Boys pull the rope on an Independence Day “Lantern” to rock DHL’s airplane.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office as at:
Tuesday, 29 April 2008

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday. Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact Martin Royston-Wright Ext 7217
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“Reporting Taylor’s trial is challenging” - Liberia Info. Minister

By Betty Milton in Liberia

During a three day training program on reporting the trial of Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia and Special Court indictee, the Liberian Minister of Information Dr. Lawrence Bropleh has told journalists that reporting the trial is challenging and it will have serious implications on the trial if not reported accurately. Speaking at the opening session held at the Crystal Ocean-view Hotel in Monrovia Liberia the minister noted that the trial has a lot of implications for the international criminal justice system and so therefore in reporting the trial the journalist should not include an opinion in his report but report only the facts. The Minister pointed out that one becomes a law abiding citizen before he or she becomes a journalist and so therefore

Cont on Page 7
“Reporting Taylor’s trial is challenging”

From Page 2

everything they do should be in accordance with the law. The media he went on should not be seen as propagating information that he is guilty when he is still facing trial because “Charles Taylor should be seen as an innocent man until proven guilty by the court. This is not child’s play,” he emphasised “this is the trial of somebody’s father, uncle and one time President of this country and it should be seen as such,” adding “this government is committed to see that their former President has a free and fair trial”.

The Minister maintained that infant mortality is one of the dreaded diseases which kill a lot of children in Africa and this leads to less capacity enhancement.

He noted further that these disease are related to poverty, therefore he called for capacity enhancement “which will lead to capacity building” On the training session itself, the Minister said that the training was seen as a good beginning, “because it will improve knowledge and understanding of international criminal justice.” Outlining the purpose of the training, Afua Hirsch coordinator for Advocate for International Development said that “the eyes of the international community are fixed on this trial and the main people who are more concerned about the trial, that is Liberians and Sierra Leoneans don’t have access to the trial.”

She hoped that “this training will help greatly on reporting the trial and also it will help them (journalists) contribute in access to international criminal justice.”
Yenga: The only way forward is through negotiation

There are behind the scenes suggestions that Yenga, a chiefdom in the Kissi district in the Kailahun district, might have been targeted in a deal between the APC regime of late Slaka Stevens and the Guinean government. The idea was to settle the issue of Serekunda and bring about peace in Yenga.

The action of the Guinean government gives the others the credit to their suggestions since the issue is about half a century starting from the Serekunda Stevens era. Therefore, Yenga can be seen as one of the political blunders of the then APC regime.

No doubt, both Presidents had mutual understanding of the issue, which might not fulfill their aspirations. Now that both leaders are out of the political scene, the issue still continues to be a threat to the peace and security of both states.

Even currently, political analysts share the belief that there seems to exist an understanding between President Lumae Coote and President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma that the two countries cannot go to war, no matter the provocation to Sierra Leone.

The previous government under former President Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah engaged the government of Guinea in a bid to resolve the impasse but that did not yield positive results.

Instead, the government of Guinea actually claimed that the Yenga corridor belonged to the government of Guinea. The SLPP government then asked the President of Liberia to mediate. Moves were taken to establish the ownership of the Yenga corridor. However, in 1997, through the intervention of Her Excellency Dr. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf it was established that Yenga belonged to Sierra Leone.

This was accepted by both Sierra Leone and Guinea. At a meeting of the former President of Sierra Leone, the Prime Minister of Guinea and the President of Liberia at Yenga, it was agreed that Yenga should be returned to Sierra Leone. As this was close to 2007 elections, the handing over did not take place. Eight months after elections, Yenga and its environs still remain part of Guinea.

The people have realized that fighting cannot resolve their problems, as the only way forward is for peaceful negotiation and not violence. An organization comprising of Kissi tribe, in the three Mano River countries known as Mano River Union, was born.

The main objective of this organization was to lobby for a negotiated return of the Yenga corridor to Sierra Leone. In 2006, the organization drafted a communiqué in which it agreed that the Kissi team in the three countries would work with their various governments to ensure that the governments do not infringe on the rights of Kissi people in any of the three countries. This communiqué did not see the light of day as it failed to receive the support of the government of Guinea.

