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:
Friday, 29 February 2008

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

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Mr. Charles Taylor In & Out Of Hospital

Charles Taylor has been discharged from hospital where he spent the rest of Tuesday this week and was back in court the following day.

On Tuesday, the court had to be adjourned after Mr. Taylor's Lawyer interrupted proceedings to report to Justice Julia Sebitunde that his client wasn't feeling too well and needed medical attention.

He was referred to hospital but after several different checks on him, doctors reported that there was no cause for alarm, as nothing serious was diagnosed but advised further that Mr. Taylor spends the rest of the day in bed.
Women call for TRC reparation

By Digital Barrie

A call for the actualization of the reparation process recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been sounded to the government and its partners by Women’s Coalition, a female group in Kenema.

Speaking through its coordinator, Doris Kalih also disclosed in an exclusive interview with Concord Times on Friday that her organization is working hard to ensure that the process is observed.

Explaining how they came about the resolution, she said the decision came after her organization conducted a survey in collaboration with Amnesty International on how the reparation process has been undertaken since the end of the decade-long civil conflict.

"We noticed that women who suffered greatly during the eleven years brutal war are still not catered for," she said as she maintained that reparations are a form of compensation for people who have been wronged.

"This forms part of the process of restorative justice which tries to repair the relationship between people and create a more fair and just society as the only way forward," she added.

Kalih concluded by saying that the rehabilitation, monetary compensation, establishment of truth, restoration of dignity and improving the quality of life for those who suffered harms during the war should be considered.
By Mohamed Koroma

The Parliamentary Committee on Appointments and Public Service on Thursday 28 February, 2008 approved Justice Shinney Taqi as Supreme Court judge of Sierra Leone. Others like the Chairman of the National Revenue Authority (NRA) Mr. Charles Campbell, the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) Advisory Council Sheikh Abubakarr Conteh and Mrs. Edna Caulker as Electoral Commissioner South, were approved for the various positions as stated.

In his statement, the Majority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Edward M. Turay noted that the presidential nominees have good track records in their respective disciplines and have proved to be reliable and committed in the discharge of their responsibilities. Hon. Emmanuel W. Tommy of the opposition SLPP maintained that the nominees are qualified and competent to serve in the various positions designated.

He called on Members of Parliament to give support to the approval of the nominees. In his contribution, the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Justice Abel Strong called on the MPs to comment on the approval of the presidential nominees. However, Members of Parliament unanimously approved the nominees.
CHEESEMAN: After spending a day in hospital, war crimes indictee Charles Taylor is back in court. Mr. Taylor, smartly dressed in a dark suit, was welcomed by Presiding Judge Teresa Doherty. The former Liberian president smiled fitly, and bowed in response to Justice Doherty’s welcome statement. On Tuesday Mr. Taylor was rushed to hospital, but doctors who examined him said they did not find anything identifiably wrong with his health. After the announcement of representation by both Defence and Prosecution, Prosecution lawyer Shyamala Alagendra made a submission declaring that the next witness only identified as TF1-362, would testify in closed session. The Prosecution said the order for closed session was issued by Trial Chamber I in Sierra Leone. This submission by the Prosecution provoked a quick response from the Defence. Defence lawyer Morris Anyah told the Court he did not see the relevance of the closed session requested by the Prosecution. According to Mr. Anyah, the name of Witness TF1-362 was already in what he called “public domain” and that the Defence was not given prior notice of the protected status of Witness TF1-362.

ANYAH: Well the forcefulness of our presentation would be enhanced if I could indicate why we want this decision reconsidered, and that would take it into the nature of an application. Like I’ve said, we are of the view that the witness’s name is in the public domain. I would leave it at that and I would rest on that in making this an application that to the extent that this chamber finds it within its discretion to rescind this order that it should.

CHEESEMAN: Prosecution lawyer Brenda Hollis expressed surprise at the Defence statement that there was no prior notice. She said the Defence submission had not merit.

HOLLIS: The Defence were given notice of existing protective measures very early on in accordance with Rule 75. And in fact, when disclosure was made, even redacted disclosure was made regarding this witness, it was clear from that disclosure that there had been prior protection. In addition to that, there is something that we filed on the 28th of January. Reference to this witness was made, and an oral decision was put in this reference, and the oral decision is the one that was followed by the written decision you have before you. So for the Defence to say they did not have notice, we suggest, is without merit. Secondly, (Rule) 75 says very clearly they’re in effect until there is an application for them to be rescinded. There needs to be a timely application for this. Witnesses are not ping pong balls. You can’t bring them, keep them here til the last minute, have it decided that they can’t go in a forum that they find comfortable and protective of their security, and then expect them at some later date to be able come back. This is an untimely application, and we suggest they’ve given no reason that there should be any change to it – and such application is untimely. If they wish to go into more detail to make a record, we suggest we go into private session.

