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, 28 March 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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REMINISCENCE OF TAYLOR’S WEALTH

-SHAW, Urey, Snowe, Dunbar Others Live In Luxury
-Lonestar Cell Pays Millions Annually

Former President Charles G. Taylor

Cyril Allen

Benon Urey

Edwin M. Snowe, Jr.

Corruption: the virus that everyone considers a disease that has virtually eaten up the fabric of the Liberian society. It may continue if those who perpetrate the act are allowed to parade the corridors of power or live in luxury while those exploited live in abject poverty. As news Editor Somwar Ballah digs into part I of Taylor’s wealth and peddles the associate of Taylor, the much publicized fight against corruption may not succeed when individuals that stole public funds during the tenure of previous governments ride the best cars and live in expensive compounds while at the same time been admired by the very people they exploited.

The case in point is the ongoing scenario in Liberia where individuals who aided and abetted former Liberian President Charles Taylor in plundering state resources and reduced the Liberian people to peasants drive around Monrovia in exotic and custom-built vehicles only showing to the public their ill-gotten wealth.

Imprisoned Liberian leader Charles Ghankay Taylor now facing trial in The Hague, Netherlands for war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in neighboring Sierra Leone may be one of those facing the pain though not for acts committed in Liberia while his millions is been collected by others back home who are riding some of the best models of vehicles and living in luxurious palaces and sponsor other's cars buying them not like "consuming".

Before the coming to power of Charles Taylor as President of Liberia following the 1997 general and presidential elections little or nothing was heard of some of Liberia’s "wealthy individuals" today living in earthly paradise.

Several little known Liberians rose to prominence and acquired abundant wealth as a consequence of Taylor’s desire to have associates who could buy his side in helping of Liberian resources at the detriment of the struggling Liberian masses. These individuals are today living in bright smiles and freely swelling amongst the very impoverished Liberian population.

Critical thinkers are of the view that such individuals must not be allowed the opportunity to live amongst the people; they should rather be declared outcast of society like it is being done in order countries and their actions must be discouraged.

For Liberia, it is becoming a culture that people who raised terror and supported the communists are the very people that are made heroes and adored as eminent citizens of society.

Probably, this is one of the factors responsible for the country downfall if it is continued.

In an investigative survey conducted by this paper, it was uncovered that some close associates to the former Liberian leader are still collecting monies belonging to the jailed former African leader and increasing their wealth at the expense of their former master and still at the detriment of the Liberian people.

Among these companies paying money to the former Liberian leader through some of his close associates is the Lonestar Communications Incorporated, the first GSM provider that began operation in Liberia in 2001 during the regime of President Taylor.

Credible information in the possession of this paper reveals millions of dollars being paid to Mr. Emmanuel Shaw, Benon Urey and others by the Lonestar Cell Company on behalf of former President Charles Taylor annually.

Our information gathered from a well placed source at the Daily Star did not mention the reason for this huge payment to the former President.
liberal has been very much under-equipped and students in this academic sector end up in the classroom either as teachers.

This has led to the poor performance of students and a scholarship offered by the government. The government’s policies are not aimed at improving the education, but to bring in foreign funding for the economy.

Liberia is one of the many African countries that are facing similar challenges. The government needs to address these issues and invest in education to ensure that students receive a quality education.

The country needs a comprehensive education reform that includes increasing funding for education, improving teaching methods, and ensuring that all students have access to quality education.

The government also needs to work with international organizations to attract foreign investment in the education sector. This will help to improve the quality of education in the country.

The government should also focus on providing scholarships and other forms of financial assistance to students who are unable to afford the cost of education. This will help to ensure that students from all backgrounds have access to quality education.

In conclusion, the education sector in Liberia needs a comprehensive reform that includes increasing funding for education, improving teaching methods, and ensuring that all students have access to quality education.

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Newspaper Summary

Deputy UNMIL Boss Warns Against Mob Violence ...Releases Report on Attacks against Police
(The News, The Inquirer, National Chronicle, New Democrat)

- The media reports that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Rule of Law, Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu has warned against mob violence in the country. Ms. Mensa-Bonsu gave the warning on Wednesday when she spoke at a one-day forum to address frequent attacks on the Police. The forum was intended to stem the tide of attacks on the LNP throughout the country by helping to create public understanding of the process of the rule of law and the extent of the responsibility of the police in the dispensation of justice.
- In a report covering the period January to February 2008, over 50 violent attacks on the police were catalogued and in most instances police stations were set ablaze in some parts of the country. She blamed the attacks on the lack of proper public education on the functions and operations of the police coupled with the lack of logistics and low incentives.