During the eleven year civil war in Sierra Leone, Guinea was the first country to render military assistance. Guinean troops arrived in 1991 and stayed throughout the conflict. The larger part of the Guinean forces in Sierra Leone, Guinean forces from Mopeoos crossed over into Sierra Leonean territory and occupied Yenga and Lilleda, two areas situated on the border with Guinea.

In 2000, rebel forces launched an attack on Guinea. They entered Guinea using the Liberian border corridor. The troops that attacked Guinea, even though they were believed to have come from Liberia, had in their midst fighters of the RUF.

This situation encouraged the Guinean government to look into the matter and in 2001, 2002 the Guinean government and the Sierra Leone government held meetings in the country to resolve the issue of the Yenga corridor. The meeting was successful and the corridor was returned to Sierra Leone.

The Government should pursue vigorously a non-violent resolution of this crisis by studying closely a status report on the negotiations that were undertaken by the previous government and make recommendations on how to re-engage the negotiation process.

Now that the assurances of the Guinean authorities that Yenga belongs to Sierra Leone looks like a mere ploy to buy time, while they continue to consolidate their personnel and authority in Yenga. The government must fast-track the search for justice if negotiations fail through United Nations, Security Council or an International Court of Justice.
Freetown: Taylor defence meets with civil society and school children

- Saturday 26 April 2008.

By Isatu Gbla.

The defence lawyer for the former president of Liberia Charles Taylor who was indicted in 2006 by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and is now standing trial at the international court of justice at the Hague was recently in Freetown to talk to members of civil society and school children.

The lawyer, Terry Munyard, at the YWCA in Freetown said the purpose of the meeting is get the views of civil society on the ongoing trial of Charles Taylor at the Hague. He said the defence has a very small team and they only have two investigators in Freetown while the prosecution has over twenty investigators in Freetown.

He also said Taylor is innocent until he is found guilty by the court.

He added that the matter of Charles Taylor is different from that of Foday Sankoh and Hinga Norman, because none of the witnesses that have already testified admitted to ever seeing Charles Taylor in Freetown and that the whole case is political.

Speaking about Taylor’s health Munyard said said his client is in good health more than what would be expected for a sixty-year old.

The trial of Mr Taylor will continue at the Hague even if the special court is closed, he revealed.

Meanwhile a prosecution witness in the ongoing trial at the Hague recently stated that Taylor fully supported the RUF with men and materiel and that the the RUF was an exact replica of Taylor’s murderous NPFL.

Photo: Charles Taylor arriving at the Hague in 2006.
The top Sierra Leone anti-riot unit, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) combat commander, continuing his testimony, says former President Charles Taylor informed them he provided the weapons to overthrow President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, preceded by a joint junta RUF role that ended in a spiral of atrocities.

Mr. Taylor is on trial for allegedly backing the rebels.

Testifying Thursday, Allamany Sesay detailed meetings he said were held with Mr. Taylor, who they referred to as the Pa. (Excerpts of the testimony)

Pros: Who boarded the plane in Liberia?
Wit: Abdulai Mustafa, Mammee Bamba, Boma Blast, myself, Captain Blood, George Johnson - Junior Lion, [obscured]
Pros: What kind of plane was it?
Wit: It was a special flight that we met at Lungi.
Pros: Who met you?
Wit: They came in two jeeps. I can't recall their names. They were men in suits. They said they were special bodyguards of President Taylor.

Wit: We landed at Roberts International Airport in Liberia.
Pros: What part of Liberia?
Wit: It is far from the city. They drove us to the city.
Pros: How far?
Wit: Maybe 20 miles.
Pros: Where do you sit at Roberts Airfield?
Wit: Yes.
Pros: Who met you?
Wit: They came in two jeeps. I can't recall their names. They were men in suits. They said they were special bodyguards of President Taylor.
He Armed Us To Overthrow Kabila

Do you remember many of their names?