CHEESEMAN: Following the arguments of both Defence and Prosecution, Justice Teresa Doherty said the Judges were reluctantly adopting the decision of Trial Chamber I, which first provided the protective status for Witness TF1-362.

JUSTICE DOHERTY: We note there is no timely application to vary or rescind the order of Trial Chamber I made in May 2005. Therefore we are, albeit reluctantly, bound by the provisions of Rule 75(F) and the order of Trial Chamber I, and this witness’s testimony will proceed in closed session. In the circumstances we direct a closed session.

CHEESEMAN: TF1-362 is the Prosecution 19th witness to take the stand since the resumption of Taylor’s trial in The Hague.

This is Joseph Cheeseman reporting for the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground.
Abdul Rashid, at The Hague (Krio narration translated)

RASHID: The Defence team representing Charles Taylor says that Judges at the Special Court are under political pressure. But the Prosecution disagrees. Lead lawyer for the Defence, Courtenay Griffiths, QC, in an interview with journalists at The Hague, says that Britain, the United States, and other Western countries which have contributed money to the Court, and portray Mr. Taylor as a devil, would not be happy to see the Court free the former president.

GRIFFITHS: It’s quite clear that the Judges are committed to ensuring a fair trial for Mr. Taylor. While saying that, I appreciate that they’re operating under a great deal of political pressure, because the United States and the United Kingdom and other Western countries, having invested so much money and time in demonising the former President of Liberia over the years, it’s unlikely that they would take kindly to an acquittal. So I appreciate the kind of pressures that the Judges are operating under, but I’m confident that they have the courage of their convictions to return the right verdict.

RASHID: But QC Griffiths added that he had confidence in the Judges’ courage to give the right judgment. Griffiths likewise said Britain had already provided a prison for the accused when the trial wasn’t yet over. The Chief Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, has a different view of this.

RAPP: My job, I take an oath not to take the instruction of any country, and the Judges are certainly in the same situation. The Judges are going to have to evaluate the evidence. People are hearing the evidence, and if the Judges come along and decide something that’s contrary to the evidence, that’s going to hurt the whole process. This has to be fair and appear to be fair. It’s not a situation where it’s going to be decided on the basis of political pressure. So they’re not deciding everything on the basis of whether the Prosecution wants it or the Defence wants it. They’re deciding it according to the law and according to the precedents, and sometimes we’re not happy and sometimes the Defence isn’t happy.

RASHID: He said, never mind the financial support that Britain, the United States, and the West are providing, they have no intention of influencing the trial and the Court is not under political pressure. Mr. Rapp said it’s not just the West that supports the Court. Other countries in Asia and Africa give support. The Chief Prosecutor said the countries the Defence is accusing are only interested in seeing justice done. As all this is going on, the Chief Prosecutor said one of the reasons for his visit to The Hague concerns the security of witnesses. With regards to the Liberian witness, Varmuyan Sherif, where people threatened his brother in Monrovia because the witness gave testimony against Mr. Taylor, Mr. Rapp said they’ve taken action to protect Sherif’s brother and his family. The Chief Prosecutor’s visit is to arrange for witnesses who will testify, and to talk to people and students at The Hague about the trial. After that he will travel to London to find out about Mr. Taylor’s assets or property.

Abdul Rashid for Search for Common Ground and BBC World Service Trust, at The Hague.
War crimes trial held up so Charles Taylor can rest

AMSTERDAM, Feb 28 (Reuters) - Charles Taylor's war crimes trial was adjourned on Thursday until Monday so the former Liberian President can rest on doctor's advice, a spokesman for the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone said. "He wasn't feeling well a few days back," the spokesman said on Thursday.

"The doctor said it wasn't serious but he needed some rest. He came to court yesterday and today but the defence counsel asked for an adjournment so he could rest on doctor's advice."

Taylor, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, faces charges of rape, murder, mutilation and recruitment of child soldiers at the court, set up to try those most responsible for the 1991-2002 conflict.

The trial is being held in The Hague because of fears it could spur instability if held in Sierra Leone.

The 60-year-old has pleaded not guilty to all charges. His trial was delayed for six months after opening in June 2007 after he appealed for more resources to fund his defence.

The court had hoped for a rapid trial, after seeing previous international war crimes trials dogged by lengthy legal arguments or posturing by the accused, notably the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

Milosevic died in jail before a verdict was reached in his marathon trial, prompting a storm of criticism about the fact his case was allowed to drag on for more than four years. (Reporting by Catherine Hornby; editing by Philippa Fletcher)
Charles Taylor after brief hospitalization returns to court for war crimes trial

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Charles Taylor is back in court for his war crimes trial a day after being hospitalized briefly for tests because he was feeling unwell.

