abolitionists' countries continues to rise which is creating a momentum in the fight to end capital punishment.

In 2006, the report states that the Philippines were the latest country to join 99 other countries that have abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes. In Africa, only six countries carried out executions in 2006. While Belarus remains the only retainer of the death penalty in Europe.

Mr. Karon, a member of National Forum for Human Rights in Sierra Leone stated that it was important the voices of Sierra Leoneans be heard on the issue of the death penalty. He maintained the argument that punishment was being misused by so many regimes in the world especially in Africa, Sierra Leone being notorious, against political opponents termed 'enemies of state'.

The director of Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) Mr. Melron Nicol-Wilson maintained that even though the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) made mentioned about the death penalty, efforts towards its being addressed by government have failed to be adhered to.

Mr. Wilson expressed dissatisfaction over government's delays and slow response to the death penalty, which he said, has been abolished in neighbouring Liberia. "No legal system is perfect", maintained the legal luminary who called on peace loving people in Sierra Leone to put their hands together and fight the abolition of death penalty.
Justifying Punishment

Unlike animals, human beings in the course of time have upgraded their social standards wherever they reside and where they can claim to be proud residents of a protective society, where they have a prerogative claim to basic civic, political, economic and legal rights, where the state watches and prevails over crime and where they are also recipients of persistent and unwavering justice, which means any slight deviation from accepted standard and behaviour by any citizen brings them under the austere eyes of the law which primary responsibility is to help in preserving the fabric of the society and the efficiency of its social network which de facto is one core reason why there should be prescribed punishment as a tool and aid to be used as a deterrent to human excesses against the state. It has been universally supported by great political thinkers like John Locke who propounded his concept of capital punishment containing elements of retributive and utilitarian theories, where he contends that a person forfeits his rights for the commission of even minor crimes and once such rights are forfeited, punishments can be rightly pronounced on them as they have made a breach to the social contract to which they had agreed and the remedy is punishment to the wrong doer which in itself is an endeavour to darn the damage done to the social fabric and by the same raison d’être punishment too is justified for the following reasons, namely from the retributive side, criminals deserve punishment, and from the utilitarian side, punishment is needed to protect our society by deterring crime through such examples, thus society may punish the criminal in any way it deems necessary which may include taking away his life to set an example for other would-be criminals and is further justified for the reason that the acts which are so vile and destructive to society and the dignity of the people.

Invalidating the right of the perpetrator to membership and even to life, because preciousness of life in a moral community must be so highly honoured that those who do
Justifying punishment

not honour the lives of others make null and void their own right to membership, which is why in a community based on love and ideals when made to face the music of hostility and having to deal with people who have committed brutal acts of terror, violence and murder, face a dilemma by the way of the set of ideals the community propagates; it cannot imbibe the philosophy of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life" but would be forced to act for the safety of the members of the community from further destruction and would have to treat the perpetrators who had shown the wrong has been done or relatives of the victims and to society as such, if he who breaks the law is not punished then he who obeys it is cheated which can also be rightly corroborated from the utilitarian and retributive perspective of punishment.

For example as per the utilitarian perspective, punishment when pronounced prevents the criminal from repeating his crime or deters crime by discouraging would-be offenders and both of these contribute to a greater balance of happiness in society and according to the retributive notion of punishment criminals deserve punishment. Where retribution involves punishment in kind, and is commonly expressed in the words "an eye for an eye," and lex talionis where retribution involves punishment through compensation, and the harm inflicted can be repaired by payment or atonement and historically so much so that punishment is most often associated with lex talionis retribution, with the earliest written statements of capital punishment from the same perspective dating back to the 18th century Babylonian Law of Hammurabi which clearly shows that punishment as a deterrent has been in existence which must be added the fact that the severity of punishment is very crucial for deterrence that can be appreciated. By the statements quoted by criminologist Ernest van den Haag - "A prompt and certain slap on the wrist, helps little" while Milwaukee Judge Ralph Adam Fine opined that "We keep our hands out of the flame because it hurts the very first time not the second, fifth or 10th time we touched the fire."

