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:
Wednesday, 21 November 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
The AFRC coup was accompanied by an explosion of violence against civilians throughout the nation; the key strategic change was that the RUF had immediate access throughout the country, something they had failed to achieve through six years of military action.

To justify the AFRC coup, Koroma cited corruption, the erosion of state sovereignty, over-dependence on foreign nations, and the failure of the Government of Sierra Leone to adequately address tensions between the SLA and government supported tribally-based militia movements, in particular the Kamajors. Koroma's story is very much that of the AFRC, and indeed the failings of the Abidjan Peace Accord struck between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF on 30 November 1996.

Involvement of ECOMOG
By 2 June 1997, the RUF/AFRC found itself at odds with Nigerian forces, which were deployed unilaterally at this stage under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and its mandate of August 1997.

The Nigerians were stationed in and around Freetown's Western Area, trading mortar fire along the main highway into Freetown and around the Freetown International Airport. Koroma immediately sought to ease the situation, seeking mediation, which resulted in the signing of a peace accord in late October 1997 in Conakry, Republic of Guinea.

Almost immediately, violations of the peace accord were perpetrated by all sides to the complex conflict in Sierra Leone. By January 1998, ECOMOG forces were preparing to oust the RUF/AFRC from power.

On 6 February 1998, ECOMOG forces invaded key locations in the Western Area, removing the RUF/AFRC entirely by 12 February 1998. On 1 March 1998, ECOMOG forces commenced operations in provincial Sierra Leone, removing the RUF/AFRC from every key town except Kailahun (in the far east of the country).

Contd. Next Issue
First hearing for Cambodia court

An international genocide tribunal set up to try surviving members of Cambodia's brutal Khmer Rouge regime is holding its first public hearing.

The UN-backed court is hearing a bail request from Kang Kek Ieu, or Duch, the former head of a notorious prison.

Duch was the first of five senior Khmer Rouge officials to be arrested and charged by the court.

More than a million people are thought to have died during the four years of Khmer Rouge rule between 1975 and 1979.

Tribunal spokesman Peter Foster described the hearing as a "milestone" for the court, which was set up last year after decades of wrangling.

"It's a big day," he said. "The spotlight will now be on Cambodia."

'Sense of relief'

Duch, who is now in his 60s, was driven to the court from a nearby detention centre, where he has been held since his arrest in July.

Three decades ago, he ran Tuol Sleng jail in Phnom Penh, where thousands of people were tortured and executed by the Khmer Rouge regime.

Lawyers for the elderly ex-leader are appealing for bail on the grounds that he was held without charge under the jurisdiction of another court for eight years.

Proceedings inside the small chamber were broadcast to hundreds of ordinary Cambodians outside in the court's compound.

The BBC's Guy De Launey, in Phnom Penh, says that the former Khmer Rouge jailer is unlikely to be released, but his appearance in court shows the tribunal is finally moving forward.

Co-prosecutor Robert Petit told the BBC the bail hearing would allow the people to see that justice was being done.

"I hope that it will provide Cambodians with a certain sense of relief that the process is ongoing and is transparent, or as transparent as it can be."

Fifty-five year old Chhouek Sao, who lost five family members to the regime, said he wanted justice.

"It's obvious that justice has been delayed and some people are so frustrated by waiting for so long," he told the French news agency AFP.

Five senior Khmer Rouge officials are now in the custody of the tribunal.

On Monday, former head of state Khieu Samphan was formally charged with committing crimes against humanity.

Pol Pot's second-in-command Nuon Chea and the former foreign and social affairs ministers Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith are also facing charges.

Their trials are expected to begin next year.
Six years after the conflict ended in Sierra Leone, little has been done to ensure that the survivors of sexual violence receive justice, acknowledgement of their suffering or reparations which could help them to rebuild their lives. All parties to the 11-year-old war were responsible for abuses including rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other crimes of sexual violence against an estimated quarter of a million women and girls.

For the victims of these crimes, sexual violence was not single event but a violation which has continued to have been systematically targeted during the war, their physical and psychological wounds have been compounded by stigmatization and discrimination since hostilities ended. They have employed many strategies to survive, both during the conflict and in the years that followed. Many survivors felt too ashamed to share their experiences of sexual violence that took place against them.

A girl from Pujehun was forcibly brought to Kailahun and did not return home when peace came. She told Amnesty International:

"They tolerate us here but we are not really welcome. In 2002 we were released by the rebels but, because we all stayed so long with them, when it was time to return many did not have relatives left, or felt that they would not be accepted if they go back; some tried and were rejected.