The 60-year-old former Liberian president appeared healthy sitting behind his lawyers in the Hague courtroom where he is facing charges of arming and supporting rebels during Sierra Leone's bloody civil war.

Taylor underwent tests at a hospital after telling his lawyers he was feeling ill. Doctors could find nothing wrong with him.

The court is in closed session to hear testimony from a protected witness.
Lawyer:

Taylor In Top Shape

No Milosevic Scenario

Subsequently, Presiding Judge Doherty adjourned the Court until tomorrow 9.30 when Prosecution Witness 175-362 will take the stand. It has been announced that this Witness will testify in closed session, however it is possible that the Witness will waive this right and give testimony in open session.

In an interview with the BBC, Courtenay discounted fears of a Milosevic scenario, referring to the death of former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic's death before a verdict could be handed down. Like Taylor, he was on trial for war crimes.
War crimes prosecutor has Taylor blood-diamond haul in sights

THE HAGUE (AFP) — The prosecutor in the Charles Taylor war crimes trial said Thursday he was closing in on a 600 million dollar (400 million euros) blood-diamond haul amassed by the former Liberia president.

"We're working on the Taylor assets with a special team from the British government (to) make them available to victims both in Sierra Leone and Liberia," Stephen Rapp said in an interview with AFP in The Hague.

"We believe there are some assets that are still there, they are not in his name but there is the ability to (...) bring them back," Rapp said.

Since his trial opened on January 7, a total of 18 witnesses have testified to Taylor's role during neighbouring Sierra Leone's bloody 1991-2001 civil war, and Rapp said they had helped him to build a "strong and compelling case."

The Special Court for Sierra Leone is pursuing Taylor on 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Taylor, 59, is specifically accused of controlling rebel forces in Sierra Leone who went on a blood diamond-funded rampage of killing, mutilation and rape during the civil war. He denies the charges.

"If the judges convict him for pillage, in part for pillaging the diamonds in Sierra Leone, we can then go back to the court after that judgement and say 'these diamonds were worth X amount of money, so we want a judgement for X million dollars'," Rapp said.

"We can then enforce that judgement against his assets and ask an order for restitution to the victims and the Sierra Leone government."

Rapp said the sums amounted to "600 million dollars" which were "stolen from the Liberian treasury" and largely composed of diamonds taken from Sierra Leone during the war.

He added that countries with banking secrecy laws are "increasingly willing to cooperate (...) particularly when talking about individuals involved in war crimes, in a brutal civil war."

Taylor's defence team have mounted stern cross-examination of the witnesses brought to testify against him, with Rapp adding that persistent intimidation has meant an extensive witness protection programme being implemented.

"We offer temporary relocation while (the witness's) situation is evaluated. At the end of the day some of them may have to be relocated to another country or continent.

"Generally they're not going back home immediately after their testimony. There have been threats, they are being investigated and pursued."
"Whatever the situation, we will seek the strongest protective measures to make sure the witness is not at risk," Rapp said.

He said eight crucial insiders were able to testify to links "between Taylor and the people who physically perpetrated the crimes", the "totality" of their testimonies shaping "a strong and compelling case."

"We'll show that it's possible to hold a chief of state responsible for these massive crimes," Rapp added.

Sierra Leone's civil war left some 120,000 people dead and thousands more mutilated.
Taylor Witnesses Being Threatened

By MIKE CORDER
THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A key "insider" witness who testified against Charles Taylor has gone into hiding after being threatened for giving evidence at the former Liberian president's war crimes trial, the chief prosecutor said Thursday.

Varmuyan Sherif, a former bodyguard for Taylor, and his family have been relocated since he testified in January in The Hague, said Stephen Rapp of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The threats, which are being investigated by police and United Nations officials in Liberia, underscore fears voiced by prosecutors before the trial that witnesses could be endangered by testifying against Taylor, who still has a wide network of supporters in Liberia.

Rapp said rocks were thrown at Sherif's home in Liberia and a threatening letter was sent to his brother after Sherif testified that Taylor smuggled arms, cash and communications equipment to one of the most notoriously brutal militias in the Sierra Leone war.

"He has been temporarily relocated and efforts are ongoing to determine whether it's safe for him to return or whether he needs to be permanently relocated," Rapp said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said other witnesses also have been threatened, and that has made some witnesses wary of appearing in the Hague courtroom where Taylor is being tried by the U.N.-backed court.