On this basis one can contemplate why some theorists strongly adhere to the doctrine that a criminal who has brutally taken somebody's life has no natural right to his own life and should pay with his own life. It is because the value of a life can only be explained by the people who were dependent on that life, and as for thinkers who think that punishment should be more reformatory then one can contend that punishment is reformatory, "we are reforming, not the hanged individual". But everyone else and by this reformatory step individuals will either be deterred or swerved from the thought process of killing a human being, which can be characterized as the ending of a sentence in any literature, only the author has the privilege to end the sentence, none other is privileged to do, and for he same rationale, one has the privilege to decide one's life and anyone who willingly snatches and disturbs that privilege loses his own and the state thus by implementing punishment on those unruly people is genuinely making an endeavour to paint on the canvas of society the importance of one's life one individual has and it is valued more than anything else and not that it is implemented to quench anyone's draconian thirst and to sum up and reinforce any argument, this quote is necessary: "Men are not hanged for stealing horses, but that horses may not be stolen."
UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 30 April 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

BBC Last Updated: Friday, 27 April 2007, 21:26 GMT 22:26 UK

UN lifts Liberia diamond sale ban

The United Nations Security Council has voted to lift a 2001 ban on the export of diamonds from Liberia. The ban was meant to stop proceeds from the sale of so-called “blood diamonds” fuelling wars in West African nations. Correspondents say the UN decided Liberia has made enough progress, but that it must certify diamonds for sale do not originate from conflict zones. Two years ago Liberia elected its first democratic leader, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, since its civil war.


Liberia: Diamond Ban Lifted

By WARREN HOGE

The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved the lifting of a 2001 blockade of the sale of so-called blood diamonds from Liberia that fuelled wars in West Africa. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the Liberian president, had pressed for an end to the embargo as necessary to revive the economy of her impoverished nation, and Emyr Jones Parry, left, Britain’s ambassador to the United Nations, said the decision reflected confidence that the country now met the standards of the Kimberley Process, an industry initiative certifying the origins of diamonds entering international trade. The Council lifted similar restrictions on Liberian timber sales in June.

International Clips on West Africa

There were no relevant stories on West Africa in the international media today.

Local Media – Newspaper

UN Lifts Sanctions on Export of Diamonds from Liberia


- The United Nations has lifted the sanction on the exports of diamonds from Liberia, more than three years after it was imposed. The decision was reached last Friday by the United Nations Security Council having unanimously adopted resolution 1753.
- According to the Daily Observer, the lifting of the sanction was greeted with great anticipation, relief and jubilation in Liberia, especially among those involved in the huge diamonds sector that had prayed and yearned for such action by the UN Security Council.

Liberian President Appraises GEMAP

(Liberian Express, The Informer, New Democrat, Public Agenda and Heritage)
The Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said the experience of the Governance Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) has been mixed. The President acknowledged that despite the progress made in other financial management areas, GEMAP has failed to live up to expectations in other areas, attributing the failure in some areas to the lack of teamwork.

UNMIL Deploys to Avert Youth Uprising in Bong Mines  
(The Liberian Express and New Democrat)

- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has deployed dozens of Nigerian police officers in troubled areas in the former iron ore mining town of Bong Mines in Bong County, where youth protested the killing of a 5-year-old boy and set ablaze a police station, motorbikes and barricaded major entry points, preventing security personnel and journalists access to the area.

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)

Rights Group Says Security Forces Fuel Tension at Rubber Farm
- A human rights group, the Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) said that officers of the Liberia National Police and the Plant Protection Department fuelled the tension that erupted at the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company.
- During a news conference yesterday, two of the organization’s Executives Roosevelt Woods and Dixon Sio Gblah stated that workers of the farm demonstrated peacefully and thought that there was no reason why officers from the two security groups should use excessive force to disperse them.
  (Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Students across Liberia Begin Regional Exams Today
- Correspondents said that over 50,000 students across Liberia will today, Monday, commence this year’s West African Examination Council test to evaluate them having completed the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The Council’s head, Mr. Elie Lamin told journalists that his Office and the Ministry of Education put in place security measures during the testing period but warned against cheating as violators would be arrested and prosecuted.
  (Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

Widows of Deceased Soldiers Appear for Benefit
- During a gathering in Monrovia Sunday, some widows of soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia appealed to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to ensure that they get their dead husband’s benefits instead of Government’s offer of vocational training skills because they were too old to sit in classrooms.
  (Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.
CONAKRY, April 30 - Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone sought to put a decade of civil wars behind them on Monday by reviving a regional bloc which has been stymied by frontier disputes between the West African neighbours.