Wit: No. I didn't know them.

Pros: Where did you go?

Wit: They took us to the Boulevard Hotel in the city. When we arrived there, we met somebody—big, tall—who identified himself as Momoh Gibb, the ADC to the president. He took us to the reception in the hotel. They had made all the necessary arrangements. He called the manager of the hotel and said these were Taylor's guests. We were free to have anything we wanted, but no alcohol.

Pros: Guy, you say anything else?

Wit: He said he would contact us later. That we should take baths and rest. We should feel free in the hotel. He said vehicles would come and we would meet with Johnny Paul, then go to meet Taylor.

Pros: Where is the Boulevard Hotel?

Wit: It's in Mono.

Pros: Did he say where the vehicles would come from?

Wit: He said a vehicle would pick us up to take us to see Johnny Paul Koroma. Then they would tell us when we would meet with Taylor. He just told us that and to stay in the hotel. He said whatever else we want, we can get.

Pros: Did a vehicle come and take you to Johnny Paul Koroma?

Wit: Yes, the next day two cars came with registration plates that said "Guest 1" and "Guest 2." They picked up the 15-man delegation.

Pros: Do you know where the vehicles came from?

Wit: The driver said they were taken to see Johnny Paul Koroma where he was staying.

Pros: Did the driver say who sent them?

Wit: He said the ADC, Momoh Gibb, said he should pick up and take us to Johnny Paul.

Pros: Who were you taken to?

Wit: They call the area of Monrovia "beach." We met with Johnny Paul Koroma there. Momoh said these were special guards from the president's task force.

Pros: Special guards from which president?

Wit: Charles Taylor.

Wit: Guards were there. They said they were the ATU. We met Johnny Paul Koroma (ph), Major Kettah (ph) who was on the SLA officer. We sat down and had a meeting with Johnny Paul Koroma. Johnny said these were special guards from the president tasked with protecting him. The area was well protected by bodyguards. Paul said he was very happy to meet with us. He said nothing had happened to him, and now that we were there, what do we want to happen? Buzzy said we'd been left out of the Lome Accord. It was a discussion between us.

Pros: What do you know about this discussion?

Wit: The delegation went together to speak with Johnny Paul. Johnny Paul and Buzzy said we should not speak loudly because he said there were some RUF boys moving up and down. He said he did not hear us.

Pros: What do you mean?

Wit: He said there were some RUF guys sitting in the park. So he told us that since this was the problem, we should make necessary arrangements. He said we should select some men to see Taylor because Taylor was concerned. He said all 11 men could not go. He told us that he was true he hadn't had any appointment in the government, but he'd seen a vacancy - the CCDF Chairman for the Consolidation of Peace - he would prefer to have that appointment. He said when we meet with Taylor, he would explain that so that he could be sent to Freetown and we could have that appointment. The meeting ended, we ate, and we returned to the Boulevard Hotel.

Pros: These were the RUF men who were with us?

Wit: Johnny Paul. He said they came with him, apart from the special guards Taylor sent.

Wit: Yes, he said Taylor was being pressured over the arms. Taylor did not want the division.

Pros: What division?

Wit: We went over the air that we were left out of the Lome Peace Accord. Taylor didn't want that to result in a division between the two groups.

Pros: Did Taylor want a division between the two groups?

Wit: Yes. We had the ISU and the SLA. Taylor wanted us to leave the ISU and the SLA. We went over the air that we were left out of the Lome Peace Accord. Taylor didn't want that to result in a division between the two groups.

Pros: Both the ISU and the SLA. Taylor wanted us to leave the ISU and the SLA. We went over the air that we were left out of the Lome Peace Accord. Taylor didn't want that to result in a division between the two groups.

Pros: Did Taylor want a division between the two groups?

Wit: No. We did not want any division between the ISU and the SLA. Taylor wanted us to leave the ISU and the SLA. We went over the air that we were left out of the Lome Peace Accord. Taylor didn't want that to result in a division between the two groups.