Several witnesses at the Taylor trial already have testified behind closed doors because of fears of reprisals.

Rapp, who has been in Africa for most of the trial, said he was pleased with the case so far.

He said the Taylor prosecution was given a significant boost last week by a ruling from the court's appeals chamber that said rebels linked to Taylor were part of an organized plot, known as a joint criminal enterprise, to seize control of Sierra Leone with a campaign of terror and loot its diamond mines.

Trial judges in Sierra Leone last year ruled that prosecutors did not correctly set out the joint criminal enterprise allegations in an indictment against three rebels who were tried separately from Taylor, but appeals judges overturned that ruling on Friday.

"It's enormously significant to us in this case," Rapp said.

Taylor has pleaded not guilty to charges that include murder, rape, torture, enlisting child soldiers and pillaging towns and villages during Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, which ended in 2002.

His trial is being held in a courtroom rented from the International Criminal Court in the Hague because of fears that prosecuting him in Sierra Leone could spark new violence.
Rapp was visiting The Hague on his way to Britain, where he will discuss with officials efforts to track down millions of dollars Taylor is believed to have syphoned into foreign bank accounts while he ruled Liberia from 1997 to 2003.

"We have got information that millions of dollars passed through his personal accounts — maybe even more money than Liberian's government was receiving at the time he was president — and evidence of wire transfers being made around the world," Rapp said.

Taylor claims to be broke and the court, funded by voluntary contributions from countries around the world, is footing the bill — expected to run to $2 million — for his defense team.

If investigators can trace and seize embezzled cash, it could be used not only to pay his legal bills, but also to aid thousands of victims mutilated by rebels in Sierra Leone notorious for hacking off their enemies' limbs.

"That money could come back and be put into programs to help amputees," Rapp said.
Insider Witness In Hiding

As Prosecutors Close In On Taylor's Millions

Rapp also said: “That money could come back and be put into programs to help amnestees.” Rapp asked.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Rapp said Thursday that the key “insider” witness who testified were being(widget) at the trial. Rapp indicated they have been other instances of witnesses being threatened as well.

“He has been temporarily sedated and efforts are ongoing to determine whether it’s safe for him to return or whether he needs to be permanently relocated.” Rapp said in an interview with the Associated Press.

Rapp told the AP that other witnesses also have been threatened, and that his made some witnesses story of appearing in the Hague courtroom where Taylor is being tried by the U.N.-backed court.

Tiring to protect others, several witnesses at the Taylor trial already have testified behind closed doors because of fears of reprisals.

SEE PAGE 14
A key witness in the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor has been moved into hiding after being threatened for testifying before the Special Court for Sierra Leone, chief prosecutor Stephen Rapp said Thursday. Varmuyan Sherif, one of Taylor's former bodyguards, testified in January that Taylor had supplied weapons, cash and gear to militia involved in Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, which ended in 2002. Other potential witnesses have also received threats, while still others have testified in closed door sessions for fear of retaliation from Taylor's supporters. AP has more.

Also Thursday, Rapp said in an AFP interview that he was close to seizing $600 million of Taylor's assets, thought to have been stolen from the Liberian treasury or obtained from trafficking in blood diamonds. Rapp said he is working with a special team from the British government to ensure that the assets are distributed to victims in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In July 2007, the Liberian government submitted a draft bill to the country's legislature to authorize the government to seek foreign assistance to track, freeze and confiscate Taylor's funds, properties and assets. Taylor faces eleven charges, including murder, rape, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers during the bloody civil war in Sierra Leone.
Charles Taylor trial witness threatened

A key "insider" witness who testified against Charles Taylor has gone into hiding after being threatened for giving evidence at the former Liberian president's war crimes trial, the chief prosecutor said in The Hague.
UNMIL Public Information Office Complete Media Summaries
28 February 2008

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

Newspaper Summary

President Sirleaf Withdraws Controversial Investment Incentive Bill
(The Analyst)

- An Executive Mansion release issued in Monrovia late Wednesday says the proposed act recently submitted to the National Legislature by the Executive has been withdrawn by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The Presidential Bill sought to amend the Investment Incentive Act of 1973 which sets aside certain businesses exclusively for Liberians.
- President Sirleaf withdrew the Bill following stiff opposition from the Liberian business community which had vowed to prevent its passage into law even though the Act was yet to be debated by members of the National Legislature.
- The release said the decision to withdraw the Act is intended to allow for more consultations and dialogue among Liberian businesses, civil society groups, the citizenry and other interested groups.