Another victim, Mamie, originally from Bo and nearly 60 years old, was abducted and brought to Kailahun in 1995. When she tried to return home, her community rejected her. She said:

"I returned to Bo in 2004 and 2006, and both times they called me a rebel. They said that the rebels were killing and eating people so they didn't want anything to do with me. Now to survive I take care of a child and in return the family gives me food. People in the community call me a rebel. Few people talk to me. I need food, shelter, and medicine now."

Considered "dirty" and unworthy"

In Sierra Leone there is an assumption among some people that women were somehow responsible for what happened to them. They are often viewed as "shameful" or "dirty" because of the rape, marriage an unlikely future option for many.

When Linda, now 30, returned to Makeni in 2002, she was well aware of her limited future options. She knew
Getting the reparations right for survivors of sexual violence

that the community would be unlikely to accept her and that her chances of marriage would be reduced if it were known that she had been with the rebels. So she did not tell anyone what happened to her, and married a man in the community. Soon after her child was born, her husband abandoned her. She said:

When I saw that one of the girls that I knew in the bush was rejected by her family, I knew it would not be good to tell too many people in the community, especially the men as they will not accept you. So I did not tell my new husband but later I heard that other men in the community were making fun of him for being married to me. Soon after I had the child he left me.

Women and girls who survive rape are sometimes accused of not having resisted enough, of having somehow feeling is strong.
Children born as a result of rape generally face severe discrimination and are often referred to as “rebel children”. Fatmata from Makeni told Amnesty International about her experience in living with her stepfather:

“My stepfather gave my little son and me a place to live and some food. But the place was very dirty and they were abusive towards us. They would call my child a rebel child. This hurt me a lot. He is my son and this really offends me. In the end they threw us out a few months later, saying that I did not do my chores properly.”

REJECT BY RELATIVES
Some of the women and girls were rejected by their own family members.

My grandmother and others laughed at me and say that I was with the rebels. This hurts me. I haven't told anyone myself. I am not happy.”

Find someone to trust
Mary, originally from Makeni and finally returned home in 2007 after being in Kono throughout the war. She stayed with the rebels for two years and had a child while she was in captivity.
When she turned to Kono she did not tell anyone what had happened to her. "When I finally escaped from the rebels I went to live with relatives in Kono. I did not tell anyone what happened to me... I was ashamed... It was only when I arrived back in Makeni and that I told my mother. After

Women and girls who survive rape are sometimes accused of not having resisted enough, of having somehow consented to sex or of having cooperated with the perpetrators.

consented to sex or of having cooperated with the perpetrators. The chief in Macomb told Amnesty International:

"Some women and girls have not come back because they know that people think it is their fault. We have tried to talk to people in the community but the

Mamutu also told Amnesty International about a girl who came from Pujehun and she has not been traced. Leticia from Makeni told Amnesty International:

"I haven't told anyone about what happened to me.

I told her what happened I felt better. I felt better. I felt it OK to talk to my mother because I knew she would not judge me and would accept me, and never say it to anyone.”

When I finally escaped from the rebels I went to live with relatives in Kono.

I did not tell anyone what happened to me...

I was ashamed... It was only when I arrived back in Makeni and that I told my mother. After
The Patriotic Vanguard
Tuesday, 20 November 2007

UNIOSIL trains human rights activists, others

The Human Rights and Rule of Law section of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) has embarked on a series of training activities on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming at provincial level. Each of the regional training events will gather a cross section of 40 participants from all districts drawn from human rights and pro-democracy groups, local councilors, and government officials.

The objective of the training is to equip the participants to plan and implement their programmes and projects from a human rights perspective. They will be informed about international human rights law and protection systems as well as the concept of human rights and its relationship to development.

Earlier this year, UNIOSIL conducted similar seminars for staff of UN agencies, including heads of agencies, senior government officials, Permanent Secretaries as well as for members of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

The Programme is part of UNIOSIL’s mandate to assist and build the capacity of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone to consolidate peace and strengthen democracy.

Photo: UNIOSIL boss Victor Angelo.
United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 20 November 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia
11/20/2007 09:55:35
Liberia, Israel sign diamond cooperation agreement

TEL AVIV (Thomson Financial) - Israel and Liberia has signed a cooperation agreement on diamond extraction in Liberia. Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the president of the Israeli diamond institute, Moti Ganz, signed the agreement in Tel Aviv. Eli Avidar, executive director of the institute, said Liberia has great potential as its new government can ensure stability, infrastructure and reliable regulations in the country. He said it was impossible at this stage to estimate the amount of diamond reserves in Liberia, but that they could be worth billions of dollars over the coming years. In April this year, the United Nations lifted an embargo imposed on Liberia in 2001 against the export of precious gems -- used to finance militias during the 1989-2003 civil wars -- known as blood diamonds. In May, Liberia rejoined the Kimberley process, under which it must provide certification to guarantee its diamonds are not being used to finance conflicts. Israel is one of the world's main diamond centers. Its exports of cut diamonds to date in 2007 have reached US$6 billion.