Pros: Who was the ISU?

Wit: It was referring to President Taylor.

Pros: After this meeting, did your group leave?

Wit: Yes. We went back to the Boulevard Hotel. We had a meeting. Buzzy chased himself, Jumah, Lenn, Major, myself, and Buzzy went to meet Taylor. Five of us went to the other side. Stayed.

Pros: Did the group selected go to meet Taylor?

Wit: Later those two vehicles came again. This time Johnny Paul was in the Lome Peace Accord. It was the office of the president. Pros: Did you meet anyone when you arrived?

Wit: Momoh Gibb received us and took us to a conference room where we waited.
Taylor’s Lawyer Barks: Trial Is Political

Defense counsel for former President Charles Taylor, currently touring the region, says the trial of their client accused of war crimes allegedly committed in neighboring Sierra Leone is political.

Mr. Taylor is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, amongst them rape, murder and torture.

Mr. Terry Munyard who left Liberia Monday for Sierra Leone was quoted by a local daily in that country as saying Wednesday that the trial of his client was political.

Speaking at an outreach session organized by the Special Court in Freetown, Mr. Munyard said other nationals have committed the same crime Taylor was accused to have committed but they have not been prosecuted in any international criminal court.

“International criminal courts should be made for anyone that is found wanting,” he said.

He said the defense team of Taylor was very small and that they were open to lots of restrictions from the prosecution adding, “We have very little resources to carry on with the trials.” “The prosecution is making their case on two evidences which are linkage witnesses and crime based witnesses,” he explained noting, however, that the defense team does not intend to challenge the prosecution’s crime based witnesses.

Munyard said they would be submitting to the prosecution that some of the linkage witnesses were bags of lies, adding that “Taylor is in good health to go ahead with the trial.” Legal assistant Logan Hambrick said they were experiencing problems of witness inducement by the prosecution, a development he said would undermine the credibility of those testifying in the court.
TAYLOR IS NOT YET FOUND GUILTY
-Says Information Minister

A 3-day international training for Liberian and Sierra Leonean journalists on reporting the trial of ex-President Charles Taylor, at the Hague has begun in Monrovia. The training program brings together 35 journalists from Liberia in print, broadcast and community-based media institutions, with 10 from neighboring Sierra Leone.

Despite Supreme Court Order:
VERDIER FIRMS ON BULL’S SUSPENSION
-Senses “Political Interference”

The Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Cllr. Jerome Verdier, says he remains firm on his indefinite suspension of fellow commissioner, Pearl Brownie Bull, though the Supreme Court issued him a writ of prohibition ordering the reinstatement of the suspended commissioner; James Harding Ghayue reports. During the Wednesday TRC public hearings in Bongololu City, Gbarpolo County, the chairman was taken by surprise upon the arrival, for the first time since the hearing began in that county, of commission Cllr. Bull, accompanied

TAYLOR

At the start of the program held at the Krystal Ocean View, Mamba Point, Minister of Information, Dr. Laurence Brophere, said ex-President Charles Taylor is yet innocent of the crimes levied against him by the Special Court until he is proved guilty by that court. He said the Sirleaf government is committed to the due process for all its citizens, including Charles Taylor.

Dr. Brophere said Taylor as former President should be given the due process culminated with free, fair and transparent trial under the law.

He thanked the organizers of the training program and called on the media to report accurately and free from bias in the ongoing trial of Taylor.

The training is geared towards widening journalists’ knowledge, improving their reportage skills and equipping them with requisite techniques on the International Criminal proceedings of Charles Taylor at the Hague.
Courtenay Griffiths - Tough-talking avvocate

Contributed

Courtenay Griffiths QC, on graduation day from the University of Coventry.

Avia Collinder, Outlook Writer

Courtenay Griffiths has little use for diplomacy and smooth talk in his career. The Queen’s Counsel, one of the most senior advocates in London’s criminal court, more popularly known as the Old Bailey, is uniquely positioned to comment on the nature of the security problems which affect Jamaicans both in the United Kingdom and in his country of birth, Jamaica.