“Uncertainty” Looms Over Little Angel’s Funeral…Court Rules Today

- The Monrovia Magisterial Court is expected to decide today if the body of Meideh Angel Togba will be buried or preserved for a private autopsy and DNA test as it hands down its ruling into a motion filed by Defense lawyers. Recently, the Counsel for Defense filed an eight-count motion requesting the magisterial court to order the state to preserve the body of Meideh and make it available to them for a DNA to be conducted on the remains.
- The media however reports that the body of the dead girl has already been given to the parents for burial. The Inquirer and New Democrat newspapers report that the case has claimed the attention of several women groups who are demanding a speedy trial. The Daily Observer quoting Justice Minister Philip Banks said if the experts arrived in the country following the burial, the body could by exhumed to allow for the DNA test.

UNICEF Announces Over US$19M Assistance for Liberia
(Daily Observer, Heritage, The News)

- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) yesterday announced a whooping US$19 million assistance package for war-ravaged Liberia. The Executive Director of UNICEF, Ms. Ann M. Veneman announced the package at the close of a three-day visit to the country.
- Speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Ms. Veneman said US$17 million would be used for education while US$2 million would go towards advocacy, research and strengthening data collection system. She said another US$15 million would be provided during the course of the year making a total of US$35 million which the country will get from UNICEF this year. “Liberia was torn apart by conflict but strong leadership is putting the country on the road to recovery”, Veneman said.

UP Defeats CDC in Margibi By-Elections
(The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- The National Elections Commission (NEC) yesterday announced the Unity Party Candidate, Ballah Zayzay, winner of the Margibi County by-election run-off conducted on Tuesday.
• Addressing a news conference Wednesday, NEC Chairman James Fromoyan said the Unity Party (UP) Candidate Zayzay obtained 61.1% votes, while the Candidate for the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) Roland Cooper, obtained 38.9% votes.
• The latest gain by the Unity Party brings to three the number of seats won by the party in the National Legislature through the conduct of by-elections. The UP had initially lost two earlier by-elections to the CDC and the Liberty party respectively.

President Sirleaf Expresses Delight over Road Project in Bensonville
(Heritage)

• President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf accompanied by Public Works Labour Ministry and ILO officials has inspected a road project in Bensonville, Montserrado County. The 8-mile road project when completed will connect Mount Barclay to Barnersville.
• The President expressed delight over the road project and noted that it will go a long way in providing additional motivation for the people who have been provided employment opportunities.

Radio Summary

Local Media – Radio Veritas (News monitored today at 9:45 am)
President Sirleaf Withdraws Controversial Investment Incentive Bill
(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

President Sirleaf Makes Additional Appointments
• President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made additional appointments in government pending confirmation by the Liberian Senate.
• Those appointed Wednesday are, Mr. James A. Boker, II, Comptroller General, Republic of Liberia and Mr. Edwin Kennedy Tetteh, Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of Youth & Sports.
• Meanwhile, the Magistrate of the Monrovia City Court at the Temple of Justice, His Honor Milton D. Taylor, has been removed from his post by the President.
(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Aggrieved UNMIL Contractors Give Mission One Week Ultimatum
• [Sic:]Protesting Liberian Individual Contractors (ICs) have given the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) a one week ultimatum to give them back-pay or address their grievances or they would resort to further demonstrations.
• For the third day running, dozens of ICs have been picketing before the mission’s headquarters protesting what they called unfair employment and discrimination, a claim the mission dismissed as untrue.

Major Rubber Company Reacts to Reports of Local Officials on its Payroll
• In an interview, the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC) has dismissed media reports that officials of Grand Bassa County are on the company’s payroll, describing a “leaked” document as fake.
• LAC’s General Services Manager, Dr. Samuel Bennette said the Company’s Administrative Manager has nothing to do with financial matters so the document was not genuine.
• Grand Bassa Superintendent Julia Duncan Cassell has since denied knowledge of the act.

Justice Minister Hints That 13-year Old “Murdered” Girl Could Be Exhumed
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**Women Press For War Crimes Court**

_Say They Were Forced Into Prostitution_

*By Alloccous David in Gbaku*

A group of women under the banner of the Grand Kru County Women’s Association has stressed the need for setting up of a war crimes court to prosecute perpetrators of the Liberian armed conflict on grounds that fighters forced them into prostitution and sexual slavery.

In a testimony presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), at the weekend in Bardufoss City, Grand Kru County through the spokesperson, Amos Weh, said the court should be similar to the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone. She said they have observed that perpetrators of the conflict are not showing interest in the TRC process.

**Snowe’s Legal Team Rejected**

*By Benjamin S. Swor*

The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives probing into bribery allegation involving some members of the House Monday rejected the legal team of former Speaker Edwin M. Snowe. According to a communication from Representative Snowe, read by the Secretary of the Committee, Lafayette Gould, the former speaker has acquired the services of Kain & Associates, Legal and Consulting Chambers, and the Center for the Protection of Human Rights to represent him at the hearing.