International Clips on West Africa
There were relevant stories on West Africa in the international Media today.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Sirleaf says LAC incident will not go unpunished

- The media reports that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has assured that the perpetrators of the weekend’s incident at the Liberia Agricultural Company which resulted to the death of the company’s Plantation Manager, Bruno Michiels will not go unpunished.
- Speaking to reporters on Monday, Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said the President also instructed security officials to get to the bottom of another incident in which a van belonging to Global Bank, conveying US$150,000 to Grand Bassa was high jacked and the money stolen.
- Mr. Badio said President Sirleaf was greatly troubled by the incidents and described them as planned attempts to instill fear of instability in the people. He said the President was however, confident that these attempts will not succeed and assured investors that the country is safe calling on them to take advantage of the opening in the country.

UNMIL Gives Medical Services Free-of-Charge
(Heritage)

- A joint team of medical personnel from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in collaboration with two international NGOs, MERCI and MERLIN have conducted a medical outreach for people living in Liberia’s most remote areas in Maryland County.
• About 600 patients, mainly women and children from several communities benefited from the free medical outreach which took place in Glofaken, Barrobo District and was carried out by a coordinated medical team from the County Health Team, MERCI, MERLIN and UNMIL’s Senegalese Level I and II hospitals based in the County.

• An UNMIL release said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss welcomed the initiative saying this was an innovative example of how Government, peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies can work together in a common cause for the well being of the Liberian people.

Burglary at Temple of Justice
(The Informer, National Chronicle and The News)

• Normal activities at the Temple of Justice were yesterday suspended following Sunday night’s burglary by unknown persons. The building was broken into and electric wires supplying power to several offices and the Chambers of the Supreme Court on the 5th floor were cut. The act also affected the floor hosting Criminal Courts A and B.

• The robbers broke into the Chambers of Judge Charles Williams stealing at least eight chairs. The National Chronicle quoting sources said police have picked up four security men assigned at the building for questioning. It is not yet known whether any court document was stolen. Bomb specialists from the Pakistani contingent of UNMIL were later sent in to check whether there were any explosives left in the building.

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

Government Orders Detailed Probe into Murder of Belgian

• According to Presidential Press Secretary Cyrus Badio, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf yesterday instructed security officials to institute an in-depth investigation into the murder of the Belgian Manager of the Liberia Agriculture Company and the armed robbery of US$150,000 from a Global Bank van along the Buchanan-Harbel highway. Mr. Badio said that the President was greatly troubled by the incidents and assured that the culprits would not go unpunished for which he thought were planned to instil fear of instability in the people. However, he said that President Sirleaf was confident that those instigating fears will not succeed.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

UNMIL Deploys Security at Controversial Rubber Plantation

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Security Arrest NGO Vehicle Carrying Marijuana

• Correspondents said that three persons were arrested in Nimba County while attempting to load 14 bags of Marijuana valued at LD$990,000 on a Norwegian Refugee Council jeep when an unnamed person alerted Liberia National Police officers in the County.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Press Union President Urges Media to Lead Anti-AIDS Campaign

• The President of the Press Union of Liberia, George Barpeen yesterday called on the
media to join the fight against HIV/AIDS and must do so by breaking silence on creating awareness on the disease.

- Speaking at the opening of a training workshop for 30 rural reporters, Mr. Barpeen noted that it was incumbent upon the media to design programs intended to educate people about the disease, adding that the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country would increase if the fails to actively participate in the fight against the disease.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

FAO Gives Contract to Liberian Blacksmiths

- The Country Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Dr. Winfred Hammond told reporters that the FAO was giving more than 20 Liberian blacksmiths a US$300,000 contract to produce agricultural processing machines for the FAO.

- Dr. Hammond said that the FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture trained the blacksmiths to produce agricultural machines which are currently in demand for the machines.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Liberian Delegation Returns from Study Tour of Kenya

- Addressing reporters on their return from a tour of Kenya, the head of a Government delegation, Maryland County Senator John Ballout said that Liberia could learn enough lessons from Kenya’s aggressive and ambitious agriculture sector as it produces every consumable product on the Kenyan market. He emphasized that Liberian farmers need to be empowered to return to the soil and grow more food.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)