In doing so, he dices out some hard truths.

The tough-talking lawyer is also an expert in international criminal law, and has written and lectured extensively on all aspects of the criminal justice system.

Recently in Jamaica for the annual Norman Manley Lecture of the Norman Manley Law School, University of the West Indies, which aims to highlight issues of national and international public concern, Griffiths suggested that, in seeking to rein in the problems of crime locally, Jamaicans should not overlook the impact of poverty on inner-city communities and the relative absence of the educational opportunities which could break the cycle of deprivation.

In an interview with Outlook, he said, “In Jamaica, it is a fact that unemployment affects certain population groups, especially in the inner city. It is inevitable that this degree of deprivation will be reflected in behaviour.”

In London, he says, there are Jamaican communities which are similarly affected by gun culture, but a significant difference between the two societies is the response of the criminal justice system.

Jamaica’s international image

"Jamaica has an image internationally of seeking to crack down largely on gun-related crime. Its constabulary has an image of brutality and total disregard for human rights. At the same time, the force is an underserved and under-financed state institution."

The advocate has a particular interest in civil liberties. Among the many notable cases in which Courtenay has been involved, he regards the following as being the most noteworthy: *R v Silcott & others* (The Blakelock murder trial); the Brighton Bombing in which a bomb was detonated in the section of the Grand Hotel where many politicians, including then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, were staying for the British Conservative Party conference. The noteworthy cases also include the Harrods Bombing - a blast that killed six persons in 1983; the Canary Wharf bombing, the Risley Riot; the Dartmoor Riot; Johnson, Davis and Rowe; *Goswell v Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis* (for a while, this case recorded the highest award of damages made by a jury against a police force); and the Damilola Taylor murder trial. There were also *R v White and Hanson* (the murder of the Chelsea banker) and *R v Brown and Carty* (the murder of the city solicitor).

Nowadays, he is constantly in The Hague in Amsterdam representing ex-Liberian leader Charles Taylor, who has been charged with crimes against humanity. Griffiths is the lead counsel of the new defence team appointed by the Special Court for Sierra Leone to represent Taylor.

Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, is being tried on 11 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law committed during Sierra Leone’s conflict, including murdering and mutilating civilians, using women and girls as sex slaves, and abducting both adults and children and making them perform forced labour or become fighters.

Taylor is charged on the basis of his alleged role as a major backer of the Sierra Leone rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and close association with a second warring faction, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

**Roots**

Courtenay Griffiths was born in Kingston, Jamaica, into a large family which went to England in his early years. He was the son of a poor carpenter and the first member of his family to attend university.

"Coming from such a background, it was easy to develop an inferiority complex when dealing with colleagues. However, I have always had a great deal of confidence," the lawyer states.

Between age 11 and 18 1/2, Courtenay was the only black child in the schools he attended.

"In such an environment, I was forced to come to terms with myself. It came to me that racism should not be allowed to prevent me from reaching goals. Racism is the problem of the racists and is often used to distract individuals from their true purpose."

**Education**

At 18, he left Coventry where he grew up, to study law at the London School of Economics, and was called to the Bar directly from university. He acquired, he said, an essential understanding of political and social context to the practice of criminal law during time spent as legal assistant to the Greater London Council's Police Support Committee, and as a Revson Fellow at the City College in New York.
Returning from the United States, he practised in West Yorkshire and other suburban areas, where the sight of a black man in a white wig and black gown often generated looks and sentiments of amazement.

Not even the juries would listen. He would have to employ special tactics to break the ice; one favourite was:

"Members of the jury, it is me sitting here with my black face and white wig, looking for all the world like a pint of Guinness. I have a good head too."

The jury would collapse with laughter and, from thereon, things would proceed smoothly.

In his earliest years of sitting behind the white QCs in court, it struck him, he said, that few of them had any understanding of the racial dynamics affecting minorities, and he promised himself - with each travesty viewed - that he would make the effort to see that the resulting miscarriage of justice would be repeated decreasingly.