Mr. Gould quoted the letter as saying that Mr. Snowe is requesting a postponement of the investigation for one week to enable him work out the necessary modalities with his legal counsels.

But the Chairman of the Committee, Rep. Amos Samuel argued that under section 5 of the House’s rules, an investigating committee only allows legal representation to any member of that august body who is under investigation by providing a formal order.

He expressed the conviction that they would have the opportunity to face perpetrators during these hearings. Madam Weh responded to a question from Commissioner John Stewart.

She noted that the court will deter individuals with sinister motives and punished perpetrators.

Testifying further, Madam Weh narrated that many women and girls were raped and abducted by fighters of various warring factions.

She disclosed that women and girls children were forced into prostitution, tortured and exposed to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

She said that raping of women and girls has resulted into the increase of teenage pregnancy noting that women in the county are far back in education.

Weh: “Looting was the objective of the fighters. We were also neglected by our husbands. We are traumatized and need counseling.”

She stressed the need for the promotion of good governance and the rule of law in Liberia because according to her those are issues that resulted into the civil conflict.

She has called on the government and the international community to prioritize the construction of health centers and provides medical services for victims of rape in the county.

The Grand Kru women are also advocating for reparation for women whose husbands and children were killed during the civil war.

They also stressed the need for the equal distribution of the country’s resources so that every part of the country can benefit from development initiative.

The women spokesperson said that women were concerned about the enactment and enforcement of laws which protect the rights of women and girls.

Madam Weh challenged her colleagues to put the past behind them and respect the human rights of others.
Grand Kru Women Want War Crimes Court

Women of the southeastern county of Grand Kru Friday called for the establishment of a war crimes court in Liberia.

The women believe the establishment of the court, which they say should be styled and fashioned as the United Nations-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone, would curb the organization and perpetration of arms conflicts in the county.

The women made the recommendation when they presented a statement under the theme “Women Gender Issues: Pre-War and Post War Challenges And Opportunities,” to commissioners of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission during institutional and thematic hearings at the end of the TRC Public Hearings in Bomi County, Grand Kru County.

In a statement read by Mrs. Anna Wreh, the local gender coordinator of the Ministry of Gender and Development, the women said they are convinced the establishment of the court would halt the culture of impunity in Liberia.

We were of the belief that perpetrators of rights abuses during the civil war would not go unpunished by allowing their victims to ask for forgiveness during the TRC hearings. But the perpetrators are not taking the TRC

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Survivals Recount Experiences at TRC Hearing

Former M’land Supt Morais, Others Implicated, But

By: our correspondent

Chilling accounts of the massacre in 2003 of hundreds of inhabitants of the town of Gbarlo, River Gee County, have been heard by commissioners of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), with survivors recounting their ordeals and experiences.

The TRC is an independent body set up to investigate the root causes of the Liberian crisis, document human rights violations, review the history of Liberia, and put all human rights abuses that occurred during the period from 1979 to 2003 on record.

The TRC mandate is to also identify victims and perpetrators and make recommendations on amnesty, prosecution and reparations. The public hearings are being held under the theme “Confronting Our Difficult Past for a Better Future.”

In 2003, militiamen loyal to former president Charles Taylor rounded up 369 inhabitants of Gbarlo and massacred them at various locations in River Gee County. The killings, witnesses appearing before the TRC, are ongoing in the town of Choloma, River Gee County, and were ordered by former Wilmington County superintendent Dan Morais and General William Burns.

Six years later, the killings have become the focus of an investigation attached to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is Liberia’s way of trying to make amends for the horrors of the country from 1979 to 2003. Now full disclosures of what became known as the Gbarlo Massacre are unwavering.

Samuel B. Chea, Sr., former acting magistrate now at the Supreme Court, River Gee County, said TRC commissioners heard testimony Monday that the massacres were carried out by fighters of the “Rastam Lion Group” of former president Taylor’s government.

According to Chea, the massacres were planned and executed by one Captain Paya S. S. Major Nelson Paye and others under the supervision of former superintendent Dan Morais and General William Burns.

He explained that at sporadic intervals, Gbarlo’s inhabitants were killed at different locations including River Gee junction. He said that the bodies of the victims cannot still be found in the area.

At one point in time, Chea said, the fighters executed the assistant superintendent of the county, Joseph W. L. and several prominent citizens of the area.

Mr. Winters was killed because he belonged to the same tribe (Gbarlo), besides being opposed to using the district
369 Massacred

On August 13, 1953, a village in the River area of Liberia was attacked by government forces. The attack resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians.