At a meeting in the Guinean capital Conakry, Guinean Prime Minister Lansana Kouyate urged the heads of state of the Mano River Union (MRU) to resolve problems dividing the three-nation group. It takes its name from a river which starts in Guinea and forms the boundary between Liberia and Sierra Leone,

"The Mano River Union, which has just undergone a turbulent period of more than a decade, is today embarked on a process of revitalisation which will benefit the development of our countries," Kouyate said in his opening speech.

High on the list of problems facing the three nations is a territorial dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone over a patch of land alongside the Makona river, occupied by Guinean troops during Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war and claimed by both countries.

"None of our countries can achieve its development aims unless all of us work together," Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said in a speech before going into a closed-door meeting with her Guinean counterpart Lansana Conte and Sierra Leone's Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo also attended as an observer.

Founded in 1973 to encourage economic cooperation between Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Mano River Union was expanded seven years later with the addition of Guinea. It was abandoned due to the civil wars in Liberia, from 1989 to 2003, and Sierra Leone, which pitted the nations against one another.

Liberia's then-president Charles Taylor accused Guinean leader Conte of backing the LURD rebels in his country, while Kabbah said Taylor was funding and arming Sierra Leone's RUF insurgents, notorious for their child soldiers who hacked limbs off civilians.

The Mano River Union was reactivated at a summit in 2004 but has since been undermined by ongoing border disputes.
Ugandan LRA Rebels Reject Counsels for Peace Mediator

By Peter Clottey
Washington, D.C.

Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have rejected the choice of counsels for the mediator of the talks WITH the government. Mediator Rieke Marchar chose the two legal consultants to advice him on the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants against the top leadership of the LRA. But the rebels claim Owiny Dollo and Jacob Oulanyah are sympathizers of President Yoweri Museveni’s government. Sources say the two have met LRA leader Joseph Kony and his deputy Vincent Otti on three occasions to enlighten them on the ICC arrest warrants against them for war crimes. Their position has however been that the government has no powers to ask the (ICC) to drop the charges, contrary to what the LRA negotiators tell Kony and Otti.

Major Felix Kulayigye is the spokesman for the Uganda’s ministry for Defense. From the capital, Kampala, he told VOA that he regrets the rebel’s rejection of the mediator’s choice of counsels.

“To begin with, we find that rejecting rather unfortunate because the mediator reserves the right to choose whom to advise him on what matters. These particular individuals are experts in their own statutes. And their own statutes that established the International Criminal Court, which indicted the top LRA commanders, and I would imagine that the mediator had wanted to have people that are knowledgeable in their own statutes during negotiations, particularly on how it would affect the peace process,” he said.

Kulayigye denied the two counsels would be involved in a conflict of interest.

“I don’t think that is correct because; one, Honorable Jacob Oulanyah was a member of parliament and he was the chairman of the legal and parliamentary affairs committee. He subscribed to one of the opposition parties in this country. Two, Honorable Owiny Dollo has been out of government for a very long time and indeed he’s been in private practice here in Kampala,” Kulayigye noted.

He said the two are best suited to act as legal consultants to mediator Rieke Marchar.

“These two are Acholi’s by tribe, the very tribe that most of the LRA, 99 percent are. So, who would be better placed to be interested in these matters than such individuals?” he said.

Kulayigye dismissed as childish calls for the government to back the rebels’ demand to have the arrest warrants against its top leadership suspended or revoked.

“I’m afraid that is being simplistic. Government as of now is not the determining factor on the question of the ICC. The arrest warrants were issued after the chief prosecutor has convinced the top chamber that there was a case to answer. Now, it is not government at this juncture to turn around and demand for the suspension of the warrants as the rebels are trying to put it,” Kulayigye pointed out.

He said there are conditions that must be considered before the arrest warrants against the rebel leadership could be suspended or revoked.

“For government to engage the ICC or for government to engage the Security Council with the view to ask it to seek the suspension of the arrest warrants, it must have a package in return. It must show that impunity would be addressed, that justice and accountability would be addressed. In the absence of those, it would be an attempt in futility to think that the International Criminal Court or the Security Council would listen to government about suspending the arrest warrants,” he noted.
Kulayigye said the government is protesting the movement of the rebels because it is flouting the agreement signed between the government and the rebels.

“The protest is about movement to the east, the LRA requested that their troops should be allowed from THE east in Southern Sudan to the west so that they could gain the command of LRA in Ri-Kwangbe, which IS in the extreme southwest. So when we see movement of the LRA to the east, it certainly causes a lot of questions,” he said.