Today, he chairs the Public Affairs Committee of the Bar Council, and worked for several years as chair of its Race Relations Committee.

As lead attorney on many subsequent cases involving minorities, he has been able to keep his pledge to defend them.

He is also enthused about representing Charles Taylor, who deserves a good defence, he states, in a court in which the normal rules of evidence do not apply and in which witnesses are paid to speak.

It is a challenge worthy of the advocate who says that, although Jamaica is a small island state, its best and brightest can make their mark on the world in international tribunals and other similar fora.

Courtenay Griffiths is married to Angela, a woman of mixed Sierra Leonian and Irish extract.

**Family understanding**

She has come, he says, to understand that "who I represent in court does not have a great deal to do with who I am. I am able to distance myself from what I do."

The lawyer is father to children Donna, Paul, Marcus and Adam.

Griffiths is an adherent of the Rastafarian faith. "You don't have to grow your hair to be a Rasta. It's in your heart, not how you look," he states. He is a passionate collector of Jamaican music with a collection dating back to the 1950s.

He believes that the enormous creativity exhibited by Jamaicans in music and other areas in less than one century after the abolition of slavery bodes well for the culture.

"We are a small island with a population of just over two million and we have come to influence the whole world."
Griffiths strongly believes that international criminal law will be one of the expanding areas of law in the 21st century and advises those who wish to follow his example to consider the field.

Where the matter of local crime is concerned, the solution lies not in talent - of which we have plenty - but in political will and the resources - for want of which we appear to be beggared.

"(Lack of) Education is often the root of this kind of deprivation (poverty which leads to crime). The government here does not appear to have the level of resources to provide the lift that youngsters need," he laments.
As Liberians struggle to overcome the repercussions of the blood-staining civil crisis that engulfed the country for over a decade and rendered many widows, orphans, and peasantries and orphans, some of the initial sponsors of the nightmare, with "pride and dignity" have described their financial needs and support to the dreadful National Patriots Front of Liberia (NPFL) as a "dip in the ocean." 

indicating that there is a measure to their destruction and number of lives several hundreds bullets took away, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who sometimes in the past confirmed holding secret meetings with Charles Taylor in the Ivory Coast. Before the latter launched his deadly rebellion into Liberia has described her early support as "dip in the ocean."

Making comment on the concern raised by members of the Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL) an US-
ELLEN, GREGA

The PARROT, FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2003

Nedra Larson group on Monday had no plans to discuss money in meeting with Taylor in the Ivory Castle. The group's plan was to get US$10,000 to help fund the trial, and the current interest rate, something money as "in the air, anyway," according to the female defendant's lawyer. The defendant's lawyer was not available for comment.

The formation and source of support for the divided National Patriotic Front of Liberia, which launched a bloody rebellion against its former government led by President Samuel K. Doe and subsequently led to the deaths of at least 1,500 people, has been a topic of speculation for several years. The philanthropic organization that encompasses the activities of the group, the African Action for Democracy in Liberia (ADL), has been operating in Washington, D.C., with the assistance of one of its members, Tom Browne. Mr. Browne has been involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in the region and has been a vocal critic of the Doe administration's handling of the war.

The ADL was formed in 1992 by a group of Liberians who were concerned about the government's handling of the conflict in the region. The group's primary goal is to promote democracy, human rights, and peace in Liberia. The ADL has been involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in the region and has been a vocal critic of the Doe administration's handling of the war.

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The formation and source of support for the divided National Patriotic Front of Liberia, which launched a bloody rebellion against its former government led by President Samuel K. Doe and subsequently led to the deaths of at least 1,500 people, has been a topic of speculation for several years. The philanthropic organization that encompasses the activities of the group, the African Action for Democracy in Liberia (ADL), has been operating in Washington, D.C., with the assistance of one of its members, Tom Browne. Mr. Browne has been involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in the region and has been a vocal critic of the Doe administration's handling of the war.

