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, 4 September 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
Martin Royston-Wright
Ext 7217
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Hinga Norman Family Press Release...

Moinina Fofana & Alieu Kondewa

For Public Release, August 30, 2007

It has come to the attention of the family of Chief Sam Hinga Norman, Late of Ngolala Village, Valunia Chiefdom, Bo District in the Southern Region of Sierra Leone that certain persons representing the Women's Wing of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) under the direction of Mrs. Mamie Norman have in the last several days made attempts to visit the grave of Mr. Norman in his ancestral home of Ngolala. The Hinga Norman family wishes to inform the public that former Vice President, Dr. Albert Joe Demby, is the chief adviser and guardian of the Hinga Norman family and the Rev. Alfred M. SamForay of the United States represents the family in all matters relating to the trial and death of Chief Hinga Norman. The public is, therefore, advised that no person or group is authorized to perform any ceremonies, rites or rituals on the grave of Chief Hinga Norman without the expressed permission of the Hinga Norman family through their designated representative.

The family also wishes it to be known that any unauthorized visit to the gravesite of Chief Hinga Norman with the intent of pouring libation or any similar activity is a violation of the family's right to privacy. The High Priest of the Kamajors, Alieu Musa Kondewa, also wishes to inform the public that the burial site of Chief Hinga Norman remains a sacred site for the Kamajor, Wunde and Poro Societies and non-initiates and female relatives of the Chief are clearly forbidden to perform any ceremonial activities at the gravesite. Members of the Kamajor Movement, chiefs and elders of Valunia Chiefdom, Ngolala Village and Mongere Town are hereby advised accordingly.

On a related matter, former CDF Director of War, Mr. Moinina Fofana and former Chief Initiator of the Kamajors, Dr. Alieu Kondewa, wish to relay to the public that contrary to statements to that effect, they have not re-joined the Sierra Leone People's Party and neither they nor any members of their immediate family have accepted any offers for that purpose. It is to be recalled that Mr. Fofana, Dr. Kondewa and Chief Sam Hinga Norman, previous to his death, issued a public statement in which they resigned as members of the SLPP and although fraternal discussions have been held at the Detention Center over the past few days between Mr. Fofana and Dr. Kondewa on one hand and representatives of the SLPP including Dr. John Karlmu and Mr. John Benjamin on the other hand, there has been no retraction by the Kamajor leaders as to their membership of the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). Mr. Fofana and Dr. Kondewa further wish to inform that they have issued no instructions regarding membership in the SLPP to rank and file members of the Kamajor Movement, friends or family. Finally, the Hinga Norman family wishes it to be known that they have taken no sides in the present campaign for the presidency of the Republic of Sierra Leone and prevail on all concerned to respect their wishes on this matter.

Alfred Munda SamForay,
For the Hinga Norman Family, Moinina Fofana & Alieu Kondewa
FLOOD DESTROYS
10 HOMES IN
FREETOWN

By Samuel Serry Jr.

Over ten families were rendered homeless past weekend as giant torrential waves from the Atlantic Ocean battered their homes at a sea-side slum around Congo Town in the West end of Freetown. Residents of the area say they were completely shocked to witness such a disaster since there was neither rainfall nor heavy winds on the very day of the incident. Valuable properties were lost as the make-shift homes were heavily flooded by sea water when the man-made sand banks proved worthless against the terrifying and desperate sea waves.

A widow, Salamatu Kamara whose home was completely destroyed by the flood explained to the New Citizen that she is now in a hopeless situation since there is no way she could afford to find another house for herself and her four children. “I don’t know where else to go, I don’t have money to rent another house and I have lost most of my valuables in the flood.” She lamented.

An official from the Ministry of Lands and Country Planning who visited the scene told the New Citizen that there have been repeated moves by his Ministry to discourage people from erecting shanty homes along the sea but it seems such moves had failed as more shanty structures keep springing up along the Freetown coastline. He said flooding has also taken place in some parts of the country adding that such incidents might not be unconnected with the global effects of climate change.
International Clips on Liberia

Liberian opposition criticizes Sirleaf government over local polls

Monrovia (dpa) - Defeated Liberian presidential candidate George Weah criticized the Unity Party-led government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for its attempt to appoint mayors and chiefs without elections. Sirleaf, Africa's first female head of state, has been lobbying with the legislature to allow her appoint local government officials for now because there is no money for elections. A statement issued by Weah's Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) party in Monrovia said any attempt to appoint municipal and chieftaincy officials violated the **Liberian** constitution.