The attack was part of a broader campaign by the government to suppress a popular uprising. The uprising was led by the Liberation Front, a group of former soldiers who had been conscripted into the army and had become disillusioned with the government's policies.

The attack on the village came as a surprise to the villagers, who had no prior warning. The government forces arrived in the village in the middle of the night, and the villagers were killed without any chance to defend themselves.

The attack was carried out by a group of soldiers led by a senior officer. The soldiers were armed with rifles and grenades, and they moved quickly and stealthily through the village.

The attack caused widespread panic and fear among the villagers. Many of them were killed outright, while others were taken prisoner and later executed.

The government's justification for the attack was that the village was suspected of supporting the Liberation Front. However, many villagers had no prior knowledge of the rebellion, and the attack was carried out without any prior warning.

The attack was met with widespread outrage and condemnation both domestically and internationally. The United Nations Security Council condemned the attack and called for an immediate investigation into the incident.

The attack on the village had a profound impact on Liberian society. It marked the beginning of a period of violence and repression that lasted for many years. The government's brutal response to the rebellion was seen as a warning to other dissidents that there was no way to challenge the government's authority.

The attack on the village is a reminder of the brutal tactics that were employed by the government in the early years of its rule. It serves as a cautionary tale for those who would challenge the government's authority in the future.
Liberia: Dan Morias' Excesses

Dan Morias served as Superintendent of Maryland County during the Charles Taylor regime. Marylanders say he sometimes referred to himself as 'President of Maryland'. At some point in time, he won the hearts of some citizens of the County, but others considered him a brutal murderer.

To crown this allegation, survivals of a massacre in Glaro, River Gee County are accusing him of masterminding the annihilation of over 300 innocent civilians.

This allegation follows a previous one that he was involved in arms trafficking while administering that Southeastern County. That Morias said was a farce and a bloody lie, and he has dismissed it.

As The Analyst reports, witnesses testifying at the TRC hearings in River Gee have recounted what observers described as Dan Morias' excesses.

Chilling accounts of the massacre in 2003 of hundreds of inhabitants of the District of Glaro, River Gee County have been heard by commissioners of Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In 2003 militiamen loyal to Charles Taylor rounded up 369 inhabitants of Glaro District and allegedly massacred them at various locations in River Gee County.

The mass killings, witnesses appearing before the TRC at ongoing Public Hearings in Fish Town City, River Gee County, said were ordered by former Maryland County superintendent Dan Morias and General William Sumo.

Six years later the killings have become the focus of an investigation attached to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is Liberia's way of trying to make amends for the horrors of the country from 1979 to 2003.

Now full disclosures of what became known as the 'Glaro Massacre' are unraveling. Solo B. Teah, Sr., former Stipendiary Magistrate now Revenue Judge of River Gee County told TRC commissioners Monday that the massacre was carried out by fighters of the "Mountain Lions Brigade" of former president Taylor's government.

According to Teah, the massacre was planned and executed by one Captain Paye Suah, Major Nelson Paye and others under the supervision of former superintendent Dan Morias and General William Sumo.

He explained that at separate intervals pickup loads of Glaro inhabitants were killed at different locations including River Gbeh junction. He said the bones of the victims can still be found in the area.

At one point in time, Solo Teah said, the fighters executed the assistant stipendiary magistrate of the county, Joseph Watkins and several prominent citizens of the area.

"Mr. Watkins was killed because we belong to the same tribe (Glaro), besides being opposed to using the district as launch pad for attacks against the Ivory Coast," Mr. Teah testified.
He said because the people of Glaro refused to cooperate with the government fighters they began an attack on the armless inhabitants leading to the murder of 369 of them. The witness said the massacre in the Glaro villages and towns were made possible by arms shipped into Liberia by road to the county by Lebanese businessman Abbas Fawaz, Manager of MWPI, a logging company that operated in River Gee and Maryland Counties.

Martha Watkins, wife of the murdered assistant stipendiary magistrate, revealed that her husband and two others, Amos Chea and Amos Nyenoh were arrested and killed by the government militia after they refused to organize a defense force in Glaro.

She said following the arrests of Watkins and others Gen. Sumo ordered fighters under his command to disembowel her for her continuous sympathy for her husband. She said the men were taken to a jail in Fish Town and days later Sumo arrived with the men bundled in a pickup and led to their executions.

She explained that another militiaman, Zico Dalieh, now Deputy Station manager for Gee Radio in Fish Town killed dozens of other Glaro inhabitants including a pregnant woman, (a mother of three young children.)