The ADL was formed in 1992 by a group of Liberians who were concerned about the government's handling of the conflict in the region. The group's primary goal is to promote democracy, human rights, and peace in Liberia. The ADL has been involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in the region and has been a vocal critic of the Doe administration's handling of the war.

The ADL has been involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in the region and has been a vocal critic of the Doe administration's handling of the war. The organization has been involved in efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and peace in Liberia.
Tears, weeping and sorrow effectively overwhelmed hundreds of listeners on Wednesday at the ongoing public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia in Bopolu City, Bong County, when several witnesses gave graphic and chilling accounts of the massacre of more than 500 people including women, children and the elderly in Fassama Town in 1993.

Witnesses Allen Zillama and Jacob Goeten told the hearings that after the cold-blooded killing of the people by the disbanded armed rebel group, National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), some residents of Fassama town who, by the grace of God, survived the massacre later buried 350 of the dead in a mass grave.

He also disclosed that several corpses that could not be buried were dumped into 10 pit
Witness Ziama, who was also a former Bopolo District Commissioner, said the NPFL rebels, dressed in outworn clothes, used guns, cutlasses and other deadly instruments in the execution of brutalities.

The witness recalled that before the massacre in 1993, Fassama, which is the biggest town in Bopolo District, was under the control of another armed insurgent group, United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO).

He said the killings were done after NPFL, in a fierce gun battle, captured the town from ULIMO and accused Fassama residents of being in sympathy with, and giving support to their enemies.

The former District Commissioner recalled that prior to the NPFL military onslaught in 1993, ULIMO used Fassama as its battalion headquarters.

According to witness Ziama, among the dead were Principal Teacher Gaylor, Vice-Principal Robert Smith, and an instructor of mathematics all of Fassama Public School.

He said though several ethnic groups were residents of Fassama, the Bellige white group at the time dominated the town's population.

Other witnesses told the TRC hearings also attended by officials from the United States Embassy in Monrovia, that besides the mass and indiscriminate killing of hundreds of Fassama residents during the 14-year Liberian armed conflict, the properties of the town people were pillaged and looted by various armed groups including NPFL, ULIMO, Lofa Defense Force (LDF), Liberians United for Democracy in Liberia (LURD), and former Government of Liberia militia, including the then presidential elite, Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU).

Witness Jacob Geiton, a father of 12 children, also electrified the huge gathering with grief and sorrow when he, among other things, disclosed that during the NPFL attack on Fassama in 1993, a crawling baby, whose mother ran away for her precious life, was picked up by the NPFL fighters and thrown into a blazing fire.
**Newspaper Summary**

**Government Embarks on Campaign to Make Armed Robbery Non-Bailable**
(The News, New Democrat, Heritage, The Inquirer, The Informer, Liberian Express)

- The media reports that Government is seeking a legislation aimed at making armed robbery a non-bailable offense in the country. Making the disclosure during the launch of “Operation Thunderstorm” - a campaign aimed at dealing with the upsurge in armed robbery, Justice Minister, Cllr. Philip Banks said if the legislation is passed it would serve as a deterrent. Minister Banks said "Thunder Storm" would be carried out by the Liberia National Police and would be backed by all state security agencies in the country and the UN Police. He said residents of the various communities would see and feel the presence of the Police and other state security agents twenty-four hours a day. Meanwhile, the News newspaper reports that government has ordered the re-arming of the police to contain the rising wave of armed robbery.

**24 Liberian Returnees Back Home From Ghana**
(The News, Heritage)

- The Liberian government has announced the return of 24 Liberian refugees from Ghana who were deemed as illegal residents by Ghanaian authorities. The 24 refugees were among 30 Liberians who were slated for deportation by the Ghanaian government for allegedly breaching Ghana’s Public Order Act. They had been living in that country for the last 18 years.
- According to a press statement, Deputy Minister for Public Affairs at the Ministry of Information, Gabriel Williams, the Government of Liberia welcomes its citizens home and assured them that the relevant agencies would work out modalities to ensure that the returnees receive the needed support for resettlement.
- The release, however, indicated that the return of the Liberian refugees does not form part of the Tripartite Agreement signed between the Governments of Liberia and Ghana, and UNHCR which only applies to legally registered refugees. It said the voluntary repatriation under the tripartite agreement is presently underway and it would apply to a total of 25,000 refugees registered with the UNHCR.