“Pen-Pen” Riders, Police in Standoff….As Drivers annoy over alleged Police Extortion
(New Democrat)

- Police and “pen-pen”[motorcycle] riders Wednesday had a standoff around the New Bridge when the riders resisted demands for bribes from police officers assigned in the area. As a result of the fracas, the bikes were forcibly parked for what the police termed as traffic violations. One of the bike riders said the officers were always demanding more than the alleged violations.

Africa Partnership Station Delivers over US$3M Worth of Medical Supplies
(The Inquirer, Heritage, New Democrat)

- The Africa Partnership Station has delivered more than US$3m worth of medical supplies to Liberia. The supplies donated by the U.S. private sector will be given to the John F. Kennedy and Redemption Hospitals, the Logan Town Clinic, and a portion will go to the Ministry of Health for distribution to other health facilities in the country. US Ambassador Donald Booth disclosed that the APS is also offering services at various hospitals and clinics as well as training to the AFL leadership.
- Meanwhile, the APS also donated postal equipment to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications to enhance its work. They would reconstruct the Logan Town road; renovate the Monrovia Demonstration High School, the Logan Town and Clay Island Clinics. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf thanked the APS for the sacrifice and service in responding to the needs of the Liberian people.
- Meanwhile, the commander of the African Partnership Station named illegal fishing, human trafficking, drug smuggling and illegal migration as threats to regional security Captain John Nowell said the threats also jeopardize economic development and long-term stability. He said APS is seeking to cultivate African response through training to improve capability and capacities to secure maritime environment.

House Ratifies Firestone Agreement
The House of Representatives has concurred with the Senate in ratifying the amended Firestone agreement. At a special session yesterday, the House passed the new Firestone deal in which for the first time in 86 years, Montserrado County will get a thirty-three percent benefit from the US$237 thousand rental tax due to be paid annually by Firestone.

The House said Margibi County will take the remaining sixty-seven percent of the amount. Grand Bassa lawmakers Vinicius Hodges and Gabriel Smith said the county should benefit from the money because Firestone pollutes the Farmington River.

The Farmington River divides Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties. Meanwhile, a Margibi lawmaker observed there are many minor issues in the ratified Firestone agreement that need to be considered. Representative Saar Gbollie said it was unfair for Firestone to state in the agreement that it would build bathrooms or safe latrines.

Road Rehabilitation Begins in Cape Mount

Ahead of the next cabinet retreat in Grand Cape Mount County, a scrap company operating in the county, Orbital Incorporated has intensified the rehabilitation of the road linking Tiene of the Congo Manor River Concession area. The 55 kilometre road project according to the Operations Manager of Orbital, Amandu Kamissoko is put at more than US$100,000. Citizens from the county particularly those from Porkpa District where the project is base has welcomed the initiative.

Radio Summary

UNMIL Releases New Report on Attacks against the Police

The U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has released a report that catalogued over 50 violent attacks on the Police.

The report covering the period January to February 2008 said in most instances police stations were set ablaze in some parts of the country.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law, Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu blamed the attacks on the lack of proper public education on the functions and operations of the Police coupled with the lack of logistics and low incentives.

ICRC Closes Tracing Program in Liberia after 18 Years

After 18 years in Liberia, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has finally closed its tracing programme in the country.

ICRC head of Delegation in Liberia, Ricardo Conti said the organization has completed its caseload of tracing up to 4000 families throughout the country and said more than 2000 children were reunited with their families under the programme.

Press Union Hold Police-Media Relations Dialogue Today

The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) will today hold a one-day police-media dialogue amidst the intermittent tension between the two groups.

The Union said the dialogue is aimed at discussing some of the vexing issues that highlight the friction between media personnel and the Police in the discharge of their duties.

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• U.S. Ambassador Donald Booth disclosed that the APS is also offering services at various hospitals and clinics as well as training to the AFL leadership.
• Meanwhile, the APS also donated postal equipment to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications to enhance its work.

(Also reported on Star Radio, Truth F.M. and ELBC)

Star Radio (News culled today from website at 8:35 am)

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Mrs. Dogolea also explained that following the death of her husband former President Taylor constituted a committee of inquiry to investigate what led to his death, adding that the committee has since carried out its work. On a press release issued Thursday and signed by her, Mrs. Dogolea further said that during his tenure as Vice President at the République Libérian, her husband enjoyed the full protection, support and cooperation of all security apparatus of the Liberian government. She said at no time did any of the security officers assigned to our family complain about his being harassed, his life being threatened, or any attempt to harm him, saying that her late husband was never even interested in any security threat his life. Meanwhile, the Dogolea family has warned all those in the habit of using the peaceful demise of her husband as a means of defaming others' characters, making money of spreading falsehood, to desist from truth and "let the soul of our Husband and Father rest in peace".
Dogolea’s Wife Reacts To TRC Hearings

The widow of former President Charles Taylor’s first Vice President, Enoch Dogolea, has reacted to statements made during witnesses’ testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the ongoing trial of Mr. Taylor in The Hague concerning her husband’s death.