International Clips on West Africa

Sierra Leone up-beat after pledge for peaceful vote

By Susan Njanji

FREETOWN, Sept 3, 2007 (AFP) - A deal clinched by Sierra Leone's rival presidential candidates in the upcoming election run-off has boosted chances of a violence-free vote, party officials, observers and analysts said on Monday. Ruling Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP) candidate Solomon Berewa and the opposition's Ernest Koroma late Sunday vowed to run peaceful campaigns after days of unrest that left scores of people wounded.

Ivory Coast police tear gas protesting students

ABIDJAN, Sept 3 (Reuters) - Riot police in Ivory Coast's main city Abidjan fired tear gas on Monday to disperse students demanding compensation for damage by the security forces to their campus during a previous riot a year ago, witnesses said. Causing panic among local residents, the students blocked main roads and smashed car windows in several neighborhoods of the lagoon-side city, one of two main ports through which the West African country's cocoa production is shipped.

Local Media – Newspaper

New Maritime Commissioner Promises to Compensate Clients


- The newly nominated Maritime Commissioner, Counsellor John W. Stewart has admitted owing 18 of his clients but says he would reimburse them.
- Counsellor Stewart told reporters at the weekend that his decision to refund his clients was based on the fact their cases were never heard and as such, it is prudent to pay them back.
• He clarified that the allegation against him borders on professional misconduct within the Washington DC Bar and said the ongoing investigation by the Bar is purely civil and not criminal in nature as is being insinuated.
• President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf appointed Cllr. Stewart last week but later withheld his nomination following reports that he was undergoing investigation on charges of financial improprieties in the United States.

President Sirleaf, Italian Prime Minister Discuss Liberia’s Debt Relief  
(*Public Agenda, The Inquirer and The Informer*)

• The Government of Italy has pledged its support to Liberia’s fight for debt relief as the country continues its drive towards national recovery.
• The pledge was made when President Johnson Sirleaf met with Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi in Rome.
• Prime Minister Prodi promised his government’s commitment to join the campaign to seek debt relief for Liberia and asked that a delegation be sent to follow up on talks with the view of exploring bilateral cooperation.
• For her part, President Sirleaf said her government has made considerable progress in tackling the country’s debt issues amidst the constraints faced by the country.

LTA Probe Committee Wants Former Chairman Reprimanded  
(*The Heritage Daily Observer and National Chronicle*)

• The board of commissioner of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA) has cleared Dr. Sahr Abdulai Vandi, the former LTA board chairman of US$300,000 bribery allegation levied against him by the West African Telecommunications (WAT) but recommended that he be reprimanded for what clearly was his indiscretion in his interaction with the WAT management.
• In its eleven count resolution, the team also recommended that the LTA board of commissioners write a letter to its former head frown on his action of continuously and surreptitiously engaging WAT on the frequency issue long after it had agree to suspend the issuance of all licensing and frequency authorization.

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

President Sirleaf Says Positive Developments in Africa Get Less Attention

• In her speech at a United Nations gathering in Turin, Italy, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf lamented that there are positive things happening on the African Continent but that they do not get the needed attention, adding that despite the huge difficulties, African Governments have made significant gains to reduce poverty on the Continent.  
• Regarding Liberia’s current political status, President Sirleaf said that the 2005 elections turned the Country’s history around and that her government will have to build the capacity of its people and will ensure that the resources are equitably distributed for sustained development.
• For his part, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon who convened the event to enable his senior managers acquaint themselves with each other, exchange ideas, reflect on past experiences stressed the importance of results in the work of the organization.  
(*Also reported on Star and ELBC Radio*)

Major Business Strategy for Liberians to be Launched Soon

• According to a release from the Public Procurement and Concession Commission, the Government will launch in Monrovia, this week a programme known as ‘The Margin of Preference for Liberian and Domestic Businesses’.
• The PPCC said that the interim procedures for the issuance of licenses, is a necessary intervention that would sustain the promotion of economic empowerment of Liberian businesses, lead to the participation of Liberian businesses in mainstream economy and encourage direct foreign investment – mainly in the area of manufacturing and concession.
Lawmakers Ask Citizens to be Calm over Land Dispute

- Correspondents said that the River Gee Legislative Caucus called on citizens of the County to remain calm as the Caucus exert all efforts to resolve the land dispute between Maryland and River Gee Counties.
- The Lawmakers also appealed to traditional leaders of the two counties to ensure that their “country devils” are withdrawn to their original positions and commended the Government and UNMIL for their timely intervention into the matter.