She explained that before Dalieh executed his victims he cut off their ears before marching them for execution. Before one of the executions, Mrs. Watkins narrated, Dalieh nailed the legs and palms of the victim before killing him.

The widow said most of the killings were sanctioned by former superintendent Morias. "Dan Morias was commander for South Eastern Liberia. He sent his defense force in the bush to arrest the people and they were killed."

She testified that following the detention of her husband in Fish Town she pleaded with Morias to release him but he refused. Mr. Morias now serves as ambassador-at-large.
'Chemical Ali' execution approved

The execution of Saddam Hussein's cousin and henchman "Chemical Ali" has been approved by Iraq's presidency.

He was condemned to death on genocide charges for killing 100,000 Kurds during the 1988 Anfal campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Chemical Ali - whose real name is Hassan al-Majid - was initially sentenced to death in June last year but legal wranglings held up the case.

The execution was approved two days ago, to be carried out within 30 days.

He was convicted along with two other top officials - Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, a senior military chief, and the former defence minister, Sultan Hashem.

Poison gas

The presidency, which is made up of President Jalal Talabani and two vice-presidents, has not yet approved the hanging of al-Tikriti and Hashem, says the BBC's Jim Muir in Baghdad.

The two men will remain in limbo not knowing whether they are to live or die, says our correspondent.

The trio were supposed to have been hanged by October but the executions were delayed after Hashem became a cause celebre among Sunni politicians.

Iraqi Vice-President Tareq al-Hashemi has been among prominent Sunnis who insisted Hashem had simply been a career soldier carrying out orders and should be reprieved.

Former regime leaders, including Saddam Hussein himself and his half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti, have been handed over by the Americans and hanged by the Iraqi government without significant popular or political repercussions.

The regime claimed the Anfal campaign was a necessary counter-insurgency operation during Iraq's bloody eight-year war with neighbouring Iran.

Majid acquired his nickname Chemical Ali during the operation after poison gas was used.

Over the course of the Anfal trial, which opened in August last year, a defiant Majid showed no trace of remorse for ordering the attacks.

He said at one hearing: "I am the one who gave orders to the army to demolish villages and relocate the villagers. I am not apologising. I did not make a mistake."
Uganda: Kony Sets Final Condition to Sign Peace Agreement

Frank Nyakairu
Juba

THE rebel LRA will not disarm and its leader Joseph Kony will not sign the final peace agreement next month unless the International Criminal Court lifts the indictments against him, negotiators said yesterday.

The LRA's chief negotiator, Dr David Nyekorach-Matsanga, told Daily Monitor in Juba that Kony would not come out of his hideout in the DR Congo as long as the indictments stand.

"Kony gave me all the authority to negotiate on his behalf but if the ICC indictments are still in place, he said he would never, I repeat, never assemble," Dr Matsanga said yesterday.

The development comes a day after the rebels rejected a government proposal to sign a peace deal on March 6. They asked for more time to consult Kony.

A ceasefire agreed last Saturday remained with demobilisation as the only outstanding issue to finalise an agreement to end one of Africa's longest wars. Mediators had been forecasting a deal within days.

About six heads of State are expected to witness the signing of the final peace deal to end northern Uganda's 21-year war between President Museveni and the LRA.

The government and the LRA debated the ICC issue for about 10 hours yesterday. The talks, said to have hit a stalemate, broke off at 5.30 am.

According to the LRA position paper on the International Criminal Court's indictments; "The Government of Uganda shall request the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution under Chapter 7 of the Charter of the United Nations to defer (for six months) all investigations and prosecutions of the leaders of the LRA. Its only then that... the LRA shall urgently assemble at Ri-Kwangba," the position paper reads in part.

This new demand has angered the government side, which flatly rejected it.

"What we agreed on is the bare minimum. How can the Uganda Government go to the UN claiming to prosecute a man who is still on the run?" asked Capt. Chris Magezi, the delegation spokesman.

"Uganda cannot make herself a laughing stock before the world. This is a stalemate," added Capt. Magezi.

Both sides have also accused each other of acting in disregard of Agenda Item three on Accountability and Reconciliation, which proposes the setting up of a special division of the High Court to try the LRA leaders.

"The government is already violating the agreement we signed," Dr Matsanga claimed.

Former Mozambique President Joachim Chissano spent the entire Tuesday urging both sides to agree.
Kony and two other LRA commanders are wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Earlier this week, the government accused the LRA of breaking the truce by attacking civilians in the Central African Republic, threatening the apparent progress at the talks. But LRA negotiators in Juba denied the accusations.

Two decades of civil war have destabilised northern Uganda and neighbouring parts of eastern Congo and South Sudan, killing thousands of people and displacing some two million more.