Madam Regina Dogolea warned that all those who are using the peaceful demise of her husband as a means of discrediting other characters, money making or on the basis of spreading falsehood should be warned and allow her soul to rest in perfect peace. She said that her attention is being drawn to attributes undergoing treatment in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, and that he was beaten and that the committee has been on the basis of the public record.

She said that the former President Taylor set up a committee to look into the death of her husband in an apparent effort of erasing the mind of the public that Mr. Dogolea was beaten and was the subject of the public record. The committee has long since completed its work noting that his body was flown back home where appropriate funeral ceremonies were arranged and was buried by the government.

Madam Dogolea spoke kindly of the support, cooperation and protection of all security apparatus during the tenure of her husband, dismissing statements that security personnel assigned to her family complained about harassment, life being threatened or test to speak of an attempted dragging on his person.
East Africa: Arusha Court of Justice Must Not Be Closed Down

Jerry Okungu
Kampala

An East African perspective

I AM an East African citizen living in Kenya but, the other week I was ashamed to have visited the Rwanda genocide trial premises at the Arusha International Conference Centre for the first time. this great institution has been with us for nearly a decade!

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is Africa's equivalent of a similar court based in The Hague. Whereas The Hague equivalent tries all cases connected with crimes against humanity, the Arusha Court was set up specifically to try suspects believed to have been the masterminds of the genocide that lasted 100 days and left nearly a million people dead in Rwanda over a decade ago.

Despite the fact that these Rwanda trials are far from over; in fact hardly half way through, the UN, the very body that set it up in the first place is bent on closing the complex down in the next nine months! A walk around the premises that included a conducted tour around the courtrooms and the library revealed that the UN invested heavily in building the infrastructure from scratch.

Like all UN facilities in New York, The Hague and Nairobi, this is an international institution that has the potential to support the fight against impunity when it comes to crimes against humanity.

In today's world, such violations of human rights are more prevalent in Africa than ever before. One only needs to remember the 21-year-old conflict in northern Uganda, South Sudan and the never ending inter-clan conflicts in Somalia and the raging genocide in Darfur to appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

Even though Charles Taylor is facing a similar trial in The Hague, the fact is that even in Liberia; Taylor is not the only culprit. There are many more perpetrators of crimes against humanity yet to be apprehended in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Darfur and South Sudan.

The significance of the Arusha International Court is obvious to Africa and the world. It can serve as a perfect deterrence for regional warlords in Africa.

Its proximity to societies that are notorious for human rights violations makes it cheaper and cost effective to institute investigations, make arrests and transport suspects to the centre with speed.

Another thing; the fact that it is located in Africa makes it have that credibility that suspects are tried on familiar grounds where even witnesses do not feel intimidated by unfamiliar environments. A case in point is the Charles Taylor trial in The Hague.

Under the circumstances, witnesses have to be transported from Liberia and Sierra Leone to go and testify thousands of miles away at someone's cost. When they get there, the courtroom is a totally alien environment with mostly white or brown faces to contend with.
Language becomes an issue as some of the witnesses may not understand any of the European languages used in the trials. Under the circumstances, the chances of a suspect like Taylor feeling like being lynched by a predominantly white jury are very high.

Equally important is the fact that UN institutions like the International Court of Justice should be permanently decentralised. There is need for such a UN facility in every continent with unique facilities to deal with unique regional violations. As it is, the facility in Arusha employed close to 2,000 people at its peak. Plans to close it down have scaled this number to 1,000 employees with nearly 50,000 direct dependants.

The UN annual budget on this establishment has had significant impact on the economy of Arusha in particular and Tanzania in general and even neighbouring countries like Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda itself. In the process, the standards of living and poverty levels have gone down drastically.

More importantly, regional despots are beginning to wake up to the reality that they can easily find their way into Arusha or The Hague cells if they continue with their wayward ways.

As the UN plans to close down this critical facility, what do the African heads of state at the AU and the EAC level think? Will they just sit there and fold their arms as if nothing is happening? Can't they rise up and raise the issue with the relevant authorities at the UN to rethink their decisions?

Presidents Jakaya Kikwete and Yoweri Museveni; you are the current chairs of the AU and the EAC respectively. Can you rise up to the challenge and save the Arusha institution? I am sure your voices are loud and strong enough to be heard across the globe. Over to you, Your Excellencies.