**Talking Drum Completes Community Radio Station Project**
(The News, Daily Observer, The Inquirer)

- The Search for Common Ground Talking Drum Studio Liberia announces the completion of the construction of a community radio station and it subsequent turn over to the people of Grand Cape Mount County. Search for Common Ground Liberia said the radio station was built in the town of Senje with the power transmission of 1000 watts.
- This radio station was constructed at the request of the people of Grand Cape Mount County in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between their Board of Directors headed by Mrs. Maddaline Fahnbulle and the Search for Common Ground some years ago, a release said. She told the people of Cape Mount that the radio was built with support from the Rhode
Island based Foundation for West Africa, the Canadian Government, Action Aid Liberia, the Cape Mount Community and the Search for Common Ground which implemented the radio construction project. The radio is made of modern studio facilities, a state of the art antenna field and a good looking building.

Radio Summary

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

**US$375M Traced To Former President Taylor – Says Chief Prosecutor**
- The Prosecution in the trial of detained former President Charles Taylor said it has made significant progress to identify and uncover his hidden wealth.
- In an interview, The Special Court Chief Prosecutor Stephen Rapp said analyses of bank records have led investigators to identify US$375 million in offshore accounts traceable to Mr. Taylor.

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**Government Seeks to Make Armed Robbery Non-Bailable**

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

**AFL Graduates Another Batch of 500 New Soldiers**
- The Security Sector Reform Programme over the weekend graduated 510 soldiers of the new Armed Forces of Liberia from its Initial Entry Training.
- In an interview, the Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation, Lieutenant Colonel William Wyatt said the number represents 23 females and 487 males. The training lasted for nine weeks.
- Lieutenant Colonel Wyatt said the graduation of the soldiers now brings the new AFL strength to 1300.

*(Also reported on Truth F.M. and ELBC)*

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"Taylor Must Be Treated Innocent"

Monrovia

As defendant Charles Taylor answers to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, Liberia's Information Minister has cautioned the media in Sierra Leone and Liberia to treat Taylor as innocent until the court determines otherwise.

Liberian Information Minister Dr. Laurence K. Bropleh told about 50 Liberian and Sierra Leonean journalists that Mr. Taylor was a former head of state, and as such, the media should not be seen as propagating sentiment either for or against the accused.

The Liberian and Sierra Leonean journalists gathered at the Krystal Overview Hotel in Mamba Point to participate in a three-day media training on International Tribunals and International Criminal Proceedings organized by the Advocates for International Development (A4ID) in collaboration with the International Center for Media Studies and Development in West Africa (INCEMSADWA).

Speaking at the opening of the training which basically centered on "Reporting the Taylor Trial in a Balanced, Fair and Objective Context", Minister Bropleh said media coverage on Taylor's trial demands optimal professional and ethical standard.

"The stories you write, the interviews and questions you ask, and the analyses you provide, indeed, have serious implications in our both countries," Bropleh noted.

He wants the media to see itself as a critical linchpin to the agenda of making post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone success stories.

Dr. Bropleh called on the media in both countries to devise a mechanism whereby there can be monitoring and evaluation of both media coverage during the trial in The Hague.

"We can establish an independent group to assess the performance of the coverage during the trial and its impact on the publics in Liberia and Sierra Leone," Dr. Bropleh suggested.

He observed that the media training was significant because, according to him, it will improve their knowledge and understanding of the working of international justice system.

He assured the Liberian government's commitment to due process and a free and fair trial of all of its citizens including Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor stands accused of an eleven count charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, terroror, rape, sexual slavery, as well as conscripting child soldiers into armed forces, among others.

Taylor has since denied the charges and pleaded not guilty.