(Also reported on Star and ELBC 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.
Victims want special court for Kony

FRANK NYAKAIRU
KAMPALA

THE Government said yesterday that a majority of people in northern Uganda want rebel leader Joseph Kony and his commanders tried for war crimes but under special local tribunals.

Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, the minister of internal affairs and chief government negotiator announced this, after conducting week long consultations in the north, largely aimed at building a strong justice system to replace the system that would be dispensed by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The ICC which indicted Kony and his four commanders for war crimes insists on trying the rebels unless Uganda comes up with an impartial and independent alternative justice system.

Dr Rugunda however, said a smaller majority backed blanket amnesty for the rebels. "Very many of them felt that Uganda, by using traditional justice and formal justice systems, will provide a sufficient alternative to handle issues of accountability and reconciliation," he said. He said many victims were concerned whether the ICC supports the peace process.

The government and rebels are engaged in lengthy peace talks in Juba, South Sudan to end the brutal 20-year war that has killed tens of thousands and displaced nearly 2 million people in the north. The consultations are under Agenda item three; Accountability and Reconciliation under the South Sudan mediated talks. Parliament will debate the result of the consultations and a law enacted establishing the special courts.

The wanted rebels have vowed never to sign a final peace deal unless Kampala persuades ICC to drop the indictments - something analysts say is unlikely. The LRA team still in Juba is yet to begin their consultations. They plan to fly researchers to Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Argentina to compare how the post conflict communities dealt with war crimes. The government consultation team heads to Teso today.
Uganda’s Rebels Upset With Museveni’s Action

Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army rebels (LRA) have reacted with shock and dismay, reports that President Yoweri Museveni is aligning himself with neighboring countries to launch a pre-emptive strike against rebel positions. This comes after President Museveni reportedly met with the President’s of Congo and the Central African Republic. The rebels have dismissed the reports as unfortunate and described president Museveni as the main stumbling block to the progress of the peace talks, currently going on in the southern Sudanese capital of Juba.

Meanwhile both the government and the rebels are consulting as part of the third agenda item, which is accountability and reconciliation.

David Matsanga is a technical advisor to the LRA on ICC matters. From the Kenyan capital, Nairobi he tells reporter Peter Clottey that the rebels are disappointed with President Museveni’s action.

“I want to tell you that every time, the government of Uganda has tried to look for an exit, a scapegoat when we want to bring peace in northern Uganda. I’m not surprised that the Uganda government is trying to align itself with Congo and the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) to attack the LRA. If these reports are true, then this is the most absurd. Every time when the Ugandan government sees that peace is about to return to northern Uganda the Ugandan government brings scapegoats and its uses all exits and all malice from all angles to make sure that the peace process collapses. So this is not coming as a surprise because the government of Uganda has never wanted peace; it always does a double strategy, or double tragedy that has killed the people of northern Uganda for almost 21 years,” Matsanga pointed out.

He wondered why Congo was reportedly planning with President Museveni to attack the LRA, when, he said, Congo is part of the peace negotiations currently in Juba.

“Let me make it very clear that Congo has got a representative on the peace mission in Juba. It is very naïve, very sardonic for even Congo to think of having anything to talk about attacking the LRA, when in actual sense Congo has got a representative of His Excellency President (Joseph) Kabila on the delegation in Juba on the mediation team as an observer,” he said.

Matsanga said if the reports of President Museveni’s meeting with neighboring countries to attack the LRA are credible, then it is a recipe for the collapse of the peace negotiations.

"Those reports if they are true, are meant to make sure that the Uganda peace process currently in Juba does not take place. The LRA as far as I’m concerned is committed to the peace process, it wants to do all what it can do to make sure that peace returns to northern Uganda. If president Museveni wants to align with the Central African Republic and Congo to attack the LRA, that is very regretful, unforgivable crime against the humanity of the people of northern Uganda in particular,” Matsanga noted.

He said although the LRA regrets the supposed meeting with neighboring countries to attack the rebels, the LRA still has hope of finding a lasting peace.

“We have dismissed Museveni’s reports as shallow and not worthy, and the Lord’s Resistance Army does not take Museveni’s report as anything that is credible. These reports and his machinations against the people of northern Uganda and northeastern Uganda are always known. The LRA is committed to the peace process; it will carry out the peace process up to the final letter. It is Museveni who would abrogate the peace process, but not the Lord’s Resistance Army,” he said.